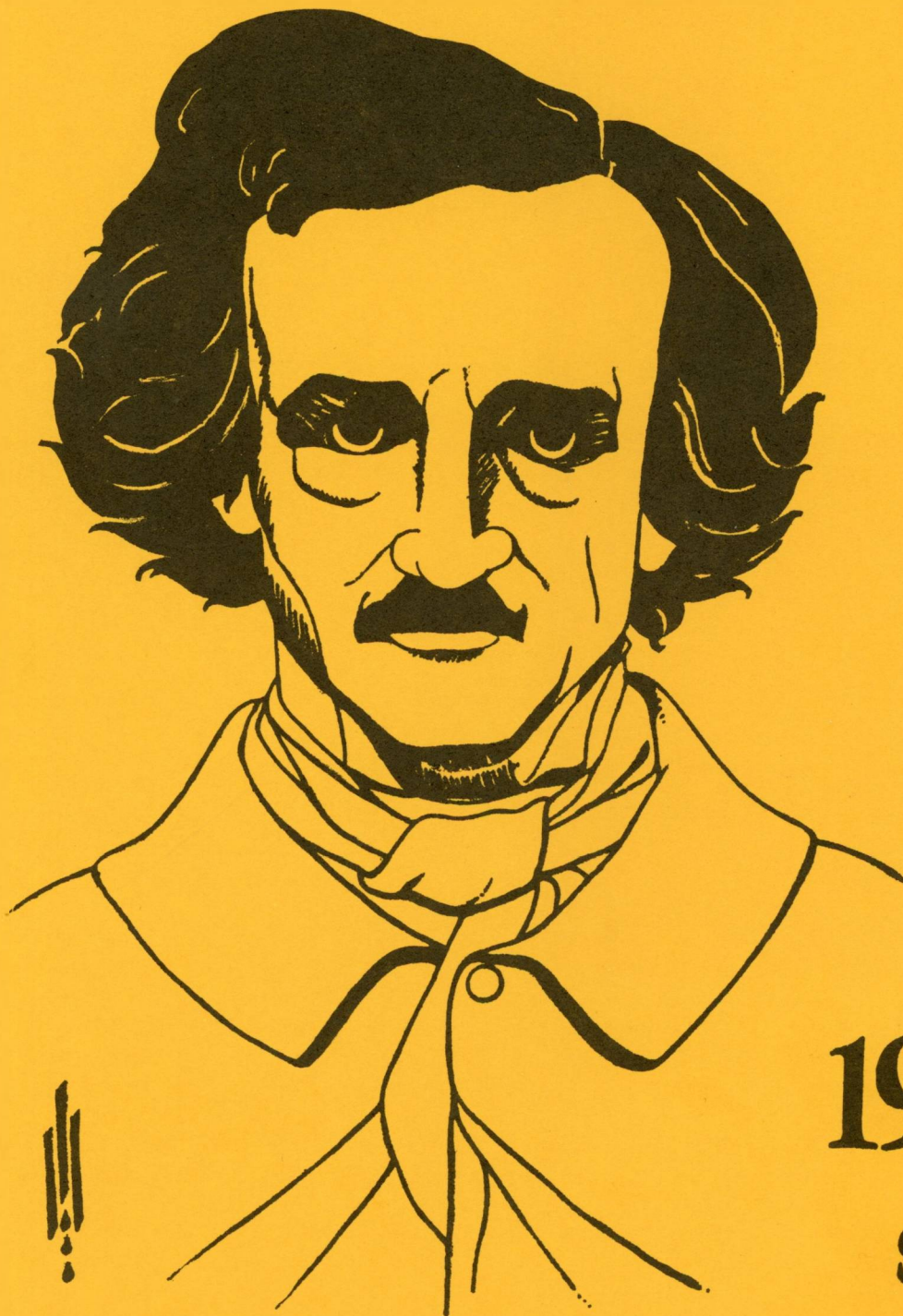


FANTASY COMMENTATOR



1983

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Fantasy Commentator

EDITOR and PUBLISHER

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Bronx, N. Y. 10470

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Vol. V, No. 1

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Winter 1983

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Edgar Allan Poe

Aubrey Beardsley cover

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This is the thirty-third number of *Fantasy Commentator*, a non-profit periodical of limited circulation devoted to articles, book reviews and verse in the area of science-fiction and fantasy, published annually. Subscription rate: \$3 a copy, three issues for \$8. All opinions expressed herein are the contributors' own, and do not necessarily reflect those of the editor or the staff. Accepted material is subject to minimal editorial revision if necessary. Unless correspondents request otherwise, communications of general interest may be excerpted for "Open House."

Realizing the Impossible Dream

THE FIRST SCIENCE-FICTION COURSE IN ACADEME

SAM MOSKOWITZ

I drove into New York late in October to oblige Sam Moskowitz, who . . . was giving a class in science fiction at City College (This is a supercommon situation now, but it was not so then. Sam's class may have been the first college class in science fiction.) and wanted me as a guest lecturer. . . . I remember very little about it except that I drew detailed diagrams on the board to exemplify my notions of novel structure. Sam remembers it more glowingly than I do. He has never ceased bemoaning the fact that it never occurred to him to tape the talk.

—Isaac Asimov: *In Memory Yet Green* (1979), p. 692.

The first college course on science fiction that I can discover was given as a night course at City College of New York Extension School; this began in 1953 and was conducted by Sam Moskowitz for three years. (It was then continued for several years by Hans Stefan Santesson.) Certainly this was the oldest continuing course on science fiction. At that time, Moskowitz had no difficulty in securing such writers as Heinlein and Asimov as guest lecturers.

—Lester Del Rey: *The World of Science Fiction* (1979), p. 224.

I

The classes in science-fiction Asimov and Del Rey refer to above were indeed the earliest ever given, and the recollections of these gentlemen should be clear because they themselves were among a distinguished group of guest lecturers who participated in them. One of the most interesting points about this landmark introduction of science-fiction to the halls of academe is that it was planned and instigated by the college itself, which instituted a deliberate and successful effort to obtain a qualified instructor.

I was first informed of this quest by a close friend, Thomas S. Gardner. Dr. Gardner, who had long been interested in science-fiction, was a research

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chemist working for Hoffman LaRoche in Nutley, New Jersey.^{1*} He also had a life-long interest in gerontology, and had received national publicity for experiments that prolonged the life-spans of fruit flies and guinea pigs. His work led to the marketing of Marplan, a drug used to increase physical energy, reduce depression and restore mental acuity in the aged and senile. He was then serving on the advisory board of the National Foundation for Anti-Aging Research, Inc., located in New York City.

Through this organization he was contacted by a popular science writer named Robert Frazier, who was then researching an article on longevity. On learning of Gardner's interest in science-fiction, Frazier told him about a related affair in which he had only recently become involved. The City College of New York offered hundreds of extension courses in art, journalism, creative writing, history, languages, mathematics, engineering, cartography and a wide variety of other subjects. Frazier had been writing articles which popularized current scientific and medical developments. (Most of these had appeared in 1947-48 in the column "Parade of Progress," which he and his former wife Shirley wrote for the newspaper supplement *Parade*.) He had approached City College officials with a plan to teach popular science writing, a seemingly logical course, since literally tens of thousands of such articles appeared annually.

To his astonishment this proposal was turned down. The college did not want a course on popular science writing, but what they were urgently seeking a competent instructor for one in science-fiction! Was he, perhaps, qualified to teach that? Mere cursory familiarity with the subject would not be enough, however; only someone with wide knowledge of the field would do. This Frazier did not have, but he clearly wished to be involved. Would Gardner care to follow up the matter and teach the course *with* him? Once he had gained acceptance for one course, Frazier probably hoped to add others and perhaps create a new career direction for himself, since a number of his other starts seemed to have petered out.

Gardner, though the subject attracted him, was far too busy to accept even a part-time teaching position. He told me about it and suggested that I apply, since my background and credentials clearly qualified me for the post.

All this was occurring early in 1953. One should remember that during 1952 the most spectacular barrage of science-fiction and fantasy magazines in history had hit the newsstands. Over two dozen titles appeared that year,² and more were announced for 1953, including *Science Fiction* +, on which I would be Managing Editor. Some of these magazines reprinted editions for foreign countries, and the United Kingdom had three of their own which printed new fiction primarily. Mass circulation magazines like *Collier's* and *The Saturday Evening Post* were featuring science-fiction prominently, and it also showed up sporadically in general publications where it had seldom or never before been seen. Whereas previously the small, specialty presses such as Arkham House, Gnome Press, FPCI, Prime Press and Fantasy Press had produced most of the hard-cover science-fiction, they now were joined by such general book firms as Frederick Fell, Greenberg Publishers, Simon & Schuster, Grossett & Dunlap, Winston, Pellegrini & Cudahy and Doubleday. It was early in 1953, in fact, that Doubleday launched its Science Fiction Book Club. In addition, paperbacks were becoming a major factor in the genre, at first with reprints and anthologies, and then increasingly with original material. Radio and television science-fiction shows made their appearance as well.

This background explains why an institution the size and stature of The City College of New York would be interested in a course in science-fiction. Finally, most science-fiction publishing was being done in New York City, and necessarily most of its editors, artists and writers lived in the area. Thus the decision of the college was scarcely frivolous or idiosyncratic. It made clear economic sense.

*Footnotes for this article begin on page 42.

The top officials of the General Studies Extension Division were headquartered in the city at Convent Avenue and 139th Street. They were Buell G. Gallagher, president, Bernard Levy, director, and Simon Lissim, assistant director. The name Simon Lissim meant absolutely nothing to me at that time, but he was then an internationally renowned artist, stage-designer and ceramist. (When he died on May 10, 1981 his work was displayed in some seventy museums in Europe and the United States.) He had been born the son of a banker in Kiev, Russia, on October 24, 1900, and got his start as a stage-designer at the age of seventeen. He continued this work in Paris and other European cities until 1939, when he joined the French army as a munitions truck driver. After the surrender of France in June, 1940 he left for the United States, and as the result of a successful one-man show at the Wildenstein Gallery in New York City was invited to head the art education program of the New York Public Library. This in turn resulted in his connection with City College, where he taught and held various executive posts from 1944 until 1971. He continued to be active in the New York Public Library for some years after that. He was heavy, round-faced and balding, looking and talking like the movie producer Otto Preminger. Lissim was the man who eventually assumed the full responsibility for instituting and sustaining the science-fiction course at City College, and with whom I dealt, almost entirely by correspondence, the entire time I was there. I initially wrote him, detailing my qualifications, March 7, 1953.

First, it is important to establish why I wanted to teach the course at all. Even by 1953 standards, the minimum base salary was very low. You were paid a few dollars in addition for each student that enrolled. If sixty to a hundred signed up, you could do very well. If only a dozen did, not only was there little money in it, but the course was in danger of being dropped as not warranting the effort and expense. In fact, many announced courses on other subjects were cancelled before opening day because of poor enrollment. (This was not unusual, and still happens routinely in academe.)

Now back in October, 1952 I had obtained my first full-time editorial job as Managing Editor of Hugo Gernsback's *Science-Fiction Plus*.³ Since I had sold stories professionally, was quite capable of revising both fiction and non-fiction and knew everyone of importance in the field, I was fully confident of my own editorial abilities, and the prospectus for *Science-Fiction Plus* had impressed Gernsback himself with my science-fiction background. But I realized, even before the first issue appeared, that Gernsback was out of touch with the times and that the economics of the magazine made its success a long shot.

A college degree was not needed for this job, nor did I have one; but I felt it might be a different story if I wanted a career in the editorial field. A college degree is frequently a negative asset. It doesn't help you get jobs that require one, but not having one can exclude you. I was nearly 33, and didn't want to take four years out of my working life for the sake of a degree. If, however, my resumé could show that I was an instructor at City College, this experience would probably be accepted in lieu of a degree—or it might simply be assumed I had one.

As a result of my letter I was invited for an interview. I do not recall the exact date, but I remember it was in April, 1953. The place was a room at the Convent Avenue headquarters. There were three men present, one of whom was Lissim. They obviously had not been assembled just for me, since they had been speaking to many people. They were professionally polite and forbearing.

"Mr. Moskowitz," one of them asked, "where did you get your degree in science-fiction?"

"There are no degrees in science-fiction," I replied. "If you decide to put on a course in science-fiction it will be the first one in history. I can demonstrate that I know as much about it as any man living, but neither I nor anyone else can show you a degree."

"You say you have extensive knowledge of the subject, Mr. Moskowitz. Would you be willing to answer a few questions?"

"Certainly," I replied.

After a little hesitation and a weak smile one of the men asked, "Who was Jules Verne?"

"Jules Verne was a French writer inspired to turn to science-fiction by reading Edgar Allan Poe who scored a tremendous success with his first novel *Five Weeks in a Balloon*, published in 1863. Other novels in the same vein, such as *Journey to the Center of the Earth*, *A Trip to the Moon* and his renowned *Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea* made him internationally famous, and they are still in print today."

"Can you name two well known books by H. G. Wells?"

"*The Time Machine* and *The War of the Worlds*. But in all honesty, gentlemen, those questions are elementary. Any one of a thousand readers could have answered them."

"We know," said one of my questioners. There wasn't the slightest bit of doubt in our minds that you knew your subject. We were interested in determining whether you were capable of transmitting your knowledge orally to others. The problem is that you don't have a degree."

"I think I have an answer to that."

"Yes?"

"I know of a man who has been trying to arrange teaching a course with you, Robert Frazier. He doesn't have the knowledge of science-fiction, but he does have a degree and a scientific background. We could teach the course together. I could supply the knowledge and he would supply the degree."

"That is a possibility."

And there matters remained. I promptly telephoned Frazier. It turned out that he had been trying on his own since the previous December to get the science-fiction course approved, but had as grave doubts about his ability to deliver as the school had about his background in the subject. In the interim he had been trying to get a crash indoctrination in science-fiction, to absorb it all *en masse*, scarcely knowing where to start and fully aware that the quantity was too large and the time too short.

But with my cooperation approval came rapidly. The college agreed to the course and set a tentative date for its inception. We were asked for a syllabus, a revised course description, a list of any guest speakers, and short biographies to be printed in the biannual catalog of courses, *Lifelong Education*.

Up until then I had dealt with Frazier only by telephone, but this required a personal meeting to iron out details. It was arranged that I should visit him at his apartment. Frazier lived at 5400 Fieldston Road, in the Riverdale section of New York City. Riverdale was then, as it is today, an exclusive, higher-income area, with beautiful homes, landscaped lawns and a few high-rise apartment houses. I was suitably impressed by both the area and the building where he lived.

The individual who opened the door for me was of medium height and build. He wore rounded eyeglasses that gave him an owl-like look, and his sparse brown hair had a frizzled appearance. He seemed extremely nervous and tense, and in the exchange of information that followed he altered the format and content of the suggested course with each bit of new material I mentioned. He was also distracted by personal problems, answering telephone calls from his wife and other people extremely defensively. He also received word that his mother was on her way up.

Frazier was then about 38 years of age, married, and without children. From scraps of conversation I pieced together that his family was in the garment industry, probably sportswear. His mother arrived in a chauffeured limousine which swept imperiously into the crescent-shaped drive to the apartment. She appeared to be well into her 60's, wore a full-length fur coat, and seemed to have a bit of

a tremor. She scarcely noticed me as she brushed in, and began to take up family matters with Frazier. After some minutes he introduced me. I was then slightly on the heavy side, very conservatively dressed, well spoken and groomed, the anti-thesis of a Bohemian.

"What do you do for a living?" she asked me with a sidelong glance.

"I'm the editor of a science-fiction magazine," I replied.

"An editor?" she repeated. "What does an editor do?"

"I select stories, write editorials and columns——"

"A writer!" she intoned with the contempt of a detective who has just collared a murderer. "I thought so! I don't know what ever got into Robert's head to make him want to be a writer. All you writers will starve to death. None of you ever get anywhere."

After that she did not deign to converse with me at all. She concluded the business with her son, in the course of which it was impossible not to learn that she was covering his living expenses. She didn't bother to look at me as she swept out, but managed to impart the overpowering impression that I was the symbol of a disreputable calling whose lure acted as an irresistible siren's song, leading her son astray. Frazier himself seemed somewhat embarrassed.

To minimize this, I asked him about his own background. From what he said, from a standard reference book⁴ and from subsequent conversations I learned the following. He had received a B.A. degree from Brooklyn College in 1939, and later also attended classes at Columbia University and the University of Southern California. At the time I had somehow got the impression that he had a doctorate in science, but I was never able to verify this or find he had claimed such a degree. He said that in 1941 he had worked at the Bureau of Ordnance in the United States Navy; as a degaussing engineer and an electrical engineer in Mobile and in Chicasaw, Alabama in 1942; and in editorial posts at *Popular Science Monthly* and *Electronics* (1943) and *Air Tech* (1944).

Late in 1944 he took the plunge, becoming editor and publisher of a magazine in the garment industry titled *Sportswear Stylist*. Frazier's intent was to turn out a trade publication that looked like a consumer magazine, and in this he succeeded. There were only two issues (dated January and April-May 1945); they were eye-pleasing, expensive-looking and carried a fair amount of advertising. He claimed they had been a disaster, however, and seemed unwilling to discuss them. Since the collapse of this publication Frazier had for one year been a science consultant and columnist in *Parade*, and thereafter been a free-lance writer.

Frazier's most significant production resulted from the death of Joseph Stalin on March 5, 1953. An obscure aide named Georgi Maximilianovich Malenkov was appointed Stalin's successor by the Presidium of the U.S.S.R. Somehow Frazier received from Lion Books the commission to write a full-length original paperback on Malenkov, about whom the public knew very little. He agreed to deliver the manuscript within thirty days!

This would have been a formidable job even if the subject had been Joseph Stalin, about whom there were scores of books and hundreds of articles from which to draw. But Malenkov was limited to brief mentions in books about Stalin and articles on the U.S.S.R. The only abundant source of information at all was a "Profile" in *The New Yorker* magazine. Frazier filled out his book by giving some background in recent Russian history. He devoted chapters to prominent men like Bulganin, Molotov, Zhukov and Beria, and described the new, virulent Russian anti-Semitism in a style that was polemically anti-Communist.

Frazier met his deadline, for the book appeared in April. It received poor distribution, however, and before sales had a chance to build Malenkov was downgraded in favor of Nikita Krushchev. With some reticence Frazier confided to me that *The New Yorker* was unhappy with him because it felt too much material had been taken verbatim from its pages without acknowledgement, and Lion Books was not

pleased either with this charge or Malenkov's mere interim leadership. He said little further to me about the book, and as far as I know received no more paper-back assignments while I worked with him.

At our April meeting I told Frazier that because of my previous activity in the field and my then current position with *Science Fiction Plus*, I felt I could get a number of famous professionals to give guest lectures at our classes.

Over the next month, whatever his other shortcomings or problems, Frazier succeeded in managing the details. On May 18th he wrote me in part:

I was exceedingly pleased with your interest in presenting the science fiction writing course in full collaboration with me. It will definitely begin the week of September 21st [1953], one hour and forty minutes one evening a week for twelve weeks excluding holidays. Which evening and what time is best for you and the course? I think Friday to enable Asimov and Sprague de Camp to get to New York. But is Friday apt to interfere with week-end plans?

His letter proceeded to ask me to do the following:

Write all the proposed guest lecturers and schedule them for specific dates and specific topics.

Revise his original description and publicity material for the course to make it more effective and accurate.

Arrange with the publishers of all our guest lecturers to send us books for displaying in the classes.

Prepare a syllabus for the course.

Supply a brief biographical note for the catalog.

Work up a four-paged leaflet on the course for the upcoming World Science Fiction Convention in Philadelphia in September.

Design a suitable poster on the class.

Arrange for Hugo Gernsback to write an editorial for *Science Fiction Plus* emphasizing the importance of this pioneering course.

Try to get the advance galleys of de Camp's upcoming *Science Fiction Handbook* before the course began.

Arrange for each speaker to include an analysis of two science-fiction stories they considered among the world's best in the course of their talks, and to do the same for two of their own best works, explaining also how they got their ideas and carried them through from conception to marketing. The students would then be assigned these works to read, and the list would be offered to book publishers for simultaneous hard- and soft-covered publication as *The World's Best Science Fiction selected by the World's greatest Science Fiction Writers*. Then we could use it as a class text. I was also asked to handle all permissions needed for such a book.

Frazier, meanwhile, was leaving for Texas for a week and would be glad to answer any questions on his return.

At every personal meeting and telephone call for the entire length of our association over the next two years I would receive a new list of requests as elaborate as this one. Often they would be revised several times a month. Frazier had no regular job and lots of time to dream up ideas—for someone else, of course, to work on.

In addition to this, I was regularly given jotted lists of books and stories he had heard about and wanted to borrow from me. One note still in my files asks me to write 2000-word summaries of seven anthologies and 3000-word descriptions of eight current stories—to give him a quick briefing.

He seldom forgot his requests and nagged about them interminably, while I would parry them, trim them back to reality, or sidetrack them as diplomatically

as possible. Frazier apparently saw here not only an opportunity to penetrate academe but to spin off endless reputation-building projects. Lacking both the materials and background to accomplish these on his own, he sought me to do them for him, either as a collaborator or as a personal favor.

During the ensuing summer he sent me cuttings from what were ostensibly proofs of the college's Fall 1953 catalog. These harbored several surprises. The course was listed as having two sections, not one! This meant nearly double the work, since despite Frazier's presence it seemed clear I was the one who would do all the preparation and teaching. The course was numbered 582 and called "Fantasy and Science Fiction Workshop"; it was described as "A course of demonstration and practice in the writing of fantasy and science fiction stories. Special sessions devoted to preparation of radio and television scripts. Guest lectures by leading practitioners. Students will have access to rare books in the field."

Now I never had had the slightest intention of teaching how to prepare radio and television scripts, which were outside the parameters of my expertise (and to the best of my knowledge Frazier's as well), and I certainly had no intention of removing rare and impossible-to-replace volumes from my collection to be thumbed through by students and possibly lost.

More immediately disturbing was the fact that the instructor for both sections was listed as Mr. Robert Frazier, my name being omitted! Frazier had pencilled my name in, and wrote that it had been left out through an error which he had already notified the editor of the catalog to correct. (No correction was ever made, however, for the final bulletin also appeared without my name, although it was incorporated in later issues.)

Despite all this I included a notice in my editorial column "Chain Reaction" for the October issue of *Science Fiction Plus*, which appeared on August 12, 1953:

The influence and importance of science-fiction has increased to the extent where The City College of New York is presenting two evening classes on Science Fiction Writing to be given during late September, October and November, with your managing editor of *Science Fiction Plus*, Sam Moskowitz, and the former science feature editor of *Parade*, Robert Frazier, jointly instructing the classes. Among the many guest lecturers will be Murray Leinster, Harry Bates, Isaac Asimov, L. Sprague de Camp, and Robert Sheckley. Those interested in obtaining further information concerning these courses should write to The City College, School of General Studies Extensions Division, Convent Avenue and 139th St., New York 31, N. Y.

II

Let us pause here to review a bit of history. The earliest course attempting to teach a pulp magazine genre that I have uncovered was begun at New York University in 1942. It was taught by professional writers with the sanction of the Authors' League of America. Heading it was the then popular Western story author William Byron Mowery, whose work appeared regularly in such prestige pulps as *Adventure*, *Blue Book* and *Short Stories*. At least two other instructors taught pulp writing under his direction. The action story was handled by Willard Crosby, whose qualifications I have not been able to ferret out. The art of writing the detective story was taught by Marion Randolph, who under her pen name of Marie Fried Rodell had produced three detective novels (*Breathe No More* [1940], *This'll Kill You* [1940] and *Grim Grow the Lilacs* [1941]) prior to the course. Doubtless this teaching experience contributed to her book on detective story writing, *Mystery Fiction* (1952), which Heritage House included in the same series of volumes as de Camp's *Science Fiction Handbook* (1953).

This course continued for at least three academic years, for I know that one lecture, "The Pulp Market and What It Means to New Authors," was delivered by Leo Margulies on November 15, 1944 before the Authors' League under New York University's sponsorship. Science-fiction figured in the course only peripherally, and sometimes negatively as well. For example, Mowery's list of what writers must stay away from⁵ included "Fanciful Inventions: except for specialized pulps", and under "Miscellaneous Points to Avoid" stated, "Fantasy John Pyes are rare."⁶ In his talk⁷ Margulies listed eight primary pulp classifications, "pseudo-science" being one of them.

These sessions are notable primarily because they showed that pop culture pulp writing was worth the trouble of teaching, and because they were sponsored by a leading university.

It is of note that New York University, through the aegis of Professor Benjamin Hamilton, solicited from me a guest lecture on science-fiction. He had learned of me through my listing in *Who Knows—and What among Authorities, Experts and the Specially Informed* (1949). I agreed to speak, and the evening of December 13, 1950 was decided on.

In a classroom at 1 Washington Square, New York City, I found facing me about thirty students, most in their middle thirties or older. From an outline I delivered a very serious extemporaneous lecture on an academic level. It began with "What Is Science-Fiction?", and cited definitions by Donald A. Wollheim, Jack Speer, Robert W. Lowndes and myself. I discussed its range, its variety, and the basis of its appeal. I outlined its genesis as an outgrowth of myths and fables, showing its early elements in *The Bible*, *Beowulf* and *The Odyssey*, and its emergence as a recognizable form in the works of Lucian and Cyrano de Bergerac. I noted the appearance of utopias, and their incorporation into the modern body of the genre, the transition of Gothic literature into science-fiction with *Frankenstein*, and brought my listeners to the threshold of the present with Poe and Verne. I concluded by describing the wide distribution of the scientific romances of Edgar Rice Burroughs, George Allan England, J. U. Giesy and Charles B. Stilson. Hugo Gernsback, I emphasized, published *all* these forms, thus leading to their homogenization into what we called modern science-fiction.

Several ancillary incidents stand out in my mind. Professor Hamilton told me that the Ellery Queen detective story collection had been donated to New York University. For some time now, and for an indefinite period to come, it would be stored in corrugated cartons in the unlighted cellar of one of the university buildings facing Washington Square. He offered to get a light on a long extension cord and show it to me right then or at any convenient future time. That jaundiced me on ever leaving my own collection to a college or university.

Two pleasant, middle-aged women came up to me after my lecture and said they ran the Peacock Pie Bookshop in Hempstead, Long Island; they had a number of Lovecraft items whose value they wanted to know. I offered to give them my estimates if they would send me a list of these, which they eventually did. The items turned out to be chiefly photostats, brochures and fan magazines of Lovecraft's work, one of which (*The Californian* for Fall, 1936, containing Reinhart Kleiner's fine article on the Kalem Club) I purchased from them.

This lecture, and my offering Professor Hamilton's name as a reference, may conceivably have influenced Simon Lissim to agree to teaching at City College three years later.

III

As the day of that first class approached, it became quickly evident that registration for the course would not justify semiweekly sections. In fact, the early enrollment was so sparse that I feared the entire idea would be a wash out. I was told not to be disheartened, however, because frequently people wait-

ed until the very evening of the first class to sign up for a course.

Meanwhile, circulation results from the first four issues of *Science-Fiction Plus* had been disappointing enough to reduce its appearance to bimonthly and to mandate other radical changes. The most important of these was a switch from coated stock to ordinary book paper with the October number—the one which announced the science-fiction class. The announcement had probably had negligible results, for only a small percent of the magazine's circulation was in New York City, and very few readers there would find such a course practical by reason of their age, nature of their work or special interests. The major portion of those who did enroll almost surely did so through reading City College's own descriptive brochure.

The two sections of the course were to be held at different locations and times. One started Tuesday, September 22nd at Public School 18, 121 East 51st Street; the second, Friday, September 25th at the High School of Commerce, 155 West 65th Street. The reader might wonder why college-level courses were held in grammar and high school buildings. The answer was that City College was then a part of the city's educational system; this controlled all public educational structures, which could be delegated for special use as officials felt best warranted from the standpoints of convenience and economy. (P. S. 18 has since been torn down and replaced by a modern office building, its location being in one of the prime land-value business areas of Manhattan.) It had been built during the Nineteenth Century, and its desks and seats proved a rather tight fit for adults, but its generous blackboard space was to prove useful.

Since the majority of students had signed for the Tuesday section, the Friday one was cancelled and the two sections consolidated. There were eleven in the class on its first meeting, just below the twelve usually required, and several of these were to drop out before the course ended. Each had paid \$19 plus a \$2 registration fee for attending the twelve meetings. (If it exists, the list of enrollees rests in the files of Robert Frazier, with whom I have not been in contact since 1957.) Our roles were now clearly differentiated. Frazier would handle all liason with the college, including the required paperwork, and I would be responsible for the actual instruction, including arranging all the guest lectures, and supplying assistance required by the students.

I devoted the bulk of the first class to a condensed and revised version of the lecture I had given three years previously at New York University. The weekly sessions that followed bore a startling resemblance to meetings of The Eastern Science Fiction Association, which I had directed for six years.⁶ The current state of the market would be reviewed, followed by a guest lecturer. One of the tragedies of the course was that nobody thought of taping its meetings. Both individually and collectively the lectures were among the most outstanding ever delivered by authors and editors in the field.

In one way guest lecturers posed a problem. No funds were available to pay them an honorarium, or even to reimburse their carfare. This limited invitations to those living in the city or its immediate outskirts. But most of them knew me—some for as long as sixteen years—, had met me at conventions, been guests at the Eastern Science Fiction Association (which often wined and dined them), and had been done favors by me. As an editor, I happened then also to be in a position to buy their stories, though the sellers' market for distinguished writers was then so good that this was not a particularly decisive or supportive factor.

Most of them I telephoned from my office or spoke to at meetings. My most persuasive argument was that they would be speaking to a class at the college level. Since such a thing had never existed previously in science-fiction, there was considerable appeal in this. An invitation was a testimonial to their status in the field. Perhaps equally important was the fact that the majority of the writers and editors I invited had themselves never attended college. Being in-

vited to lecture to a college-level class was something they could legitimately brag about to their colleagues. Murray Leinster, for example, had no formal education beyond grammar school, and was usually not anxious to speak in public, but the psychological boost to his ego of such an appearance was as irresistible as his qualifications to lecture were impeccable.

The biggest drawback was the small size of the class. Too few students would be insulting. I solved this problem by **inviting** as guests local fans who were delighted to hear a close-up performance of a famous figure discussing their favorite subject. In that way the audience was increased to a more respectable number, and with myself and Frazier seated in front of the speaker as well there was no complaint. Further, most students fell into the over-thirty agegroup, and on seeing so mature an audience before them speakers could not feel compromised.

While no guest lists were kept, I recall among them Joseph Wrzos, who later became an editor,⁹ the poetess Edith Agutsch, and such collectors and enthusiasts as Jean Carroll, Kay Brickman and Gilda Blitzer. (None of the women had any compunction of taking the subway home unescorted, so different was the climate of New York City in 1953 from what it is today.)

For a textbook, the only thing remotely suitable when the course had been proposed was *Modern Science Fiction, Its Meaning and Its Future*, edited by Reginald Bretnor, which had appeared earlier that year. This collection of essays was quite good, but not precisely what I felt most apt, and when L. Sprague de Camp's *Science-Fiction Handbook* came out the summer before classes started, it was no longer considered seriously. De Camp's book had a history of science-fiction, described markets for it, told about editors and fans, gave profiles of writers, and advised how to compose and sell stories. It was written in a light, easy-to-read style. It happened also to be slightly cheaper than Bretnor's. By placing an order for the books in quantity I received a 40% discount which I passed on to the class, selling the volume to students at \$2.10 a copy. The book remained the text for the course the two years I taught it, and possibly afterward.

My files list the names and topics of all scheduled speakers, but unfortunately not always on which class session they spoke. However, I believe the first one was Dr. Thomas Gardner, through whom I had come to teach the course. He outlined correct methods for incorporating sound science into a story without making it seem obtrusive. He understood his subject thoroughly and gave a fascinating lecture.

Sam Merwin, Jr. also spoke during the term. He had written a number of novels both in and out of the field, and was then editing the newly-launched *Fantastic Universe Science Fiction* and *The Saint's Detective Magazine*. He was well qualified both as a writer and an editor, and spoke about what editors look for in a science-fiction yarn and what pitfalls budding writers should avoid.

The guest longest associated with the field was Murray Leinster. His first story appeared in 1919, and he had successfully altered his style to accommodate all changing trends for over a third of a century. Appropriately, he discussed plotting the science-fiction story.

Another speaker was Lester Del Rey, then editing *Space Stories*, *Science Fiction Adventures* and *Rocket Stories*. He had been a major name since 1938, and was known throughout a variety of stories for an ability to make human-like characters out of robots, aliens and mythological creatures. This was why he lectured on the subject of characterization, particularly that of the non-human.

Isaac Asimov was residing in Boston at the time, but he occasionally visited his mother, who still lived in Brooklyn. He addressed the class on October 23rd on writing the science-fiction novel. The reason he had been assigned that topic was that while many writers (including Asimov) were getting their short stories from magazines published in book form, he had succeeded in selling three unpublished novels (*Pebble in the Sky* [1950], *The Stars Like Dust* [1951] and *The*

Currents of Space [1952]), an achievement commanding considerable respect. Unlike many of his contemporaries, whose novels were usually expanded short stories or a group of these tied together, Asimov's were constructed along classical lines. If there was the slightest doubt that he knew how to design a good novel it was dissipated rapidly. Using chalk and blackboard he diagrammed the necessary elements with a clarity and assurance I could only term brilliant. This class alone was worth the price of the course to students.

The logical topic to follow this was a discourse on the structure of the short story. For this I had obtained Robert Sheckley, then one of the most adroit practitioners in that medium. He was known to have a slight stutter, but this was only barely perceptible, and his lecture was of a very high calibre.

Theodore Sturgeon spoke on the style, mood and finish of a science-fiction story. Sturgeon had been considered one of the field's finest writers for the previous fourteen years, and the publication of his novel *More Than Human* the previous year, which had been acclaimed a masterpiece, solidified that opinion. His ability to adjust his style to the subject and purpose of his plots was universally recognized, and he set forth his theories and methods cogently.

Fletcher Pratt was another old-timer, active in the field for a quarter of a century. He was known as an author and a translator, and most widely as a collaborator (particularly with L. Sprague de Camp). In his talk on the problems of collaboration he revealed that his most frequent method was to plot out the story with his collaborator, who would then write the first draft; Pratt then rewrote and polished as necessary.

Thomas Calvert McClary lectured on the handling of world catastrophe as a background in science-fiction. He himself used the device in his stories "Re-birth" (1934), "Three Thousand Years" (1938) and "The Celestial Brake" (1953). His method in each of these was to focus on people's reactions to the catastrophe and relegate the event itself to the background, and he told exactly how this emphasis on individual characters could be successfully accomplished.

For the last class of the term, on December 6th, the speaker was Samuel Mines. Mines was the editor of *Thrilling Wonder Stories* and *Startling Stories*. Both of these magazines were highly regarded in the field, and his discovery of the writer Philip José Farmer and printing of "The Lovers" had gained Mines considerable respect. His topic was the current market for science-fiction, policies of the various magazines, and how to cope with these. He did not have good news to report. His own company had dropped *Space Stories*, and both *Thrilling Wonder* and *Startling*, which had been monthly when the year began were now bimonthly, and would appear quarterly with their next issues. The field was saturated. During 1953 some 28 different magazines had appeared and the market, while still large, was now shrinking. Mines warned that new writers would have to target and slant their stories carefully; it had to be more of a rifle and less a shotgun approach.

Although all these lectures had been highly informative, and revealed how well successful practitioners in the field knew what they were doing, I still had no way of knowing if City College would consider the course successful and repeat it in the coming Spring term. In the hopes that it would be, I asked Mines if he would give a notice of it in one of his magazines, and this he agreed to do.

IV

I have not yet spoken about one meeting of the course, that for November 30th. This deserves more than a thumbnail description, because it is a story all by itself.

Frazier told me that every semester the college assigned a staff member to audit a session of each course and rate it. Whether or not a course was renewed often depended more heavily on its rating than its enrollment. The college didn't want courses just because they were popular if they were not educationally

effective. Now, no one had showed up to sit in on any of our first ten meetings. Nor was it likely that anyone would do so at the final session, when things were being tidied up for the term. So the odds were overwhelming that the course would be judged at its next to the last session. And for that the scheduled guest lecturer was Harry Bates.

Bates was the first editor of the magazine known today as *Analog*, but which he started as *Astounding Stories of Super Science* in January, 1930. It was then part of the Clayton chain, a newsstand leader in the early 1930's, and also the first science-fiction magazine having traditional pulp qualities. Although Bates paid the highest rates in the field, he had trouble securing stories to fit his wild action policy, and often plugged the gaps with fiction he wrote himself under the pen name of Anthony Gilmore. His most famous stories featured the character Hawk Carse,¹⁰ an almost satiric exaggeration of the ray-gun wielding heroes prevalent in science-fiction at that time.

In 1933 the entire Clayton chain collapsed. *Astounding* was bought by Street and Smith, and placed under the direction of F. Orlin Tremaine. Tremaine had briefly been president of Clayton Publications before its demise, and was a seasoned editor with some twelve years' experience. Bates found himself out of a job, and among the things he did to try to make a living was to sell fiction.

Tremaine preferred rich, colorful stories with a philosophical bent and strong human touches. Amazingly, Bates, whose Anthony Gilmore work was an icon of the worst excesses of pulp writing, proved capable of producing acknowledged masterpieces of adult science-fiction: "A Matter of Size" (1934), "Alas, All Thinking" (1935) and "Farewell to the Master" (1940) are stories one still remembers.

I had always admired his work and near the end of 1952, when I knew I would become Managing Editor of *Science-Fiction Plus*, I began coaxing him to give me a story for the new magazine.¹¹ Bates then occupied the same cold-water flat at 207 Eighth Avenue where he died in 1981. In an effort to get him to write, I made several visits to the place. He lived there in abject poverty, for to all intents and purposes he had not held a stable, long-term job of any sort since 1933. He had done a little technical writing as the mood struck him and as he got assignments; this constituted chiefly putting together catalogs of scientific equipment and describing how electrical apparatus worked.

Somehow the loss of his Clayton editorships had made him psychologically incapable of sustaining any steady work-load again. Yet his ego was incredible. He fully believed he had edited the best science-fiction magazine in history. In conversation he returned again and again to talking about a three-day aptitude test he had taken at Stevens Institute in which he rated higher than anyone else, and which proved him capable of succeeding at virtually anything he put his mind to. Naturally, since this test was a matter of record, it was not incumbent upon him to accomplish anything to confirm it!

Bates was emotionally on a hair-trigger, a single remark causing either great enthusiasm or vicious attack. But nursing him through such emotional swings to the completion of a story was the easiest part of my task. Once the finished manuscript was in his hands, he was all but invulnerable to any argument for change. And the worst came in arriving at an agreement for payment. Despite having been told precisely what the rates were before the story was begun, it appreciated in value in his mind with every tap on the typewriter keys. The carrying on between him and Hugo Gernsback over an expensive lunch, with myself serving as a mediator, would have had to be recorded to be believed. The rancor and resentment Bates harbored over a change in story title or the excision of a single sentence still smolders in the letters to me preserved in my files.

The first work of his I published was "Death of a Sensitive" (*Science-Fiction Plus*, May, 1953); perhaps arguably, it was the best story the magazine ever ran. I also bought "The Triggered Dimension," which appeared in our seventh

and last (December, 1953) issue. This was not as good, being too long for its message, which simply stated is "There are problems to which Science does not yet have an answer."¹² Yet it has a certain crude power.

Bates had incorporated into this last story several thousand words of scientific explanation to prove his point. Gernsback felt that point was not only implicit but explicit without them, and further that they slowed an already leisurely paced story. So eventually the scientific explanation went. (Those who have repeatedly claimed that Gernsback insisted on heavy science at the expense of story values please note!)

Under great protest, Bates had finally agreed to make certain changes in the manuscript. Some he made in my office as I sat beside him. If I expected great slashes in the story I was to be disappointed. Carefully he reread his text and crossed out two words here and a word there. Occasionally he wrote a word or two in. There was little beauty or poetry to his sentences, but he knew how to organize and present them to obtain a desired effect. His revisions sharpened his meaning, heightened the mood, and gave the impression of movement when there was little real action. The longer I watched, the more impressed I became. Whatever the man's faults, he was a master at polishing a manuscript. This process, by the way, was an almost literal repetition of his performance with his earlier story, "Death of a Sensitive."

As an editor, every time an author submitted a rough but usable manuscript, I required rewriting of at least its weak segments. If he couldn't do it, or didn't do it right, I would tackle the job myself; but whenever I hit a poor sequence, I was accustomed to rewriting it from end to end until it meshed with the rest of the story. I now realized that if I could adopt Bates's methods, the weaknesses could usually be corrected simply by pencilling the original copy. After Bates had finished, delivering the while a full quota of vitriol because his genius was not appreciated, I took each corrected manuscript home and studied it, memorizing what was done and why.

All this gave me an idea for a session of the science-fiction course that seemed hard to beat. I would bring copies of "Death of a Sensitive" to class and give one to each student. I would also bring the original edited manuscript. Then Harry Bates could lecture, as the students followed the story under his guidance, on what changes he had made at every point and why he had made them. Bates hedged a bit, but then responded to my enthusiasm and said he would do it.

The day of the class arrived. I chatted with Frazier and some early arrivals, and then distributed copies of the issue of *Science-Fiction Plus* which contained "Death of a Sensitive." About ten minutes before the class was scheduled to start a dark-haired, middle-aged man whom I had never seen before came in, removed his overcoat and hat, and sat down. I asked him if he were sure he was in the right class.

"Please don't let me disturb you at all," he said in a slightly patronizing but polite voice. "I'm from the School of General Studies. It's routine for us to sit in on the classes once a term. Just forget I'm here." Our auditor had arrived on schedule.

The time came to begin and Bates had not yet arrived. Among the fans sitting in that evening was Sheldon Deretchin, then active in fan magazine publishing and a recent convention sponsor. I beckoned to him and pressed a coin in his palm. "Please, Sheldon," I whispered. "Go down to the luncheonette on the corner and phone Harry Bates. His number's in the book. If no one answers, he's on his way. If he does answer, remind him he's supposed to be here. He can make it in twenty minutes."

Sheldon left. I began the class with a number of announcements, elaborated on some recent developments particularly relevant to prospective writers of science-fiction, and by then saw Sheldon gesticulating to me through the glass

window of the classroom door. I motioned to indicate I would be right with him, and then said to the class, "Our lesson today is a very important one on the best methods of copy-editing and polishing a completed draft of a story. As a prelude to this lesson, I want all of you to read the first three pages of the first story in the magazine I have given you, 'Death of a Sensitive.' Then you will be able to understand the process that is going to be described."

Everyone began reading the story, including our auditor. While they were doing this I went out into the hall to Sheldon. "What's the score?" I asked.

"You're not going to believe this," he began. "I called up and Harry Bates is home."

"Did you tell him he's supposed to be teaching this class tonight?"

"I told him and that was the last word I got in, because then he told me."

"What did he tell you?"

Sheldon's lips tightened for emphasis. "He said that the only thing he's going to teach is a lesson to that son of a bitch Gernsback, a lesson that he won't forget. That these power-mad publishers can't go around destroying literary masterpieces at their whim, and on top of that cheating him by cutting out 1500 words of explanation at three or four cents a word."

"But we paid him for the wordage that was cut out!" I exclaimed. All we wanted to do was speed up the story."

"He didn't mention that," continued Sheldon. "But he said he had purposely promised to come down so you wouldn't prepare another lecture and would be caught with a two-hour vacuum to fill. Then you'd fall on your face and make a fool of yourself."

"But why me, if he's angry at Gernsback?"

"He said you should have fought Gernsback down the line as a matter of principle, even if it meant your job, and that he wasn't going to forget the insult you tossed at him when you said that his editing had greatly improved the manuscript."

"But why was that an insult?"

"Because," concluded Sheldon with a toss of his head, "he said you knew very well that it was perfect the way it had originally been written, and alteration of a single word downgraded the story. Yet you went along with the changes just to satisfy Hugo's ego."¹³

It was obvious that some members of the class had finished the pages I had asked them to read and were looking around. Bates's warped idea of revenge might be even more effective than he hoped. Of all the superb sessions throughout the term, the one meeting a college official had chosen to audit was that where the scheduled speaker had failed to appear. With our low enrollment, this could very well mean the end of the world's first college science-fiction course!

Well, I would carry on myself. I returned to the podium and faced the class. "Now that you have read the beginning of the story, please turn back to the first page and find line three of the fourth paragraph," I said. "Reread this. Now let me read to you the way it was originally written. Note the changes, and I shall tell you why they were made."

For the next hour and a half I worked my way through the manuscript that I had pored over again and again for my own education as the class listened and took notes. Strangely enough it was not boring, both because Bates had known what he was doing and because I happened to be a better speaker than he, and interpreted his revisions in a manner that not only emphasized their validity but showed their general adaptability to students' writing problems.

When the class bell finally rang, I resolved to be ready to apologize to the auditor for having had to improvise a lecture. When I finally reached him he was already facing me, and his face had the look of a music lover who has just

listened to a superbly rendered symphony. He grasped my right hand in both of his and said, "Mr. Moskowitz, I must say I owe you and Mr. Frazier an apology. In all honesty I expected this to be another of those popular culture courses with no substance, intended to appeal as a light form of entertainment, offering the public the illusion they were being educated. I never expected anything like what you presented. You were down to the nuts and bolts, the nitty-gritty of writing. If your students didn't get something out of it, it was their fault, not yours. I've sat in on many classes and I can honestly say none was more worthwhile than yours! Rest assured that my report will be positive, and the size of your class will have no bearing on whether or not we renew it. Thanks again for a most illuminating lecture, and I hope I can some time sit in one of your future sessions." So everything had turned out well after all!

I did not try to contact Harry Bates further, and years passed—but that was not the end of the story. Unexpectedly, I received from him a letter dated October 2, 1960. It was long and detailed, but revealed in essence that Bates was now totally disabled by progressive arthritis. Though only sixty, he was applying for social security. He had a doctor's statement attesting that as of the date of his letter he was permanently disabled, but asserted that the authorities had demanded proof his condition was progressive, and that he had been suffering from it earlier. He didn't ever remember mentioning his condition to me, but would I be willing to supply a statement that he had written stories for me with the greatest difficulty because arthritis circumscribed his ability to type? He didn't want me to exaggerate, but anything would help.

Now the strange part of this was that I had indeed known that Bates was suffering from arthritis in 1953, because when I visited him he had shown me his swollen, misshapen hands and said he had been forced to stop playing tennis because he could no longer hold a racquet properly. Typing was an agony. Further, he had actually mentioned his condition in letters to me which I had kept.

So I called Bates on the phone and discussed the matter, and later sent him a notarized statement of my knowledge of his condition in 1953. I also returned his letters, for one of which I had retained the postmarked envelope, and was prepared to testify for him if that would help.

That Christmas I received from him a card with a note thanking me and saying he was still waiting to hear the results of his application. Finally his pension was approved. I suspect it was the only regular income he had for the remaining twenty years of his life.

At Christmas of 1962 I received another card from him. All it said was "I ain't mad at you no more."

V

By now word of the science-fiction course had got around. A short time before the semester ended I had received a call from Professor Freeman of the Columbia University English Department. He was then conducting a course titled Current Literature, and wondered if I could appear in it as a guest lecturer. There were over 200 students, and I would have an entire three-hour meeting to tell them about science-fiction. I consented, and the date of December 17, 1953 was agreed upon.

Adam J. Smith, office director of newsstand sales for Gernsback Publications, was excited about the promotional aspects of my lecture. He decided to furnish blow-ups of black-and-white science-fiction illustrations to hang in the classroom auditorium. Most prominent were a group by Albert Robida from his famous book *Le Vingtieme Siecle* (1883) predicting television, automats, tanks, airplanes and other inventions.¹⁴

I prepared a list of sixteen categories of science-fiction, such as future war, time travel, robots, supermen, and so on. For each category I furnished

three to five titles for suggested reading, giving preference to those that were most readily accessible. This information was mimeographed, and distributed to the students of Freeman's class as a preparatory hand-out sheet.

My lecture at Teacher's College began at 7:15 P.M. Room 400 was actually a small auditorium, with seats rising in a semicircle around the podium. I had time for a most comprehensive outline, and I included a synoptic history of science-fiction, its types, its authors, the state of the field, and related the latter to the mainstream of literature. I pointed out, citing comparative examples, how contemporary science-fiction writers were introducing the stylistic methods and devices of Dos Passos, Hemingway, Joyce, Steinbeck and Wolfe, two or three decades behind the times, but when adorned with futuristic ornaments the readers and frequently even the critics thought they had found something new.

Initially this caused a bit of a stir, since the instructor and students thought they had me on their own turf, but it was an error to assume that because I was so deeply involved in science-fiction I ignored everything else. I had actually read, beginning enthusiastically in high school, a large proportion of the works that many people only talk about, and here this accumulation of knowledge stood me in good stead.

After the class Freeman's conversation implied that Columbia might evaluate the possibility of doing more along this line, at least making science-fiction a regular part of their current literature courses. However, I did not wish to explore any further personal involvement until I knew if the course at City College would be continued.

Apparently the anonymous but deeply impressed auditor at the abortive Harry Bates session had been as good as his word, for in early January Frazier told me our course was to be renewed, and that we would soon receive official notice. I therefore never contacted Columbia again, for one session a week was all I wanted to handle. And indeed on January 22, 1954 Simon Lissim wrote me, confirming that I was scheduled to teach course #582, Science Fiction Workshop, at the High School of Commerce, 155 West 65th Street, for twelve consecutive Thursday evenings from 7:00 to 8:30 beginning the next March.

Meanwhile Frazier had been negotiating with administrative officials regarding publicity, and they had agreed to have mimeographed for us two hundred descriptive circulars which could be mailed to any likely prospects we chose in the greater New York area. On January 24th the circulars and stamps for them arrived. They were legal-sized, with complete information about the course on one side and half the space on the other left for a message. In that space I mimeographed the following exhortation:

THE ONLY COLLEGE LEVEL SCIENCE FICTION WRITING AND LITERARY CLASS IN THE COUNTRY

Presented under the co-instructorship of Sam Moskowitz, Managing Editor of *Science-Fiction Plus* magazine and world-recognized authority on science fiction, and Robert Frazier, former magazine publisher and veteran feature science writer, City College will make available to the general public special instruction in this nation's fastest booming literary phenomenon. No special qualifications needed for enrollment.

GUEST LECTURES will be given during the course by John W. Campbell, Jr., editor of *Astounding Science Fiction*, and famous editors and authors L. Sprague de Camp, Isaac Asimov, Willy Ley, Lester del Rey, Frederik Pohl, Murray Leinster, Hugo Gernsback, Sam Merwin, Jr., and Fletcher Pratt, who will collectively cover every phase of the historical background, writing, plotting and marketing of science fiction and fantasy.

Now at *Science-Fiction Plus* I routinely kept a record of every manuscript received, along, of course, with the address of the author. I went through these records, selecting names from the New York area, and sent a circular to each one. I also sent a circular to *Fantasy Times*, which treated the course as an important news story in its February, 1954 issue. Finally, Sam Mines kept his promise by giving us a notice.¹⁵ Disappointingly, however, it gave no address, but was important in principle, since it appeared in a science-fiction publication that had national distribution.

On March 11th eighteen people showed up for the course. These had, as was the usual custom, the option of sitting through the first session and then formally signing up if they so desired. I believe about a third of them eventually dropped out, for the records in my possession cover only twelve registrants. Details about them are not only interesting but valuable, because they tell us who was attracted by the course, and in particular how well acquainted with science-fiction they already were. As all this is now almost three decades in the past, I shall cite actual names as well as specific details, feeling that any invasion of privacy is far outweighed by need for historical documentation.

Lila Borison was a receptionist who had been an avid science-fiction reader for five years. She had previously taken courses in science and writing, and had written for her college newspaper. She was more interested in fantasy than science-fiction, and was particularly eager to learn how stories were slanted for specific markets.

Ward Botsford was a rabid science-fiction fan in his twenties who had recently sold science-fiction.¹⁶ He had received my circular. He was also a musician, and was later to write hundreds of the biographical and promotional texts that appear on record albums. At the time he was first vice-president of the American Astronautical Society.

Mildred Corn was a proofreader with an excellent background in college science. She had taken one earlier course in writing fiction, and wanted to find out if she could write fiction successfully.

Babette de Ghary was a nursery governess, formerly an artist, who had a mild interest in fantasy. She had written some poetry and some childrens' stories, but had never submitted any. She was feeling her way.

Sheldon J. Deretchin I have already mentioned. His main interest was in plotting, and had enjoyed Leinster's appearance in the previous term.

Dorothy Edgerly, a woman in her sixties, had long been a reader of fantastic and detective stories. She preferred fantasy and the supernatural to science-fiction, and was also interested in archeology. She had taken writing courses and enjoyed them. She lived on upper Park Avenue, and I surmised that she had an independant income.

Albert Friedman was Managing Editor of *The Jewish Daily Forward*. For years he had liked to read, and now would like to write, tales of the future. He also wanted an ongoing knowledge of current happenings in science-fiction.

Jo Hazelton was a young college student who had recently begun reading science-fiction. She had been in good science programs in high school and college. She hoped a more comprehensive knowledge of the field would lend a deeper enjoyment to the books she was currently reading.

Samuel Kagan was a middle-aged commercial artist and a selective reader of the genre. He was interested in science, and wanted to know the mechanics of writing science-fiction and how to sell what he wrote.

Rudolph H. Rumplik had followed science-fiction for five years. He was awaiting entry into the Navy, and wanted instruction in short story writing.

Dr. Helen Wissenstein was a lawyer-psychiatrist in her sixties. She had published two books about chess. She had attended other workshops in writing

and greatly enjoyed science-fiction anthologies. She spoke with a slight accent and I remember her as a particularly lovely person.

Finally there was Arthur Zirul, a display artist; he was a large, well built and mild-mannered man in his twenties who lived in Palisade, New Jersey. He had sold a novelette titled "Final Exam" to John W. Campbell,¹⁷ and as a result, through no fault of his own, became our most renowned student.

The story of how that happened begins in 1952, when the science-fiction writer James Blish apparently began to feel that his own stories were not receiving enough critical attention. He thereupon inaugurated, under the pseudonym of William Atheling, Jr., a column of review and commentary in the fan magazine *Skyhook* titled "The Issue at Hand." Here he would frequently review periodicals containing Blish stories and enumerate their alleged profundities. Sometimes he even wrote letters to *Skyhook* under his real name, approving and expanding Atheling's musings on his genius.

In the Spring, 1954 number of *Skyhook*, which came out at almost exactly the same time as the City College course began, Blish made "Final Exam" the subject of his entire column. "This story is one of the worst stinkers ever to appear in the field," he began, and hit his target with such phrases as "downright bad grammar", "terrible" dialog, "tone deaf", "prepositional phrases dangle", "a pre-adolescent effort" and so on, concluding that "a once great editor was asleep at the switch." If he took this attack seriously, Zirul might indeed feel he needed a course in science-fiction writing!

Campbell survived Atheling's criticism to edit *Astounding* for nineteen more years. Blish included his remarks in a collection titled *The Issue at Hand* (1964) as an example of his best criticism, though modern readers doubtless have wondered who Arthur Zirul was and why his dangling prepositional phrases deserved to be preserved for posterity. Few knew the real reason for Blish's ire: Campbell had rejected a revision of a Blish novelette originally scheduled for that particular issue, and had substituted for it Zirul's story. The attack had really been aimed not at Zirul, but at Campbell!

At the first two classes of the term I lectured, speaking from an outline rather than notes, buoyant in the certainty I could never run out of material.

Sam Merwin appeared as guest speaker again, carefully describing the differences among the more scientific policy of *Astounding Science Fiction*, the psychiatrically oriented stories of Gold's *Galaxy*, the "incomplete" type of short story filling *Fantastic Universe*, and the more freewheeling policy of *Startling* and *Thrilling Wonder Stories*.

Willy Ley preached what Frazier had dreamed of, the non-fiction article aimed at a science-fiction audience. He stressed the narrative hook, something of interest to lure the reader into the article; how to look for and find a new approach in an old subject; narratives with a detective story approach, where readers are led from clue to clue; framing a piece with many twists and turns before revealing the final results—an approach that would make a superb adventure out of the discovery of the planet Pluto.

Lester Del Rey reappeared to elucidate the techniques of gaining reader sympathy for the characters, especially aliens. These, he emphasized, must be endowed with recognizable human weaknesses and vulnerabilities.

Though his magazines were in a precarious state and it would be only a matter of time before his own job was terminated, Sam Mines returned to flesh out a point his editorials had previously touched on: Stories must entertain, and they cannot do so unless their characters are themselves of interest. He quoted Goethe about some people: "If they were books I would not read them."

One session proved to be incredible. I had invited John Campbell to guest lecture and he had accepted. I contacted many fans residing in the area and invited them to this session in order to increase the audience. The evening came

and in walked Campbell—with Robert Heinlein! Campbell spoke for an hour and Heinlein for forty minutes. Both were absolutely brilliant, at the peak of their considerable abilities. I am sure they were inspired by the idea of speaking before a college-level class. Neither had ever done that before in science-fiction and they gave the task their all. Heinlein concluded with his five famous rules for writing:

- (1) You must write.
- (2) You must finish what you start.
- (3) You must refrain from rewriting except to editorial order.
- (4) You must put what you write on the market.
- (5) You must keep it on the market until sold.

I pounded these rules into my classes over and over again, because it was revealing how few aspirants followed them.

An unusual development occurred as the result of an invitation to Chester Whitehorn to be a guest lecturer. On the basis of one acceptance and editing three issues of *Planet Stories* in 1945-46 Whitehorn had been made editor of *Vortex Science Fiction* and *Science Fiction Digest*. These were published by the Specific Fiction Corporation, a division of Geographia, which produced maps, atlases and the like. Appearance of the first issue of *Science Fiction Digest* late in 1953 prompted me to write the president of Geographia, Alexander Gross. *Science-Fiction Plus* was faltering, and I hoped, if Gross was building a chain of magazines, that he would be interested in taking on Gernsback's title while it was still viable. Gross was then in his late sixties, and I found him polite and gracious. He was not interested in my proposition, however, for *Vortex* was about to be discontinued because of poor sales. I salvaged what I could out of the interview by asking him to urge Whitehorn to lecture in our course, and this he did.

Whitehorn, a trim, youthful-looking man, described how to incorporate movement and action into science-fiction stories. At the end of his lecture he took the class by surprise. "I understand some of you are working on new stories," he said. "Although the first two issues of *Science Fiction Digest*¹⁸ have used nothing but reprints, if you will submit the best stories completed by the class to me, I'll select the top yarn, pay space rates for it [then one cent a word] and print it in my next issue!" This was more than any writing class had ever dreamed of—a guaranteed acceptance for one student by a professional magazine. Considerable energy went into late night work thereafter.

I had been pressuring L. Sprague de Camp for almost a year to have his next business trip from Philadelphia fall on a Thursday so that so that he could speak to us. Every class member had bought his *Science Fiction Handbook*, and I suggested that he base his talk on one of its chapters. He agreed, eventually, to appear on May 13th. His lecture on characterization and dialog was well received and he graciously autographed copies of his book for everybody.

As the term wound to a close, three students finished stories which I sent to Chester Whitehorn as "the finest" the class had produced. All were short. One was "The Coming of the Krackals" by Arthur Zirul, who mailed it himself since he had problems attending the last few classes. The other two I mailed to Whitehorn on June 14th with a covering letter that said in part: "Of the two I like best "The Cold Wave" by Helen Wissenstein, which is reminiscent of the style of old David H. Keller, M.D., and rather well done in that vein. . . . The other, "The Toss of a Coin" by Dorothy H. Edgerly, is a straight fantasy and easy to read. I hope you can get to them very soon, since I am sending a group of stories back to all members of the class with comments and I should like to tell them who won."

But *Science Fiction Digest* never saw another issue and Whitehorn proved elusive. Telephone calls to his home and Geographia office were not returned. I heard eventually that he had obtained a position on the staff of *Tempo*, a digest-sized competitor to *Quick* magazine. The situation was not resolved until next October, as I shall later relate.

VI

Meanwhile, Robert Frazier had used the City College affiliation to make a science-fiction magazine connection. In 1953 Leo Margulies had started *Fantastic Universe Science Fiction*, with Sam Merwin, Jr. as editor. But Merwin subsequently left Margulies to become assistant editor at *Galaxy*. As a result of Merwin's guest lecture Frazier met Margulies and asked to be permitted to write book reviews for *Fantastic Universe*, receiving as payment only a credit line and a plug for the science-fiction course. Margulies agreed, and his first column, "Universe in Books," began in the magazine's March, 1954 issue. Frazier managed fastidiously to avoid mentioning any name but his own in the plug, even though I myself wrote some of the reviews to help him. The column continued erratically and concluded with the February, 1955 number.

I had been moving into other publishing areas myself. *Science-Fiction Plus* had been suspended, but I had been kept on. Gernsback had received a request from the McBride publishers to edit a science-fiction anthology to be titled *Editor's Choice in Science Fiction*. For this each magazine editor was to select a previously unanthologized story from his own magazines he considered outstanding. Donald A. Wollheim had originally started this collection, but had had a falling out with McBride. Gernsback made me an offer. He would turn the anthology over to me if McBride was agreeable, and I would work on it in his offices. My salary would be substantially reduced. By the time I finished, he would have completed dickering with his distributor to determine the fate of *Science-Fiction Plus*. I agreed.

Plans to continue the magazine fell through, and on January 17, 1954 I was released. But I had completed *Editor's Choice*, and the advance on that kept me going while I looked for a new job. In the meantime McBride asked me to edit a second anthology, on which I began work. This appeared as *Great Railroad Stories of the World* later in the same year.

At this time the entire science-fiction field had begun to collapse. Fan news magazines ran a non-stop series of headlines about titles that were folding, cutting pages, reducing size or decreasing frequency of appearance. As there were many titles, such news went on endlessly. In such a climate there was very little chance of my obtaining editorial employment in the field.

For most of my life I had been in or close to the food business. I knew it well, both wholesale and retail. This led me to scan the want ads for editorial jobs requiring a food background. Eventually I found one and applied for it. It turned out to be *Frosted Food Field* magazine, and was located at 25 West Broadway—the very same building where I had worked for Gernsback, and one floor below his offices! I was interviewed for the position and the publisher, Edward Sherby, walked upstairs, got a reference from Gernsback, and hired me. One year earlier, I found, James Blish had done a stint as editor on the magazine.

An unexpected fallout from Frazier's "Universe in Books" was a solicitation from Leslie Flood, secretary of the International Fantasy Award Committee, for Frazier to participate in making the annual selections. Since he read scarcely any fantasy books, I made the choices for him. Although I had apparently not been considered knowledgeable enough to serve on this committee,¹⁹ I had been participating in its work since 1952 by making choices for Gernsback, who had little time for reading current books. In 1954 and 1955 I was in effect casting a double vote, and I usually agreed with the winners!

Frazier received another opportunity to obtain publicity through the Metropolitan Science Fiction Conference (the "Metricon") held in New York City October 23-24, 1954, of which David A. Kyle and I were co-chairmen. So many professionals were present that most photographs taken at the event show them outnumbering the fans, and the talks were among the finest ever delivered.²⁰ Frazier was to speak on the topic "Criticism in Science Fiction," but actually devoted most of the time that had been allotted him in describing and plugging the City College science-fiction course.

Frazier's hope to use that course as a springboard to secure one on a less specific subject was realized for the next semester. He was slated to teach 550A, Elementary Short Story Writing; his former wife Shirley, I noted, taught another section of that course, 550C. (I did not participate in either one in any way.)

VII

Our science-fiction course opened again on September 23, 1954 at the Needles Trade High School. There was a good turn-out of eighteen students, though not all of these eventually registered. Among the attendees was a woman who had sold two poems to *Cosmopolitan* magazine some years back, and the "real pro" of the group expressed the view that we should dispense with guest lecturers and settle down to writing stories, while I offered criticism and helped shape them. Most of the others were tyros, not having attended any similar classes previously, and the work ethic sounded great to them.

I took a vote, and almost all wanted this new approach. I told them that if they really meant it, and were willing to work hard at producing stories, I could almost guarantee that one of these could be whipped into good enough professional shape to sell. That term I learned a lesson that has stayed with me ever since: Never let the pupils tell the teacher what they should be taught or how they should be taught it!

It should be noted for the record that those signing up for the course were Conrad Chittick, Doris Dolphin, Dorothy Edgerly, Robert Epstein, Robert Holz, Thomas J. O'Hara, Bueno Reiner, Roselee Rockman, Anne Turner and Suzanna Winder. I believe the instigator of the new direction of the course never showed up after the first session, and I have no clear recollection of her name.

On October 7th I finally reached Chester Whitehorn. He claimed he had held the students' stories for awhile in the hope *Science Fiction Digest* would be revived, but since that had not happened he was returning them. (The one he would have published was "The Coming of the Krackals" by Arthur Zirul.) I spoke to Leo Margulies about the situation, and he magnanimously offered to print the winning story in *Fantastic Universe* if Whitehorn's magazine collapsed. I wrote to Zirul immediately telling him this, and advising him to send his story to Margulies as promptly as possible. I wrote also to each of the other students, with comments and my analysis of their stories as a sort of consolation prize.

Touching base with each student was suddenly interrupted by a cry of pain and anguish from Arthur Zirul. Margulies, he reported, had bounced back his story with "... the somewhat pointed remark that it was up to *him* to decide what material is to be used in his magazine. ... He also said that he wouldn't use the story in any case as it was not up to his standard."

Now Leo Margulies was normally a kind and generous man, but he also was sensitive and volatile. I felt that something in Zirul's covering letter had stung him, and was embarrassed for both of us. It so happened that just at this time another of my books, *The Immortal Storm*, had appeared. This had a photograph of Margulies at a science-fiction conclave and his name was mentioned on about a dozen different pages. I hoped to use this to smooth over the incident.

When I telephoned him his first words were, "What makes you think you and your gooks can tell me what stories I'm going to print and what I'm not? It's my money and my magazine!"

"But Leo, " I protested, "you made him the offer to print the story yourself. No one twisted your arm."

"The hell I did. Let me tell you—"

"That isn't what I called about."

"Well, what did you call about?"

"I've just received my author's copies of *The Immortal Storm*. Since

you're mentioned so often the book almost reads like your life story, I thought you might like to have a copy.

There was an instant of silence. "Yeah, someone did tell me about the book. I'd like at least to see it so I can tell my lawyer whether to sue you or not!" And he chuckled loudly.

I made a luncheon date with Margulies, and when he heard of it Frazier insisted on tagging along. Heaven knows I didn't take him to any fancy place—just a coffee shop of no special distinction on Eighth Avenue. There I gave him flatteringly autographed copies of both *Editor's Choice in Science-Fiction* and *The Immortal Storm*. He mellowed a bit and began to examine them.

Then Frazier interrupted. "Why can't I have a copy of *The Immortal Storm*?" he pouted. "I need it to get some background in the field." I tried to ignore him.

Margulies looked up. "If he wants it that bad, he can have this one!" he said with obvious annoyance.

"I've already inscribed that one to you, Leo, and I want you to have it," I said. "I'll get him another one."

Leo was sipping an ice cream soda. He liked ice cream sodas. He wiped his lips and said, "Listen, fellows. I'll tell you what I'll do to help. If you submit the top stories your class produces this term—nothing over 5000 words—I'll buy and print the best one. If it's a little below par I'll have Long rewrite it. [He was referring to Frank Belknap Long, who assisted him on *Fantastic Universe*.] You can put in a plug for your course, and a college connection can't hurt the magazine." He slapped me on the shoulder. "I might even get lucky and find a good story!"

"That's fine," said Frazier, "but I don't see why you didn't bring a copy of *The Immortal Storm* for me."

Knowing he wouldn't read it, I made a point of never giving him one.

Margulies's offer wasn't retroactive. He still would not honor Whitehorn's selection of the Zirul story. But I brought back the news to the class in the hope of instilling some enthusiasm. Every week their numbers dwindled. Apparently sessions where students really sweated over stories sounded practical, but turned out not to be any fun. As we reached the next to the last class, only four students remained. Thomas J. O'Hara had completed three stories, Robert Epstein and Anne Turner had each finished one, and Dorothy Edgerly had done about two-thirds of one. I went to work revising and touching up all of these. The one I remember most vividly was O'Hara's "Rescue Squad," because in front of the horrified eyes of the class I literally made the last third the opening third, and then switched the opening to the end, writing a few lines of connective prose to erase any signs of literary surgery.

I mailed all the revised stories to Margulies on December 26th with a carefully worded, very diplomatic letter. On January 7, 1955 he replied:

I finally have news for you and I think you will like it. I am writing you first, for you may perhaps wish to make the announcement to the writers. . . . We have decided that "Incident" by Thomas O'Hara is the prize-winning top story. I should say that this is the most imaginative and successful of all the stories submitted. It is surprisingly good and needs very little revision.

"Exchange" by Robert Epstein will also be published in *Fantastic Universe* and will be accorded honorable mention. The mature and very imaginative concept underlying it redounds greatly to Epstein's credit.

As for "The Living Sound" by Anne Turner—this is a highly imaginative story and theme, and while by no means startlingly original, has a strong appeal to a demonstrable reality in the minds of most of

us. I would say that Miss Turner shows promise and that she falls down chiefly in the insidious realm of stylistic integration and of prose rhythm harmony—just the right feeling for the right phrase at the right moment.

I am going to hold on to Mr. O'Hara's "Rescue Squad" for another reading. I may decide to use it also—giving it honorable mention. I trust you and Mr. O'Hara won't mind.

Margulies's normal rate was a cent a word, but since all the stories were quite short he raised it for the winners to nearly two. "And so that's that," his letter concluded. "Did I make good on my promise?"

O'Hara, who was a reporter for the New York *Journal-American*, saw his prize-winning story appear in the May, 1955 issue of *Fantastic Universe*. It told of a spaceship whose crew have contracted a deadly disease on one of the planets they have visited. As the ship descends upon a beautiful, blue-green world, the last surviving crew member must choose between the chance that the planet's inhabitants can cure the disease or be decimated by it. The crewman makes his decision—and on Earth two lovers marvel at the sight of a falling star. The story was prefaced by a blurb giving its genesis and naming Frazier, myself and the City College science-fiction course.

Epstein, a middle-aged postal employee, was so delighted at his success that he declared himself afraid ever to try writing a story again. His "Exchange" appeared in the June, 1955 issue. It told of a man from the future arranging for a scientific murder via a matter-transmitting device, and how his plan backfires.

O'Hara's second story, "Rescue Squad," was the longest of the three. It appeared in the September, 1955 issue. It is an interplanetary tale with strong human interest.

I think such results are of extraordinary interest. None of these students had ever sold a story—or even finished one. They were not potentially outstanding writers. But their talents were adequate enough for twelve classes, comprising seventeen hours of instruction, to teach them how to plot, organize, express their thoughts, how to shape and market their product, so that five stories were completed and three of them sold, paid for and published.

However, I was not going to conduct that kind of workshop again. Not because it was ineffective (far from it!) or because it was too much work for me, but because the class would probably expire within the term if I did. Most would-be writers do think they want such a workshop, but the drudgery quickly dissuades them. Those who feel compelled will write anyway, and it would be better for me to use the extra time to package and sell my own material.

VIII

With the Spring course, which began the next March 10th, I reverted to my original formula of teaching several sessions the history and basics of writing science-fiction, and inviting guest speakers for the others. Two of these were appearing for the first time, Algis Budrys and Hans Stefan Santesson.

Budrys was then a rising star, with stories in four different magazines on the newsstands even as he appeared. At the age of 24 he was also a glowing example of the opportunities the field offered new writers of talent. Though younger than almost all members of the class, he held their interest and respect by an excellent lecture. His manner of speech, delivery, choice of ideas and terminology about writing were very close to those of John W. Campbell.

Santesson was a Swedish-born American citizen who from 1945 to 1952 had held the prestigious position of editor at The Unicorn Mystery Book Club. This packaged four "whodunit" novels into handsome single volumes for its members. He

(continued on page 40)

TOLD AFTER MIDNIGHT

LEE BECKER

Shadows

They are too faint, when dusk appears,
To take on shape; but one can feel them there,
Slowly gathering shape as darkness nears
Like some nocturnal creature in its lair.
The light from new-born stars is not enough,
But with the rising moon they show up dark,
Changing dappled black with every puff
Of passing breeze in transformations stark.
This boulder now becomes a crouching man,
That maple sapling casts a gallows; this strip
Of waving goldenrod's a caravan,
That laurel clump a nest of hands that trip.
And among those shadows darting eerily
Are always some whose source we never see.

Nat White

I never knew why people shunned Nat White;
They'd said, as far back as I could recall,
That there was something weird, something not right
About the man. But asked just why, they all
Were vague. It was long ago—a murder and
A trial—a man condemned—old Nat some way
Involved in it. I'd better understand,
I thought, by asking him myself some day.
When next we met I said he'd looked the same
Since I had been a boy. "And when was that,
Young man?" he said. I told him when I came
To town and asked, Do you remember, Nat?"
"I'll always remember that year," he replied.
"They hanged me then. That was the year I died."

Lonely Field

There is a spot deep in the woods I know
Where open grass invites the tired to rest,
A clearing where no bush or tree will grow,
About whose edges no birds fly or nest.
Creatures disappear as one draws near,
And forest noises all grow mute and die.
As I sit there naught breaks the silence drear
Except the sound of my own breath's quick sigh.

I do not feel it is an evil place
Yet often have I noticed something strange:
Though in my walks I see no other face
Or sign of human territorial range,
Some one—or thing—does come into this lair:
I know because the path here's trodden bare.

Avenging Snow

When Matthew Edwards' wife just disappeared
He said she'd run off with another man,
And laughed or cursed at those who feared
Her dead, likely as not by his own hand.
Folks talked of bringing Matt to trial, but we
Hadn't evidence to hang a cat;
And then one stormy February night he
Disappeared himself—so that was that.
It's never safe for those who maim or slay
To be outdoors when winter snows are near—
At least that's what the country legends say
(They're often right, even if they do sound queer).
Matt's turning up, come spring, helped this folklore,
Frozen deep in a drift by his own back door.

Inheritance

Remembrance filled me as I looked around
In what was my house now. Each room recalled
A childhood years ago: the hall clock's sound,
The andirions' glow, the secret place I scrawled
My name—and of course the padlocked cellar door.
That door was open now, but my flashlight's glare
Lit only shelves and barrels, bare stone floor—
Just a country cellar. I sat down on the stair.
Why was the door locked after my sister died?
Was it being a twin that made me miss her more?
Were the things I heard then real, or just inside?
There's none to answer now. Children dream or
Mix times up, they say, but I know I'm right—
It was *after* she died that I heard her sobs at night.

Tips on Tales

Short Reviews of Books Old and New

Kevin J. Anderson

Orson Scott Card's *Songmaster* (1980): How can anyone describe the feeling a reader gets the first time he reads *Dune* or *The Lord of the Rings* or *The Chronicles of Thomas Covenant*—and knows, with inner certainty, that this is one of the best books ever? Then the reader goes on to read countless others, searching for that same feeling. I hope that among them he finally encounters *Songmaster*. This grew from Card's novelette "Mikal's Songbird," runner-up for both the Hugo and Nebula awards and winner of the *Analog* "Reader's Poll" for best novelette of the year. The novel has terrifying potential which is fully realized—the author has a really fine story to tell. He knows it, and so does the reader almost at once.

Ansset is a singer, a special singer with a phenomenal power in his voice which can make people helpless before the naked emotion in his songs. "But then he changed his song. Still without words, he began telling them of the sweating cooks in the kitchen, of the loaders, of the dentist, of the shabbiness behind the buildings. He made them understand the ache of weariness, the pain of serving the ungrateful. And at last he sang of the old woman, sang her laugh, sang her loneliness and her trust, and sang her death, the cold embalming on a shining table. It was agony, and the audience wept and screamed and fled the hall, those who could control themselves enough to stand." Then Ansset becomes the special songbird to Mikal, Emperor of the Galaxy; and they learn to love each other. "It was a soft song, and it was short, but at the end of it Mikal was lying on his back looking at the ceiling. Tears streamed out from his eyes. 'I didn't mean the song to be sad. I was rejoicing,' Ansset said. 'So am I.'" But an emperor has many enemies, and Ansset loses almost all of the people he loves before he learns to use his voice as a weapon.

This is a book the reader enjoys reading slowly, simply to savor. This novel seems made up less of words than quanta of sheer joy, pure horror, rending sorrow and absolute ecstasy of an intensity I have felt only one or two times before. I could quote paragraphs and pages of writing brilliance, hoping to convince others to rejoice as I have done. *Songmaster* is the best work I've yet seen from the best new author I've yet seen. Card should win every award in every field of literature for this masterpiece. He is a *wordmaster*.

John Crowley's *Little, Big* (1981): Okay, so I'm prejudiced—but when I read a book, I expect it to be written in reasonably coherent English and I expect it to have a plot. *Little, Big* proved to me that all books don't have these two essentials. 538 pages made it more big than little, and I had serious difficulty finishing it. It is dull, dull, dull, dull, dull!

I'd like to give a plot summary—but I spent the entire book waiting for something to happen and nothing ever did. *Little, Big* concerns a bizarre family and the bizarre house they live in; the author drones on and on, giving us biographies of every character as if that's all he needs to do to make a novel. This looks like a mainstream work, but it is marketed as fantasy and you will find it in the fantasy section of your bookstore—though I assure you no fantasy buff would find it the least bit interesting. It's sort of a half-baked "Isn't life like a fairy tale?" wound around genre elements, Tarot cards, dark shadows passing over the house, figures hidden in the bushes and a grandfather who believes in fairies.

As far as the writing goes, much is incoherent babble which takes incredible persistence to understand. Here's an example: "He found widowed ladies with ancient Dutch names who lived he knew in high-windowed buildings on great avenues, whose husbands, Estates of, they managed, and whose sons had names like Steele and Eric and were intr dctrs [*sic!*] and lived in Bohemian neighborhoods." Crowley also has some weird disease which inexplicably forces him to capitalize the word "somehow" whenever he uses it, no matter the context. Worst of all is his confusing habit of shifting the point of view in mid-page without changing the scene or otherwise cuing in the reader, something students learn not to do in their first creative writing course. Several annoying astronomical errors grate on the reader also. Crowley flip-flops the lunar cycle to suit his own purpose, and rearranges stars in the constellations as he pleases.

One would be better advised to reread *Dune* or part of a "Thomas Covenant" book than spend time on this one. *Little, Big* is a big disappointment.

James Kahn's *World Enough, and Time* (1980): You've probably at least noticed this title in your bookstore; with a glaring yellow cover flashing at you from among the other paperbacks, you can't help but see it. You might even have picked it up, scanned the back cover, noticed the fine illustrations as you paged through it, and been tempted to buy it. That would have been a mistake.

In a future world peopled with literally every mythical creature one can imagine, a mysterious New Animal appears, organizing all the nasty vampires, griffins, etc. to go on a rampage and either kill humans or take them for slaves. Thus is Josh Green's family destroyed and his brother and wife kidnapped while he is away on a hunting trip. So Josh teams up with his friend Beauty, a centaur, and they are off on a quest for revenge. On their journey of course they meet others willing to help them—two cyborgs, an intelligent cat, a dryad, a butterfly, an old bear, and so on. It gets a little silly after a while. I must admit the story does have its moments, most notably in telling how cyborgs are made, the murder of a mutant in a windmill, and best of all an episode at the very end which I won't spoil for you by describing. But these are few and not worth waiting for.

The main problem with the story is that it has no depth. One doesn't really *care* about the characters, so when they run into dire predicaments with boring regularity one just says "Ho, hum" and turns the page. Kahn jams in far too many irrelevant adventures for no other purpose than to make the book longer. Every action is stereotyped, from the evil vampires to the tough, female cyborg who goes on a corny spy mission à la James Bond (this was hilariously ridiculous, though I don't think it was intended to be). One gets the feeling that the author hasn't read enough fantasy to know what is expected of him.

This future world simply doesn't come across as real. It is so filled with dragons, nymphs, satyrs, elves, sirens, minotaurs, dryads—yes, it even has hobbits and a yellow brick road—that it gets cluttered. One remembers a bar scene (lifted, I suspect, from *Star Wars*) with mythical beasts instead of aliens: "A sphinx walked through the front door. It had the head and breasts of a woman, the body of a dog, the tail of a serpent, the wings of a bird, the paws of a lion; and it was drunk."

The other major problem is the writing, which isn't very good. It is choked with so many blaring clichés you wonder if the manuscript was rushed into type without getting a final polish: "dark destination", "watery death", "Life was strange, was it not?" and so on. Yes, the first line of chapter one reads "It was a clear, bright day."! Also, sentences are laced with words like "quotidian" and "ecchymotic"—but the reader should be prepared for this by the contents-page, where he finds chapter titles like "In Which It Is Seen That Time Is a River Which May Briefly Stop, Yet Then Moves On".

I don't absolutely condemn the book, for it has potential, but I get dismayed when an author does such a sloppy job and can still get a work published. Does the title *World Enough, and Time* sound familiar? It's a quotation from Andrew Marvell's poem "To His Coy Mistress," which says more in one page than James Kahn can in over three hundred.

Vonda N. McIntyre's *Fireflood and Other Stories* (1981): She's won a Nebula Award for her novelette "Of Mist, and Grass, and Sand," was nominated for the Hugo and Nebula for "Aztecs," and won them both for the novel *Dreamsnake*. She must be doing something right! *Fireflood* has eleven entries (sadly without an introduction) that amply display her award-winning talents. These are powerful stories with real impact, not just entertaining ones. They show that Vonda McIntyre has earned her track record.

The diversity of these eleven stories shows what a tremendous imagination this author has. Her alien worlds are brilliant and colorful, not abstract like a painting but photographically clear and sharp. She is able to place herself into the minds, into the very reality of her alien beings. However, one disturbing point is that her every main character is a tragic martyr-figure, filled with a terrible loneliness—and that is depressing after eleven in a row. Despite the powerful plots and unique premises, some of the themes are also repetitive. "Be yourself", "Save the environment", "Question authority"—these are some of the banners she carries.

Two of the best stories here are the title novelette and "Of Mist, and Grass, and Sand." "Fireflood" has an original concept—people have been bred into bizarre beings able to survive on alien worlds, but they never can get off Earth to realize what they were born to be, thanks to a dead space exploration program. This was captivating rather than stereotypical despite its preachy overtones. "Of Mist, and Grass, and Sand" (which eventually became *Dreamsnake*) is about a healer who uses deadly snakes to do her work, and how the superstitious fear of the people she helps works against her. It was a good, solid effort, and made very enjoyable reading. Oddly enough, the famous "Aztecs," where space pilots must give up their human hearts to withstand the strain of interstellar flight, didn't seem anything special. I found it a little blah and too stretched out, but it does have some nice dialog. "'I've always wanted to meet an Aztec'" His voice trailed off at Laenea's frown. 'Just "pilot", please.' 'But Aztecs—' 'The Aztecs sacrificed their captives' hearts,' Laenea said. 'We don't feel we've made a sacrifice.'"

I don't believe I've ever read a collection where the quality of the stories was so consistently high. Vonda McIntyre has certainly convinced me of her talents, and one has to read only a few of them to see why.

Robert Silverberg's *Lord Valentine's Castle* (1981): Although it has a rather predictable plot, this novel will not waste your time. It is mammoth, both in the amount of acclaim it has received and in the number of pages; I should class it as a book to be reading, rather than to be finished with.

Valentine has lost his past, and aimlessly wanders about on the giant fantasy world of Majipoor. He is "one who understood without being told what was

right and what was wrong, one who was of even and balanced and sunny temperament, so that everyone loved him and respected him." He joins a group of jugglers and begins to travel with them, and through dreams discovers that he has been treacherously cast down from a high place—a very high place indeed. And he sets out on an epic journey to regain his throne.

The world of Majipoor has its own private atmosphere, culture and most singular flavor. It has a motley, distinctive feeling—a little medieval, a little futuristic, with a bit of *Star Wars* and Yellowstone National Park thrown in for good measure. However, some of its physical reality and environment do not mesh with scientific facts. Majipoor is supposed to be many times larger than the Earth—but if the surface area of a planet is increased by, say, four times, its mass and consequently its gravity increases eightfold. Silverberg has humans and delicate flowers and tentacled things pattering about, feeling no ill effects. If you can believe that, you're suspending disbelief a little too much.

Beyond that, the story has remarkably few serious faults. True, the peripheral characters drop dead like the poor security guards in *Star Trek*, while the handful of main characters survive incredible peril. And true, the plot is predictable, with none too subtle foreshadowing: sinister characters "seem to have a dark aura" about them. The dream scenes are also lengthy enough to put a reader to sleep along with the characters. But what bothers me most is that one of the main characters, blue-skinned Khun of Kianimot, seems to be here for no particular reason; he simply tags along in the background and frustratingly does absolutely nothing significant throughout the whole story.

But this is clutching at straws. Judged in totality, *Lord Valentine's Castle* is in the top ten of the last hundred books I've read. It is a marvellous book filled with marvels, a wonderful book filled with wonders. It even lives up to its advance billing, and you can't ask more than that!

Joan D. Vinge's *The Snow Queen* (1981): How can anyone possibly give an objective review to a book which hits you with pages of spectacular praise before you even get to chapter one? Or to an auburn-haired, almost-shy author with a smile that would turn a saber-toothed tiger into a purring kitten? Joan Vinge is proud of her achievement; one could tell even before *The Snow Queen* was published, and now that I've read it I can understand how everyone felt it would surely become a classic, and compared it to *Dune*, *The Lord of the Rings* and the *Foundation* trilogy—some impressive associates. Vinge has already won a Hugo in 1978 for her novelette "Eyes of Amber," and has written other novels, among them *The Outcasts of Heaven Belt* and *Fireship*.

The plot here is so complicated it couldn't be summarized in less than three pages. It has a cast of characters to rival a Cecil B. DeMille epic. At times the story was so massive I had to pause to assimilate what I'd read. But the worlds in *The Snow Queen* are clear and sparkling, with beautiful landscapes and memorable descriptions. A waterfall is "flung over a precipice, battered by rocks, a silvered sacrifice falling eternally to its death." A primitive native girl tries to explain her first experience with zero gravity by saying, "The room is full of the Sea, that's why we're floating. . . . it's a miracle." Vinge's concept of her worlds is real and complete in all their depths and intricacies; through many loosely connected happenings she transfers her feeling to the reader.

She has been clearly influenced by the fairy tales of Hans Christian Anderson. This was first evident in her fine short story "Tin Soldier," and now again in *The Snow Queen*, although I didn't realize how much until I was struck by the line "She was to stay Queen, and keep Winter here forever!" Other influences are evident, too—the Water of Life, which is the drug all rich and powerful people seek, is strongly reminiscent of *Dune's* *melange*; and the slaughter of the mers derives from "Save the whales." Doubtless the author was attracted to

Anderson's "Snow Queen" because it is a fairy tale with a strong female character, who rescues the prince from an evil queen. But at times Vinge lays the feminism on a bit too thick, telling of worlds where women are enslaved, made to wear veils and not allowed to do as they want to. We have garbage lines like "Since when did a woman need a brain, anyhow?", or "You see the trouble women cause when they take too much freedom on themselves." We're also asked to believe that a woman character is the only female police commander ever in the whole galaxy. But since women are comparably more important than that now, what has happened in the far future to oppress them again?

Much more effectively underlining the feminist message is Vinge's giving every strong, intelligent heroine a cloddish male sidekick—Jerusha has the arrogant BZ; Moon has the hotheaded, naive Sparks; Arienrhod the sadistic Herne; and Tor first the monotonous Pollux, then the water-spined Oyarzabel. But I sometimes wished Vinge would cut the politics and get on with the story.

Yet the story does move on, through a labyrinth of subplots and coincidences, leaving me in respectful awe that the author could grasp (let alone invent) its totality. *The Snow Queen* is indeed destined for classic status; put it on your must-read list.

Karl Hansen's *War Games* (1981): "Winning isn't everything, it's the *only* thing!" That quote originally referred to football, but it certainly also applies to this book, where a great deal more than a sports championship is at stake—namely the lives of all soldiers in a vicious conflict of the future. This is given a biting and sharply defined portrayal without any deep moralizing. The story is exciting, and sometimes I became so absorbed in it I forgot to take notes.

War Games is divided into sections with titles like "Hide and Seek", "Show and Tell" and "Mumblety Peg", but there is no child's play here. The main character, Marc Detrs, is the tough, arrogant, selfish son of nobility on Earth, who comes upon the knowledge of where he can find a powerful crystal, the time-stone, which would allow him to manipulate fate, change his destiny, and become emperor of the solar system. To find the timestone he has to get to Titan, where a war is raging—so he enlists in the army, becomes a combat-hybrid soldier (a genetically built, cyborg-like warrior) and is off to Titan. Only the war stands in his way.

After only a few brief introductory pages the story takes off, and there is no stopping its brisk pace. We career through wild, breathtaking scenarios, violent action of heart-stopping impact, bizarre landscapes as real as they are memorable. Hansen's alien worlds are absolutely fantastic—and absolutely believable.

A quotation characterizes the main character perfectly: "Lance Corporal Detrs, at your service. Pride of the First Ghost Cavalry. Veteran combat hybrid *par excellence*. Member in good standing of the Legion of Lost Souls. Mercenary killer of elves." The narrative is written in terse, stark prose which is very effective. However at times Hansen slips in scientific explanations of his future phenomena in words that are just too technical for his characters to use. He also seems to have little faith in his story line, since he regularly inserts explicit sex scenes, presumably to keep the reader alert. They are repetitious and by the end of the book become more than a little tiresome; the plot would be undisturbed if as many as half of them were cut.

But overall the book has a freshness and zeal that we don't see often enough. Play these war games in your head, and hope to God you'll never have to play them in real life.

—oOo—

BACK ISSUES: #26, 29, 30, 31 and 32 are obtainable at the current price from either your local dealer or the publisher.

A Planet Like a High Place in Church

a right [their Law lays stress on this]
is left for any spirit above a certain
[untranslatable] wisdom rank
to intervene in crisis

compelling his survivors
to retrace the proper track
in the dust of the feast hall
a knife has lain a thousand years

never by Law pick up
a dropped blade or the
ghost buried in the iron
will be compelled to punish

make a mistake so elementary
as not to throw away
the lees of your drink
over your shoulder

depriving the unseen watchers
gone before of their share
in your enjoyment
you will lose your life unless

you pay for the whole caparison
of fresh celebrations—
every detail the same again
guests musicians food the lot—

the first time has been spoiled
as if by mould and must be made
as if it has not ever been:
in this place (the Law defines it)

the more there are the fewer there are:
in this place under a spilt milk heaven
nearer the Core with every year
the conclusion is inescapable as summer

always the dead must outnumber
the living

how perfect for our expedition
they think us ancestors returning

reborn to claim again their kingdom

we who have entered the realm of the Law
are therefore of course beyond it

nevertheless forever as per this briefing
be careful, watch your backs

Steve Sneyd

Shasta Publishers

Lloyd A. Eshbach

(Editor's note: This article abridges a chapter taken from the author's forthcoming book *Over My Shoulder*, a collection of reminiscences about the various fantasy publishing enterprises which followed World War II, and is printed here with his kind permission.)

It can be said with reasonable accuracy that Shasta Publishers had two beginnings, the first involving *The Checklist of Fantastic Literature* and the second a venture into science-fiction book publishing. Despite the fact that both *The Checklist* and *Who Goes There?* by John W. Campbell, Jr. appeared in 1948, there was a span of eight years between the inception of *The Checklist* and the launching of Shasta.

Nowhere but in the unlikely world of science-fiction could the specific circumstances have arisen as they did to bring the two about. In 1939 Thaddeus Eugene Dikty and Frederick Benjamin Shroyer met through their hobby, the reading and collecting of fantastic fiction. Shroyer lived in Decatur, Indiana, about twenty miles from Dikty's home in Fort Wayne; and together they came to the conclusion that they would do better in their book-hunting if they had a list of what titles to look for. They began assembling such a list, then just for their own use.

Dikty had meanwhile been corresponding with Erle Melven Korshak; and when Korshak and Mark Reinsberg, fellow Chicagoans and close friends from boyhood, drove East to attend the New York Science Fiction Convention in July, 1939 they stopped en route at Fort Wayne to visit Dikty, their first face-to-face meeting. They met again later that summer when Korshak and Reinsberg hitch-hiked to Fort Wayne and stayed for several days at Dikty's house where Shroyer joined them.

It must be remembered that all of these science-fiction fans were young. Dikty, Korshak and Reinsberg were in their late teens; Shroyer, a bit older, was then in his early twenties.

In 1940 Korshak visited Shroyer at his home, Dikty joining them there, and it was on this occasion that the first specific plans were made for a definitive checklist of fantastic literature. Letters asking for help with the project were sent to fellow collectors and to readers' columns of such publications as *The Saturday Review of Literature*. Progress was slow, but gradually a shoebox began to fill up with file cards. These were in Dikty's possession. Memories vary: a

partial manuscript may have been prepared. Then came Pearl Harbor. Dikty was called up by his draft board and the shoebox put away. Four years later it was missing, a war casualty; exactly what happened to it remains a mystery. So compilation for the checklist had to start anew from scratch.

Before resuming a chronological narrative let me present a picture of those involved. Since I have secured the cooperation of Dikty, Korshak and Shroyer, my information should be accurate.

We'll start with Ted Dikty, with whom it all began. Born into a family of readers—an older brother, Bernard, started with *The Argosy* in 1910—it would have been unusual for him not to have become a reader of the pulps. From earliest childhood he recalls impressions of vast piles of magazines stacked in the attic as well as in a huge closet at the end of a hallway.

His addiction to adventure magazines began at the age of nine with the June, 1929 *Argosy*, and later that year he read the issue of *Amazing Stories Quarterly* containing Aladra Septama's "Dragons of Space." Like many another fantasy addict, he was hooked. In the depression years that followed money was tight, but somehow the brothers managed to raise enough between them to buy *Astounding*, *Wonder*, *Amazing* and *Weird Tales* as well as *Argosy* and *The Blue Book*.

Ted developed the collecting urge early, and just about all his spare funds went towards purchasing back issues of his favorite magazines. During his high school years (1934-38) he operated a trapline of used magazine sources—used furniture and clothing stores, Salvation Army and thrift shops, all checked on a regular basis. School was some twenty-five blocks from his home, and Ted walked; aside from the folly of spending money for carfare, there was no way to cover his route except on foot. Prices were within his range; most used pulps sold for a nickel each, three for a dime. He recalls buying nine issues of 1925-26 *Weird Tales* once for a quarter. His knowledge of science-fiction was by this time extensive, and although primarily interested in magazines, he also picked up occasional books in the field when he encountered them. As with the other principals in this record, the war interrupted these fannish endeavors.

Fred Shroyer was born in Decatur, Indiana in 1916. Although withdrawing from the enterprise early, he was nonetheless important in its initial phases, probably adding a bit of mature stability. From 1935 to 1937 he attended the University of Michigan. He served as Captain in the USAAF from 1942 to 1946. After his discharge he enrolled at the University of Southern California, from which he received the Ph. D. degree in 1955. From 1950 until his recent retirement he was a member of the faculty of the California State University at Los Angeles English Department. Concentration on the field of letters necessarily relegated his interest in science-fiction to a hobby status. However, in 1946 he was the leading force behind the formation of Carcosa House, which existed just long enough to publish one book, *Edison's Conquest of Mars* by Garrett P. Serviss.

An illustration of the collector's mania came out of Shroyer's wartime stint. As aide-de-camp to a commanding general in the Pacific, he had occasion to be in Shanghai following withdrawal of the Japanese occupation forces. Many English language bookshops in the International Settlement had been closed and boarded up at the war's beginning. Fred "raided" them after they reopened, garnering large quantities of prewar titles. With his connections and official position, he was able to fill the tail of a B29 superfortress with his literary loot and have it transported to Saipan and eventually to his home.

Shroyer's contributions to the beginnings of Shasta Publishers and *The Checklist* were an enthusiastic support and his wide knowledge of fantasy books. Indeed, he may well have launched the postwar work by making available the 2000-card index-file of his own library. Out of recognition for his great contribution the book itself was dedicated to him.

Erle Melvin Korshak was born in Chicago in 1923. Because he used his first name for fannish purposes and "Mel" professionally, there existed for a time a mistaken belief that there were two Korshaks, possibly brothers. He began reading science-fiction in 1934, regularly getting issues of *Astounding Stories* and *Wonder Stories* from an older cousin. He saved and added to them, and by the late 1930's had amassed an extensive collection.

In 1938 he began a used magazine mail-order business to help support his collecting, and by the time he visited New York for the "Nycon" had already issued several catalogs. He took part in the Chicago convention in 1940, and completed a year of college at the University of Illinois before entering the army in 1942. His collection was safely stored away during the war years, so when he got out of the service in 1946 he was ready to resume business as usual.

Dikty joined him in Chicago at that time, bringing his own extensive collection. The equal partnership they formed was called Melvin Korshak, Bookseller, and it started to issue some of the most lavish, illustrated catalogs the field had ever seen. It was against this background in late 1946 and early 1947 that the two determined to publish *The Checklist* as an essential reference tool for their own bookselling activities.

Meanwhile Mark Reinsberg had begun college at the University of Chicago in early 1946, majoring in English. Korshak followed in the Fall, his field sociology and anthropology. And in the Social Sciences Department there he met the final individual of our story. This was Everett Bleiler, who actually became the editor of *The Checklist of Fantastic Literature*.

Everett Franklin Bleiler was born in 1920 into a New England family owning farmland in an outlying area of Boston which, after the war, was in danger of being overrun by the expanding city. He himself was the product of an exceptional education. He was a graduate of Boston Latin School and Harvard College, and had come to the University of Chicago for an advanced degree. His specialties were anthropology and linguistics. Besides his mastery of ancient and modern European languages he was also fluent in Japanese; he had served as a translator of captured Japanese military documents during the war. More unusual than the foregoing was his mastery of a number of primitive languages spoken only by aboriginal peoples. While at Harvard he had written a senior honors thesis on the language of a remote Indian tribe of Argentina.

Prior to this Bleiler had no special expertise in the field of fantastic fiction except some knowledge of the Gothic novel and the areas of witchcraft and demonology. Unlike the others, he had never been a fan. He was, however, a rapid and omniverous reader, and this talent was to prove an enormous asset. He also had the organizing ability that was needed. He offered his help and very soon quietly and efficiently took over the project and carried it to completion. He had added the final ingredient: a mastery of general reference techniques.

Before continuing the Shasta story I must add a few words about Mark Reinsberg and his role in this history. He was more than a fan. He wrote some science-fiction and continuity for science-fiction comic books; he is a poet, critic and book reviewer; and later became an English teacher at the university level. His name is rarely associated with Shasta, though it was anticipated from the beginning that he would be a third partner along with Korshak and Dikty. He dropped out at the last minute, however, opting instead for an academic career. But he continued to make numerous contributions, including help with designing, writing jacket copy and the like. In fact, it was Reinsberg who suggested the name Shasta Publishers.

With editorial work on *The Checklist* completed, production became the next concern. Korshak gave the job to a neighborhood printer, the bulk of whose work consisted of handbills for local merchants. The complexity of the composition and page makeup of the book, with numerous corrections, was such that Bleiler

finally had to go into the composing room and supervise the work himself. The large press in the shop was so ancient that it still used gas flames to dry the ink as the sheets came through, and during the printing Bleiler and Dikty stood guard on opposite sides of the conveyor which passed the sheets over the jets. It took quick eyes and fast fingers to jerk out sheets that caught fire. Despite a print order for 2000 copies, only 1933 complete sets of pages survived for binding.

Of interest to those who want every detail, there was one actual printing of *The Checklist*, but after half of it was run a line was added on the back of the title-page: "Second printing: February, 1948". The tyro publishers wanted to see how the first thousand copies sold before binding the remainder; It cost 30¢ a copy to bind, and they didn't wish to invest more until they saw how the book would be received. Actually they had a small tiger by the tail. Within a few weeks the first binding was almost depleted, and the book was out of print by late 1949 or early 1950.

Since the book sold for six dollars and most copies were purchased without discount, it was probably the most profitable one ever issued by any of the specialist publishers. According to Korshak, they cleared over four dollars per copy—a total of about \$8000. They owned all rights and there were no royalties to pay. It not only literally put Shasta Publishers in business but financed them more adequately than any of their competitors.

A second reference work was planned to follow the first—*The Guide to Imaginative Literature*, also edited by Bleiler. With this book, the Shasta staff reasoned, librarians could build a first-rate fantasy section in their libraries. Bleiler completed the manuscript before going to Europe on a Fulbright scholarship, but the book had not been published when Shasta went the way of most fantasy specialist houses.

Although their original plans had centered on reference books, it is evident that a change of direction occurred even before *The Checklist* was released. Later in 1948 Shasta issued Campbell's *Who Goes There?*, and three months later *Slaves of Sleep* by L. Ron Hubbard. Since time was required to contact writers, produce art work, and print and bind these books, plans must obviously have been underway while *The Checklist* was in production.

From the very beginning Shasta books were thoroughly professional productions, equal to the best of the specialist publishers—or the trade houses for that matter. This is rather surprising considering conditions under which *The Checklist* was printed, and the fact that type for *Space on My Hands* by Frederic Brown was set by pupils of the Chicago Linotype School as part of their on-the-job training. The price seemed low—but Dikty, even to this day, cannot forget the appalling proofreading job.

During Korshak's mail-order book-selling period the office was Korshak's bedroom; books were stored and wrapped in the basement of his aunt's dress shop, a block away. Once *The Checklist* was under way and other titles scheduled, it became necessary to locate an office and a warehouse. They encountered no difficulty, leasing an English basement room of ample size in a nearby apartment building. This was the address used by Shasta for most of its existence—5525 Blackstone, Chicago 37, Illinois.

More space was needed, for Shasta was growing. The print order for *The Checklist* had been 2000 copies. For *Who Goes There?* it was 3000 and for *Slaves of Sleep* 3500. The next two titles were reported to be 4000, and 4000–5000 was anticipated for Heinleins's "Future History" series which was to follow.

I shall avoid posing as a critic in these reminiscences. It would be scarcely appropriate for me to comment on the relative merits of one publisher's books as compared to another, since I myself was involved in Fantasy Press. However, it doesn't seem out of line to express opinions about occasional titles. So let me say that some of Shasta's nineteen were books of major importance.

During this period I became well acquainted with both Korshak and Dikty. Twice Korshak paid me unexpected visits, once while I lived in Reading and a second time during my years near Adamstown. We were competitors—but friends. In turn, when I lived in Chicago in the early 1960's, I was invited to join him and his wife for dinner at their apartment. We spent a most enjoyable evening reliving experiences of the past decade. By chance I also met Mel again on a street-corner a number of months later and we exchanged news. I haven't seen him since.

It must have been late in 1948 that Bleiler and Dikty put together a tentative anthology of what they considered the year's best science-fiction stories. It was to be the first of an annual series, patterned after the Martha Foley and O. Henry Award volumes. However, with a number of books in press, Shasta needed cash. Korshak came up with a plan: instead of issuing it themselves, they'd have a trade publisher do it. Since the project was owned by Bleiler, Dikty and Korshak in equal parts, this would mean a personal return for Bleiler and an increased cash flow for Shasta, since their share would be ploughed back into the business. Korshak put the idea in the hands of Abe Klein, a representative then selling the lines of members of the Associated Fantasy Publishers, who then sold it to Frederick Fell, one of the smaller New York trade publishers.

Fell liked the idea and signed it up, presumably thinking the project further along than it actually was. Being new to the anthology business, Bleiler and Dikty hurriedly had a manuscript typed from tear-sheets of the stories while they negotiated authors' permissions. As Dikty recalls it, the job was done in one week; Korshak adds that he wrote the introduction overnight. The anthology was a success, and Fell published seven more in the series. In these subsequent volumes tear-sheets themselves were used instead of typed manuscripts.

Korshak's friendship with John Farrar was a factor in the sale of *Imagination Unlimited*, another anthology from the same triumvirate, published by Farrar, Straus & Young in 1952. The 1952 and 1953 *Best Science Fiction Stories* were edited by Bleiler and Dikty working together, as was the companion series that began in 1952, *The Year's Best Science Fiction Novels*. Dikty assumed sole editorship with the 1954 volume when Bleiler went to Europe.

We now come to a phase of the Shasta story which is painful to all concerned. Korshak conceived another excellent idea—a prize contest for science-fiction novels, the winner to be published first by Shasta, and after a suitable time-lapse by a major paperback house. He sold the idea to Pocket Books, which was to advance a certain sum to the winner with Shasta paying a lesser amount. Not only would this give both houses a first-class, original science-fiction novel to publish, but would probably make available for regular contract publishing a number of original non-prize-winning works.

The project was given extensive publicity and entries came in. *I Owe for the Flesh*, submitted by Philip José Farmer, was the agreed-on winner. This 150,000-word novel had been written in one month to meet the contest deadline. Of this transaction, Farmer says in his introduction to *Riverworld and Other Stories*: "Because of circumstances I won't go into here, it was never published and I got only a fraction of the money due me."

Extensively rewritten, the novel was later printed serially as three novelettes, and still later it became the Hugo Award novel *To Your Scattered Bodies Go* and its sequels (the "Riverworld" series).

Unfortunately, Farmer's statement is correct. The prize-winner was never published, and although Pocket Books paid its portion of prize-money to Shasta, Farmer received only part of the moneys due him. Farmer was understandably bitter about the matter, for what was to have been his big break actually set back his career for a number of years, not to mention involving him in other, related difficulties. I have received both Farmer's and Korshak's versions of this unfortunate affair; as might be expected, they differ. After carefully weighing the vari-

ous ramifications and details I have decided against placing myself in that unenviable position known as the middle. I do sincerely sympathize with those involved, however; I have had my own share of difficulties, and I believe all others in this pioneering field of fan publishing have also.

Another factor was meanwhile complicating the picture. This was *Beauty Book* by the Westmores, Hollywood's Royal Family of Makeup. It was the joint work of Perc, Wally, Bud, Frank (all brothers) and Mont (a nephew), and without question in its area had the potential to be a world-beater. It was to be a full-color production, the last word about feminine beauty enhancement. It represented a complete departure from Shasta's publications, and was to be the answer to any further financial difficulties Shasta might have. It was to be promoted by the most famous of the authors, Perc Westmore, demonstrating his skills in department stores from coast to coast. In short, Shasta would have a best-seller!

Shasta's total concentration on the project is verified by a letter I received from Ted Dikty. Under the date of December 13, 1954 he wrote in part:

We've been working harder than ever, what with our WESTMORE BEAUTY BOOK due out this coming Spring. Things are coming along very well, but there's little time to relax for even a bit.

But things weren't coming along very well. The book was delayed. There were cost overruns. Dealers who had ordered in advance became impatient, and printers were crying for payment. Finally, when the book was completed, no funds were available for shipping. These funds were borrowed from a most unlikely source, Sam Moskowitz, who by his own admission never loaned money to anyone. (He finally received payment by accepting Shasta books of comparable value.)

All this difficulty is understandable when one realizes that a total of \$60,000 went into the book's preparation and production. Despite everything *Beauty Book* finally appeared—under the logo of Melvin Korshak: Publishers. This was a new corporation of which Korshak was president and Dikty vice-president.

And they almost pulled it off!

There was a 15,000-copy first printing, and at that point the advance sales looked so encouraging that 10,000 more were printed while the first printing was still in the bindery. An ambitious and well planned sales campaign was set in motion, with Perc Westmore's personal appearances backed by multiple newspaper, radio and TV interviews; the latter included Westmore on Steve Allen's "Tonight" show and Art Linkletter's "Houseparty," coast-to-coast.

Success seemed certain—until Westmore collapsed from exhaustion while on his first tour. Overweight, and (unknown to Korshak and Dikty) with a long coronary history, he simply could not stand the rigor and pressure.

25,000 copies of *Beauty Book* were sold, but unfortunately they needed a sale of nearly twice that to break even. So with the collapse of Westmore there was another collapse—that of Shasta and Melvin Korshak: Publishers.

But their venture was a worthy effort, deserving a better fate. At the time I recall thinking, "Why in the world are they wasting time and money on a book like that?" (I was still a fan, and anything outside fantasy and science-fiction wasn't worth a thought!) This despite Walter Bradbury's question, "If your science-fiction stops selling, what do you do?"

I realize now that Mel and Ted were trying to do what none of the rest of us had—break out into the big time of trade book publishing. Everything considered, they didn't do badly for a couple of young amateurs. What isn't generally known is that *Beauty Book* was not to have been the only string in their bow. In that same period of time they had built a projected trade list from scratch, and had about a dozen books under contract with advances paid. But it was not to be. So much had been ventured on the Westmore book that when it failed to turn a profit everything went down the tube.

In my first draft of this brief history of Shasta Publishers I used as a climax a tragic story I had heard about their remaining stock of books being stacked by the landlord on the sidewalk in front of their Blackstone Avenue address, with rain descending and no one around to claim them—a very sad ending to a noble effort.

Fortunately this tale is only partly true. Rent had not indeed been paid on what then amounted to storage space, the long-suffering landlord had got an eviction order, and a sheriff had duly arrived and moved whatever was left out onto the sidewalk. But by sheer chance this was observed by an acquaintance of the Korshaks, and in minutes someone was standing guard until Korshak was reached. Eventually everything was picked up by a nearby storage company. Carefully boxed, the books and art work are still preserved and await Korshak's disposition.

It should be added that after the passing of decades Dikty ventured into publishing again in partnership with Darrell C. Richardson as FAX Collector's Editions; but since there is no connection between FAX and Shasta I shall say no more about that here. In 1955 Everett Bleiler joined Dover Publications and for years was that firm's very capable guiding light. He is now producing scholarly reference books under the imprint of Firebell Books.

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"Realizing the Impossible Dream"—continued from page 25

maintained his status by controlling an important market for mystery story reprint rights, and when he began to buy rights to science-fiction novels with a detective angle like Asimov's *Pebble in the Sky* and Hal Clement's *Needle* this status strengthened further.

Santesson was first introduced to the field at the New York Science Fiction Conference of July 1-3, 1950. When the formal session ended on the second day of the convention, Santesson and Orrin Keepnews of Simon & Schuster engaged in a fiery platform debate on science-fiction hardcover book publishing. This gave him an unjustified reputation for arrogance which was not helped by a rather aloof European manner. Actually Santesson was the kindest of individuals, one of those rare people who turn benevolent in any position of power and influence; his life was filled with countless examples of giving both personal and financial aid to causes he could often ill afford.

Santesson lost his position at Unicorn when the club was discontinued in 1952. He had been unable to secure any permanent job up to the time I invited him to speak and was in desperate financial straits. He lectured on the subject of combining the detective and science-fiction story. He seemed fascinated by the course, and would pop up at sessions thereafter at any pretext, usually attaching himself to whomever we had speaking.

While teaching this course can be seen to involve considerable personal effort on my part, I have so far said little about its financial aspects. Because registration was always low, it never earned more than the minimum. The latter, after deducting taxes, proved to be \$90 for the two of us per term. And split two ways that came nearly to the cost of my weekly restaurant meals I ate after work. If one added the cost of unrecompensed postage, telephone calls, carfare, and so on, it obviously wasn't even a break-even proposition. Further, Frazier's incessant demands were a trial that tested my patience.

Meanwhile at *Frosted Food Field* my achievements were being noticed in the industry. Within the space of a year I had negotiated extensive additional advertising sections which brought in very substantial revenue. The shrewd publisher of our competition, E. W. Williams, noted this, and when his own managing

editor, a woman, married and left for a life of domestic bliss, he telephoned me to drop in and see him. His magazine was literally four times the size of the one on which I was working, publishing single issues that ran over 500 pages.

It was a strange interview. He carefully examined copies of the books and magazines I had edited and a portfolio of other material with his wife Doris squealing with glee, for she was a lifelong science-fiction reader and liked the idea of a kindred soul on the staff. Strange or not, my credentials must have satisfied Williams, for he offered me an editorial position on the spot. I accepted, and promptly wrote Simon Lissim:

I am scheduled to teach with Mr. Robert Frazier class #582, scheduled to meet for the first time on Thursday, September 22, 1955.

I recently have changed positions and as a result of some special features of my new editorial position find that my hours might sometimes prove unreliable. Therefore I would like to withdraw from the class, for this term at least, until I have been with my new position long enough to continue with night classes.

If Mr. Frazier is willing to carry on alone he is welcome to my part of the fee, and this is your authorization to pay it to him. . .

By this time Frazier had a total of three night classes—one on radio script writing, one called "Publishing Procedures and Techniques of Book Promotion," and of course the one on science-fiction. He proved resourceful, bringing in Santesson to teach the science-fiction course, managing never to list Santesson's name in its connection. Santesson was then still unemployed; he liked teaching, and I hope he received at least the small stipend I had been paid.

With the October, 1955 issue Santesson also took over from Frazier the book review column in *Fantastic Universe*. I was involved in no more City College classes, nor did I attend any as an observer, but believe the science-fiction course was continued for the Spring and Fall terms of 1956 since it is listed in the catalogs. By the end of 1956 Frazier no longer had the additional two courses. He now listed among his credits "Book Review Editor, *Fantastic Universe*."

Leo Margulies had a financial arrangement with Larry Herbert on *Fantastic Universe* and its companion *The Saint's Detective Magazine*. This agreement was terminated with the September, 1956 issue of *Fantastic Universe* and the August, 1956 issue of *Saint's*. Margulies departed, and Frank Belknap Long, who had been working for him on a freelance basis, left with him. Now Santesson had been writing a review department in *The Saint's* titled "What's New in Crime?" since its February, 1956 number. With his considerable experience in detective and mystery stories he was in a position to handle both publications. A period of sustained unemployment now into its fourth year had left him impoverished, in debt, and willing to accept the editorships at what was almost certainly a very modest salary.

In a variety of ways I was able to assist him. I alerted him to the existence of good stories by big names that had not been published, helped arrange for Virgil Finlay to do covers for his magazine, and contributed a brief story myself. I advised him frequently in the technical aspects of editing and printing, where I was well versed, since Santesson had never actually edited a magazine before, and might jeopardize his job if he betrayed obvious inadequacies. After a shaky start he solidified his position, and through a change of owners and occasional hiatuses edited *The Saint Magazine* (its final title) until its 1967 demise.

Dorothy Edgerly signed up again for the science-fiction course in the Fall of 1956, and brought to Santesson the incomplete story she had started under me a year earlier. He guided her in finishing it, and bought it for *Fantastic Universe*, where it appeared in February, 1957 as "The Farmer in the Dell."

I have not ascertained the official end of the world's first college-level science-fiction course. I suspect it terminated in the Spring of 1957, be-

cause with Santesson running two monthly magazines by himself he would have had little time to handle the course for Frazier. I suspect, too, that Frazier would not have tried to perpetuate it on his own. When I departed from the scene Frazier still had in his possession a variety of useful class materials, including the original manuscripts for "Death of a Sensitive" and "The Triggered Dimension." He "needed" them for his "program", he said—and I never got them back. Subsequently I lost track of his whereabouts. For a few years I occasionally encountered a former student and exchanged pleasantries, but that has not happened since 1960.

College and university lectures on science-fiction have continued in a virtually unbroken chain since that first one almost three decades ago, notably at the University of Chicago (1957), Princeton University (1958 and 1959), Beloit College (1960 and 1961) and Colgate University (1962);²¹ and this list may not be complete. Less than careful historians, in fact, have erroneously referred to the Colgate course, which was taught by Mark Hillegas, as the first of its kind,²² but since 1953 academic interest in the field has actually been continuous.

It is an oversight verging on tragedy that the lectures delivered at City College in 1953-1955 were not recorded, transcribed and published. They were of the highest quality and practical value, given by top people in the field at their best, often breaking new ground with their enthusiasm at its height. This series of recollections will have to serve in their place as the best existing record of how the course came into being and fared, who the participants were, what problems were faced and how they were resolved. I have tried as well to describe candidly the behavior, attitudes and motives of the cardinal personalities who were involved, and to interface all these things with science-fiction as the field existed in those years.

By the standards of academe, this first course in science-fiction was an outstanding success. In terms of economics it was as clearly humiliating. To paraphrase Winston Churchill, never in the course of higher education was so much given to so few for so little.²³

NOTES

(1) Gardner (1908-1953) had been active in the field since the early 1930's; for further biographical information see "Thomas S. Gardner Dead at 44" by Sam Moskowitz, *Fantasy Times* nos. 409/410 (Dec., 1963), pp. 13-15.

(2) For details see "1952 in Science Fiction" by Thos. S. Gardner, *ibid.* no. 169 (Jan. 1, 1953), pp. 3-5, 9.

(3) This was a smooth-paper magazine designed to rise above the flood of digest-sized magazines then deluging the newsstands. It actually was an alternative to a magazine Gernsback planned to call *Popular Atomies* but abandoned when market research showed its popular appeal would be low and sources of material limited.

(4) *Who's Who in New York*, 12th edition (1952).

(5) "Taboos" by William Byron Mowry, *Different* vol. IV, no. 3 (Nov., 1974), pp. 2-7.

(6) The reference is to Stephen Vincent Benét's short fantasy, "Johnny Pye and the Fool-Killer," *The Saturday Evening Post* vol. 210 (Sep. 18, 1937), pp. 10ff.

(7) As reported in *Different* vol. IV, no. 1 (Nov., 1972), pp. 1-6.

(8) "This Is ESFA" by Sam Moskowitz, *Science Fiction Adventures* vol. 1, no. 6 (Nov., 1972), pp. 74-81.

(9) He edited *Amazing Stories* and *Fantastic Science Fiction* under the pen name of Joseph Ross from 1965 to 1967.

(10) He proved unexpectedly popular with readers, and for several years the author's identity was one of the field's unsolved mysteries.

(11) Part of our correspondence appeared as "Background for a Story", *Different* vol. 3, no. 1, pp. 1-9.

(12) Connoisseurs should note its similarity in theme to Lem's *Solaris*, which it

predates by eight years.

(13) I can add a touch of irony to this situation. One of the entries in the anthology *Editor's Choice in Science Fiction* (1954) was "Death of a Sensitive." Bates would not permit it to be published until he went through it, making changes from end to end. And these were not restorations, but simply revisions! I let Otto V. St. Whitelock, the editor at McBride, conduct all negotiations with Bates, and I happen to know he did not enjoy them.

(14) The reason for Smith's enthusiasm was the success the company had previously enjoyed for blow-ups of astronomical art from *Science-Fiction Plus* that had been displayed during the summer of 1953 at New York City's Hayden Planetarium. It was the first time the planetarium had requested (or even permitted) the showing of illustrations from a science-fiction magazine.

(15) This appeared in the Spring, 1954 issue of *Thrilling Wonder Stories*, p. 130.

(16) E. g., "The Needle of Space," *The Blue Book*, July, 1950, pp. 76-83.

(17) This appeared in the March, 1954 issue of *Astounding Science-Fiction*.

(18) *Science Fiction Digest* aimed to fill the role in science-fiction that *Reader's Digest* did in general non-fiction. Each number ran twenty or more stories taken not only from magazines catering to the field itself, but from mainstream ones that printed science-fiction occasionally. These stories were not condensed, but printed uncut. *Science Fiction Digest* was a good magazine, but there were too many competing newsstand titles, and it lasted but two issues.

(19) At the time Frazier joined, the committee consisted of Forrest J. Ackerman, Anthony Boucher, Fred C. Brown, John Carnell, Groff Conklin, Basil Davenport, August Derleth, Georges Gallet, Hugo Gernsback, Igor Maslowski, J. Francis McComas, P. Schuyler Miller and Donald Wollheim.

(20) The speakers included Isaac Asimov, James Blish, Leigh Brackett, Lin Carter, Lester Del Rey, Lloyd A. Eshbach, Thomas S. Gardner, Harry Harrison, Edmond Hamilton, Cyril Kornbluth, Murray Leinster, Leo Margulies, Thomas Calvert McClary, Alan E. Nourse, William M. Sloane (his only appearance at any science-fiction gathering) and William Tenn.

(21) A more detailed account of these early examples is given by A. L. Searles in "Books on Science-Fiction, 1937-1973: a Critical Evaluation," *Essays in Arts and Sciences*, vol. IX, no. 2 (August, 1980), pp. 163 *et passim*.

(22) For example: Jack Williamson in his *Science Fiction Comes to College* (1971), p. 1, Neil Barron in *Anatomy of Wonder* (1976), p. xvi, and Peter Nicholls's *The Science Fiction Encyclopedia* (1979), p. 524. The second edition of *Anatomy of Wonder* (1981), p. 575, fortunately corrects this error.

(23) I presented portions of this article, in abbreviated form, at the Mysticcon II, a science-fiction gathering held on July 2, 1982 at Roanoke, Va.

—oOo—

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT: The sonnets "Avenging Snow," "Inheritance" and "Lonely Field" appeared in the April, 1980 issue of *The Fonthill Dial*; they are copyright 1980 and are reprinted by permission of the author.

—oOo—

"Open House"—concluded from page 74

Finally, a correction of a correction. On page 250 of the last issue, with reference to the remarks on page 525 of Nicholls's book ("...from Delaney by Street and Smith."): It was Foley from whom Street and Smith bought the magazine! As far back as that Foley and Delaney may not even have met. This information is from a letter to Lovecraft from Wright, regretting rejection of "Through the Gates of the Silver Key," but suggesting magazines that might want the story.

'Plus Ultra'

An Unknown Science-Fiction Utopia

by A. LANGLEY SEARLES

Part IV

V

In the previous installments of this article I have described the first three parts of Edward Lucas White's gigantic, unpublished science-fiction novel of 50,000 A.D. Here I shall deal with the twenty chapters that comprise part four. These, written in 1929-1930, "portray the working of society at its acme of individual and collective felicity," "in which the driving force of all actions would be intelligent self-interest and their guiding force universal confidence in the competence and integrity of trained experts."

Chapter 23, "Water Control"
(written Oct. 21 - 25, 1929)

White visualizes all problems here soluble by careful, planned distribution of existing aquifers plus rainfall. Streams are diverted and/or divided and controlled by extensive damming. Wells provide both a supply and a means of storage. There is no mention of scarcity dictating conversion of seawater into fresh water. The future world's high esthetic considerations are shown by the fact that even arid regions have fountains and use water decoratively.

Chapter 24, "Water-borne Traffic"
(written Sep. 4, 1929 and Jan. 3-10, 1930)

Everything transportable by water is sent that way if possible. (In order of decreasing preference—based primarily on cost—the other methods are via rail, road and air.) Centuries of river-silting have moved many ports far upstream, but dredging and canalization have kept them operable. Second channels have been dug for both the Suez and the Panama Canals. The latter, now termed the Darien Canal, is described in some detail: the channels are 400 feet wide and 70 feet deep, are 1600 feet apart, and are paralleled by concrete roads and a two-track rail line.

Chapter 25, "Rail Traffic"
(written Jan. 13-24, 1930)

"The world government maintains and operates the great system of railways which radiates from Byzantium." Continental governments operate connecting lines to the main system. Tunnels through whole mountain chains are common. All are of one standard gauge except for local spurs through gorges and ravines. All grade crossings with roads have been eliminated.

Chapter 26, "Road Traffic"
(written Apr. 20-24, 1930)

Highway systems are maintained by various governments, much as now. The cost and upkeep are paid for out of general government expenses and by imposts on vehicles using the system. Imposts are based on the weight of the vehicle, and are such on commercial vehicles that freight and passenger rates are greater by road than by rail. Road widths vary according to terrain from narrow to four-lane. Cloverleaf intersections are the rule so as to minimize grade-crossings. Cities all have encircling belt parkways connecting to outgoing highways so that traffic need not go through the cities themselves. Definite limitations on vehicle size, weight and axle-load have long been in force, and license fees are high enough to discourage use of three-axled vehicles. Types of cars vary with climate and ownership, and those of one empire or nation are not allowed to cross the frontiers with others. Motorcycles may be used only by certain officials. In a few localities roads suitable for vehicles drawn by beasts of burden are maintained. Most shorelines are paralleled by foot and bicycle paths, as are scenic areas.

Chapter 27, "Air Traffic"
(written Apr. 24-25, 1930)

Both lighter- and heavier-than-air vehicles are in use. Collectively, all are termed "avions"; the former White calls "airships", "airfish" or "aerons", the latter the then-current term aeroplanes. "All air traffic is controlled by the world government and every apparatus capable of rising into the air and moving through it at will is either owned and operated by the world government or licensed by the world government either directly or through the government of some continent, empire or nation. This applies to motorless gliders even if used only for amusement or diversion." Airships can maneuver and travel under almost any atmospheric conditions. All avions are built either by the world government or under its supervision. Airship lines vary from world-girdling ones to shorter intercontinental and empire shuttle services. "In general, airships are expedient for long distances and aeroplanes for short distances, although aeroplanes make daily as a matter of course countless non-stop flights over distances which would have seemed startlingly long in the early days of aviation." "The chance of a person owning a private avion, yacht, railway car, etc., is based on the value of each individual to humankind and the contribution of each to the welfare of communities." "All traffic is rigidly regulated" and "safety devices infallibly and automatically signal central control stations if anything goes wrong." All passengers must sign and thumb-print records of their journeys; all vehicles are insured and bonded against damage to life and property. Although restrictive and detailed, traffic regulations are cheerfully complied with: "...very gradually it came to be perceived that the more complex human life became, the more populous the world and its cities became, the greater became the advantage of all unscrupulous, knavish rogues and rascals over all upright, honest, honorable, decent people. ... It is felt by all that the best way to abolish crime ... is rather than penalization a consistent effort to discourage ... by making [it]...as near-

ly impossible as may be, and by making escape from detection so unusual that the practical certainty of conviction and punishment may act as an effective deterrent."

Chapter 28, "Hostelries"
(written July 10-15, 1931)

Various types are described. Prices for accomodation are equated to the actual costs of construction and maintainance. Customs of reciprocal hospitality exist between urban and rural pueblos.

Chapter 29, "Time"
(written Aug. 23-25, 1930)

Units of short spans of time were considered too well established to be altered, except that hours are numbered from one to twenty-four and the week has been abolished. There are four world holidays a year (five in leap-years) and localities may add up to five more of their own choosing. The former include the first days of the four seasons.

Chapter 30, "Conformities and Uniformities"
(written Aug. 6-12, 1931)

When the world government was established it chose standards of weights and measures and prescribed universal use of scientific terms and constants (for example, the metric system and the Centigrade temperature scale). It was realized early that one common world language would be desirable. This was brought into being as follows: each nation, empire and continent first prescribed its own official language which had to be mastered as an employment qualification by a gradually increasing number of people. Over generations this gradually brought about the disuse of many tongues. Control of radio licensing and the languages used on broadcast programs aided change. Celibacy was likewise gradually discouraged and state ownership of most property came about.

Chapter 31, "Finance"
(written Sep. 2-9, 1930; "largely rewritten" July 2-4, 1931)

A monetary gold standard exists, though no coins contain gold, for it is 2000 times more valuable as in the year 1500. Coinage is based on the decimal system: there are five standard coins, each differing in color and size, and each worth ten times its predecessor. There are also three auxiliary coins worth half the second in the series and twice the second and third. Bills of virtually indestructable parchment are issued in denominations of five, ten, twenty, fifty, 100, 500 and 1000 times the value of the highest coin.

Credit is an established part of finance, and "currency is conceived of as a mechanism for measuring and transferring small quantities of credit . . . Banks are conceived of as institutions that deal in credit, that buy, lease, hold, rent and sell credit." They must be "entirely independant of government promptings of any sort." Bank checks are used far more than currency. Loans are granted mainly on the ability of the borrower to repay with interest, and secondarily on public welfare.

Chapter 32, "Utilization of Land"
(written June 17-18, 1930)

The land area of the globe is 58,000,000 square miles. Of this 40% is tillable or potentially productive, 30% is forested, 20% is grassland or pastureland, and 10% is waste—unusable mainly because of altitude or latitude. (Acclivity, because of terracing, is not usually a barrier to use.) Water control and irrigation have eliminated deserts.

Chapter 33, "Forests, Forestry and Forest Homes"
(written July 15-16, 1930)

Types of forests and dwellings of foresters are classified. Forestation is used not only as a source of wood, but to check erosion and provide shelter for fur-bearing animals. Conservation measures are exercised, with cutting and replanting carefully balanced. Wood is occasionally still used as fuel if waste is abundant and electricity and gas scarce or too costly.

Chapter 34, "Agriculture"
(written July 16-Aug. 3, 1930)

The vast majority of farm machinery is electrically powered. Most foods are the same as those grown in our time. The chief foods of livestock are alfalfa, soy beans and alsike [a type of European clover]. There is no mention of hydroponics. Most harmful rodents have been eliminated. A corpulent and sluggish variety called pit rats has been developed and are bred; these are used for meat and skins. A type of canine called meat-dog is used for the same purpose; these are silent, stocky, torpid creatures, almost undog-like.

Chapter 35, "Herders"
(written Aug. 3-6, 1930)

Herding is regarded as the best method for utilizing land unsuitable for forests or agriculture. There are improved breeds of herbivorous animals such as yaks, etc. Many species once near extinction have been fostered and are now protected, such as Galapagos tortoises, walruses and seals.

Chapter 36, "Breeders"
(written Aug. 5-8, 1930)

No new methods are described, but several new animals have been developed, as cited above.

Chapter 37, "Fisheries and Kelpers"
(written Aug. 6-15, 1930)

The World Fisheries Bureau controls licenses and catches. Seafood is very abundant, and streams are stocked so that fishing for sport is still also possible. Kelp is the generic term given any seaweed useful as food or fertilizer.

Chapter 38, "Mining and Quarrying"
(written Aug. 16-20, 1930)

All fossil fuels have been exhausted. Many elements are still abundant, but are hard to get at because most shallow mines have been depleted. Zinc, tin and copper are now semi-precious metals, valued a hundred times what they were formerly. Lead is somewhat dear. The cost of gold and silver has risen a thousand-fold, and metals of the platinum group even more so. In essence, mining now means reworking tailings from ancient mines or extracting low-grade ore from very deep mines—both difficult. It pays to work ores running an ounce per ton for iron, an ounce in ten tons for lead, one in a hundred tons for zinc, tin and copper, and one in a thousand for silver and gold. Mine shafts are so deep that a round trip down and up again takes six hours. Antarctica has proved a mineral treasure-trove.

The work of miners is strictly regulated, and considered too rigorous to be followed for a lifetime. Prospecting is greatly aided by the esoscope, invented about 2500 A.D. This device enables one to see inside solid objects. It is also used extensively by physicians and others. [Today's counterpart of this device is of course the CAT scanner.]

Chapter 39, "Industry"
(written Aug. 20-27, 1930)

Nothing that can be done mechanically is done by hand. All sources of power are under the control of the Ministry of Industry, whose chief task is the development and maintenance of power sources. The most important ones in 50,000 A.D. are sunlight and "the impetus of the revolution of the earth round the sun." There are nine other major sources; not necessarily in order, these are from radiation (other than sunlight), wind, flowing water, tides, surf, the momentum of the earth's axial spin, the earth's interior heat, combustion and the difference between the temperature of the oceans at their surfaces and at their depths. Collectively these furnish about sixteen times that formerly obtained from petroleum and coal when their use was at its peak. As there are nearly four times as many people as there were then, this means each person has fourfold more power.

Industrial power "has not abolished toil, drudgery, labor, work and exertion or even effort. But it has vastly diminished the necessity for them and lessened the frequency of any and all in the aggregate." There is no uniform legal time-limit for a work-day; the World Health Ministry controls this, and each occupation is considered individually. For example, daytime out-of-doors jobs involve 9-10 hours per day (according to class), and mine and cession work 1-3.

Chapter 40, "Food"
(written Aug. 27- Sep. 4, 1930)

"It is universally held that most human discontent originates from an unsatisfactory diet or from being unhappily mated...." Health authorities believe that "...overeating is best curbed by management rather than precepts... and ordinances." This is done by making a large variety of staple necessities cheap, and never forbidding delicacies and luxury foods, but making them expensive. The most important basic diets are based on wheat, corn and rice (polished rice is prohibited). Many fruits are staples. "All alcoholic beverages are classed with variety foods, and the supply of them is everywhere limited." Most luxury foods are of animal origin, and hence mankind is "predominately vegetarian." Most of the foods are well known now, though many used scantily today are seen extensively in the future. There is one new leaf beverage, discovered about 2100 A.D., which became popular. Freezing and drying are the commonest ways of preserving foods.

Chapter 41, "Clothing"
(written Sep. 5-7, 1930 and July 14-15, 1931)

Clothing is for protection from heat, cold, dampness, etc., and is important for "seemliness, dignity, adornment, but never for concealment...." Total nudity is regarded as natural, decent and proper. Prudery has vanished. This attitude was brought about to a large extent by the development and perfection of the hapantoscope, whose use was once restricted, which enables the viewer to see through objects in light or darkness. Cotton, rayon, wool, linen and silk (in that descending order) are the commonest fabrics in use.

Chapter 42, "Health"
(written July 15-20, 1931)

Mankind is very healthy. All bacteria, parasites and other harmful microorganisms have been eliminated. Knowledge of the nature and causation of cancer has lowered human incidence to one person in four million. Blood tests have reached the acme of diagnostic importance; they can forecast the onset of disease, puberty, glandular imbalance, etc. Growth and development can be controlled; few deaf, nearsighted, etc. people exist. Teeth remain sound to over the age of 120.

The normal span of human life is now 140, and people remain vigorous through 120. Fertility of women extends past their ninetieth year; that of men, past 130. Most deaths occur in the 140-150 decade. The longest life-span that has been recorded is 180 years. Defectives beyond cure are destroyed at birth—including Mongolian idiots, those with multiple appendages and imperfect median closures. Such cases, however, are comparatively rare.

Chapter 43, "Genealogy and Ancestors"
(written July 20-21, 1931)

Genealogy is regarded as very important, increasingly so in higher classes. Records are kept with scrupulous exactness and care. Kinships are highly revered.

Comments on fictional Utopias, fairly or not, usually compare what they predict with what has actually come to pass. Many of White's forecasts are so rational and sound that they already are here, just fifty years after he suggested them: beltways around cities, cloverleaf intersections, computer-like punch-cards, increased use of soybeans for foodstuffs, checks largely replacing currency for business transactions, informality in clothing and the general trend of Western society towards socialism. He has also foreseen as clearly problems we have not as yet solved, the most important of which is probably people committing crimes and being miles away a few hours later. His solution to this—stricter controls on the individual—doubtless would succeed, but regimentation is still a dirty word today even though an increasing world population has made a drift in that direction inevitable, and though in a number of countries it works (*viz.* Japan).

To some the almost offhand statement that the deserts of our planet have been eliminated may read like airy fantasy. I do not think it is; and I strongly suspect its genesis lies in White's thorough knowledge of ancient history. Not many people even now realize that the Sahara Desert, for example, exists more for the lack of will and manpower than because of its geography and natural climate. Northern Africa teemed with human, animal and plant life for thousands of years; it was the breadbasket of the Roman Empire, which made it a colony from about 40 A.D., built roads, dug wells, irrigated and kept the peace until the Vandal invasions. Only when European civilization went then into decline did the dry sands take over. What man could accomplish in one area, White plausibly reasoned, he could also in others.

Not surprisingly, he does show blind spots. The widespread use of synthetic fibers is not envisioned (which perhaps is pardonable), nor is use of seawater as a source of scarce materials (which probably is not, as its mineral-rich composition was known at the time). White also neglects—or at least minimizes—the effect of temperature in descriptions of future mining operations. In our deepest (12,600 feet) mine today the ambient temperature is 125°, and refrigerated ventilation is required; one doubts if the more costly added cooling for deeper operations would be practical even for recovery of expensive metals. (I might also quarrel here with the forecast of \$30,000 an ounce for gold, as it has relatively few essential everyday uses.) Biologists will also note that his general statement regarding elimination of all harmful microorganisms begs a question still vexing us today: are some bacteria symbiotic and beneficial (as Pasteur suggested) or are all of them harmful? Finally, the esoscope and the hepantoscope are inventions that are simply pulled out of the air; they support concepts important to White's Utopian fabric, but are never themselves rationalized.

All these, however, seem minor flaws in a vision that is always believable and interesting; these chapters of the fourth part of *Plus Ultra* continue to be refreshingly confident and positive in their outlook.

(to be concluded)

Book Reviews

Steve Eng

ANATOMY OF WONDER: A CRITICAL GUIDE TO SCIENCE FICTION, second edition, edited by Neil Barron. New York and London: R. R. Bowker Co., 1981. xiv-724 pp. 24.8 cm. \$32.95 (cloth), \$22.95 (paper).

"There have been more books on science fiction...published in the last seven years than in all the the preceding history of the literature," Sam Moskowitz wrote recently. Indeed, production of science-fiction and fantasy reference works, check-lists, critical studies, bibliographies and even bibliographies of bibliographies has become a viable literary movement all its own. For newcomers and veterans alike, it is most bewildering—and expensive. High-priced tomes tumble forth from the presses, their numbers seeming to increase exponentially. Necessarily they impart basic information, telling us who wrote *The War of the Worlds*, that *Amazing Stories* is a pulp magazine, and so on. But most of these books also include valuable lore unavailable elsewhere. And although compiled by different editors with different aims, they are usually not superficial despite severe space limitations, generally getting to the heart of their topics with brevity. Recent works by L. W. Currey, R. Reginald, Peter Nicholls and Marshall Tymn are representative, and *Survey of Modern Fantasy Literature*, a forthcoming set edited by Keith Neilson for Salem Press, will fill a large part of one more shelf of a reference bookcase that is already buckling from the weight.

One sighs. Like a wallflower suddenly besieged with suitors, it is flattering to receive much belated attention. This field has endured—perhaps sometimes preferred—decades of critical oblivion, broken only by the pioneering works of a few enthusiasts, occasional condescension from Establishment critics, and isolated efforts by unconventional academics. But all this recent attention has had one unfortunate result. These myriad reference works sometimes get picky fan magazine reviews which focus on minor flaws, and thus distort their generally high worth. It is not always remembered, to begin with, that such works are aimed at libraries, scholars, and potential new students in the field. They are missionary recruiting efforts, sometimes operating in hostile territory. Yet since the writers are usually specialists, the die-hard collector or old-timer is also going to learn many new things from them. Secondly, the books are seemingly produced at either top speed under intense pressure or not at all: hence their inevitable and sometimes laughable trivial errors. Finally, different hands at work in different places produce inconsistencies of format that editors do not always spot and correct. These things lead to minor factual slips, and to variances and gaps in coverage. Book reviewers can become so preoccupied with such vagaries that the overall solid value of a volume dwindles in perspective.

This said, let us look at one of the best of these recent science-fiction reference books, *Anatomy of Wonder*. This update of its first (1976) edition strains almost conspicuously to make its predecessor appear minor by contrast.

Much, much has been added; many dogmatic opinions have been tempered; two chapters have been entirely rewritten. And this in only five years! Meanwhile the field has been exploding with countless fiction titles in addition to the shower of scholarly works I have already mentioned. Barron valiantly catches up and stays abreast of it all.

The format stresses annotations, and key works within this bibliographic cavalcade are marked as "core titles" to give librarians their starting point for acquisition. They also give the reader, collector or bookseller an idea of the "best" amid a plethora of choices. (Companion volumes in this vein from Bowker are Tymn's *Fantasy Literature and Horror Literature*, and to a lesser extent also Ruth Lynn's *Fantasy for Children*.) *Anatomy of Wonder* annotates, staggeringly, some 1900 books. With hundreds of new titles appearing each year, such a guide (even of this length, and with its smaller type-face than the first edition) must be very selective. Annotations are prefaced by chapters tracing historical development. Despite the mass of material addressed they are acutely written and critically perceptive. They also place the genre in the larger literary and social context of each period, something Barron faults earlier scholars for not doing.

Thomas D. Clareson covers the early period to the 1920's. He confesses to definition problems, and suggests that academic categorization can alienate the reading public (as has already happened to mainstream novelists and readers). He retains an eclectic definition—wisely, I think, considering how randomly early science-fiction was created. His historical texture is sound, and he perceives accurately that science-fiction existed within the early Gothic tradition. Nineteenth century mainstream authors not usually identified with the field are discussed, i. e., deMaupassant, Thomas Bailey Aldrich and William Dean Howells. Future war tales, especially involving the Yellow Peril, receive informed treatment. Lost race material is reviewed without the usual condescension, and Haggard and Burroughs get intelligent notice instead of snuffy dismissal. Although this is a rich, integrated chapter its bibliography is erratic: notes sometimes state the place of publication but not the publisher, sometimes the reverse, once neither.

The annotations reveal many fascinating conclusions: a satire by Robert W. Chambers, a novel by Thomas (*The Clansman*) Dixon where German invaders are routed by Western rough riders, an attempted completion of Poe's *Pym* by the eccentric Ignatius Donnelly, and others. There is the obligatory, thorough treatment of Verne, Wells, Poe, London and Doyle, and discerning inclusion of Chesterton, Hawthorne and Kipling. Neglected and/or controversial figures like M. P. Shiel get a fair shake, and there is a good sampling of hollow earth novels.

However, one wonders why a few early titles have been dropped from the first edition. Certainly critical perspectives cannot really have changed as much as that in only five years. Also some annotations, though from a new hand, sound perhaps unavoidably like paraphrases of the earlier versions. But I am quibbling.

Brian Stableford's 1918-38 chapter supplants Ivor Rogers's "Gernsback Era" chapter in the first edition; the title change indicates a shift in content from pulp magazines to more respectable hard-covered books. This new version is probably more literary, with expectedly more stress (and welcome it is) on British writers who are too often undiscussed. The intellectual milieu is well delineated, giving science-fiction the largest and best possible perspective. Stableford's emphasis on books is at the expense of pulp magazine writers and editors; some of these turn up in annotations—but only if in book form. Rogers's good discussion of fandom and its influence has also been cut.

Stableford's approach seems incisive and well informed, and will be preferred by many to the general American tendency to exalt the "Golden Age" of the pulps above rational literary merit. On the other hand, it is dangerous to avoid material simply because it happens to be ephemeral, from another country, or unavailable. Perhaps more from American pulps can be brought into the next edition,

overdone as these have been elsewhere. Science-fiction in the general magazines has likewise been neglected here.

The chapter on the modern period retains its original authors, Joe De Bolt and John R. Pfeiffer. They have made many changes, however. Several pre-1976 titles have been replaced by fifty others, and an additional 350 more added (largely from the glut of the past few years). Over 900 are cited in all. The essay section, necessarily highly condensed, is broken down first thematically—into ten categories and examples—and then chronologically, with decade-by-decade coverage. Fandom, comic books, pulps and films are also discussed, as well as integration of the genre into mainstream literature. A nearly unmanageable bulk of material has been covered, understandably in survey fashion, but by no means superficially. Compressed annotations must stress plots and themes, but they are succinctly evaluative, too. Anthologies are intelligently handled—instead of mere contents-listings their general make-up and special features are indicated.

Intact almost verbatim from the previous edition is "Children's Science Fiction" by Francis J. Molson. This provides an interesting historic retrospect from Frank Reade through the early twentieth century boys' book series down to the present. The mostly bad writing is honestly admitted, as is the quickie greed of their writers and publishers. Molson rightly gripes of recent science-fiction reference books misusing the term "juvenile"; does it mean something purposely written for kids, or just bad writing for adults? One surprise is the number of annotations: 166 titles, establishing the author's knowledge in a field most readers are barely aware of. Yet professionals who have written in this category make a who's who: Anderson, Asimov, Blish, Clarke, del Rey, Heinlein, McCaffrey, Norton, Offutt, Oliver, Silverberg (four titles!), Vance and Wollheim. Since newcomers, and perhaps children's librarians, may not know all adult writers in the genre by name, cross-referencing to the modern period's chapter might have been useful.

In all of the sections there are mainstream authors who usually escape being so identified. It's a small thing, but I feel it could be useful to be reminded that so-and-so is famous in another context; this would further integrate science-fiction into the literary mainstream. Lawrence Durrell *is* identified as a "front-rank British novelist", but most others are never similarly designated. And though we all probably know who Gore Vidal is, younger generations might appreciate being reminded of his other work. Dixon also wrote the notorious novel that became the film *The Birth of a Nation*; Donnelly was an interesting crank who dabbled in several fields; and a few more syllables about Chesterton would improve his annotation. Not everyone knows everyone, and it's fun to make connections.

The extensive foreign language section explores mostly uncharted regions—Germany, Russia, France, Italy, Japan and China. The author of the Chinese section had the pleasure of visiting the mainland lecturing there on science-fiction; while discussing *Nineteen Eighty-Four* the students could look past him to the huge picture of Chairman Mao on the wall, the fulfillment of Orwell's Big Brother. An exquisite anecdote of cultural exchange!

The editor's own chapter on selecting, acquiring and cataloging gives good lists of American, English and other publishers. Ex-librarian Barron bears down on libraries' snobbish "buckram syndrome"—they consign paperbacks to impermanent, cheap circulation status, yet will buy the same titles for the more respectable shelves if they happen to be in hard covers. Whether or not they can, people surely do judge books by their covers! In a time of good paperback originals this is foul play.

Barron handles several other chapters: "Indexes and Bibliographies," "History and Criticism" and "Autobiography and Author Studies." Of course he knows these books-about-books intimately, and the annotations are crisply detailed. A tape recording of Harlan Ellison sounds interesting; there are a number of books on Mary Shelley and eight on H. G. Wells; and Burroughs gets tolerant coverage. (It

is comforting to learn that someone has tabulated all the plants on Barsoom, but where is the Heins bibliography?) Generally the glut of reference books is meticulously handled; Barron is usually fair to the competition, though I don't find pioneer researcher Sam Moskowitz as inbred or uncritical as he seems to. In *Explorers of the Infinite* Moskowitz makes an air-tight case for Lovecraft as a science-fiction author, and his essay on Shiel is severely critical of that writer's techniques and themes. Milestone essays, both; but I wish Sam would give us more documentation and provide indexes for his lively books.

Barron also cites nine titles on science-fiction in films and on TV. Armageddon freaks will learn that a university has published a study called *Nuclear War Films* (may it get wide translation!). He also covers illustration, though by annotation only—no historical discussion. Well, thirteen titles on science-fiction art alone are significant.

Marshall Tymn, who has edited several books in the field including the complementary *Science Fiction Reference Book*, teaches teachers how to teach this subject. His chapter is "Classroom Aids," which annotates textbooks and anthologies aimed at the classroom—all post-1970—plus audio-visual and books on how to write science-fiction.

H. W. Hall adds a list of indexes and studies on science-fiction magazines, as well as one of current ones and fan magazines (though unaccountably *Fantasy Commentator* is omitted). I was interested to learn that for only \$1075 one can acquire the first nineteen volumes of *Amazing Stories* on microfilm. He also lists library and private collections, sometimes with unintentionally amusing precision. San Diego State carries two linear feet of Suzette Haden Elgin mss. but only one fan magazine; the San Francisco Public Library has one lone box of *Star Trek* scripts; 40,000 dime novels reside at the University of Minnesota; at Dallas "losses are high" (bad security?); and so on. Private collections are interesting and Moskowitz's and Ackerman's—possibly the largest—each require a long paragraph to summarize. If you can imagine 3000 pre-1975 Japanese fanzines there is a collector waiting to open his doors to you.

Irreverence aside, it truly is dramatic to see how many places thoughtfully retain items in the genre, including primary source materials. The University of Illinois, for example, has several thousand items from H. G. Wells's correspondence, and Brown claims over 5000 manuscripts/typescripts of Clark Ashton Smith. These lists could aid publishers and dealers, perhaps, in marketing.

Yes, there are discernable flaws. Poetry in the field is slighted. A few dates and misspelled words ought to be corrected. And as I have already remarked, some material dropped from the first edition will be missed. For this reason libraries should *not* dump the first edition at their next book sale.

The same line of thinking makes me suggest that the forthcoming edition be expanded to two volumes; let us add, not subtract from what we have. If I have dwelt perhaps overlong on *Anatomy of Wonder* it is because of its worth. I found it truly encyclopedic without banality or redundancy. Any reader or fan who can afford it will find it valuable. It's not stuffy, and it's easy and fun to use.

THE YEAR'S SCHOLARSHIP IN SCIENCE FICTION AND FANTASY, 1972-1975, edited by Marshall B. Tymn and Roger C. Schlobin. Kent, Ohion: The Kent State University Press, 1979. 222 pp. 21.8 cm. \$12.00 (cloth).

Yes, professors are reading fan magazines! Fan critics finally are being taken seriously. Essays, articles and private press studies that used to be ignored are now recorded in a running bibliography; formerly this appeared in *Extrapolation*, but since 1980 is being issued by Kent State University. Included also are the more conventional sources of science-fiction and fantasy research, as academic journals and books, plus the more obscure cassette tapes, film-strips and

unpublished doctoral dissertations. This volume is the first to collect the Year's Scholarship series, supplanting Thomas Clareson's *Science Fiction Criticism* of a decade ago.

The book is laid out simply and logically. First come "General Studies," forty pages of these comprising 193 entries. (We can only imagine this section's size in the next edition, considering the recent explosion of checklists, guidebooks, encyclopedias and other reference works!) Here we find standard studies like a reprint of *Pilgrims Through Space and Time* next to an unpublished thesis on Kurt Vonnegut, or an article by Neal Wilgus on science-fiction's "failure to become a major intellectual testing ground." Eleven pages of bibliographical and reference entries follow—fifty-two entries.

The biggest section is a bibliographical and biographical one devoted to authors. Here especially is something or someone for everyone. Where else to find Jack London's fantasy fiction, or a thesis on Arthur Machen? In just this three-year period are sixteen items each on Le Guin and Vonnegut and four on Ray Bradbury, showing something about fashions in current criticism. Oldies like H. G. Wells and G. K. Chesterton are covered too.

Section IV, "Teacher and Visual Aids," is fascinating. With the decline of literacy, attendance and discipline in the school, even science-fiction (and other fantasy, especially horror) is actively encouraged there today. Times certainly have changed! Before 1965 only "weird" kids brought pulp magazines to school, and had to hide them in their lockers. School marms back then condemned all fantasy as an escape from reality, as contrasted with *Silas Marner* and other yawners. This section is amusingly eclectic—how to teach religion by science-fiction, the use of Von Däniken as a negative example of history and science (you mean that stuff ain't true?), Le Guin's "Why Are Americans Afraid of Dragons?", which explains exactly why fantasy is (or was) kept from children. Those of us ancients who went to school in the 1950's know why: It is bad for you, can even kill you—remember the kid who thought he really was Superman, and jumped off a high building? "We told you so," crowed the high school teachers and comic book censors. Well, at least they warned that fantasy would keep us from growing up; they were right about that.

Now Dr. Tymn is lecturing on how to teach science-fiction at workshops such as the Annual Conference on the Fantastic at Boca Raton each Spring. For any teacher this book provides plenty of sources and tools. For example, there's item "IV-26", where a Dr. Starkie traces the history of vampires on a tape cassette "including a chilling personal encounter with vampirism in a small village graveyard near Budapest."

The whole volume is an open sesame to the non-fiction in a field which, with all its excesses and insecurities, seems now certain of permanent academic consideration. "Coming of age" and all that. The next volume will probably have even more entries from each year: a perpetual, swelling series. It embraces all of our sub-genres—supernatural horror, heroic fantasy, etc., making other such checklists less necessary and less likely to appear.

The annotations throughout are informative and tersely evaluative. Page numbers (instead of cryptic serial numbers like "III-B-lxxxix-2") would make the index shorter and easier to use. The typeface throughout is crisp and very attractive—Paladium, I think—but it would be nice to have at least a brief colophon telling us this, since Kent State is proud enough of the volume's design to include it in their "Serif Series" of bibliographies. A list of all the magazines that were reviewed, whether inclusively or randomly, should also have been included, as is done in *The Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature*.

The Year's Scholarship is a must for libraries, serious researchers, and indeed for anyone else wanting to keep track of this field's burgeoning bulk of critical writing.

Voyagers through Eternity

A History of Science-Fiction From the Beginnings to H. G. Wells

by SAM MOSKOWITZ

Part III

In Gernsback's new series of stories, Baron Munchhausen, who was supposed to have died in 1797, turns out to have been injected with an embalming fluid which kept him in a state of suspended animation until 1907, when he is revived. He sets up his home-base on the moon, which he reaches with an anti-gravity ship of his own design, and from there contacts a wireless operator on Earth to whom he tells his further adventures. These tales were already outmoded by the time they were reprinted in *Amazing Stories*,^{35*} but they constitute true science-fiction and are enlivened by occasional flashes of humor.

IX

THE FIRST SCIENCE-FICTION ANTHOLOGIES

So popular had become the different varieties of what today we call science-fiction—Utopias, Robinsonades, imaginary voyages, trips into space and to lands at the center of the earth, tales of lost races and civilizations—that efforts were already being made to categorize them. Substantial bibliographies had come into existence. In his book *L'Usage des Romans* Nicolas Lenglet du Fresnoy divided all fiction into fourteen categories, and included the imaginary voyage in a group he called "Romans divers qui ne se rapportent à aucune des classes precedentes." In *Bibliothèque Universelle des Romans*, a serial publication which appeared monthly in Paris beginning in July, 1775, Marquis de Paulmy d'Argenson wrestled with the problem of identifying these numerous, strange tales and finally termed them "roman veilleux."³⁶ He did not discriminate among those with a fantastic element such as *Gulliver's Travels*, highly unusual adventure such as *Robinson Crusoe*, or merely out-and-out fairy tales. However, the need to find each

*Footnotes for this article begin on page 63.

special kind of fiction gradually caused later bibliographers to institute ever more detailed classifications.

The result of such bibliographical recognition was the appearance of an incredible *thirty-six* volume anthology, *Voyages Imaginaires, Songes, Visions, et Romans Cabalistiques*, edited by Charles-Georges-Thomas Garnier, and published in Amsterdam and Paris in 1787-89. Garnier was a lawyer, writer and translator; he knew and associated with the editors of *Bibliothèque des Romans*, and possibly its publisher as well. Furthermore, he was simultaneously working with Charles Joseph de Mayer on another huge anthology—*Cabinet des Fées, ou Collection de Contes des Fées at autres Contes Merveilleux*, published also in Amsterdam and Paris in 1785-89, a compendium of fairy stories, fantasies and unusual tales that ran to forty-one volumes!

For *Voyages Imaginaires* Garnier selected 71 entries. Most were complete novels, though in a few instances excerpts from larger works were used. His collection involved translations into French from seven languages. No such planned, unified publishing venture of this magnitude so heavily involving science-fiction would appear in the field for nearly two hundred years.³⁷ Any doubt that the imaginary voyage and the more fantastic fiction allied with it constituted a fully recognized and flourishing part of the literature of the time, many titles of which have probably not yet been identified, can be dispelled merely by listing some of Garnier's selections. In addition to major titles already discussed in this history³⁸ are many French works scarcely known today, such as *Les Aventures du Voyageur Aerien* by Marc-Antoine Legrand; *L'Isle Inconnue ou Memoires du Chevalier des Gastines* by M. Grivel, a thousand-page story in the Robinson Crusoe manner; *Le Nouveau Gulliver* by Pierre Francois Guyot Desfontaines, about the travels of Gulliver's son; Chevalier Mouhy's *Lamekis*; the anonymous *Account of a Journey from the Arctic Pole to the Antarctic Pole Through the Center of the Earth*; and *Relation du Monde de Merare* (1750), in which the beautiful landscape of the planet Mercury is observed through a telescope, and supernatural means are used to learn about the people and politics of other planets.

Some volumes in Garnier's anthology are in no way fantastic. Among these are several collections of letters from writers who have visited well known areas in France and tell, in the form of satirical travelogues, about people they met or imagined they met and things they saw or imagined they saw. Some volumes are collections of fantasies, more mature carryovers from *Cabinet des Fées*, but the editor does not pretend they are science-fiction. Garnier has set up four divisions for the imaginary voyages, there is a separate grouping for dreams and visions, and another for cabalistiques—stories that are fantasy or supernatural. How little times have changed: even today we have a well established publication, *The Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction*, which prints not only science-fiction but tales in the broader grouping of fantasy and the supernatural!

That this type of work was first attempted by the French underscores the fact that in the eighteenth century France was (and would remain for another hundred years) a leader among Western nations in scientific development and interest. It also establishes as historical fact that well before *Frankenstein* science-fiction as we term it today was recognized as a separate and honorable genre. Indeed, its very existence could well have been crucial to the creation of Mary Shelley's work.

Later in 1789 three more imaginary voyage volumes were added to Garnier's work, making thirty-nine in all. They constituted a reprinting of a small collection originally published in 1781 under the editorship of J. L. H. Simon Desperthes, a lawyer and a collector of books on voyages. These are not fantastic, being merely accounts of shipwrecks.

The nearest that England came to producing an anthology comparable to Garnier's was because of Sir Walter Scott's love for science-fiction, which he

termed "romances of wonder." The phrase "wonder stories" came into use not only in England but the United States, and through most of the Nineteenth Century people understood it as meaning predominantly science-fiction. In 1808 Scott sounded out his London publisher, William Miller, on the possibility of starting a series of six volumes a year of romances of wonder; this was to begin with *Peter Wilkins* and include translations from other languages. He offered to edit and supply biographical information on the authors himself. Miller was not interested, but the publishers Longman and Rees asked Scott for "a rough list of tales sufficient to make about twenty-five volumes," and the price he would want to fulfill the series. However, no agreement was ever reached. This is unfortunate, for it would be fascinating to see Scott's list of his personal favorites in the genre; *Gulliver's Travels* would probably have been one of them, since he wrote a life of Swift.

The project, happily, was not entirely aborted. An associate of Swift, who did scholarly research to supply him background information for his novels, was Henry Weber. Weber had worked for Scott since he had first come to England from Germany in 1804, and Scott helped him in every way he could, including supplying introductions to publishers. The anthology which was published in Edinburgh by Ballantyne in 1812, edited by Weber, titled *Popular Romances: Consisting of Imaginary Voyages and Travels*, was undoubtedly the residue of Scott's notion of a collection of romances of wonder.³⁹ It is close to being the first anthology of science-fiction in English and contains, in a single volume of small type, the following novels: *Gulliver's Travels*, *Peter Wilkins*, *A Journey to the World Underground*, *Robinson Crusoe* and *The Capacity and Extent of Human Understanding; Exemplified in the Extraordinary Case of Automathes*. This last story was one of an interminable number of imitations of *Robinson Crusoe*, written anonymously, which had originally been published by J. Roberts of London in 1736.⁴⁰ In his introduction to *Popular Romances* Weber refers specifically to Garnier's previous collection, so there seems no doubt that he—and Scott as well—were familiar with it and had something similar in mind.⁴¹

While the many extraordinary voyages, Utopias, satires and the more extravagant Robinsonades were obviously capable of expounding scientific, philosophical, political and sociological ideas of considerable intellectual depth, they were also, in large part, vehicles of entertainment and escape. The variety of amusements available even to the wealthier classes of the eighteenth century was limited. The value of a book was that it could be read at any time, regardless of the weather, and matched whatever hours or moments were available; it could also be what we today call a conversational piece.

X

THE GOTHIC TALE AND SCIENCE-FICTION

In the last third of the eighteenth century another type of fiction was coming into vogue. This was published and read primarily for escapist entertainment, and its popularity grew so rapidly that by 1800 it was crowding aside the imaginary voyage and Robinsade. That genre has come to be called Gothic. Horace Walpole has justly been accorded credit for popularizing it with publication of *The Castle of Otranto* (1764); indeed, its second edition is subtitled *a Gothick Story*. In a letter to his friend Joseph Warton, Walpole defines the work as "partially an imitation of ancient romances; being rather intended for an attempt to blend the marvellous of old story with the natural of modern novels." In his renowned and scholarly volume *The Gothic Quest* (1938) Montague Summers separates the genre into three types: the Terror Gothic, the Sentimental Gothic and the Historical Gothic. *The Castle of Otranto* belongs to the first of these, the one that eventually overlapped the area of science-fiction.

The action of the novel takes place during the Crusades. Manfred, master of the castle of Otranto, has arranged to have his only son—sickly and puny

—married to Isabella, the daughter of the Marquis of Vicenzia. On the way to the altar the boy is crushed when a gigantic war helmet falls on him. Manfred, whose wife is sterile, resolves to divorce her and marry Isabella himself in order to have a male heir. The portrait of his grandfather Alfonso on the wall heaves a sigh and its chest moves; then it "quits the frame and bids to be followed from the room." Visitations of gigantic armor and other supernatural manifestations appear at intervals, and Isabella flees for the sanctuary of a nearby church through a subterranean tunnel. Finally it is learned that Theodore, a peasant boy who helps Isabella escape Manfred's lustful clutches, is actually the true heir to the great Castle of Otranto. Manfred is defeated, the spirit of Alfonso can rise to heaven, Theodore can marry Isabella, and Manfred's wife retires to a convent.

In parts the story reads more like a synopsis than a novel, but its popularity brought about a great tidal wave of similar novels whose very quantity still defies the efforts of bibliographers to encompass. Montague Summers spent forty years of his life writing a history of the Gothic movement and compiling a bibliography of it, yet apologized for his inability to treat it comprehensively, expressing the hope that his outline would enable others to complete the work.

There are some clear landmarks, nevertheless, that can be used in navigating this area. One is *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794), a high water-mark in the career of Ann Radcliffe, whose own life was almost as shadowy as some of the spectres to which she alludes. Again and again Mrs. Radcliffe suggests the most horrifying and fearful aspects of the supernatural, but as the novel proceeds methodically ties everything together with a naturalistic explanation that is even harder to believe. This became a technique of many Gothic writers: suggest the unimaginable, and then palliate the reader with a mundane bromide.⁴²

Another landmark is *The Monk* (1795) by Matthew G. Lewis, a veritable tour de force among Gothic novels, written when the author was only twenty. This is definitely a work of the supernatural, evoking scenes reminiscent of Dante and moving with extraordinary pace and vigor. The shocking extremes of the protagonist's passion which sweep him inevitably into the embrace of Satan—these include murdering his mother and rape scenes that run to seventy pages—leave no doubt why *The Monk* was probably the most popular Gothic novel of its time, and why in modern days it was enthusiastically reprinted by a publishing house noted for the "adult" character of many of its better-selling works.

Many students of the genre agree it reached its peak of intensity, artistry and imaginative fervor with Charles Robert Maturin's *Melmoth the Wanderer* (1820). Maturin was a clergyman with a literary bent, and a friend of Scott. Unquestionably talented, he tried to make a living from full-time writing in an era when geniuses subsisted through patronage, and but for his own impracticality might have succeeded. Few people today have read *Melmoth the Wanderer*, but most are familiar with its theme, that of a man granted indefinite life by Satan in exchange for his soul. Melmoth's longevity offers extraordinary scope for diverse and bizarre adventures and human interplay, and Maturin takes full advantage of it. Like "Monk" Lewis he writes superbly, and can carry the reader with elan through episodes of horror, terror, sadism, torture, depravity and carnage.

The influence of Gothic fiction has never abated. It is still with us today in our modern tales of the supernatural, in a hundred or more paperbacks a year plainly called "gothics"; and in this continuity it seems that the soul of Melmoth did not go to the devil, but instead, by some unrecorded literary bargain, his burden was assumed by a Frankenstein's monster who has been damned ever since to a hellish immortality.

Frankenstein; or, the Modern Prometheus had been published on March 11, 1818 in three volumes by Lackington, Hughes, Harding, Mayor and Jones of Finsbury Square, London. It appeared anonymously, and some credited the authorship to Percy Bysshe Shelley, Mary's husband. Reviewers expressed a combination of high praise

for the quality of the writing and utter disgust for its subject-matter. As we shall see, creation of the work involved cooperation among family and friends.

To understand this it will be helpful to sketch in some background. Mary Shelley's mother was Mary Wollstonecraft, a woman in the active forefront of the fight for women's suffrage. She emerged from a hard and difficult early life with all traces of diplomacy and discretion discarded. She said what she felt, both in person and in her writings (such as *The Vindication of the Rights of Women*, 1792). In matters of the heart she was equally uninhibited, being involved in a number of affairs, all of which ended unhappily and one of which left her with an illegitimate daughter. Her final romantic involvement was with the philosopher and writer William Godwin, himself already notorious among British intellectuals as a radical, libertarian, anarchist and proponent of "rationalism." His most famous book, *An Enquiry Concerning Political Justice* (1793), recommends such things as abolishing the existing types of government, dissolution of the family, outlawing marriage, discarding religion, and ending private ownership of property. The story is told that he was not arrested and imprisoned only because the Prime Minister of England, William Pitt the younger, felt that Godwin's very high priced book could not be purchased by enough people to threaten the institutions which it attacked.

Unhampered, Godwin produced much writing—journalism, plays and fiction—that echoed his unconventional views. The most germane of these to science-fiction was his novel *St. Leon* (1799). This is interesting not only in its own right, but for its relation to the Gothic novel and its later influence on the Shelleys. Though written in the leisurely manner common to its time, it is organized with considerable skill to entice and engross the reader. The preface introduces Signor Gualdi of Venice, whose fine art collection he is glad to show to anyone professing interest. A stranger viewing it is stunned to see a portrait of his host painted by Titian, who had been dead 150 years! And the opening chapter begins with a passage that, in many forms, has become one of the major building stones of science-fiction: "There is nothing that human imagination can figure brilliant and enviable, that human genius and skill do not aspire to realize." Or, as we would say, "What man can imagine, man can do." The narrator further states that the two things most sought after by men are "the art of multiplying gold and defying the inroads of infirmity and death." He then claims "I have in my possession the choice of being as wealthy as I please and the gift of immortal life." All this in the first few hundred words of *St. Leon*!

On the plea that he has sworn never to reveal the secrets of these two great gifts, Godwin all but destroys the opportunity to create a solid work of science-fiction, redeeming it only by the fact that the method of attaining immortality is achievable by an elixir rather than by supernatural means. His possession of immortality and wealth destroys the protagonist's happy family life, makes him the object of suspicion and persecution, and incurs the hatred of his son. The psychological and moral problems of a man gifted with immortality while other members of his family are not anticipate the philosophical debate in *Frankenstein* as to whether the monster or his creator should bear the greater guilt for crimes the former committed.

The first meeting of these two outspoken and controversial figures—Mary Wollstonecraft and William Godwin—was arranged by Maria Hays, a writer and one of Godwin's fulsome admirers, and took place in 1796 at her London home. Instead of clashing, the two hit it off. Mary found that she liked the dignified radical philosopher. Godwin, three years her senior at forty, was getting a bit tired of living alone despite still having a string of married and unmarried women, some of them quite distinguished, to keep him occupied. His liking for Mary rapidly warmed into something deeper.

Godwin believed that man and wife living in the same home was one of

the factors that broke up the marriage relationship (which on general principles he opposed anyway) so he and Mary took separate houses close together. She soon became pregnant, and to safeguard the rights of the child (though at the risk of being accused of hypocrisy) the two married on March 29, 1797. For the short time they had together, their marriage seems to have been a happy one.

Mary believed that childbirth was a natural function, disdained the presence of a doctor, and hired a midwife. But there were complications which the midwife could not handle. A week later Mary was dead, leaving Godwin with an infant girl, whom he named Mary Wollstonecraft in memory of his wife, and Fanny Imlay, her three-year-old illegitimate daughter.

Godwin married again, this time to a widow with a daughter of her own, Jane "Clair" Clairmont. The new Mrs. Godwin seems to have had a quick temper and to have overrated her own intellectual capabilities; she urged her husband into the publishing business, which drove him into debt. Visitors to the Godwin ménage dwindled, but some still came, including Charles Lamb and, later, the young Percy Shelley with his wife Harriet.

Shelley was fascinated by Godwin's freewheeling philosophy. He had written Godwin while still at school, and normally might have been brushed off, for he was some years from establishing his literary reputation, but he came from a wealthy family and would eventually be heir to a substantial fortune. Godwin, in dire financial straits, felt he might transmute the young man's admiration into a contribution to his publishing firm, so he invited him to visit at his pleasure.

From his earliest years Shelley had been intrigued by the Gothic novel and by the supernatural; and, because of his excellent education, by science and scientific experiments as well. His first novel, *Zastrozzi* (1810), written while still in school, was a Gothic melange of borrowings from Ann Radcliffe, "Monk" Lewis and Charlotte Dacre's *Zofloya* (1806). His second, *St. Irvyne* (1811), shows a close reading of Godwin's *St. Leon*. *St. Irvyne*, published initially as by "A Gentleman of the University of Oxford," tells of a man who has drunk the elixir of life and seeks to give his secret to another so that he himself may die; in this he fails, and after many dark adventures is doomed to live on, in "a dateless and hopeless eternity of horror." The theme of immortality is also found in Shelley's *Queen Mab* (1813), *Prometheus Unbound* (1818), *Hellas* (1822) and his posthumously published poem "The Wandering Jew" (1876).

Mary Wollstonecraft, now sixteen, fell in love with the charismatic Shelley, a constant visitor to the Godwin home; and he, estranged from his wife, fell in love with her. They managed secret trysts arranged by Mary's half-sister Jane. In July, 1814 Shelley convinced Mary to run off with him;⁴³ and shortly after Harriet's death in December, 1816 they were married.

With the death of his grandfather in 1815 Shelley began receiving a regular income, and because of his health spent most of his life thereafter in Italy and Switzerland. Among his closest friends was Lord Byron. At Geneva the Shelleys set up residence at Maison Chappius, while Byron ensconced himself at the Villa Diodati, within easy walking distance. This was the setting for the birth of the idea of the novel *Frankenstein*.

It was a wet, unpleasant day in mid-June, 1816. At the Shelleys' residence were guests Lord Byron and John Polidori, a doctor with literary inclinations who had been moving from country to country trying to find a niche for himself as a doctor or a writer, but never quite succeeding. Jane Clairmont was also present.⁴⁴ Fitting with the mood induced by the weather, several volumes of German ghost stories, translated into French, were being read by the party. We even know the title of these volumes: *Fantasmagoriana; ou Recueil d'Histoires d'Apparitions, de Spectres, Revenans, Fantomes, etc.*, and that they were published in 1812 in Paris.⁴⁵

Byron suggested that each person present write a ghost story, to ascertain who could do the most chilling job. Shelley started a story which he never finished. Jane began one, but never finished either. Polidori began a novel, of which a brief outline is known. Byron planned a novel; he outlined the plot (which Polidori recorded in his notebook) but completed only a fragment.⁴⁶ Mary could not think of a plot, and poring over *Fantasmagoriana* did not help. But several days later she listened to a conversation between Shelley and Byron about experiments of Dr. Darwin⁴⁷ on the nature of the life-principle and its creation. As a result, that very night she had a vision in which a scientist is kneeling beside an artificial man which shows signs of life. He retires, almost hoping that the slight manifestations of awareness in his synthetic creature may disappear. But on awakening he finds "the horrid thing stands at his bedside, opening his curtains, and looking on him with yellow, watery, but speculative eyes."

The next morning she began writing the story. Her actual beginning is now chapter five, which opens with the sentence, "It was on a dreary night of November that I beheld the accomplishment of my toils." In the very first paragraph the monster which Victor Frankenstein has created opens his yellow eyes and begins to breathe. Horrified, Frankenstein bolts the room and later falls asleep, but when he awakens his creation his parting the curtains of his bed, looking at him.

This was a powerful opening, but Percy Shelley, schooled in an age when novels moved at a leisurely pace, advised his wife to add substantial prefatory material. It was this urging that transformed the work into a true science-fiction novel. For it is in the earliest chapters—which were actually written later—that the foundation of science is carefully (and, considering the time, elaborately) laid for the creation of an artificial man, eight feet high and animated by electricity. Repeatedly, Mary Shelley emphasizes the fact that there is nothing supernatural in any phase of the being's fabrication. One of Frankenstein's preceptors tells him:

"The ancient teachers of this science . . . promised impossibilities, and performed nothing. The modern masters promise very little; they know that metals cannot be transmuted, and that the elixir of life is a chimera. But those philosophers, whose hands seem only made to dabble in dirt, and their eyes to pore over the microscope or crucible, have indeed performed miracles. They penetrate into the recesses of nature, and show how she works in her hiding places. They ascend into the heavens; they have discovered how the blood circulates, and the nature of the air we breathe. They have acquired new and almost unlimited powers; they can command the thunders of heaven, mimic the earthquake, and even mock the invisible world with its shadows."

"Monk" Lewis's visit to the Shelleys in August, 1816, while the writing of *Frankenstein* was in progress, did nothing to transform it back into a simple supernatural tale; although he spoke at length of ghosts he did not believe in them.

Mary Shelley completed the novel on May 14, 1817. It was rejected by John Murray (Byron's publisher) and also by Olliers before being accepted by Lackington, Hughes, Harding, Mayor and Jones. Mary received the equivalent of about \$2000 for the work. This was a substantial amount—enough for a person to live on for several years at that time. Possibly this was because the publishers believed the author was really Percy Bysshe Shelley, who had submitted it as "by a friend."

Though most reviews of the novel were favorable, reviewers found the subject-matter chilling. Scott called it an "...extraordinary tale in which the author seems to us to disclose uncommon powers of poetic imagination. The feeling

with which we perused the unexpected and fearful, yet, allowing the possibility of the event, very natural conclusion of Frankenstein's experiment, shook a little even our firm nerves.... Upon the whole, the work impresses us with a high idea of the author's original genius and power of expression."⁴⁸

Edinburgh Magazine and Literary Miscellany for March, 1818 noted that "while the work sacrifices everything for effect... it possesses... a power of fascination." But it was termed "a tissue of horrible and disgusting absurdity" by the *Quarterly Review* for January, 1818. "Our taste and judgement alike revolt at this kind of writing, and the greater the ability with which it may be executed the worse it is."

The tale is indeed a fearsome one. Frankenstein's monster learns to speak by listening to the conversation of a blind man who lives in a cottage with his son and daughter. As he attempts to establish a rapport with the blind man he is repulsed by the fright and horror he instills in the other two. Upon rescuing a little girl who is drowning, the monster is shot by her father. Encountering a small boy, and discovering that he is the son of his creator, the monster kills him.

He confronts Frankenstein and promises that if a female is created for him he will leave for the wilds of South America and never be seen again. Moved by this entreaty, Frankenstein does make a similar female, but at the last moment, realizing that he may have threatened the existence of man, destroys her. The monster vows vengeance.

On his wedding night the monster kills Frankenstein's bride. Frankenstein then commits his life to the monster's pursuit and destruction. The chase leads ever north, and in the ice-packs the trail is lost. While returning home, Frankenstein dies from the rigor of his ordeals, but not before he has told his story to a friend aboard ship. Shortly after his death the monster enters the room, exhibiting great remorse; he vows to retreat to the icy wastes, where he will build himself a funeral pyre and be consumed. He then leaps onto the ice-floe, and disappears into the "darkness and the distance."

The novel is written in an affected style, and the organization of its plot is sometimes poor. In no sense could it be called a "modern" work. Yet read on its own terms it is a compelling narrative which moves relentlessly along, carrying the reader to an ending that is not without power in its theatrical tableau where the monster confronts the dead body of his creator.

There have been efforts by some critics to rule out all fiction before this novel as irrelevant. For them, the historical lineage of the field does not proceed in unbroken continuity from Lucian onwards, but miraculously begins in 1818 with *Frankenstein*. Evidence presented in this history clearly disproves any such convenient and simplistic introduction of Mary Shelley as the Holy Mother of Science-Fiction, giving birth to the genre in a literary parallel to the Immaculate Conception. Indeed, the evidence is so conclusive one becomes puzzled. How could such a myth ever get started? I offer one possible source: In her biography *Mary Shelley* (1938) Rose Glynn Gryllis says:

In its erection of a superstructure of fantasy on a foundation of circumstantial "scientific" fact it is the first of the Scientific Romances that have culminated in our day in the work of Mr. H. G. Wells; in this, in this, as in its suggestion of deeper psychological and sociological implications underlying the story, *Frankenstein* marks an advance on the crude horror of the Radcliffe-Monk Lewis school.⁴⁹

This could be the statement that has led some current writers⁵⁰ astray. Gryllis cites no evidence to support her remark; probably *Frankenstein* was simply the earliest example she had found or knew about. But the second part of her statement,

that the work is an advance over purely Gothic novels, strikes close to the heart of truth. *Frankenstein* did successfully incorporate major Gothic elements, including true horror, into a work of science-fiction. In a sense the novel echoes the clash of fictional tradition with freethinking rationalism and an interest in science—all of which were part of the Shelleys' heritage.

Thereafter, an increasing number of horror tales would be buttressed by scientific explanation, including those of Poe, Verne, Wells, Lovecraft and Clark Ashton Smith. Even today, the barrage of monster movies shown in the theatre or on television follow *Frankenstein's* formula in offering some sort of scientific or pseudo-scientific explanation for the existence of the central abnormality. And horror science-fiction did not supercede the interplanetary, lost race, Utopian or other types—it merely enriched the varieties already available.

(to be continued)

NOTES

(35) They appeared from February through July, 1928. The magnificent astronomical cover that Frank R. Paul painted for the opening of the series was so cherished by Gernsback that the original hung framed in his home until his death.

(36) Fantastic stories such as might be told by night around a fire; tales of the unreal.

(37) Until the Hyperion Press of Westport, Conn. in 1974 issued 23 "Classics of Science Fiction" selected by myself, along with six histories and anthologies that I wrote or edited.

(38) Lucian's *True History*, the *Voyages to the Moon and Sun* by de Bergerac, *Robinson Crusoe* by Defoe, *The History of the Sevarites or Severambi* by Denis Vairasse D'Alais, *Gulliver's Travels* by Swift, Simon Berington's *Gaudentio di Lucaa*, *Journey of Niels Klim to the World Underground* of Ludvig Holberg, *Peter Wilkins* by Robert Paltock, Voltaire's *Micromegas* and *Life and Death among the Australians* by Gabriel de Foigny.

(39) It may also have been a trial balloon. Scott's relationship with Ballantyne had long been close—he and the Ballantyne brothers had been schoolmates, he provided them with literary material (and, later, capital), and for a brief time actually ran the publishing house himself.

(40) Its nature can be readily learned from its subtitle: *The History of Autonus. Containing a Relation of how that Young Nobleman Was Accidentally Left Alone, in his Infancy, upon a Desolate Island; where he Lived Nineteen Years, Remote from all Humane Society, 'till taken up by his Father. With an Account of his Life, Reflections, and Improvements in Knowledge During his Continuance in that Solitary State. The Whole, as Taken from his own Mouth.*

(41) Weber's other literary enterprises brought him little income, and this, combined with a proclivity towards alcohol, eventually drove him mad. In 1816 he died in an asylum with Scott (whom he actually once tried to kill) bearing most of the expenses.

(42) The method has been passed down to recent times—for example, pulp magazines of the 1930's like *Horror Stories* and *Terror Tales* regularly printed fiction that suggested the most malign developments (usually accented by an aura of sadistic sex) but almost always wound up with natural explanations.

(43) Accompanied by Jane, who may well have served him as an alternate sex partner. Shelley raised £1200 at about this time to help Godwin out of debt; later some unkind people said that the two daughters were part of the deal.

(44) She had become Byron's mistress, and bore him a daughter, Allegra, in January, 1817.

(45) Much of this information appeared in Mary Shelley's introduction to the sec-

ond edition of *Frankenstein*, where she recorded some things about its origin.

(46) This was published three years later, as I shall later describe.

(47) This could not have been the famous Charles Darwin (1809-1882), but was probably either his great grandfather, Erasmus Darwin (1731-1802), who had been conducting experiments on the cross-fertilization of plants, or the latter's son, Robert Waring Darwin, a physician.

(48) *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, March, 1818.

(49) P. 320.

(50) Such as Brian W. Aldiss, in his *Billion Year Spree* (1973)

—oOo—

Book Reviews

A. Langley Searles

THE PRINCESS OF ALL LANDS by Russell Kirk. Sauk City, Wisconsin: Arkham House Publishers, 1979. viii-238 pp. 19.1 cm. \$8.95

The author of this book, one of Arkham House's finer collections in recent years, is better known as a literary critic and political historian, and his expertise there brings much background to these stories of horror, fantasy and the supernatural. They also reflect his conservative outlook, which frequently gives a tartly pleasant savor. This is most noticeable in "Ex Tenebris" and "Behind the Stumps," where modern social planning and its bureaucracy are delicately mocked. Kirk also claims in his brief introduction that the last three titles—"Balgrummo's Hell," "There's a Long, Long Trail a-Winding" and "Saviourgate"—form an allegory of Dante's Inferno, Purgatory and Paradise. They are neither better nor worse for this added dimension (which I doubt if anyone would have noticed without being told), forming what I might term the "middle cut" of quality in this collection—competently written though a bit obvious in plot; "There's a Long, Long, Trail a-Winding" won the 1977 World Fantasy Award, and to my mind owes more than a little to Kipling's "'They'."

Below these in quality are "Soworth Place," where a haunting is ended as tragically as it was begun; "The Cellar of Little Egypt," a horror story overburdened with local color; "The Last God's Dream," a slight fantasy that is much too long, mannered and talky; and the title tale, which carries the germ of a very good idea, but relies too heavily on coincidence and overdraws one character to the point of caricature.

For all the fastidious care that one can see the author has lavished on what is probably hobby-writing, a few false touches of detail still obtrude—among others, a supposed gourmet who smokes cigars while drinking wine (page 84), shadows which would not appear as described (page 40) and two misquotations (page 63 and page 232) of Wordsworth that are really inexcusable. The Arkham House editor should have caught these, and also advised Kirk that his habit of putting ad-

verbs at the end of sentences ("the door opened creakingly," "not covered over merely," etc.) interrupts the narrative flow, as does the regular appearance of what seems to be his favorite newfangled adjective, "oldfangled." I don't want to overemphasize; the prose here is generally smooth and literate, and contains some very nice touches, too, as when a character disclaims senility but admits to "anecdoteage."

All these faults are surely more than made up for by two stories which are outrightly excellent, "Ex Tenebris" and "Beyond the Stumps." The climax to the latter is not only the most powerful in the volume, but one of the most moving I have read in several years. Both stories gain in their power by careful juxtaposition of their fantastic elements with such realistic everyday detail that you cannot help believing. The English setting of the first tale is particularly effective, and the atmosphere in the second superbly managed.

The typography and design of *The Princess of All Lands* are well above the average of most publishers in the genre, but I wish Arkham would go back to the black cloth they used to use (Holliston Novelex) instead of saving a few pennies by binding their books in its imitation, which is paper-covered cardboard. Joseph Wehrle, Jr. has drawn an attractive frontispiece and jacket for the book, the latter in two colors. On the basis of Kirk's style and his two best stories I consider the collection well worth owning, and recommend it even to those who are primarily readers rather than collectors.

H. P. LOVECRAFT AND LOVECRAFT CRITICISM: AN ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY, edited by S.T. Joshi. Kent, Ohio: The Kent State University Press, 1981. xxxiv-473 pp. 22.2 cm. \$27.50. (No. 38 in the Serif Series)

In 1943 Francis T. Laney and William H. Evans printed the first tentative checklist of Howard Lovecraft's writings, a pamphlet of only a dozen pages. It was not until 1955 that the first extensive bibliography was compiled by George T. Wetzel, whose work ran to three times that length. In the quarter-century that followed various hands have published additions and supplements to Wetzel's work, but not until now have we been able to find all known data, corrected, amplified and updated, edited into a single scholarly volume. Despite all the help for which Joshi gives generous credit, five years of research and hard work went into this book. All serious Lovecraft followers will surely be as ready to welcome it as to wonder that so monumental a task did not need an even longer gestation. Just the proofreading, what with the book's intricate reference system, different type-faces and numberings, must have been a near nightmare!

For all the intricacies involved, the organization is clear, straightforward and logical. There are three categories: "Works by Lovecraft in English," "Works by Lovecraft in Translation" and "Works About Lovecraft." The last is about three-fourths as long as the first—showing that Lovecraft's production will shortly be exceeded by what others have to say about it (indeed, in terms of word-count I suspect this has already happened). Each of these categories in turn is broken down in rational ways. The first, for example, has its own five divisions—Lovecraft's books and pamphlets (did you know the earliest dates from 1915?), his contributions to periodicals, to books by others, items he edited, and "Apocrypha and Other Miscellany" (where you will even find what works he is believed to have destroyed or which have been lost).

We also encounter, conveniently itemized, such separate lists as academic theses, unpublished papers, reviews of Lovecraft's books, what periodicals devoted whole issues to the man, and bibliographies—where the history I have summarized in the first paragraph of this review is amplified item by item. In fact, there are so many good things here that this reference volume can become a trap: an hour after you have verified some point for which you took it off the

shelf you may find yourself still browsing, far from the page of entry.

No less than five indices exist to help locate information, so that if you remember only an author, a title, a periodical appearance or a pseudonym that Howard Lovecraft used, you can usually still locate what you are searching for. That is particularly advantageous because, as Joshi states in his preface, he has not cross-indexed everything.

He has also deliberately left out certain ancillary material—the so-called posthumous collaborations foisted on us by Derleth, tales in the Lovecraft manner by other writers and fussings about *The Necronomicon* (I think this is reasonable), as well as mss. and other unpublished work, phonograph recordings of his stories, parodies of them and their adaptations for other media (which I would have included). Otherwise the scope of this bibliography seems complete through the year 1979, and there are scattered references dated 1980. It would have been useful if the editor had stated somewhere at what point his collecting ceased.

Joshi's point of view throughout is pro-Lovecraft, as would be expected of anyone who was interested enough in the man to expend this much time and effort on him. (I say this descriptively rather than pejoratively; I happen to be pro-H.P.L. myself.) To my mind this partisanship does not unduly distort his annotations. Here and there in the preface, however, are occasional statements that make me uneasy. Did Lovecraft *really* write more letters "than anyone in the history of literature"? Wetzel says that Edward Lucas White wrote more, for example, and he knows both authors well. And weren't the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries full of diligent correspondents? This point certainly deserves at least a footnote telling us what the approximate total of Lovecraft's letters is and who Joshi found follows him in second place. I also doubt if unearthing the totality of Lovecraft's works has been made more difficult because he chose to write mostly fantasy. To me the case seems just the reverse: because the fantasy field during Lovecraft's lifetime was just a handful of periodicals (to only three of which he contributed) it has been *easier* to locate his most important work. What we are missing are chiefly juvenilia—brief items in local newspapers, evanescent amateur journals and the like. Of course it would be nice to know about these, but they can scarcely include any literary gems, and this bibliography is not noticeably harmed by their omission.

We all aim for perfection, and in a work of this scope there are bound to be a few lacunae. In the line of duty I'll cite a few I spotted: *Golden Atom* and *Scienti-Snaps* are totally unrelated periodicals (page 465); the original place of publication of "Lovecraft's Literary Executor" by George Wetzel (page 363) is not cited; and some of the de Camp items (page 303) are actually parts of his biography of Lovecraft and should be so annotated. Lovecraft often used playful or openly pseudonymous names to sign his letters (as "Socrates" to "Xanthippe"); a list of these might usefully be added to the one on page 460. As for typographical errors, I found only two—misspelled words on pages xxi and 408. Finally, while it is convenient to have all the poems to Jonathon Hoag arranged chronologically in one place (pages 127-128), I think it would be tidier if the page and column of each *Troy Times* appearance had been cited as well as the date. But all these are rather trivial matters, mentioned for the record and to help assure a future volume providing addenda, corrections and updating to this one.

It should be mentioned additionally that this work is not a concordance. If you recall no more than a particular sentence or phrase, consulting the book probably wouldn't help you pin down who said it. I picked half a dozen of these at random—ones that stuck in my mind because they were important, pithy, amusing or particularly derogatory and whose authorship I *did* know—and was surprised to find that three had been omitted. All were by well-known names. Well, are you curious to know who said Lovecraft's style always reminded him of a cart-

load of bananas? Or that the Necronomicon mythology "eventually became a millstone around his neck"? Or "that his kind of mind is fundamentally perverse—finicky with the past, childish with the 'made-up,' antagonistic to reality...."? If you are, you will hope with me that Joshi's next project will be a companion volume to the present one that will enable you to look up things like this.

H. P. Lovecraft and Lovecraft Criticism is printed on fine quality paper and sturdily bound, with headbands, in red cloth. It is dedicated, I was pleased to see, to George Wetzel, who has contributed so much and for so long to increasing our knowledge of this once obscure but now well known regional writer. It is a sound and solid work, and I recommend it highly.

—oOo—

Edward Lucas White:

Notes for a Biography

GEORGE T. WETZEL

Part IV

White stated that eight of the ten stories in his book *Lukundoo* were based on his own nightmares. (The ninth story, "Floki's Blade," he is known to have adapted from the nightmare of an acquaintance.) Because of remarks in his letters these eight stories can be identified conclusively. By elimination, then, we know that the one not from a nightmare is "Alfandega 49A." It has a typical White touch: he leaves unexplained the mystery of how a jealous man's rivals fall mysteriously to their deaths from a certain office in a high building.

White wrote friends that this tale contained an accurate description of the Hyett family and their farm, "The Willows," where he spent five summer vacations in 1894-98, and singled out a minor character—Mattie—who in real life was Mary Wickliffe (Hyett) Lee (Mrs. Arthur Lee). Mattie is not described in detail, save to say that was "stout" and "had a face generally expressionless"; no hints of any autobiographical emotional relationship show through. This depiction of her may well have been purposely restrained and indifferent. At the time this story was written Edward White and "Mame" Lee had been friends for nearly twenty years, and one letter he wrote her later hints a romantic involvement once existed between them before his marriage which his wife Agnes knew or suspected. Here he wrote:

...I have never, for any twenty-four hours since we last saw each other, had you out of my mind; never has a day passed

without my thinking of you, generally more than once, always with the warmest admiration and respect. You were a wonderful girl and are an admirable woman. I seldom come home without thinking how the weather is or may be with you, especially at night, when I often conjecture how your home looks under the stars or in the rain and snow. And I think of you often when I wake up at night and when I get up in the morning....

I think that the less frequently we exchange letters the better, for many reasons.

And now farewell. I am pleased that your letter gave me an excuse for writing to you.¹*

Even though White prefaced these words with a long section extolling Agnes's outstanding wifely qualities and a declaration of his own matrimonial happiness—or because he did—it is difficult to equate the feelings in the passage I have quoted with simple friendship alone.

White drew on local color for another of his stories, "Buttermilk Bailey."² Alonzo Peck had been the ward of Zenas Bailey since the age of five. When Peck reached his majority Bailey, who had administered the boy's inheritance, gave him what assets remained, together with an accounting of how much had been spent on board, keep and sundries. Peck contested the validity of many items, and took the matter to court.

Bowden, Peck's lawyer, pointed out the niggardliness of charging his client twenty-five cents for each ride to church, for claiming Peck was responsible when a skunk ruined his Sunday suit, as well as other far-fetched trifles. He finally directed attention to a charge of \$311.88 for buttermilk Peck had drunk over the sixteen-year period. Could a child have a passion for buttermilk that amounted to a vice? No, his guardian had repeatedly told his ward to avoid water as unhealthy. Now buttermilk in that part of the country was regarded as worthless, something to be thrown away or at the most used for animal food. At this point the lawyer rhetorically asked the court what such a miserly man ought to be called—a skinflint? A money-grubber?

As he paused, Peck's fiancée, who had heretofore sat quietly throughout the trial, arose. From a basket she had had on her lap she drew out a vessel and emptied it over the head of the unsuspecting defendant, saying the while, "I baptize you 'Buttermilk Bailey'!"

White claimed the story was based on an actual trial that occurred in Ovid, New York in the 1870's, adding that he had told it as an after-dinner anecdote for some years before writing it. (Ovid is in Seneca County, and White used a fictional Iroquois County in the tale.) Perhaps something like this did happen; but there seems a sublimated hint of the episode I have described earlier where the widow Lucas threatened legal action against Edwards, who had managed her farm dishonestly. Her lawyer was actually named Bodine, while in "Buttermilk Bailey" the lawyer is named Bowdin.²

During the summer of 1909 White wrote "The Whirlpool Gorge," which one modern reader has described as Kiplingesque. This opinion may not be far off the mark when one remembers White's admiration for Kipling's prose and poetry, as well as how the story "Her Majesty's Servants" suggested to him the idea on which "The Ghoul" and "Amina" were based. I find it, however, more suggestive of Dunsany. One doubts that there was an active influence here; not only had very little of Dunsany's fiction appeared at this time, but White does not mention him until ten years later.³

The locale of White's story is a rocky and wooded area in south-central Asia. Two men seek a jewel-encrusted idol which has been washed "from some flood-ravaged temple of some nameless cult in the vast mysterious region known . . . to

*Notes for this article begin on page 74.

all Europeans merely as 'up river';" an idol that has been trapped in the circling debris of an almost inaccessible whirlpool. The place is dangerously close to the territory of a shadowy, sinister race called the Miang-Miangs, who themselves never venture near it for "fear of the nats and phees with which their tribal superstitions people its abysses." Like Dunsany, with an economy of words, hints of the strange, and exotic coined names White creates an ominous atmosphere.

As if the idea had some fascination for him, White wrote that same year three stories about what can befall incautious house-burglars. The first two were attempts at humor, but the third, "The Snout," was much different. It was based on one of his nightmares, experienced after a long nap one February afternoon, which at first he wrote down in scraps.⁴

Three thieves decide to burglarize the mansion of a wealthy but mysterious and solitary recluse named Hengist Eversleigh. In his garden they pass statues of animal-headed humans. Inside the house they see the same abnormality repeated in paintings hanging in a gallery, with a saurian-headed creature appearing most often. When the three encounter a locked door, they pick it. Out of the dark springs Eversleigh, a dwarf with an alligator's head, and clamps his jaws about one thief's throat. (It was the opening of this door that climaxed White's nightmare.) The narrator of the story, when later visiting a museum, notes the resemblance of Eversleigh to an "enigmatical black-diorite twelfth-dynasty statue which represents neither Anubis nor Seth, but some nameless cynocephalus god."⁵

As can be seen from a number of their synopses, White's short fiction, both supernatural and mainstream, is regularly preoccupied with depiction of physical horror. Another example is his unpublished tale "Canea." This is based on a dream he had on September 16, 1909, after returning home from his summer vacation; he wrote most of it, he said, in three days.⁶

A doctor has a patient who falls into a curious stupor after an encounter with something while horseback riding; it is something her horse shies at but which she cannot or refuses to describe. She lingers near death until killing a rat, which screams in her voice as it dies, causes her to recover. The supernatural elements in the story are, as usual, never clearly defined, but the theme seems less one of psychic possession than of absorption of a personality. (If the climax seems brutish and cruel, we should remember that White hated rats; in one letter he related to a friend without a trace of emotion how he trapped a rat in a wash-basin in his cellar and battered it to death with a wire brush.) As it stands "Canea" is also marred by White's tendency to pad, to increase the wordage and thus earn more money. But the story was never bought.

Physical horror is also paramount in "The Buzzards," which contains the unsubtle suggestion of what sky-circling buzzards may have been feasting on—the eyes of a dead man.¹⁵

White's story "Cat and Beefsteak" merits mention as an example of his more successful attempts at both humor and mainstream fiction. Even more important, however, is that it may be the first appearance in print—in fiction, at any rate—of what has become an apochryphal tale in American culture.

A man shoots and kills a neighbor's cat, but dares not bury it or put the body in the garbage lest the deed be discovered. So he wraps it in butcher's paper, and tries unsuccessfully to abandon it in various places on his way to work the next day. Each time a thoughtful stranger hands his package back to him. On the return trip he sits beside another passenger with packages, and again is unsuccessful. Back home, he places his parcel on the mantel. Only later, when his wife compliments him on the fine steak he brought home, does he realize that he and his fellow passenger on the train have exchanged parcels.

When White's agent received the manuscript, he worriedly wrote White that while it was "a distinctly amusing story, do you know where you got the idea?

I have heard the story half a dozen times told to me as an actual experience of a man living within twenty miles of New York...."⁷ White replied, "I came up here June 27th and heard that story the next evening from the wife of one of my cousins; one of her cousins was the wife of the man it happened to...."⁸ It is still alive. I recall being told the story in the 1940's, Searles tells me he read a variation of it in the 1970's, and a recent columnist describes it as follows: "One that appears now and then under exotic datelines is probably immortal. It is the tale of a thief who steals a parcel from a lady; the parcel contains a dead cat she was on her way to bury. Sleepy editors still bite on that one."⁹

Equally amusing and reminiscent of Irvin S. Cobb is White's "An Ovine Misogynist." Farmer Moonset owned a ram that fears men but attacks every woman he sees. An apparent country bumpkin bets Moonset that he can break the animal of this habit if loaned him for two weeks. Moonset accepts. When the ram is returned, he pointedly ignores the farmer's daughter. The bumpkin has accomplished this miracle by dressing a solid gate-post in women's clothing and turning the animal loose; after butting the post numerous times he quits, cured.

Moonset, disbelieving, says it cannot be the same ram. When he tries to examine it, however, it butts him into the mill-race. Then the bumpkin tells the rest of his secret. He has stolen some of the farmer's clothing and draped it on a resilient scarecrow; turned loose, the ram vents its animus on the new target.

XII

White's First Book

For some time Meredith Nicholson, an old acquaintance, had urged White "to get a volume of long poems out and become famous." Though doubting the value of this suggestion he finally began to act on it. During the winter of 1905-1906 he culled from some four hundred poems he had written since 1886 fifteen he felt worthy of publication. To these he added three he had composed in 1905. One of the latter was "The Measure of the Sword," whose idea White said he had carried in his mind for fourteen years. He finally wrote it "in a fury of ecstasy in seven days ending with August 28, 1905; on the night of August 27th Agnes positively protested when for the ninth time I woke her by getting out of bed and lighting the lamp (we were in the country) to write down a stanza which had irresistably formed as I tried to go to sleep."¹⁰

Before she left on June 23, 1906 to chaperone Zoe on her annual summer vacation in New England, Agnes had typed the entire manuscript of this proposed book, which was titled *Narrative Lyrics*. From Boston she later penned a note to her husband, mentioning among other things that she had found exactly the kind of tombstone she wanted for her grave; then she remarked jestingly, "You said your poems will be your monument." Neither was aware of the strange, ironic prophecy in her words.¹¹

White mailed the manuscript to two publishers, both of whom rejected it. He toyed for awhile with the notion of seeking a vanity publisher, but was advised by friends that such an imprint would lessen the book's value. Eventually he submitted it to G. P. Putnam's Co., preferably for sale, but, if rejected, then to be printed at his expense. They agreed to the latter, and the book was issued in September, 1908.¹⁴ White wrote one of his close friends that it had been published "at the expense of my mother who wanted to see a volume of my poems in print." Could her generosity have been prompted by her conscience, in view of her son's never having pressed his valid claim on his father's estate?

To one person White boasted that the poems in the book were some of his best; but a year later—a few months before its publication—he grew dubious

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Open House

Letters From Readers

We hear first from Sam Moskowitz:

I found the remarks of Lincoln Van Rose in your last issue very interesting ("A Few Thorns," pp. 203-204), and I am in a position to shed more light on the subject of F. Orlin Tremaine's familiarity with fantastic literature and his knowledge of H. P. Lovecraft.

With the issue of September, 1921 Bernarr McFadden started a companion magazine to *Physical Culture* titled *Brain Power*. *Physical Culture* dealt with physical fitness and *Brain Power* emphasized improving mental acuity. At that time apparently more people were interested in developing their muscles than in expanding their mental horizons, for the magazine did not last long and never looked prosperous. Two things about it concern us, however. First, with its June, 1922 issue *Brain Power* began a department called "True Ghost Stories," a few of which were admitted to be outright fiction. Second, these were run while the managing editor was F. Orlin Tremaine. (This is confirmed in the "Statement of Ownership" of the magazine—see, for example, that in the June, 1923 issue.)

Now, Tremaine's first name is Frederick, and we find in the October, 1926 issue of *Weird Tales* an 800-word story called "The Throwback," whose author was given as "Orlin Frederick." While editing that magazine I checked its records, and found, as one might suspect, that this was a pen name for Tremaine; the magazine had bought first serial rights from him for ten dollars, and sent the check to 331 West 150th Street, New York City, where he then lived.

"The Throwback" is about a World War I soldier who is periodically overcome by blood-lust and wanders about at night killing humans and animals and rending them apart with his bare hands and teeth. It is well written, and ends simply by saying that the man was killed during the war. I should not be surprised if Tremaine had been writing some of the "true" ghost stories for *Brain Power* himself and that this was one of them still unpublished when the magazine collapsed. Four months later "The Horror at Red Hook" appeared in *Weird Tales*, and there were Lovecraft stories in the two issues preceding it. All this is strong circumstantial evidence that F. Orlin Tremaine was quite familiar with *Weird Tales* magazine and its authors—including, of course, H. P. Lovecraft.

When Tremaine assumed editorship of *Astounding Stories* with its October, 1933 issue the first three numbers were about 50% supernatural stories, including one by Clark Ashton Smith, an author many find as difficult to read as Lovecraft, and he bought another story from Smith when he edited *Comet* in 1941.

In *The Shuttered Room* (1959) by H. P. Lovecraft and Divers Hands, Donald Wandrei has a memoir entitled "Lovecraft in Providence." Here he states that Tremaine asked him how to get in touch with Lovecraft because he had received many letters from readers asking for his stories. Wandrei says that he had read "At the Mountains of Madness" and "The Shadow Out of Time" a year earlier (in manuscript form) and that he recommended them to Tremaine. Wandrei then goes on to say that he brought the mss. personally to Tremaine, who made out vouchers for them the same day and had payment mailed directly to Lovecraft.

There is another version of this sale. When interviewed by Guy H. Lillian III ("Strange Schwartz Stories," printed in the November, 1974 issue of *The Amazing World of DC Comics*, a house organ for the publishers of *Superman* and *Batman*, which Schwartz edits) Julius Schwartz stated that while he was a literary agent specializing in science-fiction (1934-1943) the most important sale he ever made was that of "At the Mountains of Madness" and "The Shadow out of Time," and that Tremaine gave him "a standing order for anything Lovecraft wrote." (There never was anything more, of course, because Lovecraft was upset over changes that Tremaine made in the text of "Mountains," and in any event died only a little over a year later.) Schwartz said his records showed he received a check for "Mountains," deducted his 10% commission, and mailed the balance to Lovecraft. He is unable to find any record of having received a check for "Shadow," although he remembers selling it.

There is no question that Schwartz was Lovecraft's agent. This is attested to by Lovecraft's letter of July 1, 1936 to Farnsworth Wright. And from his December 5, 1935 letter to J. Vernon Shea we know the total amount Lovecraft received for both stories was \$595. In his article Wandrei claimed that Wright had rejected the two; but in his letter of December 15, 1935 to E. Hoffman Price Lovecraft stated that only "Mountains" had been rejected, "Shadow" never having been submitted anywhere.

In an effort to resolve the discrepancies in these two accounts I asked Julius Schwartz to check his records once again. He did, and stated that they showed that "Mountains" was given a word-count of 35,000, that he received \$350 for it, and forwarded \$315 to Lovecraft. Nothing turned up on "Shadow." Schwartz added that in 1935 there were meetings at Donald Wandrei's New York City apartment. It was there, he said, that Wandrei had told him Tremaine was looking for Lovecraft stories; and since Schwartz was already corresponding with Lovecraft, he wrote him for some.

The most likely interpretation, then, is that Schwartz sold one story and Wandrei brought in the other to Tremaine—which agrees with de Camp's version of the matter in his biography of Lovecraft (page 414).

I appreciate the kind review you gave to my *Science Fiction in Old San Francisco*. As you know, these two volumes carried the history up only to 1890. I have started work on a third volume—about 20,000 words are done so far—that I hope will take readers at least to 1900, where the science-fiction vein in that area peters out. Wouldn't it be tidy if the culmination was 1906, the year of the earthquake? Of particular interest should be some new information on the works of Ambrose Bierce. I uncovered the original magazine and newspaper printings of some of his most famous stories, most of which are unknown to present critics. Comparison of the original texts with those appearing in book form show many changes. In fact, Bierce's two most famous books, *In the Midst of Life* (originally titled *Tales of Soldiers and Civilians*) and *Can Such Things Be?* themselves underwent numerous changes in content. Most of these seem unnoticed by his biographers, who credit Bierce with brilliant stories claimed to have appeared as long as five years before they actually were written! All this makes a point that should certainly be stressed in classes on literary criticism: if you don't know the original date of publication and original text of a work you place yourself in great jeopardy when commenting on it.

There are couple of things of interest about *The Overland Monthly* that I don't believe I mentioned in my book. The editor who replaced Bret Harte was Benjamin P. Avery. He was originally a miner, liked poetry, and authored several volumes of it. In 1875 he was appointed Minister to China. Another who served as an associate editor in the magazine's early period was William B. Bartlett. A number of his essays appeared in *The Overland Monthly* and later were collected in book form. After he left he made a career for himself as a newspaperman.

It may interest your readers to learn that I have completed a volume of biography and marginalia titled *A. Merritt: Reflections in the Moon Pool*. It contains previously unpublished stories and fragments by Merritt, including 28 uncollected poems, 60 letters that cover the period from 1924 to his death, ten essays and sixteen pages of photographs, most of them previously unpublished. The biography runs to 50,000 words, and contains much information I have never before seen in print. It helps clarify the history of science-fiction during the 1920's, much of which has been a murky area up to now, and from discussion of Hugo Gernsback's relationship with Merritt a more positive view of the former's role in creating the movement towards modern science-fiction emerges than anyone would have given him credit for. The book has a four-color cover-jacket by Stephen Fabian, and is being published early in 1983 by Oswald Train, 1129 West Wingohocking St., Philadelphia, Pa. 19140; it will probably be priced at \$15.

The following remarks by Kenneth Faig, Jr. have been reprinted, with his permission, from his journal Tekeli-Li #6, p. 8:

The revival of *Fantasy Commentator* has been a continuing delight to me, but I do think Lincoln Van Rose is a bit harsh on S. T. Joshi's book *Four Decades of Lovecraft Criticism*—although as a contributor to it myself my view is naturally biased. (By the way, the errors of usage and spelling which Mr. Van Rose points out are undoubtedly my fault: I'm terrible at this stuff!) Joshi reprints many of the most famous pieces of writing on Lovecraft, and I for one am certainly grateful to have these in one convenient volume. There are surely many worthy selections which were omitted, and I wish Mr. Van Rose had given his own list of the best of these in his review. I agree with him entirely about the merit of Matthew Onderdonk's contributions. I do feel, however, that the postscript regarding Mr. Joshi's motivation for assembling the book is unfair. Virtually every author and editor must derive gratification from publication, and a lengthy record will certainly not harm Mr. Joshi's academic *vita*. But since his field of study has been the Greek and Roman classics, I question how much writings about Lovecraft will accelerate his career. I have a final comment on one item in the collection: I think the value of J. Vernon Shea's essay lies in its breadth. He discusses most of Lovecraft's reading in fantasy and the supernatural and lays out general points of similarity, pointing the way toward finer, more technical analyses.

I hope the review of Joshi's Lovecraft bibliography in this issue is more pleasing to Mr. Faig! . . . We hear next from T. G. Cockcroft:

I thought it would be useful to Lovecraft researchers to have a list of the payments he received for all his major stories. Amounts for only ten of the seventeen shown in the adjoining column are cited by de Camp in his biography; that for "The Lurking Fear" is revealed in Lovecraft's letter to Talman of April, 1928 (#325 of the *Selected Letters*); the others (marked here with an asterisk) appear never to have been published. (I am grateful to Sam Moskowitz for furnishing these, and for checking the accuracy of all the others.)

Lovecraft is said to have been one of *Weird Tales'* highest paid writers, but for several reasons it is

"The Outsider"	* \$25
"The Colour out of Space"	25
"The Call of Cthulhu"	165
"The Lurking Fear"	78
"The Silver Key"	70
"The Dunwich Horror"	240
"The Whisperer in Darkness"	350
"The Strange High House in the Mist"	55
"In the Vault"	55
"The Dreams in the Witch House"	140
"Through the Gates of the Silver Key"	140
"At the Mountains of Madness"	350
"The Shadow Out of Time"	280
"The Hunter of the Dark"	* 90
"The Thing on the Door-Step"	* 115
"Psychopompos"	* 25
"The Shunned House"	* 110

difficult to calculate exactly how much per word he got. To do so we must know how many words the editors believed were in each story—presumably what Lovecraft put on his mss. Such figures will probably differ from the *exact* wordage (which nobody has ever actually counted), as well as from what others might estimate. Few of these needed figures have been published, and may remain unobtainable; they are not always noted in the magazine's original records. However, what rough figures we do have show that Wright always paid Lovecraft at least a cent a word, and at times about a cent and a half. Sam Moskowitz has confirmed this with a couple of examples: de Camp counts 8000 words in "The Lurking Fear," but Wright counted 7800 and paid a cent a word; the editorial count for "In the Vault" was 3500 words, and this is over a cent and a half.

Glenn Lord told me that Robert E. Howard was paid only \$80 for his "Red Shadows" (*Weird Tales*, August, 1928); on the basis of length, this is about half the rate Lovecraft received for "The Dunwich Horror." But Robert Weinberg states (*The Weird Tales Story*, page 41) Thomas Kelley was paid \$700 for "The Last Pharaoh." If you work out rates from their lengths, it turns out Kelley got more per word than Lovecraft!

(concluded on page 43)

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"Edward Lucas White"—continued from page 70

and confided to another friend that they were "not the very best I have written." In the summer of 1909 he admitted to his sister that the book was "a failure for the time being."¹² In time Putnam's came to the same conclusion, only 78 copies having been sold in two years. The plates were melted down and the remaining 289 copies sent to the disappointed author, who could use them only as gifts.¹³

(to be continued)

NOTES

- (1) Letter, E. L. White to "Mame" (Mrs. Arthur Lee), Dec. 11, 1921.
- (2) This appeared in *The Popular Magazine*, August, 1907.
- (3) Letter, E. L. White to Paul Lamerly, Oct. 18, 1919. "The Whirlpool Gorge" appeared in *Sunset Magazine* (August, 1910).
- (4) Letter, E. L. White to Meredith Nicholson, May 15, 1909.
- (5) It is possible that White had heard and was influenced by the Glamis legend. This tells of an ageless, monstrous, Batrachian-like ancestor of the Strathmore family, who was hidden away in a secret room of Glamis Castle for several hundred years. Maurice Sandoz's novel *The Maze* (1945) was based on this account. "The Snout" was first published in *Lukundoo*.
- (6) Letter, E. L. White to Joe (Joseph A. White), Dec. 5, 1909.
- (7) Letter, Paul R. Reynolds to E. L. White, July 17, 1911.
- (8) Letter, E. L. White to Paul R. Reynolds, July 18, 1911.
- (9) John L. Hess, "Chocolate Chip Fib," *The Baltimore Morning Sun*, Nov. 12, 1980. White's story appeared in *The New York Evening Post*, Oct. 5, 1912, under the title "The Cat that Didn't Come Back."
- (10) Letter, E. L. White to Carpenter, June 24, 1906. Foster Damon once said, "The best poems are those you get out of bed to write."
- (11) Letter, Agnes White to E. L. White, July 5, 1906.
- (12) Letter, E. L. White to Ethel White, Aug. 17, 1909.
- (13) Letters, G. P. Putnam's Co. to E. L. White, Aug. 17 and 22, 1910.
- (14) Letter, E. L. White to G. P. Putnam's Co., March 24, 1908.
- (15) This story was published in *The Bellman* for July 25, 1908.

