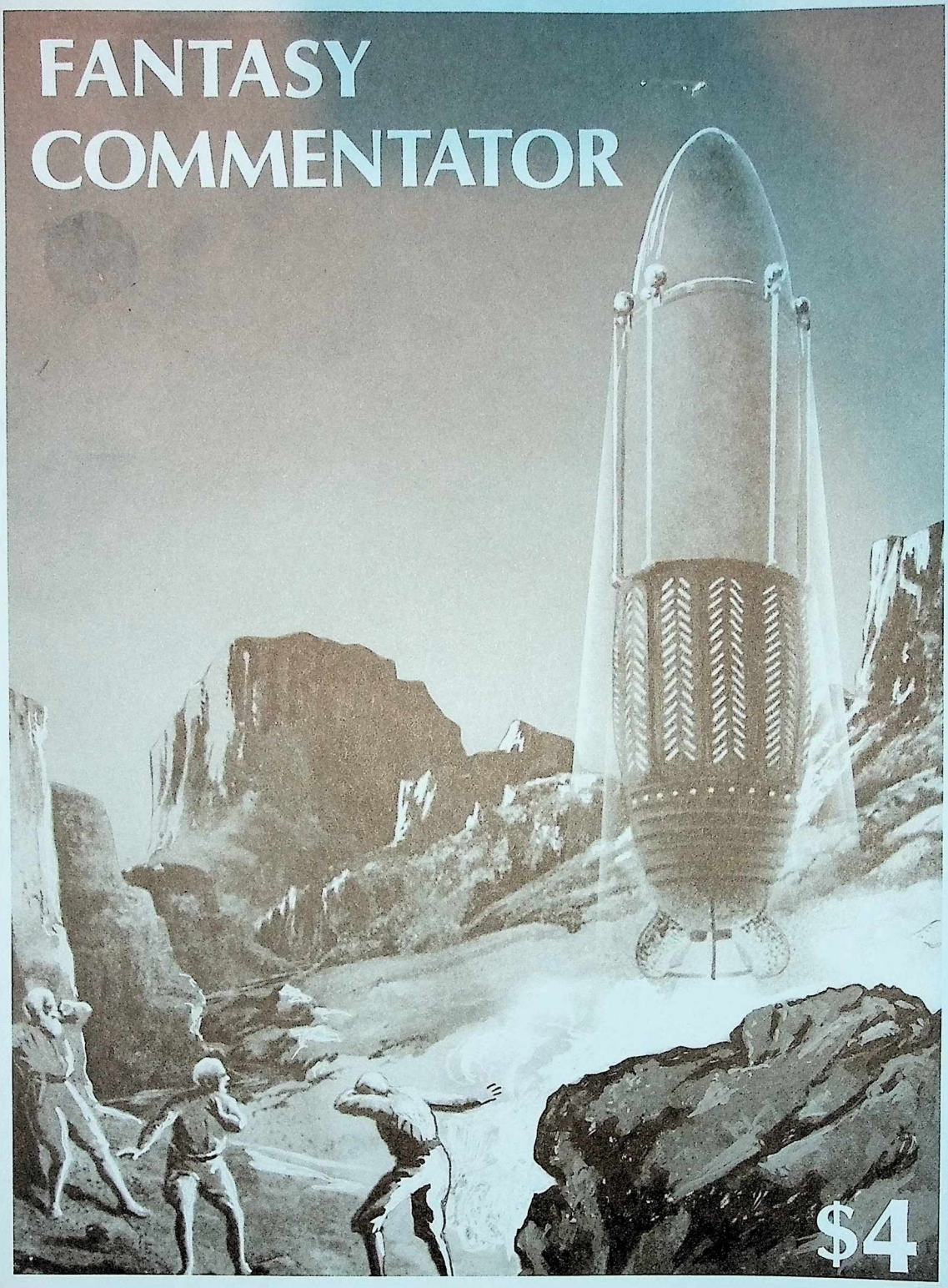
FANTASY COMMENTATOR



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The cover, which illustrates "The Green Splotches" by T. S. Stribling, is from a photograph of that on the March 1927 issue of *Amazing Stories* magazine. It has been retouched by the artist, Frank R. Paul, for monochrome reproduction.

Fantasy Commentator

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Vol. VI, No. 4 —oOo— Winter 1989-90

Articles

Verse

Regular Features

This is the fortieth number of *Fantasy Commentator*, a periodical devoted to articles, reviews and verse in the area of science-fiction and fantasy, published semi-annually. Subscription rate: $4 per copy, four copies for $15. All the opinions expressed herein are the individual contributors' own, and do not necessarily reflect those of the editor or the staff as a whole. Accepted material is subject to editorial revision if necessary. Unless correspondents request otherwise, communications of general interest received may be excerpted for the letters column.

T. S. Stribling, Subliminal Science-Fictionist

Sam Moskowitz

I

T. S. Stribling's "The Green Splotches" is one of the most unusual novelettes of science-fiction ever published. For the year in which it first appeared its subject-matter was incredibly advanced, its off-beat philosophy contemporaneous with Charles Fort's, and its writing distinctly superior. This last is not surprising, since Stribling was destined to win the Pulitzer Prize in 1933 for his novel *The Store*.

Veteran readers of science-fiction will remember the story for its stunning cover illustration on the March 1927 number of *Amazing Stories*, which depicts a space ship standing on end and taking off just as today's advanced rockets do.[1]* Hugo Gernsback called "The Green Splotches" "a perfect example of scientifiction," and predicted that it would be the readers' favorite story in the issue.[2] That was a bold statement for an editor to make, since this issue of the magazine also contained A. Merritt's superlative tale "The People of the Pit" and a 40,000-word installment of one of Edgar Rice Burroughs's finest novels, "The Land That Time Forgot."

But "The Green Splotches" is indeed an excellent story. Three members of the DeLong Geographical Expedition approach the prefect of a Peruvian province for assistance in getting guides to explore the valley of the Rio Infernillo. This area is so feared by the natives that only by reprieving murderers Cesare Ruano and Pablo Pasca from their death sentences can "volunteers" be found.

Several nights out Pethwick, one of the American geographers, asks linguist Demtriovich how likely it would be for two meteorites to strike exactly the same spot on two nights in succession. A bit of calculation produces the probability of one chance in eight trillion. That means the objects they have seen may well not be meteorites.

As the party moves closer to its destination, the trail is blocked by a barrier of skeletons of various creatures, including one of a man, all articulated. They seem to be arranged in order of their evolutionary development. The guide Ruano displays the most competence in confronting this chilling sight, so he is given a rifle. He sees a man on the nearby hill ahead and fires at him. Not sure if he has merely wounded him, he sets out alone to investigate. When he does not return the other members of the party follow, and as they reach the rocks where the man was standing they see splotches of green liquid on the ground. An analysis of the liquid reveals that it is chiefly chlorophyll.

Further on they find a fully roasted rabbit above the vent of an ancient volcano, but there is no sign that the volcano has been active for many years. What seems to be a second moon glares in the sky, obviously not the real moon, for that is visible as a pale crescent a little distance away.

When Demetriovich and Pethwick return to camp and reenter their tent they find Standifer, the third member of the expedition, looking very smug. "I've

*Notes for this article begin on page 294.

sold one of my books!" he announces. Standifer had written a scholarly work titled *The Reindeer of Iceland* and brought several copies with him. He wandered several miles from camp, he said, and met an Indian. The fellow quickly picked up English and exchanged some pure gold for a copy of *The Reindeer of Iceland.* The native also told him that chlorophyll was used in the smelting of gold, that what appeared to be a second moon was the light from a smelter, and that the missing Ruano was now working there. Standifer said the Indian had promised to come to their camp and buy the remaining copies of his book. "I wish I had brought more," he remarks.

The next morning Pethwick and Demetriovich are shocked to find that Standifer has visibly aged; his hair has whitened and he has a bad burn on his leg next to the pocket where he kept the gold he got for his book.

The Indian arrives in the camp. He is also amazed at the change in Standifer, and reveals to have with him a piece of radium which has made the gold radioactive, but which has apparently not injured him. The "Indian" has a yellowish skin under a coating of red, uses a number instead of a name to identify himself, and claims he can read minds. His identification number is so long that they call him Mr. Three for convenience. He seems to regard the scientists with great condescension. In his place of origin all speak by "mentage," and atomic-mechanics have made necessary the procurement of radium for fuel. Chess is too elementary a game for him.

Pablo returns, and confides to the Americans that the stranger is wearing the other guide's clothes. When confronted, he admits to having killed Ruano, and they handcuff him to a chair in the tent, a process to which he submits quite amiably. There is a sudden disturbance among the pack animals, and when these are quieted they return to the tent to find nothing but Ruano's clothes and an empty red skin on the chair. Their captive has disappeared.

Then an incredible variety of animals, some rarely seen, move swiftly through the area in a purposeful exodus. A group of yellow men with flashing metallic objects in their hands follow. Among them is Mr. Three, whom they recognize by his head being still red though the rest of his naked body is yellow. In his hand he carries what he calls a focussing rod, which concentrates wireless power to paralyze living creatures by an electric shock. Mr. Three tells them that his people are selecting an example of every species to take back to their world, and that one of their party will be chosen as a representative human——preferably a brown one because those seem more humanoid than whites, being closer to the yellow color of Mr. Three. The scientific body is herded along until

> Not more than three hundred yards distant rose an enormous structure in the shape of a Zeppelin. It required a second glance to observe this fact as the huge creation stood on its end instead of lying horizontal as do the ordinary flying ships . . . . It was some 750 feet high, an amazing skyscraper of silver . . . shored up with long metal rods anchored in the earth. The rods, some one hundred feet long, were inserted in the airship just where its great barrel began to taper to its stern . . . . Five hundred feet up the side of the cylinder Pethwick noticed the controlling planes, which look exceedingly small for so vast a bulk . . . .
>
> "Do you realize," said Pethwick, "what their small size indicates? The speed of this ship through the air must be prodigious if these tiny controls grip the air with sufficient leverage to direct this monster . . . ." Then the old scientist went on to commend the novel idea of landing the dirigible on her stern. It did away with wide maneuvering to gain altitude. This aluminum dirigible could drop into a hole slightly larger than her own diameter and launch out of it straight at the sky. It was an admirable stroke.

The yellow men select Pablo as their specimen, and after a struggle pack him into the ship. Then:

> Quite suddenly from where the stern of the Zeppelin nested on the ground there broke out a light of insufferable brilliancy. A luminous gas seemed to boil out in whirls of furious brightness. It spread everywhere and in its radiance the great ship stood out in brilliant silver from stem to stern.
>
> In that fulgor Pethwick saw the restraining rods cast off and the dirigible . . . mounted straight into the green heart of the evening sky . . . . Within

> half a minute its light was reduced from the terrific glare of a furnace to the glow of a headlight, and then to a radiance like that of a shooting star against the darkening eastern sky.

The story concludes with a monograph prepared by Pethwick which summarizes the conclusions to be drawn from the expedition's observations. These are as follows:

(1) There seems no doubt that the strange creatures can read minds.

(2) Their purpose on Earth was to mine radium, and since there was no other apparent source of power for their ship it must be assumed that "a powerful emanation of radium from under its stern shot the great metal cylinder upward exactly as powder propels a skyrocket."

(3) With such a power source "the only conclusion to be drawn from this is that at the time of the light's extinction the mysterious metal cylinder was hurtling through space at the speed of light itself; that is to say, at a speed of one hundred and eighty-six thousand miles per second."

(4) At this rate of speed the vessel had to be out in space and accelerating away from the Earth.

(5) This velocity was attained by "the reaction of radium upon sunlight," a combination of light-pressure and thrust. Therefore speed in excess of light's may have been attained.

(6) "At such a rate a journey even to one of the fixed stars would be within the realm of possibility." The ship was probably an *interstellar* vessel stopping on Earth to obtain more fuel.

(7) The immediate destination of the ship may have been one of the larger planets, like Jupiter; because of the strangers' smaller size and great agility they might be more comfortable on a planet with a greater gravitational pull.

(8) The serial number of Mr. Three was very large. This suggests a densely populated home planet where all other forms of life had been crowded out, which in turn would explain their taking along samples of our own animal species.

(9) The reason splotches of green were found when one of the creatures was wounded is that their blood contains chlorophyll instead of hemoglobin. They are not mammals but mobile humanoid plants which obtain their energy from the sun.

(10) They took along only one specimen of each animal because they are not familiar with mammalian reproduction, and assumed that these would reproduce as do plants.

It would have been uncommon to find this many advanced hypotheses even in a science-fiction magazine at that time. But "The Green Splotches" was a reprint! It had first appeared as the leading story in the January 3, 1920 issue of *Adventure*, when there were no science-fiction magazines. The leading exponents of the genre then were *Argosy-All Story Weekly*, *Science and Invention* and *Physical Culture*. Indeed, *Adventure* had a policy of excluding fantastic fiction from its pages; some lost race tales were the closest it came to printing science-fiction. Consequently it had to explain this departure from its usual precept.

This was done by describing "The Green Splotches" as an "Off-the-Trail story." The contents-page of the magazine explained this term: "Occasionally one of our stories will be called an 'Off-the-Trail' story, a warning that it is in some way different from the usual magazine stories, perhaps a little different, perhaps a good deal. It may violate a canon of literature or a custom of the magazine, or merely be different from the type usually found in this magazine. The difference may lie in unusual theme, material, ending, or manner of telling. No question of relative merit is involved."

There can be no doubt as to *why* *Adventure* had made an exception to its policy. "The Green Splotches" was clearly outstanding, combining adventure, mystery, suspense, fine dialog, biting satire, philosophic asides and frequent wit, so that its superlative scientific speculations were not overriding. The really puzzling question is how did a writer like T. S. Stribling, with no apparent his-

tory of interest in the field, come to write a landmark work of science-fiction?

There is no clue in the relatively few biographical and autobiographical sketches of him, none of which even mention this story. Wilton Eckley, author of the only detailed biography of the man (*T. S. Stribling* [1975], does not list "The Green Splotches" in his bibliography of the author's magazine appearances (he leaves out numerous other stories also), which is surprising, since he credits both Stribling and his wife for assistance. In fact, he seems to avoid the issue by not discussing *any* of the shorter pieces of fiction. One may regard this as a serious error, because there is much evidence to support nominating "The Green Splotches" as Stribling's best short work.[3]

The date it was actually written is of prime importance in determining how it came to be written. This would tell us whether it was an earlier work, purchased only because the author had begun to build his reputation, or was actually a current one reflecting his contemporary opinions. Fortunately the date is supplied by the text. Demetriovich states, "If the Germans could synthesize the sun's energy and transform it directly into food, they would certainly be in a position to bid again for world dominion." That statement establishes that the story could have been written only in 1919, after the end of World War I, and sold to *Adventure* in the same year. It also establishes that the concepts expressed must have been Stribling's at the time of composition and publication.

At the same period, Stribling's humorous short story, "The Passing of the St. Louis Bearcat," appeared in the December 1919 number of *Everybody's* magazine. Ten years earlier *Everybody's* had been one of America's leading mass-market publications, but it had been on the decline since the outbreak of the war. The important point here is that it was put out by The Ridgeway Publishing Company, the same firm that published *Adventure*.

Adventure then enjoyed the reputation of being the country's number one pulp magazine. It appeared semimonthly, and was soon to increase its frequency to three times a month. It paid authors a minimum of two cents a word, and up to ten cents according to reputation and quality of the submission. This made it a favored market in terms of both payment and prestige, which was why its famous editor, Arthur Sullivant Hoffman, was consistently able to secure high quality contributions.[4]

Stribling had previously sold fiction to both *Adventure* and *Everybody's*, and doubtless submitted "The Green Splotches" to the former because of its excellent rates. He was then 38, and although he had many sales to his credit, he had not yet hit his full stride as an author.

Now in November 1919 The Ridgeway Company started a third magazine which, despite its undeniable excellence and the fact that it was a companion to *Adventure*, is virtually unknown today. It was titled *Romance*. The title was a double entendre. Originally the word "romance" meant adventure, often with an interwoven love story. But by the end of World War I that meaning had been almost lost except in dictionaries; the public equated romance to love stories. (In fact, after Bernarr Macfadden's *True Story* magazine scored a great success in 1919, he issued a companion, which is still being published today, titled *True Romances*, and nobody thought it contained anything but love stories.)

As a matter of policy *Adventure* bought stories with no love interest at all. Its appeal was predominately to men. *Romance* bought the same type of stories, except that an added love-interest was not only acceptable but desirable. The magazine was a pulp, appeared monthly, and had a price (20¢), size and typeface identical to that of *Adventure*. Editorially it asserted a policy of developing new writers, but opened with serialization of novels by Joseph Conrad ("The Rescue") and Talbot Mundy ("The Eye of Zeitun"), both established authors.

The very month that *Adventure* ran "The Green Splotches" as the leading novelette *Romance* featured Stribling's "Tiger Lure" as its opening story. Since

Romance was also edited by Hoffman, he must certainly have been taken by Stribling. He had every justification, since the story was colorfully written, conveying the atmosphere of the Venezuelan tropics superbly. The characters are sharply cut and distinguishable. The protagonist is an American named LeFever, who traps and studies exotic birds. He is staying with a linguist, who is hiding out after committing a political murder. The linguist has a sixteen year old daughter whose kidnapping has been unsuccessfully attempted by a one-eyed trapper, Jesu Diabolo. The American falls in love with the girl, and they plan to marry. But Diabolo, who is skilled at formulating ways to attract game, plans revenge. He manages to coat the soles of the girl's shoes with a scent attractive to jaguars, so that she will be stalked and killed by one of these beasts. He is initially successful, but the girl falls into the hollow interior of a great tree when she is attacked; and since a jaguar does not follow up if its first assault fails, she escapes unharmed and the story comes to a happy ending.

However, there is a hint in this novelette of the introspection which might form the basis of a philosophical science-fiction plot. It occurs when the American discovers that his bird-traps have been robbed, and he muses on the value of his work:

> Did a slowly accumulating catalog of facts lead anywhere? Indeed, did man's whole life and works have any significance at all? The thought stretched out and out.
>
> What excuse had man for all his tremendous pride? What real difference was there between me and Jesu Diabol and the gaudy heron in the mold, or even the coroner beetle, laying eggs in the dead meat? Were we not all little vital mechanisms, evolved with prodigal purposelessness by the steaming painted jungle around us?

This was Stribling's first story in *Romance* magazine which, despite its high level of quality, did not survive the year; it suspended publication with the October 1920 number after publishing just twelve issues.

II

Most of the printed details of Stribling's life up to 1919——and even afterwards——derive from a single source, his long entry in *Twentieth Century Authors* (1942), edited by Stanley J. Kunitz and Howard Haycraft. Even Wilton Eckley's 1975 biography, the only book on this author, or Edward Pracentino's more recent short analysis,[5] add very little. Neither has *Twentieth Century Authors* in its list of references (though it is obviously the primary source), and neither seems to have any knowledge of Stribling's brief autobiographical sketch that appeared in *Argosy* magazine.[6] Few other sources of information exist.

What is known about Thomas Sigismund Stribling can be set forth briefly. He was born on March 4, 1881 in Clifton, Tennessee, the son of Christopher Columbus and Amelia Annie (Waits) Stribling. Part of his upbringing was on the plantation of an uncle and aunt near Florence, Alabama. He showed literary proclivities as early as the age of twelve, when he sold a story, "The House of the Haunted Shadows," for five dollars to a grocery paper whose name has been lost. Under pressure from his parents, who wanted him to be a lawyer, he took courses at the University of Alabama leading to an LL.B. degree in 1904. A year's practice in Florence, however, convinced him he was unfitted to continue law. He then worked in a menial capacity in Nashville on the *Taylor-Trotwood Magazine.* On the side he found he could sell regularly to the Sunday School magazine market, and at least partially from these earnings, spent almost eight years moving about Europe and South America, where he got the background for many stories. By 1917 Stribling had settled back in the United States as a reporter for *The Chatanooga News*, and was selling to *American Boy* and *Adventure*. His first book, *The Cruise of the Drydock*, appeared in the same year. He spent 1918 as a stenographer in the Aviation Bureau in Washington, D. C. By 1919, at the age of 38, he was

already making a serious bid for the national recognition which he was to achieve in the next decade.

Arthur Sullivant Hoffman is a name that became synonymous with the success of *Adventure*, but it is obvious that from the time the magazine went semi-monthly, printing over 125,000 words in each issue, no one man could be handling the entire job by himself. One of the *Adventure* staff readers at that time was Joseph Cox. In his biography, Eckley notes that Cox was a friend of Stribling. Just before his trip to South America Stribling completed *Birthright*, his first major novel, and brought the ms. to Cox to show around. Stribling's hopes were realized, for while still in South America he received word that *Century Magazine* wanted to buy the story.[7]

Century had once been the leading magazine in America. It had reached its peak early in the 1890's, and since then had suffered a long, slow decline as *Munsey's*, *Cosmopolitan* and *McClure's* began offering superb value for only ten cents, on the correct theory that mass circulation would bring them profitable supporting advertising. By 1921, when it published Stribling's novel, it was still, in terms of quality of content and illustration, one of the best magazines in the country; but it was losing money and finding it difficult to compete even with magazines in its own class, such as *Harper's* and *Scribner's*. Like many of its competitors *Century* also ran a book-publishing business, and after serialization it brought *Birthright* out in hard covers. The novel was a psychological, sociological and economic appraisal of the pressures on a highly educated negro in the Old South, who despite prodigious efforts finds that he does not fit in either with negroes or white men. Circumstances with which he is powerless to cope eventually defeat him.

Perhaps unwittingly, Joseph Cox played a pivotal role in Stribling's career. He understood the magazine market well enough to know that *Birthright* would never fit in any pulp magazine, where Stribling evidently visualized placing it. The plot turned entirely on race relations, and though honest, its sympathies were openly with the negro, so it would not be welcome below the Mason-Dixon line. At that very time, in fact, the South was intensifying its Jim Crow laws so that they were becoming more stringent than at any period since the Civil War. That meant any periodical printing the novel could expect to have subscriptions cancelled and be censored by Southern newsdealers and magazine distributors. Indeed, it was arguable whether any book company, let alone a magazine, would welcome as startlingly frank, provocative and obviously authentic a presentation of race relations in the South as was in *Birthright*——least of all the rather conservative *Century*, with its elite though dwindling circulation.[8]

That Stribling's novel found a home there was due to *Century's* forward-looking editor, Glenn Frank. Frank had come to the magazine in 1919, at the age of thirty-two, with a background of journalism and four years as assistant to the president of Northwestern University. He had been promoted to the editorial seat in 1921, and was writing a regular feature for *Century* titled "The Tide of Affairs." A segment in that column for May 1921, "The Black Ambassador," ran as follows:

> Charles Gilpin, negro actor, has made himself a sort of black ambassador to the sane America that is equally impatient with the white provokers of race hatred and the Du Bois type of colored leadership that batters itself into passionate rhetoric against the walls of racial integrity. . . . His acting [in Eugene O'Neill's *The Emperor Jones*] proved an artistic triumph. The Drama League planned its annual dinner in honor of the ten persons who had contributed most to dramatic art during the year. Voting had hardly begun before it was evident that Charles Gilpin would be among the artists chosen. Then someone put through the suggestion that Gilpin would not be invited to the dinner even if he were chosen by vote. Immediately, the leading artists of the theatre protested. Gilpin was finally invited. . . . It is in this spirit that Charles Gilpin is one of the black ambassadors, bringing the appeal of negro usefulness and attainment to the decency and sense of fair play that we like to think characterize America.[9]

That was clearly Cox's cue to submit *Birthright* to *Century Magazine.* Frank's offer to purchase it followed Stribling to Trinidad, and he accepted via a cable to Cox. Serialization of the novel began in the October 1921 issue and was concluded in that of April 1922. It was then brought out as a book. Critics immediately recognized it as probably the first truly realistic novel of the negro in the history of American publishing, and certainly one of the most effective and readable. The contrast between the highly imaginative yet strongly scientifically based situations in "The Green Splotches" and the authentically grim, earthy situations in *Birthright* is so great that they scarcely seem to have been written by the same person. A synopsis of the latter shows the gulf between them.

The protagonist is Peter Siner, a mulatto graduate of Harvard University. As the novel opens he is returning to Hooker's Bend, Tennessee, the backward southern village where he was born and reared and where his mother, an obese, elderly woman, still lives in an unhealthy poverty that raises the question of how she ever raised the money she sent him periodically to help him though college.

Stribling's description of the contemporary surroundings in the "Ni[redacted]r-town" section, as well as the whole area's life-style and traditions, rears as large as the characters. The blacks in Ni[redacted]rtown have no electricity, gas, central heating, running water or decent sanitary facilities; they are second-class citizens in every meaning of the term. But the whites seem going nowhere either; progress has passed by Hooker's Bend and left them in a decadent backwater with nothing to look forward to. Local injustice to the negro has been formalized to the extent that both whites and blacks accept it as "the way things have always been." Few blacks show any ambition beyond day-to-day existence.

When Siner arrives in town he is treated like a celebrity, for an "educated n[redacted]r," especially one with a Harvard degree, is a rare person indeed; but he finds a musical chorus that strikes up when he docks at Hooker's Bend is there not for him but for Tump Pack, a negro who has received the Medal of Honor for bravery in World War I for bayonetting to death four Germans. The wonder to all the negroes is not so much his bravery but the fact that the government would hand out a medal to a black man for killing four *white* men! This anomaly is as difficult for them to understand as Einstein's theory of relativity.

Siner has an oral agreement to buy a tract of land on which he hopes to begin an educational institute for negroes along the lines of Tuskegee Institute. Any standing his education has given him disappears, however, when he actually signs this agreement without bothering to read it carefully. One of its clauses prohibits use of the land for the establishment of any place to educate negroes. As a result, Siner cannot solicit further contributions to pay for the land, loses his down payment, and the bank places a lien on all his possessions and those of his mother. He becomes an object of ridicule by both blacks and whites. To add further to his problems, his criticizing his mother for penny-pinching habits she has clung to all her life for survival is regarded by her as condescension brought about by higher education. She too berates his stupidity in the land deal, and tearfully regrets the years of self-sacrifice in sending a fool to college.

Cissie Dildine, an attractive negress who is known as Tump Pack's girl friend, becomes acquainted with Peter and his mother. She too has been educated out of town and feels misplaced in her surroundings. Peter feels attracted to her but Peter's mother strongly opposes any association for reasons she will not reveal. Pack, jealous of the growing relationship between Cissie and Peter, attacks him but is beaten. He then obtains a gun and begins to stalk Peter.

Peter arrives home late one evening to find his mother seriously ill. The white doctor refuses to come because Peter's mother owes him five dollars. Heading back to his mother's cabin to see if there is any money he passes the home of old Captain Renfrew and remembers his mother having told him that if he were ever in trouble to enlist his aid. To his amazement he is treated with the utmost

kindness by the former lawyer and believer in the Confederate cause. Renfrew seems to know that he is a Harvard graduate, and reveals he is one himself. He calls the doctor and arranges for him to pick up the two of them and drive to Peter's home.

Renfrew shows unusual solicitude for the old negro woman, who calls him "Mas Milt" and unburdens her distress at her son's attitude towards her. Renfrew remains while the doctor treats her; taking Peter aside he says, "I hope you'll be careful of Caroline's feelings if she ever gets up again. She has been very faithful to you, Peter."

The doctor misdiagnoses the old woman and treats her for malaria. Actually she has a severe case of food poisoning, and dies that night from its effects. Peter proposes marriage to Cissie and asks her to go north with him, but for some mysterious reason she refuses him.

At this point old Captain Renfrew astonishes Peter by offering him a full-time position, with board, to act as his secretary. This would involve transcribing his manuscripts, cataloging his library, briefing him on important material in the current journals and doing other odds and ends. He wants Peter to remain with him as long as he lives, for he has a fear of collapsing alone in the house and being found dead on the floor. In exchange Peter will also receive a substantial portion of his estate for, as he says, "I am the last Renfrew of *my race*, Peter."

Peter accepts, but soon becomes restless in his duties. When he talks of leaving, the old man reveals that he was the one who advanced his mother the money to help his college education. Though never stated explicitly, the inference is now clear: Renfrew is Peter's father. So Peter stays on.

One day Cissie stops by to speak with him privately. She asks him to marry her and take her away. But Peter turns her down, for he has come to feel that he has a higher calling: that of getting whites to treat and pay their colored help better in exchange for getting the negroes to agree not to steal from their employers. One of the first merchants he approaches with this proposition is Mr. Killibrew, a grocer who has a philosophy of never either trusting or cheating a negro, and who has prospered by it. After hearing Peter out he replies:

> "Now let me see," he proceeded, recurring pleasantly to what he recalled of Peter's original proposition. "Aunt Becky sent you here to tell me if I'd raise her pay, she'd stop stealin' and——and raise some honest children." Mr. Killibrew threw back his head and broke into loud, jelly-like laughter. "Why, don't you know, Peter, she's an old liar. If I gave her a hundred a week, she'd steal. And children! Why, the old humbug! She's too old; she's had her crop. And, besides all that, I don't mind what the old woman takes. It isn't much. She's a good old darky, faithful as a dog." He rose from his swivel-chair briskly and floated Peter out before him.
>
> "Tell her, if she wants a raise," he concluded heartily, "and can't pinch enough out of my kitchen and the two dollars I pay her——tell her to come to me, straight out, and I'll give her more and she can pinch more."

A sense of defeat begins to descend on Peter as he realizes that "with Mr. Killibrew, with all of Hooker's Bend, there was no negro question."

Abruptly he is then brought face to face with the fact that his problem does not rest with whites but with his own race. He is confronted by Tump Pack, who has been informed by Captain Renfrew's cook that Cissie has visited him. Pack marches Peter at gun-point towards the center of "N[redacted]rtown" where he plans to shoot him publicly, well aware that in the South negroes rarely get a prison sentence of more than a few years for killing another negro.

Peter's life is saved when the two see Cissie in the sheriff's car being driven to jail. They learn she has been turned in as a thief on the complaint of the son in one of the families she worked for. Pack is killed in a drunken attempt to free her, but she is later released when the father of the boy who turned her in refuses to press charges. Peter finds out that she was caught stealing some time back, and had to exchange sexual favors with the boy for silence. When she

refused to continue the arrangement, he turned her in. But there is a further complication: she is pregnant, which was the reason she did not accept Peter's initial proposal. Peter realizes there are different standards of morality in negroes and in whites, and granting that, Cissie is a good person. He accepts her standards, marries her, and the two leave for the North. Stribling concludes, ". . . there is no such thing as absolute morals. Morals are as transitory as the sheen on a blackbird's wing; they change perpetually with the necessities of the race."

III

The vast gulf between *Birthright* and "The Green Splotches" seems unbridgeable. We look in vain for a connection between the two. Stribling's later fame that culminated in his receiving the 1933 Pulitzer Prize was based entirely on a series of realistic novels of the South, beginning with *Birthright* and continuing with *Teeftallow* (1926), *Bright Metal* (1928), *Backwater* (1930), *The Forge* (1931), *The Store* (1932) and *The Unfinished Cathedral* (1934). (The last three comprise a trinity and form the basis of his literary reputation.) Yet despite the dichotomy between science-fiction on the one hand and Southern regionalism on the other, a careful examination of the latter reveals clues which help explain the writing of "The Green Splotches."

For example, in appraising the nature of the books in old Captain Renfrew's library, Peter is struck by the fact that not a single one would in any way challenge Southern Fundamentalist beliefs. "Darwin's great hypothesis and every development springing from it had been banned, because the moment that a theory was proposed of the great biologic relationship of all flesh from worms to vertebrates, there instantly followed the corollary of the brotherhood of man." The notorious Scopes trial did not take place until 1925, and here, four years earlier, Stribling not only pointed out one of the blind spots of the South, but indicated his own familiarity with and acceptance of Darwin's theory. Nine years later that quotation was to form the basis of one of his finest stories, "Mogglesby"—which happens to be science-fiction.

There are also hints in other works. For example, there is a reference to telepathy (called "telegraphy" by a juvenile character) in "What a Young Man Should Know" (*Everybody's Magazine*, January 1921), one of a series of humorous short stories Stribling wrote about teen-agers. [7]

Another suggestion is found in "Fombombo," the first of several novels derived from Stribling's travels in South America. This was serialized in four installments in *Adventure* (August 20 through September 20, 1922; the magazine was then being issued three times a month). The work takes its name from that of a Venezuelan revolutionary who has virtually seized control of the rich Orinoco valley. A "cyclopean" canal is under construction there, and an American observer is told that Fombombo's aim is to "found a Government where men can forget material care and devote their lives to the arts, the sciences and pure philosophy. Great cities will gem these llanos in which poverty is banished, and they will form a brotherhood of intellectuals, a mental aristocracy, based not on force, but kindliness and good will." It should be noted in passing that although these South American novels were aimed at magazine rather than book publication, Stribling took them quite seriously; their backgrounds are in every way just as authentic as was that of the South in *Birthright*. [10]

An element of fantasy also enters the short novel "East Is East" (serialized in four installments in *Argosy-Allstory Weekly*, April 22, 1922 through May 13, 1922). The setting is Algeria, and the pace of the action in this saga can only be described as incredible; that it should have been constructed by the same man who wrote *Birthright* is almost unbelievable. Jimmy Million, searching for a parasite that will kill the boll weevil, which has seriously damaged American cot-

ton crops, falls madly in love with a Moorish girl, and with the aid of a giant Taureg, a dwarf and a treacherous Cockney, experiences a wild series of adventures to rescue her from an undesirable marriage. There is no end of thrills, which include subduing a huge Japanese wrestler working for an Arab shiek, fighting off bloodhounds and cheetahs while desperately holding onto tree branches to keep from being swept over the edge of a waterfall, and encountering an adept who can eliminate weariness with a touch of his hand. The touch of fantasy is a crystal which actually shows future events; and the notion of countering the harmful action of an organism in agriculture by introducing another that preys upon it is notably prescient, being one that has been gradually supplanting pesticides in the 1980's.

"The Servant of Peter Illington" (*Adventure*, November 30, 1923) is based on an actual incident related to Stribling by a British ex-diplomat. It seems that a representative of the Japanese government had once come within twenty-four hours of buying one of the Fiji Islands from a native tribe residing there; only an act of Parliament rushed through at the last moment prevented it. Stribling surrounds this event with a rousing series of adventures; and although the tale is not fantasy, it was bizarre enough to be labelled an "off-the-trail story." Tanoa, a brown native of the Fijis, is the servant of Peter Charles Kent Illington, undersecretary in the British Colonial Service. Illington, Stribling tells us, believed that "the sun never set on English soil because it had been made and hung up especially to illuminate the Empire."

> Tanoa's belief was not quite so unscientific and anthropocentric as this. He thought a great serpent, Ndengei, had laid some eggs in the sand and then had crawled away. Out of those eggs hatched earth, sky, sea, sun, moon, stars, men, animals and all things. But Ndengei, that great serpent, had crawled away and did not even know that the eggs had hatched, or what they had hatched; that Ndengei cared nothing at all about any of it. That Ndengei was far far away somewhere asleep, plunged into a profound reptilian torpor which no cry could break and no prayer penetrate.

This segment of mystical philosophy is not only interesting in itself, as a posble echo of the author's own, but for its location: it is prominent in the beginning of the story instead of being inconspicuously hidden, as is usual, in the later text.

As a last (and admittedly minor) illustration, we might even mention Stribling's siting some of the action of his very first book, *The Cruise of the Dry Dock*, in the legendary Sargasso Sea.

These isolated examples of imaginative thinking in predominately mundane works indicate that Stribling was routinely conversant with current scientific theory, and suggest also a familiarity with Utopian writers. They make his writing "The Green Splotches" more understandable. As we proceed still more examples will be cited, because close reading of this author's work reveals repeated, unobtrusive references to themes that are generally associated with science-fiction. They not only make his occasional outright excursions into the genre unsurprising, but suggest that we may even think of Stribling as a subliminal science-fictionist.

There is a final point to make here. While a knowledge of science and the ability to write well are indeed needed for success, producing good science-fiction demands something more than these. That something more may be described as an unusual cast of mind, a different way of looking at things around us, a willingness——perhaps even a liking——to plunge into the unknown. "One of the most beautiful things we can experience is the mysterious," Einstein once said. "It is the source of all true science and art. He who can no longer pause to wonder is as good as dead." There seems no doubt that Stribling possessed that essential something, and fortunately there is on record an incident confirming this belief.

One of the best known Western story writers in the 1920's was Raymond S. Spears. Spears wrote a supernatural story, "The Were-Cougar," and submitted it to *Adventure*. In it a child raised by cougars has such a close affinity with them

that bullets striking one of the beasts leave scars on his body. Hoffman accepted the story, but since it violated the magazine's policy, felt the need to justify his action. When "The Were-Cougar" was published in the January 20, 1926 issue, therefore, he prefaced it by the following statement: "Once T. S. Stribling and I agreed over a luncheon table on what he expressed much better than I, to this general effect: 'All human knowledge yet attained is, compared to the total of truth, merely a very, very thin film spread over the surface of a great, deep pond.' . . . So do I believe in werewolves? No, but my knowledge is only an infinitesimal fraction of the film on the pond. . . . "

IV

The next story Stribling wrote for *Adventure* appeared in its January 30, 1922 issue, and was titled "The Web of the Sun." This seems forgotten today, despite the fact that it is a major work, a novel of some 60,000 words. Further, though it is a lost-race story, and can therefore qualify as science-fiction (indeed, Stribling himself so classified it), I have never seen it reviewed, referred to or even listed in any bibliography of fantasy. Only a few old-time collectors have read and remember it. It seems never to have been reprinted.[11]

During this period *Adventure* was featuring a novel of 30,000 to 70,000 words in every issue. Now, such novels are not written on speculation; they have to be planned by the editor and the authors. The editor must order them, or he will soon find himself without a lead novel worth printing. During a novel's development he must remain in constant touch with the author to make certain that it meets the magazine's standards——and *Adventure's* standards were high. Hoffman was therefore well aware that Stribling was writing something akin to science-fiction, yet was so pleased that he did not object to the fantasy element. Indeed, the blurb he wrote and signed for the work ran to nearly a page, and was one of the most laudatory of his entire editorial tenure.[12]

In "The Web of the Sun" Stribling writes that the story was told to him by Charles Lassiter when the two met in a Rio de Janeiro in 1917. Lassiter had accepted a position with the giant Stendill Company of New York, which had operations in many parts of the world. Because of his language proficiency he was given the opportunity to operate as the corporation's travelling auditor in South America. Polite and innately diplomatic, he was well liked, and ingratiated himself with South Americans. The corporation had planned a zeppelin service from Quito to Rio de Janeiro, and also wanted Lassiter to survey routes and select sites for hangers and tourist hotels. It estimated that it could cut travelling times drastically and still remain competitive with other forms of transportation.

Shortly before he is to leave from New York, Lassiter meets an Arkansas evangelist named Ezekiel Birdsong. Birdsong's goal is converting South American heathen to the Christian faith. He has been unable to obtain a cabin on the same ship, and manages to inveigle himself into Lassiter's suite. Birdsong is a short, stocky, powerful man, physically well suited to wandering about the wilds with a mule-load of Spanish-language bibles.

After arriving in South America, Lassiter has great difficulty securing a guide to the region of Rio Vampiro. The natives are wary because there is a disturbing legend abroad about that area, which is the land of the Jivaro tribe. A man who went there is said to have loaded his mule with gold found lying about. He fell asleep, and on waking found his gold gone and his mule hanging dead from a tree. The only guide who seems willing, Balthauser Nunes, shows a scar on his neck which he claims he got in the region from an "eagle vampire."

The three set out. They travel through the Andes and at nightfall stop atop a ridge looking out over a giant chasm far larger than the Grand Canyon.

They are awakened at night and discover their mules are gone. Nunes, who carries an automatic rifle, fires in the direction of a noise he hears, though he can see nothing. The three mules are found dead; they have been dragged towards the chasm by ropes made of some colloidal substance, and their bodies are sucked dry of all liquids. All that is found is a silk-like rope that clings to the cliff and disappears about 150 feet below.

Lassiter, Birdsong and Nunes descend a series of such ropes down a sheer precipice and eventually reach at the bottom a sub-tropical valley with trees and cultivated fields surrounding a large lake in its center. There they meet a huge, obese naked man who addresses them in the Indian language Quichus, which Nunes understands and which Lassiter can make out with some difficulty. His name is Gogoma, and he is a local priest. Without prompting he tells them that a white man came over the mountain nearly two hundred years ago. He wished to leave, but no way out of the valley by foot has ever been discovered. He spent five years capturing a dozen eagles, constructed a saddle and a harness, and attempted to fly out in his makeshift vehicle; but he could not control them and fell to his death. There are a few of this white man's descendents left, and Gogoma reels off their names and relationships to one another.

He takes the explorers to an apparently aged woman who is one of these descendents. Despite appearances, she is pregnant with her sixteenth child. They are shocked to learn that she is only in her early thirties. She introduces them to her beautiful daughter, Tilita. When asked where her other fourteen children are she replies, "In the sun." The woman shows them her dwelling, which like others in the valley are furnished compartments built around trunks of giant trees.

The people turn out to be sun-worshippers, and have an imposing temple built into the side of the cliff. Alongside it is an inlet from the lake, across which are ropes of the same material the explorers found on the cliff, arranged like a gigantic web. The web is coated with a viscous substance which sticks to whatever comes into contact with it. Tilita tells them a vicuna lamb is to be flung into the web to feed her fourteen brothers and sisters in the sun. The lamb is thrown into the web and is unable to move; but when they turn away for a moment and then look back, it has disappeared. Shortly thereafter the lamb floats to the surface of the water, unmarked but unquestionably dead. Examination shows that its body is virtually dried up, as were those of the explorers' mules. Lassiter asks where the rope of the web comes from, and is told people find it clinging to the cliffs and gather it.

Birdsong, meanwhile, has seen Lassiter with Tilita at the temple sacrifice and lectures him on idolatry. Tilita overhears Birdsong's admonitions, and is angry at Lassiter for permitting the missionary to denigrate her. Then, surprisingly, she suggests that Lassiter marry her. He is stunned to learn that this fully developed beauty is only thirteen years old. Birdsong of course vehemently opposes Lassiter's marrying the girl; and matters are complicated because Nunes is also interested in her.

In the meantime Birdsong starts holding prayer meetings for the natives and offering converts to Christianity the option of keeping their children instead of losing them to the Web of the Sun. Many are taken with this desirable concept and begin to agitate.

To avoid Nunes, who has begun to follow them, Lassiter and Tilita wander along the lake to where its waters drain in a whirlpool down a hole alongside the cliff. There they discover the body of one of Birdsong's converts, his hands tied with the strange rope and his body sucked dry of fluids. Talita also shows Lassiter about the interior of the temple and points out a remarkably lifelike statue of her grandmother there.

Birdson's erasure of the natives' belief in their own religion continues. Tilita's mother, who watches him "miraculously" create fire by striking a

match, is convinced that her children have not gone to live in the sun but are dead, and runs shrieking to the priests in righteous anguish. A group of loyal natives attacks the explorers, but thanks to Nunes's automatic weapon they are repulsed.

Gogoma sends for Lassiter. He admits that children have been sacrificed and says this is done to prevent overpopulation. He is willing to step down and let Birdsong take his place as the high priest on condition that the Web of the Sun be left intact. An angry Lassiter, without thinking, replies that the "civilized" way of dealing with overpopulation is to let the excess starve. Gogoma replies that this has been tried, but in order to survive people became killers, lechers, beggars, liars and robbers. Factions developed and warred on each other. Had Christians ever had that problem? If so, how had they solved it? Here, the Web of the Sun provides an alternative to such anti-social behavior. The inhabitants are permitted one child per family. The population stays under control and everyone lives a harmonious life. Lassiter attacks the use of religion and its priests as deceptive. Gogoma responds that believers cannot be priests because they would not be cruel and ruthless enough to do what must be done in order to preserve their civilization.

They are interrupted by Birdsong leading an army singing a hymn to Jesus, with Nunes a captive. Birdsong has not turned on him for killing the natives, but because Nunes had imitated his "miracle" with matches and proclaimed himself an angel. As punishment, Birdsong intends to throw him into the Web of the Sun. But at the last moment, recalling the hardships that he and Nunes have shared, he relents and throws himself into the web, confident that his faith will somehow save him. Lassiter goes to find a pole to rescue the evangelist, but when he returns Birdsong is gone.

Gogoma again offers Lassiter the position of high priest. This will enable him, he says, to pursue his dream of beauty. He initially had accepted the position, he tells Lassiter, because he alone "could administer the holy rites purely for the benefit of my people, without the corruption of faith or credulity or idolatry or useless sacrifice. Only one thing is immortal on Earth, and that is beauty. Our philosophies change with the years, history is a forgetting, science is man's last guess, but a work of beauty, señor, lives on and on. It is immortal."

This offer of power and respect wins over Lassiter, though he realizes that priests here must take a vow of chastity, and that he therefore could not marry Tilita, whose mother is already preparing the wedding feast. Tilita realizes the implications, but nonetheless brings Lassiter his portion of the wedding meal. The two sit together in bittersweet agony until she falls asleep. Then the priest comes and leads him to his cell in the temple. (There are many such cells there, for celibacy is also a device for keeping the population in check.)

He is alone when he hears his name whispered again and again. It is Nunes, who tells him that Tilita, distraught, has leaped into the Web of the Sun. They run down to where she is trapped in the sticky ropes. As they watch a stone slab parts and a mammoth spider, fully twenty feet across, leaps out, seizes the girl, and disappears almost instantly. Lassiter has been told by Gogoma that rubbing oneself with grease makes it possible to climb the web without sticking. He does this, and armed with Nunes's gun, enters the cavern. Sticky ropes drop on him, but not before he gets off a shot at the spider's eyes, just as it is driving a spike-like protuberance into the girl's body. The girl falls to the floor and the creature vanishes. The door to a tunnel in the cavern opens, and the priests come forth to pick up the girl, who is now paralyzed.

Lassiter then realizes that the statue of Tilita's grandmother, and all the other statues there, are actually people preserved in suspended animation by the spiders' venom until they are eaten. The preserved form of Birdsong is also there. The silken ropes are of course actually webs of these giant trapdoor spi-

ders, who at night roam the valley and cliffs at will. The small consolation is that Tilita will remain always unchanged as a living statue; her beauty will not fade, as it would with endless childbearing which makes women of the valley old at thirty.

Disconsolate, Lassiter leaves his cell to drown himself in the maelstrom where the valley's lake exits. Nunes insists on accompanying him. The two are enveloped in the whirlpool and drawn down together. They pass through it safely and eventually reach the outside world, where Lassiter tells his story.

"The Web of the Sun" is a marvellously controlled and professionally organized tale, constructed like a mystery novel with all enigmas explained and all loose ends neatly gathered together. The characterizations of the three adventurers are very carefully handled, as are those of Golgoma, Tilita and her mother. The writing in the early chapters is leisurely, but the pace builds steadily as the work progresses. At tense moments Stribling calls upon reserves of writing skill and narrative power that command respect. One can easily understand editor Hoffman's unreserved enthusiasm. There is considerable subtle satire on religion but this is presented in so objective a manner that the converted can only fume in frustration, and had better think of "The Web of the Sun" simply as a classic lost race novel.

It is possible the story was influential. One thinks here in particular of A. Merritt's "The Face in the Abyss" (*Argosy-Allstory*, September 8, 1923), which takes place in a similar Andean locale. The hero, Nicholas Graydon, and his three companions all show sharply differentiated personalities. Among their other trials they are attacked by invisible birds, just as Stribling's adventurers thought they were besieged by invisible creatures when their mules were killed. There are gigantic spiders, too, but these are intelligent and benevolent creatures. Merritt's imagination is much more far-ranging, but it is conceivable that "The Web of the Sun" suggested the locale and perhaps even the format for "The Face in the Abyss." We lack specific evidence that Merritt read Stribling's work, but since *Argosy-Allstory* and *Adventure* were the two leading pulp magazines in the adventure field, Merritt's encountering it before writing his own story is quite possible.[13]

V

One short story of Stribling's is a bonafide work of the occult and the supernatural. That is his now-famous "A Passage to Benares" (*Adventure*, February 20, 1926), featuring the psychologist-detective Henry Poggioli, Ph. D., who uses his special background to explore aberrant and criminal tendancies in human behavior.

Poggioli, an Italian-American, awakens in a Hindu temple located in Port of Spain, Trinidad (a city with which Stribling was well familiar). He had chosen to sleep there for one night, because in watching a wedding procession he had the impression that it had vanished on entering the temple. This suggested the Hindu concept of heaven which, simply stated, is oblivion. He wanted to see if sleeping there would further that impression. Before sleeping, he has a plate of rice and a cup of tea.

Poggioli awakens with a headache and a vague recollection of having had a bizarre dream. As he leaves the temple he notes there are other beggars there still asleep. He does not know that after observing the wedding procession Boodman Lal, nephew of the wealthy Hindu Hira Dass, who built the temple, had returned and slept there also.

A note from Hira Dass informs Poggioli that Boodman Lal's bride was beheaded six to eight hours after the temple wedding, and that Lal has been arrested as a suspect. Some of the murdered woman's missing jewelry has been found on the

(continued on page 277)

Sonnets for the Space Age

LEE BECKER

Thoughts Beside a Missile Silo

Struck dumb and feeble, impotent, I watched
The silver brood flash out of their deep holes.
What difference to man if someone botched
Their destinations or set straight their goals?
And slowly as the fiery roar died out
I heard wail stridently through dust and smoke
Alarm bells' adamant, unsilenced shout
For Armageddon none could now revoke.

So must have bells in lost Atlantis pealed
Too late while helpless watchers saw afar
The green tide of the main sweep road and field,
Breaching at last the final barrier,
And knew that not in ice or fire or blood
Would their world die, but in this drowning flood.

Greenhouse Effects

After a dozen winters without snow
There came the years when summer never stopped.
At first the tourist trade was hurt; who'd go
South for New Year's, or why even opt
New Orleans' Mardi Gras when you could swim
Or sunbathe right at home? Some, to flee
The heat, booked flights for Greenland and the rim
Of Hudson's Bay, where there was snow to ski.
But it was harder to adjust to all
The oceans creeping up. Of course the smart
Shore-owners sold out early; and even small
Time realtors got rich by maps and charts.

Florida was cut in half by seas
But new Maine orchards soon replaced its groves
Of submerged grapefruit, lime and orange trees,
And eager travellers still came in droves
To ride glass-bottomed boats over Disneyland,
The New World's Venice, awash in waves and sand.

The Martian Drug

After the needle's sharp attack I felt
The velvet closing of a warm embrace:
My hands dissolved, my arms began to melt,
My mind spun out upon a whirlpool's race,
Leaving the body where it long had dwelt
For some far destination, for a place
Unknown and dark, a longitude unspelt
In beckoning reaches of celestial space.

Unerringly as only thought can fly
I rose up brightly as if I were shod
With stars, past room and town, past land and sky,
Past planets where no human ever trod——
Invisible, a disembodied cry,
A feather lofted on the breath of God.

Arrival and Departure

On this lone planet all the seas were dun
And a vast chasm, continental-sized,
Scarred the equator. The blue-white sun,
Still burning in his prime, now cauterized
Shrinking polar caps that slowly spun
And ruddy deserts, broad and oxidized.
Surely, we thought, this was a world to shun,
Sterile lifelessness epitomized.

Then we glimpsed a sudden flash of light
And saw on dropping low from whence it came:
Alone amid the waste there stood upright,
Throwing back to us the sun's far flame,
A huge and polished golden hemisphere,
Bright last remnant of what once was here.

Their craft is landing. Data indicate
These creatures are our type: bilaterally
Symmetrical, erect and bifurcate,
With eyes and ears and nose, but certainly
Much less intelligent——level eight
Or seven at most——and therefore will be easy
To command; an ideal surrogate,
Even oxygen-breathers, as were we!

Infiltrate their thought by slow degrees
And project friendliness to gain our goal;
Do not dissolve their personalities
Until all minds are under firm control.
They've come out of their ship now to explore.
Are we all ready? Open up the door!

Hugo Gernsback's Ideas of Science and Fiction, 1915-26

Deborah Elkin

Hugo Gernsback took the unusual step of including "scientific fiction" in the popular science magazines he edited and published early in the twentieth century *Modern Electrics* (1908), *Electrical Experimenter* (1913)[1]* and *Radio Amateur News* (1919).[2] In April 1926 he started the first magazine devoted to "scientific fiction," *Amazing Stories*. This article will explore the links he saw between science[3] and fiction; his hopes for the science of radio as expressed in *Radio News*; the changing social reality of the radio world that eroded his hopes; the supporting role for science that fiction played in *Radio News*; and the more active role of fiction in the *Electric Experimenter* in carrying out his vision of science.

Gernsback was fascinated by the visionary aspects of both science and fiction, and viewed them as complementary. He regarded the vision of the fiction writers as part of the design-stage of science: he believed that fiction, by imagining as yet unrealized scientific possibilities, developed hypotheses which stimulated the scientific imagination to create new realities. While his magazines also encouraged people to take part in the theory-*testing* part of science, the painstaking work of making the vision a reality, Gernsback was more excited by theory-*construction*, the vision of new possibilities. By May 1924[4] he began to use a quotation from Aldous Huxley on every following *Science and Invention* masthead: "Those Who Refuse to Go Beyond Fact Rarely Get as Far as Fact." Going beyond fact expresses his view of the creative role of scientific fiction in charting directions for science, as well as of science itself. This sentiment continued on the masthead of *Amazing Stories*: "Extravagant Fiction Today——Cold Fact Tomorrow." Gernsback's early *Amazing Stories* editorials testify to his view of the creative role of fiction for "progress":

> An author, in one of his fantastic scientifiction stories, may start some one thinking along the suggested lines which the author had in mind, whereas the inventor in the end will finish up with something totally different, and perhaps more important. But the fact remains that *the author provided the stimulus* in the first place, which is a most important function to perform.
>
> On the other hand, many devices predicted by scientifiction authors have literally come true for many generations. There is an old popular saying that what man imagines, man can accomplish . . . many of the so-called wild ideas which we read in our scientifiction stories may prove to be not so wild if they give an actual stimulus to some inventor or inventor-to-be who reads the story.
>
> . . . a scientifiction story . . . actually helps in the progress of the world, if ever so little, and the fact remains that it contributes something to progress that probably no other kind of literature does.[5]

An August 1920 editorial speaks of Jules Verne (fiction writer) and of Nikola Tesla (scientist) in the same breath: "It matters little that Jules Verne

*Notes for this article begin on page 255.

or Nikola Tesla are a hundred years ahead of the times—the scientists scoff and laugh unbelievingly."[6] In the same issue an article by Charles Horne called "Jules Verne *The World's Greatest Prophet*" hailed Verne's scientific vision:

> He was [the world's] greatest inventor, not in the immediate sense of having laboriously worked out each practical step of some new machine, but in the broader sense of having conceived, foreseen, planned out the general road along which advancing science was to make its way.[7]

Gernsback's interest in both scientific fiction and science stemmed from childhood. He wrote in *Amazing Stories* that he had been interested in scientific fiction since he was eight years old.[8] At age seventeen he wrote a novel (unpublished, but still in existence) called *Ein Pechvogel*, about a "schlemiel" who can never do anything right because he lacks common sense. The novel includes a process for solar roasting of coffee, and an umbrella-vending machine.[9]

At the same time his scientific and technical skills were developing. Sam Moskowitz writes:

> He was born in Luxumbourg August 16, 1884, son of a Jewish wine wholesaler, and received a good scientific education in Ecole Industrielle of Luxembourg and the Technikum in Bingen, Germany . . . .
>
> He was technically oriented from his early childhood and in his teens gained a small reputation for his knowledge of electricity. He invented a layer battery capable of three times the current output of any similar unit then in existence. He eventually left Europe because he could not obtain a patent there for his battery.[10]

After Gernsback emigrated to the United States from Luxembourg in 1904 he marketed home radio sets.[11] In 1908 he began publishing *Modern Electrics*, in which from 1911 through 1913 he serialized his own novel of fantasy and science, *Ralph 124C 41+: A Romance of the Year 2660*.

During the first quarter of the twentieth century, Gernsback was fascinated by radio. It seemed to embody what he liked best about science: the generation of new possibilities. In *Radio News*, science rather than fiction was the primary vehicle for his vision. *Radio News* promulgated his ideas of the exciting possibilities of radio and defended the interests of the radio amateurs, who he thought would be the primary people carrying out those developments. In the first (July 1919) issue of what was then called *Radio Amateur News*, Gernsback wrote of his hopes for radio and the amateur. "Marvelous inventions will be made in Radio during the next decade—unbelievable now." Amateur radio would accomplish noble goals: "Amateur Radio is not a plaything or a sport—it is a useful, mind-ennobling art—it vanquishes distances, it saves lives and it will be as necessary as the telephone ten years hence." In order to accomplish their mission, radio amateurs would need to be free from both unfair legislation and commercial radio interests. He concluded his editorial by proclaiming, "Long live the Radio Amateur."[12]

To Gernsback, the amateur radio enthusiast embodied what he liked about science. He pictured the amateur as the visionary who believed in making dreams reality, and who was willing to work to enable that vision to be realized. In his first editorial in *Radio Amateur News* Gernsback declared that the magazine was devoted to the amateur, and would endeavor to raise radio amateurism "out of the 'kid' class, into the serious status to which the art is entitled."

An important element in Gernsback's conception was the noble purpose of science. Science would create useful, helpful devices; it would help defeat criminals and nations with whom the United States was at war.

> The modern amateur sends and relays messages to his friends across the continent and assists wherever possible the authorities for the welfare of the community. In some instances, radio amateurs have been instrumental in apprehending thieves of stolen automobiles; he has helped telegraph companies to handle traffic when the wires were down; and can usually be relied upon to do his share when the country is in danger by war or when a catastrophe occurs.[13]

Radio also fostered peaceful coexistence among nations. He believed that "radio broadcasting, by bringing the nations closer together, minimizes war."[14]

This seems to reflect a belief that technology itself creates a social organization, rather than the belief that social organization directs the development and use of technology.[15] As David Brion Davis points out, it could also reflect a belief that "conflicts arise from faulty communication, lack of understanding, false beliefs," rather than being a real conflict of interests. If only people could talk to each other, in Gernsback's view, conflicts would be reduced. To further international communication, *Radio News* published a number of articles in support of Esperanto as an international language.

In order to carry out these noble purposes, Gernsback believed the amateur must be independent from the government and from commercial interests. Since Gernsback believed that commercial interests were "stifling" and had suppressed important discoveries, he asserted, in his first editorial in *Radio Amateur News*, that one of his goals was maintaining the independence of the radio amateur. He certainly was not adverse to making money himself; his magazines and later his commercial radio station represented commercial interests. When he encouraged amateurs to invent, he reminded them that they could make a lot of money from their inventions. In an early editorial he also urged radio clubs to develop ties of mutual interests with their local newspapers,[16] which are also commercial interests. Perhaps he meant that he would not develop a special relation with any particular *manufacturer* and endorse its products without regard to merit.[17]

Gernsback was concerned about the independence of amateurs from the government as well as from commercial interests. Just as the United Stated was entering World War I, he urged the government not to close down all non-government radio stations (as eventually it did); the amateurs, he argued, could be of great help to the government by listening for enemy transmissions. After the war, the independence of "free enterprise" as opposed to government regulation or ownership of radio was of great concern to him. He wrote,

> As to Government control of radio, we are certain that the country wants none of it at present after its unsatisfactory experiment in Government ownership of the telegraph, telephone and cable lines just returned.[18]
>
> It is absolutely necessary that the amateur be allowed his freedom of the ether, without it he can accomplish nothing.[19]

To Gernsback, perhaps one of the key attractions of the amateur was his independent existence working at home. Numerous magazine cover drawings show the amateur there in front of his wireless set. (There is a parallel between these amateurs inventing at home during the young radio industry and people such as Steven Jobs and Wozniak inventing the Apple computer at home during the young computer industry. In a new industry the inventors are often not yet integrated into a social form of production.)

Both the great men of radio[20] and the amateurs were portrayed as arrayed against a scientific establishment which had lost its ability to dream and therefore "create new facts." For example, Gernsback used an analogy to show that the "great" scientists were unappreciated:

> But our *real* scientists are as backward as in Galileo's times. The public applauds and instantly believes in anything new that is scientific, whereas the true scientist scoffs and jeers, just as he did in Galileo's times when that worthy stoutly maintained that the earth moved and did not stand still.
>
> Then as now they burn our great discoverers and our great scientists at the stake. Only today the stake is moral and the fire derision.
>
> It matters little that Jules Verne or Nikola Tesla are a hundred years ahead of the times—the scientists scoff and laugh unbelievingly.[21]

Activities of individual experimenters were portrayed as something anyone could learn to do. The magazines explained how to build various devices. Advertisements urged that "you, too, can learn to do this." Many issues contained articles explaining scientific principles, and more numerous ones on how to construct a particular device or component.[22]

Gernsback's vision of the independent lone amateur imagining and realizing fantastic new creations was increasingly being diluted by reality.[23] During

World War I, the government closed down all amateur radio stations. At the same time, invention was encouraged within the government. For example, Edwin Armstrong, an amateur who became a radio engineer, "conceived and constructed the super-heterodyne receiver" while he was an officer in the Signal Corps.[24] Many men also received training in radio while in service. These people could have gone on to become radio amateurs after the war. However, since the post-war period saw an expansion not of amateurs, but broadcast listeners and the radio industry, it is likely that their wartime training either cultivated an enthusiasm for radio which was transformed into eager broadcast-listening, or prepared them to enter the radio industry.

After the war the government restricted amateur access to the air waves by allocating only certain wavelengths (below 200 meters) for their use. (The proliferation of commercial, government and amateur stations had created what one observer called "a chaotic condition in the ether."[25]) In a November 1919 editorial called "Our Freedom of the Ether," Gernsback warned that even though the government had lifted the ban on amateur radio transmission, amateurs would be shut down permanently if they did not stay within their allocated band.

> Amateurs should thoroly [sic] understand the fact that they have, so to speak, been put upon probation. If they are going to annoy Government and commercial stations or even make themselves felt in such a way that they will only slightly hinder prevailing Government or commercial traffic, it will cut down our dearly won freedom by just so much . . . . Usually the amateur wave is so broad that it can be picked up all over the scale. As long as we persist in sending out such waves we must expect criticism from the big stations with which we interfere.[26]

The next month's editorial continued in this vein:

> Already radio inspectors are issuing warnings to those amateurs who are again hogging the ether, just as before the war. . . . What then will hapnen to us three or five years from now when fifty thousand more of us insist in tapping the key. Simply this: *Amateur Radio will be closed down tight by legislation.*[27]

He urged that amateurs develop the radio telephone, which would transmit in a more focused manner, as a means of reducing "the dreaded interference."

The number of commercial broadcast stations increased tremendously, especially in 1922. "In one short year the radio telephone broadcasting stations, that numbered less than six in the United States, increased to almost six hundred at the end of 1922."[28] Commercial stations and listeners wanted broadcasting without interference from amateurs. Gernsback continued to warn the amateurs that if they didn't respect the needs of these listeners by staying within the government-imposed limits, they would be prevented from operation altogether. He proposed a role amateurs might adopt to preserve their usefulness to the general public: that of relaying broadcast entertainment to listeners outside the territory reached by commercial stations. This was a stop-gap proposal, because it was only a matter of time before these stations would be able to reach everyone themselves. Nevertheless, there was not universal support for this idea; no less a notable than Lee De Forest, inventor of the audion, thought the government, rather than the amateurs, should control the relay.[29]

By 1922 the number of people buying complete radio sets began to increase rapidly. The percentage of homes having radios went from zero in 1920 to forty in 1930.[30] Unlike the amateurs, who were often interested in improving radio design and in transmitting messages as well as receiving them, most of the huge numbers of radio buyers wanted only to be able to turn on their sets and listen to a commercial broadcast.

The radio industry was expanding, too. Gernsback observed, "It is a fact that when radio became a big thing in 1921, practically every radio amateur was immediately drawn into the new industry and a great many of them today are in some commanding position."[31] Invention was largely becoming industrialized. (Even inventors of legendary status such as De Forest and Armstrong were not so much independent as fiercely engaged in patent disputes.) David Noble writes,

> The majority of inventors . . . while perhaps able to obtain patents . . . were unable either to interest investors in them or to sell them to established companies . . . . The frustrations of independent invention led the majority of inventors into the research laboratories of the large corporations; in the process, invention itself was transformed. "Team research in the laboratory of the large corporation has largely displaced the inventive activity of the individual. The assembly line of invention, like that of manufacturing, is dominant today."[32]

> The patents issued to individuals increased substantially between 1900 and 1916, but thereafter the *role of the lone inventor declined* [emphasis added] as the corporate apparatus for patent control—strengthened during the war—became firmly established.[33]

The advertisements for schools and home-study courses which had been prominent in the Gernsback magazines throughout this period portrayed careers in industry rather than ones in independent invention.

The design-stage of science, that of theory construction, was shrinking, while theory testing was assuming a larger role. The number of people developing the kind of new ideas Gernsback admired was diminishing, compared to the number who tested and elaborated on existing ideas.[34]

The image of the lone inventor contrasted to the reality of the time, when invention and science were more and more becoming part of industry. Gernsback recognized this trend. In June 1925 he wrote,

> The next few years will show great refinements in radio sets, rather than revolutionary changes. The radio set industry has now settled down into an orderly business, the same as the automobile industry. In both it is a matter of refinements, of improvements, rather than of revolutionary changes.[35]

And in March 1926:

> The industry has now settled down to such a degree that we need not expect any revolutionary radio inventions for some time to come. . . . . There is, indeed, a tremendous amount of money to be made in radio inventions, or shall we call it "radio improvements"?[36]

Radio had lost the sense of vision which it had once had for Gernsback.

The industrial corporations that were increasingly becoming the places where invention and scientific development took place were rarely the settings in the fiction in the Gernsback magazines. Nevertheless, fiction in *Radio News* did trace the change from the amateur to broadcast listener, as well as add to the image of the amateur and inventor as independent and of noble purpose. While the fiction in *Electrical Experimenter* and *Science and Invention* shared this image of the amateur and inventor, it expressed, more consistently than *Radio News*, Gernsback's idea of fiction as imagining future inventions.

The fiction in *Radio News* did not, by and large, express Gernsback's idea of great new revolutionary developments in radio. Rather than carrying the visionary torch itself, it supported and promoted radio, reflecting some of the changing ideas about radio as well as changing realities.[37]

"The Time Flies" by Marius Logan clearly portrays the distinction between the fiction-inspired creation of ideas and their technical development. The publisher of *The Holden Times*, responding to an increased interest in radio among the reading public, recruits "radio editors." To prepare for his new job as a radio editor, Micky read a couple of Jules Verne's accounts of exploits in the various sciences. "He topped it off with some stories in the popular magazines and read one or two simple treatises on radio—written in words of one syllable, with a demi-tasse of *Radio News*." This, together with the "stuff" in the bottom of Henri's teacups (we are still in Prohibition times), enables him to generate ideas, while Izzy, who absorbed "Flemming, a bit of Van Der Bijl and some miscellaneous authors of less note and less mathematics," can supply the technical details.[38]

Many stories reflect Gernsback's ideal that radio serves the public good. At first the characters are frequently ship radio operators. For example, in "The Radio Man's Code," a young operator gives his captain the message he has received over the wireless to arrest a murderer, even though the name transmitted to him was his brother's. "It was the code of the radio man to remain faithful to his position no matter what the circumstances."[39]

Often the amateur is able to overhear criminals, and so is able to save the public. In Robert W. Allen's "When the Lights Grew Dim," "Ham" discovers that the "man from Mars," who is demanding radium from the world and threatening to blow up government wireless stations, is actually someone speaking from just a block away. Ham noticed that whenever the "man from Mars" transmitted a message, his room lights dimmed, as they did when nearby amateurs were transmitting.

This story also points out that Ham could not have saved the country if the government had continued to restrict amateurs. "Had it not been for the government restrictions on amateur radio being removed, it is probable that much damage would have resulted before the man was found."[40] A 1924 Ellis Parker Butler piece, "Regulate or Bust!," satirizes government regulations. The happiness of the people of Sudania with their newly invented radios is brief because the government, in its zeal for regulation, found a rule to get everything off the air.[41]

Sometimes the hero who uses radio to save people is a policeman, government agent or scientist. In "Gunbarrel Radio," Dan Collingame, "general 'clean-up' man in the Internal Revenue Department," saves himself and captures the moonshiners by using a wireless sending set and constructing a loop aerial, as one of his men who was "a 'nut' on radio" had showed him how to do. (Interestingly, the moonshiners, the Farley gang on the headwaters of Knox Creek in Kentucky, had a less technically advanced but still effective "wireless" system: they blew in code through gun barrels to signal each other.)[42]

"The Radio King" involved the ongoing efforts of Bradley Lane, "the equal even of [the villain] Marnee in scientific powers," who was a high-ranking officer of Military Intelligence during the Great War" and "later a sub-chief in the Bureau of Chemical Warfare," and the scientist John Leyden to defeat the misshapen evil red anarchist Marnee, "Wizard of the Electrons," "quadruply dangerous because of his undoubtedly high attainments in applied physics and chemistry," and his Russian and Chinese accomplices. (In "The Radio King," five years after the Russian Revolution, the author associated the independence of the scientist with the independence of the United States from communism and anarchism; he equated evil with the anarchist, Red, and Russian.) The heroes are assisted by two young boys: Jimmy, a prisoner of Marnee, has learned how to send radio messages by watching his captor carefully; and the other, Fatty Evarts, has built a radio out of junk parts by reading *Radio News*. The most impressive invention, developed by the scientist, was a device which recalled messages from the air that had been previously sent. It was not simply a receiver, but could receive and record broadcasts from the past.[43]

"The Radio King" was unusual in *Radio News* fiction in its portrayal of a device incorporating principles not yet discovered. More typically, fictional characters in this magazine devised ingenious uses of existing equipment. "The Simplest Hook-Up" describes the ingenuity of Roy, who ran aground on a sandbar in the middle of a lake in his twenty-foot launch. He managed to construct a radio transmitter, using only what he had on the boat (the boat's battery for a power source, the single-blade switch on the battery box as a crude key, the coil on the ignition system, the awning uprights as an aerial, and spare spark plugs) to send a signal to a friend for help.

"Radio Beats the Ticker" provides another example of the creative use of existing devices. Alfred the amateur, who has radio parts strewn all over his attic room, rigs up a radio phone to help his brother James on his "knightly journey" to win the hand of a banker's daughter. This allows James to receive stock prices secretly in a "bucket shop," where securities are bought on margin, before the ticker-tape records them, and enables him to make a lot of money quickly.

An interesting series of stories by Robert Francis Smith published in 1924-26 features Jerry Lawson ("the Master"), a wealthy amateur.[44] (Wealth is one

way in which an amateur can maintain the independence Gernsback thought so necessary for creative thinking.) In the world of Smith's fiction, middle class broadcast listeners outnumber the amateurs; yet the listener is fascinated by the creative amateur, whose ingenuity permits his lack of a sense of humor to be overlooked. The narrator of these stories is Joe Hammerstein, a vaudeville actor, who meets Jerry while he and his wife are spending the summer in Brightmere-on-the-Deep, a town of fairly well-off people. Joe wants to buy a radio, since everyone in town has one. Jerry, the most knowledgable scientist there, obligingly builds him a new set. Smith's stories reflect a transition from the radio amateur who invents for the sake of creating, to one who wants to demonstrate unfamiliar uses of radio, to one who sees no further revolutionary developments in it. (The last transition, of course, directly parallels Gernsback's.) In "Allez, Houpla!," Jerry is working on a device that can attached to a radio and "provide a voice-throwing effect similar to that used by a ventriloquist on a stage." When Joe asks him what its use is, Jerry answers, "Use! Why man, it's just the principle of the thing at the moment. Uses will develop in good time."[45]

In "Cent from Heaven" Jerry has become interested in uses of radio. He wants to demonstrate "unfamiliar uses to which radio can be put, such as radio transmission of power, sending pictures by radio, radio control of remote devices. . . ."[46] All three of these ideas were promoted by Gernsback. In fact, Sam Moskowitz notes that Gernsback was the first person to bring the word "television" to the United States.[47]

Jerry finds another use for radio in "Drink to Me Only with Thine Eyes," a story which also captures the change from crystal sets to those with more expensive vacuum tubes. During prohibition, the Master invents a radio intoxicator that induces a state mimicking inebriation by lowering the frequency of human vibration. Jerry and Joe open a supper club in which each customer is given to wear during dinner a radio headset with a choice of stations, one of which is the radio intoxicator. But Jerry had experimented only with vacuum tubes, the newer and more expensive radio receiver components. The crystal receiver, still used by people who could not afford vacuum tubes, turned out to be the best receiver of his "intoxicating" vibrations. Nearly 11,000 people, "most of them persons of small means," were charged with drunkenness, because anyone in the area who was listening on a crystal receiver was affected. Jerry says, "I've been so engrossed in tube work I'd completely forgotten that people still use crystal sets."[48]

Smith's "Ride and Seek," in September 1925, contains an exposition by Jerry which sounds just like Gernsback as he is losing his sense of excitement about the possibilities for new developments. The narrator asks Jerry what is new in the field.

> "Not a thing, Joe," he says, musing. "The possibilities of radio, insofar as anything supplementing broadcasting is concerned, seem to have been exhausted. We have death rays, radio pictures and numerous other devices that have been proved, to say nothing of hundreds of quack ideas that've never been tried out. . . . However, radio control of remote objects is receiving a large amount of attention in all lines. This, I believe, will be the biggest development in the future of radio. And then, of course, there are improvements to be made on devices already proven. Oh, the field will be busily occupied, but the newer ideas will be slower from now on. Really, I can't think of one use to which radio has not been either put or suggested."[49]

In another Smith story, Joe asks for an explanation of another invention, a "close tuner" that allows tuning to fractions of a wavelength, increasing the number of stations that could operate without mutual interference. "How's it work? Some radically new principle?" Jerry shakes his head. "Oh no," he replies. "Merely intensifying the normal method."[50]

An "in" social group is present in Brightmere-on-the-Deep, in which each man's use of radio helps either to strengthen his ties within the group or to exclude him from it. Smith's most elitist story, which draws on many degrading stereotypes, pictures a new man in town named Bohunkevitch, who instead of joining

in the town's adulation of "the Master," complains that Jerry's device is causing interference on his own radio. Bohunkovitch is a former coal miner from the East Side of New York [sic] who got money from a relative. He has eleven children. He borrows all the time instead of spending his own money. Joe comments, "There being neither Scotch nor Hebrew in them, I'm puzzled." When no one will sign Bohunkovitch's petition for Jerry to stop sending out interference, he takes Jerry to court. Joe describes the courtroom: "There's a strong flavor of garlic and dill pickles in the air . . . if he loses I ain't putting it above his gang to drop a little arsenic in the city water." Joe sums up the way in which Bohunkovitch has transgressed the town's social mores: "'Foreign' usually refers to some thick-skulled piano mover who settles in our little seaside village and doesn't get chummy with the gang, which same revolves eccentrically around the Master." The case concludes in Jerry's favor, because he has put his machine in a room of grounded steel for the court's inspection——no radiation can leave. Afterwards everyone signs a petition to get Bohunkovitch to leave town.[51]

The world of increasing middle class broadcast listeners is portrayed even more fully in the fiction of Ellis Parker Butler, whose businessman characters commute by train to New York from their suburb of Westcote on Long Island, where their wives belong to and run the town's social clubs. Westcote is described as "a radio community," with "more radio sets than any other town in the world. Like Brighton-on-the-Deep, it is a community that tolerates no interference with what it holds to be sacred concerning its radios. In "The Golden Rabbit," when the Spiffs, long-time friends of the Bronsons, move to town ("Spiff's name had been Eddie until he made his money, but now it was Eduard, and Mrs. Spiff was seriously thinking of changing Spiff to Spyffe."), Mr. Spiff plays his expensive new radio set loudly, which interferes with everyone else's reception. When he refuses to turn it down, the town ostracizes not only the Spiffs but the Bronsons for bringing them to town, until Bronson thinks of a way to replace Spiff's antenna with a realistic looking fake one; Spiff can't figure out why his radio won't work any more, and eventually he leaves town.[52] Other Ellis Parker Butler stories poke fun at broadcast listeners trying to improve reception but getting only static, and trying to impress friends and family with their radios.[53]

Unlike the Smith stories, in which the amateur is viewed as the expert, Colman Galloway's March 1926 "Interference" transforms people who might have been highly respected amateurs at an earlier time into "self-appointed experts" who give misleading advice. Gernsback notes:

> Mr. Galloway's moving little narrative of a group of self-appointed Radio experts, in trouble-shooting the performance of a brand-new Radio set, will strike a responsive chord in the breasts of all B.C.L.'s [broadcast listeners] who have found that there is not always safety in a multitude of counselors.

The only way to find out what is wrong with the new set is not to listen to the many ideas of friends from the office but, as "the Missis" did, to call the salesman back from the store.[54]

Fiction in *Science and Invention* shares with *Radio News* the themes of "you can do it" and the value of science for humanity. (These themes emerge vividly in "Joe's Experiment," in which a blind boy who wants to be an electrical engineer suggests the gadget that replaces an unavailable transformer, enabling a new power plant to open. He had been able to imagine the device, based on principles and components he had learned about by listening to the construction crew.) Yet *Science and Invention's* fiction is also more consistent in visioning new possibilities than was that in *Radio News*. The only story I have so far found which implies new social relationships as well as new abilities is one which raised the issues of scientist-controlled eugenics and artificial reproduction.[55] In this, the first of many provocative stories by Clement Fezandie, a scientist creates a baby girl from a laboratory-fertilized human egg-cell grown in a cow. He tells the

reporter:

> "Yes, Mr. Rockett, I have solved our eugenic problem. By means of my discovery the human race could be perfected in the course of a very few years. By selecting the finest types of manhood and womanhood for parents, I could grow artificially hundreds of thousands of almost perfect children. And in a few generations mankind would scarcely recognize itself!"

Fezandie also wrote the only story in which science in the hands of the right people is still problematic. Even though science and technology give power to the criminals as well as the heroes in many stories, the good always conquers. In "The Mystery of Atomic Energy," however, science itself cannot be controlled by the forces of good. Dr. Hackensaw, who has discovered how to start an atomic reaction in stones, is determined to keep that secret to himself because he fears its misuse, but he also wants to use the process for the good of humanity. However, when a thief steals his secret, and is prevented from doing major damage only through fortuitously being killed in an auto accident, he realizes that the knowledge must be destroyed because the world is not ready for it and could destroy itself:

> The world is not far enough advanced to make proper use of Atomic Energy. Our wars and our strikes would become far more destructive than they are at present, and humanity in its foolishness might wipe itself completely from the face of the earth![56]

Interestingly, the thief is named I. N. Ventor, suggesting a source of misuse of power closer to home that the usual "other" image.

Demonstrating the idea of fiction as both stimulator of the scientific imagination and foreteller of scientific developments, the magazines often published fiction and articles on the same subject in juxtaposition. For example, in "The Living Death," a serial by John Martin Leahy, the scientist Darwin Frontenac, newspaper reporter Bond McQuestion and Antarctic explorer Captain Livingstone find and awaken a woman frozen in ice for centuries.[57] In response to a reader who wanted to know whether this was actually possible, Gernsback conducted some small-scale experiments, using Leahy's ideas. He concluded that life could not be maintained by freezing, although he speculated about the conditions under which this might be possible.

In an inset in "The Gravitation Nullifier" Gernsback asserts that the fictional imagination may be prophesizing the future. The story involves a gravity nullifier developed by Wheaton, a mechanic working for millionaire Ned Cawthorne. After successfully bypassing governmental red tape, they are able to use the device against the "Japo-Chinee-Mexican" army. Gernsback's insert reads:

> This story . . . may sound far more impossible than it really is, for Professor Thomas Jefferson Jackson See, of the Naval Observatory at Mare Island, Cal., has just announced one of the most important and momentous disvoveries of the age. He claims that gravity is but another electrical phenomenon caused by electrical currents circulating about atoms of matter. If this is really so——and we have no reason to doubt the new theory——then Mr. Stratton's story is not only probable, but highly possible.[58]

Gernsback also included a "gravity neutralizer" in his serial "Baron Munchhausen's New Scientific Adventures."[59] The device was built by the Baron, who used it to travel to the moon. The narrator, I. M. Alier, is able to convey the story because he has picked up the Baron's voice over his wireless set. The functions of the story are to plant the idea of interplanetary travel and to propose a means for its realization; complementing it are Gernsback's non-fiction speculations about communication between people on earth and beings on other planets. (A later serial of interplanetary travel was "Tarrano the Conquerer" by Ray Cummings.)

By 1926, radio seemed to be fast losing its bold imaginative aspects and its independence from industry and government. As a result, Gernsback's attention shifted to the sort of fiction he had published in *Science and Invention*. He created *Amazing Stories*, the first magazine wholly devoted to "scientific fiction," to keep alive what he liked best about science: the creation of marvellous theories.[60]

NOTES

(1) *The Electrical Experimenter* became *Science and Invention* in August 1920.

(2) *Radio Amateur News* became *Radio News* with volume 2 in 1920.

(3) A note about terms: Rather than using "science" to mean trying to understand nature, versus "technology" as applying that knowledge to the construction of non-human devices, Gernsback tended to use the terms "scientist"/"inventor" and "science"/"invention" interchangeably. In an editorial titled "Science and Invention" in August 1920, he includes inventions within "science":

"The general public and "the man in the street" possibly come nearer the actual definition of "science than most of our philosophers. To the public, the arts, discoveries, inventions——all fall under the term of science. Anything under the sun nowadays becomes a "science"——be it the science of cooking, the science of darning socks, or the science of cleaning streets.

"The myriad of inventions and discoveries all tend to make the world more "scientific" and whether we like it or not, one science or another creeps into every one of our homes. We are surrounded with science all day long as well as during the night. Science does this thing for us, and makes us do that . . . ."

Engineers are often referred to as either "scientists" or "inventors." Many of the men portrayed in the "Who's Who in Radio" section are engineers, including some whom Gernsback regarded as great men such as De Forest and Armstrong. The line between science and technology may be particularly blurry in the electrical and chemical industries; David Noble observes that these both had their origins in scientific knowledge, rather than the craft knowledge which partly generated the auto industry, for example. In his *America by Design: Science, Technology, and the Rise of Corporate Capitalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977, p. 5) he says:

"Of the new industries which emerged between 1880 and 1920 and transformed the nature of social production in America, only two grew out of the soil of scientific rather than traditional craft knowledge: the electrical and chemical industries. The creation of both presupposed and stimulated advances in physics and chemistry would have been unthinkable without some basic knowledge about the behavior of atoms, molecules, gases, light, magnetism, and electricity. Of the two, the electrical industry arose first, in the 1880s; by the turn of the century it had become a major force in the world of production, dominated by a handful of large, powerful, and dynamic corporations."

The overlap between science and technology is also large during the new phase of an industry. It would be hard to decide which term to apply to Wozniak or Stephen Jobs, who invented the Apple computer in a garage.

(4) Since the previous two years are missing, I cannot state when during this time Gernsback began to use the Huxley quotation.

(5) Hugo Gernsback, "Imagination and Reality," *Amazing Stories 1* (August 1920), p. 579.

(6) Hugo Gernsback, "Science and Invention," *Science and Invention 8* (August 1920), p. 354.

(7) Charles I. Horne, Ph.D., "Jules Verne the World's Greatest Prophet," *Science and Invention 8* (August 1920), p. 368.

(8) Hugo Gernsback, "Idle Thoughts of a Busy Editor," *Amazing Stories 1* (March 1927), p.1085: "Having made scientifiction a hobby since I was eight years old . . . ."

(9) Sam Moskowitz writes: "'Pechvogel' is a term used in derision, somewhat comparable to the Yiddish 'schlemiol,' which describes an impractical person for whom everything turns out wrong, no matter how well-intentioned, because of his lack of common sense." (Moskowitz, "The Ultimate Hugo Gernsback," in Hugo Gernsback, *Ultimate World* [New York: Walker and Co., 1971], pp. 10-11 and 13-15.)

(10) *Ibid.*, p. 10.

(11) Brian W. Aldiss, *Billion Year Spree: The True History of Science Fiction* (Garden City, N.Y., Doubleday and Co., 1973), p. 209.

(12) His editorial is worth quoting from at length:

"This magazine is the logical outcome of many attempts to publish a purely Radio periodical, independent thruout and devoted to American Radio Amateurism.

"In 1908 I started the first magazine in America in which were publisht many radio articles—— *Modern Electrics*. Radio Amateurism being in its infancy then, could not support a purely radio magazine,——so *Modern Electrics* devoted only about one-quarter of its contents to radio. In 1913 I came out with the *Electrical Experimenter*. This magazine has been more prominent than any other on account of its very important radio section. Even during the war——with radio amateurism dead, and nearly every radio magazine discontinued——the *Electrical Experimenter*, at a great financial loss, continued publishing radio articles uninterruptedly, month after month, to keep alive the radio spark in the hearts of our amateurs.

"But now that the war is won,——now that the amateurs have won *their* war, by defeating a proposed new law which would have destroyed American Radio Amateurism——we will witness the most wonderful expansion of the radio arts ever dreamt of. The amateur is here to stay and so is radio in general. I predict an astounding growth of the art during the next ten years. Every other house will have its radiophone, to converse with friends and relatives, for business and for pleasure. Marvellous inventions will be made in Radio during the next decade——unbelievable now.

"Because I am a staunch believer in the glorious future of Radio in America, I have launched *Radio Amateur News*. Its first issue will mark the time when amateur radio in America has come into its own again, when it has been reborn greater than ever——a Phoenix rising, more beautiful than before, from his ashes.

"I felt that the time was ripe for a purely radio magazine——a 100% radio magazine——by and for the amateur. I felt that a magazine for the entire radio fraternity, be he scientist, advanced, or junior amateur, was badly needed, and that is

why you are now reading this, the first issue of the newcomer.

"And here is the platform upon which *Radio Amateur News* stands. I pledge myself to a strict adherence to every plank:

"1st. Only radio——100% of it——nothing else.

"2nd. An Organ for and by the amateur. The amateur's likes and wants will always come first in this magazine.

"3rd. Absolute independence. *Radio Amateur News* has only one Boss——its readers. This magazine is not, nor will it ever be, affiliated with any stifling, commercial radio interests whatsoever.

"4th. Truth——first, last and always. When you see it in *Radio Amateur News* you may be sure that it is so. Not being affiliated with commercial radio interest, this magazine will have no reason to suppress important articles, discoveries, etc.

"5th. *Radio Amateur News* is and will be the sworn enemy of all adverse and unfair radio legislation. Our Washington representative will inform us immediately of any new radio legislative measures. No unfair bill will become a law before all amateurs have had their say.

"6th. The uplift of American Radio Amateurism out of the "kid" class, into the serious status to which the art is entitled. Amateur Radio is not a a plaything or a sport——it is a useful, mind-ennobling art——it vanquishes distances, it saves lives and it will be as necessary as the telephone ten years hence . . . .

"Three cheers for American Radio Amateurism——*"Long live the Radio Amateur."*

Hugo Gernsback, "Why 'Radio Amateur News' Is Here," *Radio Amateur News 1* (July 1919), p. 5.

(13) Hugo Gernsback, "Amateur Radio," *Radio News 5* (November 1923), p. 521.

(14) Hugo Gernsback, *Science and Invention 13* (August 1925), p. 303.

(15) This view was held by progressive engineers of the period, whom Edwin Layton writes about in *The Revolt of the Engineers* (Cleveland: Case Western Reserve University Press, 1971).

(16) Hugo Gernsback, "About Radio Clubs," *Radio Amateur News 1* (March 1920), p. 463.

(17) Gernsback viewed manufacturers as an essential part of the radio industry. In *Radio News 3* (September 1922), p. 419, he wrote, "*Radio News* believes its mission is to enhance the radio industry wherever possible." This was in an editorial urging manufacturers to hold but a single radio show a year and that one in a major city. At other times, he took them to task for the poor quality of their products. (See "The Radio Business," *Radio News 3* [4 July 1922], p. 21.) He seemed to feel that amateurs and manufacturers had a symbiotic relationship, although he viewed the amateurs as the more dynamic element.

(18) Hugo Gernsback, "Governemnt Radio Control——Once More," *Radio Amateur News 1* (September 1919), p. 101.

(19) Hugo Gernsback, "The Future of the American Radio Amateur," *Radio Amateur News 1* (July 1919), p. 23. See also "The Future of Radio," *ibid.* (October 1919), p. 157 and "Government Radio Control," *ibid.* (September 1919), p. 108

(20) The great men were often *portrayed* as amateurs who had made good, although according to a *Radio News* article on Edwin Armstrong, who discovered the phenomenon of regeneration in 1912, he was "one of the very few radio engineers who have risen from the ranks of the radio amateur." Lee De Forest, inventor of the audio vacuum tube, was portrayed as if he had no resources at all other than his own wits when he made crucial discoveries; according to that article, which was written by the president of the company bearing the De Forest name, De Forest was experimenting in his $2-a-week room in Chicago when he accidentally found that a gas lamp was affected by high frequency current. Based on this discovery, he built the three-electrode vacuum tube, or audion (from "audible ions"). (Charles Gilbert, "The True Story of the de Forest Vacuum Tube," *Radio News 4* [October 1922]).

However, we learn in another issue of *Radio News* that by the time of his discovery he had been graduated from the Sheffield Scientific School at Yale University in electrical and mechanical engineering, had earned a Ph.D. from Yale in physics and mathematics, and had done research at Western Electric's Telephone Department.

(21) Hugo Gernsback, *Science and Invention 8* (August 1920), p. 354.

(22) Not only could already-existing techniques and principles be learned by anyone, but anyone could envision new possibilities. In the June 1915 *Electrical Experimenter* Gernsback urges readers to try writing stories for publication:

"Can you write a snappy, short story, having some scientific fact for a main theme? . . . However, please bear in mind that only scientific literature is acceptable, altho not necessarily dealing with electrical subjects." (*Ibid. 3* [June 1915]).

In the next issue Gernsback begins an installment of a piece of fiction written by himself with a fake beginning——it is drama——packed to get the reader's attention. He then explains that this is what needs to be done to start a story. He is sharing with the reader the process by which he writes, which enables the reader to think of writing. (Hugo Gernsback, "Baron Munchhausen's New Scientific Adventures: Man on the Moon," (*Ibid. 3* [July 1915], p. 88.)

An indication of faith in the amateur audience to understand science was the magazines' airing of current scientific debates. For example, did the ether really exist? Ether, filling all air and matter, was assumed to be the medium through which light waves were transmitted. However, Einstein had challenged its existence. Gernsback then observed that Faraday and Maxwell had invented the concept in order to explain how light waves could be transmitted through space. He noted that although no experiments had ever proved its existence (Michelson and Morley tried to in 1887 but failed), it would be hard to give up the concept because it made so much sense, and had never been disproved. (Hugo Gernsback, "Ether and Space," *ibid. 7* [December 1919], p. 730.)

By showing that scientists themselves disagreed over explanations, the magazine demystified science, enabling its readers to feel that it was not a closed area open only to an initiated elite. But since Einstein had published his findings in 1905, and since by 1919 they were generally accepted within the scientific community, it is puzzling to see Gernsback not simply revive the debate, but support the outmoded side of it.

(23) Even in the late nineteenth century Edison did not work alone, but directed many employees in a large laboratory.

(24) "Who's Who in Radio: Edwin H. Armstrong," *Radio News 4* (December 1922), p. 1070.

(25) L. R. Krumm (Superintendent of Radio Operations at Westinghouse Electric & Manufacturing Co.), "The Development of Radiophone Broadcasting," *ibid.* (September 1922), p. 593.

(26) Hugo Gernsback, "Our Freedom of the Ether," *Radio Amateur News 1* (November 1919), p. 211

(27) Hugo Gernsback, "Developing the Radiophone," *ibid.* (December 1919), p. 269.

(28) Hugo Gernsback, "Radio in 1923," *Radio News 4* (February 1923), p. 1439.

(29) Hugo Gernsback, "Popularizing Radio——a Double Barreled Scheme," *ibid.* (December 1922) and "Our Popularizing Radio Scheme," *ibid.* (February 1923), pp. 1452-3.

(30) Stanley Lebergott, *The American Economy: Income, Wealth and Want*(1976), as cited in Frank Stricker, "Affluence for Whom?——Another Look at Prosperity and the Working Classes in the 1920s," *Labor History* (Winter 1983). I am grateful to Laura Owen for calling my attention to this reference.

(31) Hugo Gernsback, "Your Boy and Radio," *Radio News 6* (December 1924), p. 897.

(32) "The improvements of various workmen and technicians are put together, under the guidance of lawyers and business managers, so that patents can be acquired which will provide for dominating a field of production more completely. (Bernhard J. Stern, "The Corporations as Beneficiaries," *American Scholar XVIII* [1949], p. 112, as quoted in Noble, *America by Design*, p. 99.) Inventors became employees in corporations to spare themselves the hardships of going it alone. Their patents were thereby handled by corporation-paid patent lawyers and their inventions were made commercially viable at company expense. Corporate employment thus eliminated the problem of lawsuits, and in addition provided well-equipped laboratories, libraries, and technical assistance for research. *The nature of their work, however, had changed.* [italics mine] "Work was often done under high pressure. The employee-inventor was expected to direct his efforts along lines in accord with the company's commercial policies and not to spend time fooling around with any interesting idea that appealed to him. He was expected to produce results of definite commercial value and not to take too long about it." The "collectivization" of invention done in the research laboratory presupposed the specialization of each task: "company inventors were usually organized into departments or sections; they were assigned definite projects to work on and problems to solve," and the various efforts so assigned were assembled only by management. (L. Sprague de Camp, *The Heroic Age of American Invention* [Garden City: Doubleday and Co., 1961], pp. 251-9, as quoted in Noble, *op. cit.*, pp. 99-100.

(33) Noble, p. 102.

(34) Sandra Harding, in *The Science Question in Feminism*, discusses the different hierarchical rankings of the top 10% or so scientists who are involved in theory testing. While she was discussing this phenomenon *among* scientists, it is probably useful as a hypothesis when considering scientists *v.* engineers *v.* technicians as well.

(35) Hugo Gernsback, "New Radio Developments," *Radio News 6* (June 1925), p. 2205.

(36) Hugo Gernsback, "Is There Money in Radio Inventions?" *ibid. 7* (March 1926), p. 1253.

(37) Interestingly, the initial fiction in the magazine deals with animated radio. In the very first piece, "Local Forecast——Stormy," by Dorothy Kantro (*Radio Amateur News 1* [November 1919], p. 236 and cover), the narration is from the point of view of the receiver, who after being rescued from a younger brother of the Master, marries the Audion. In the next story, "The Third Pill," by J. K. Henney *ibid.*, p. 237), the parts of the radio come nightmarishly alive; it turns out that the operator has taken an opium pill by accident. This animation also occurred even earlier in the poem "The Wraith of the Wireless" by Rose Seelye Miller (the only other fiction authored by a woman here), which is written from the point of view of the wireless set (*Electrical Experimenter 3* [September 1915], p.192):

> I'm a wandering wraith,
> without control,
> For my voice went out with
> my Master's Soul.

(38) Marius Logan, "The Times Flies," *Radio News 7* (October 1925), p. 425.

(39) Erald A. Schivo, "The Radio Man's Code," *ibid. 2* (October 1920), p. 216.

(40) Robert W. Allen, "When the Lights Grew Dim," *Radio Amateur News 1* (March 1920), p. 491.

(41) Ellis Parker Butler, "Regulate or Bust!," *Radio News 6* (September 1924). This story attacked unions, as well as government, for construing self-interest narrowly——e.g. the Waiters Union stopped banquets from being broadcast because it was thought people would stay home and listen to the speeches instead of attending. The Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals dealt radio the final blow: since no one knew what an electron was, it might be an animal; agitating the ether might be mistreating animals. The story ends on a pro-capitalist note: people who had enjoyed radio didn't protest because "they got it all free of charge" and so did not appreciate it.

(42) H. M. Sutherland, "Gunbarrel Radio," *Radio News 4* (July 1922), p. 47.

(43) "The Radio King," novelized by George Bronson Howard from the Universal Chapter Play of the same name by Robert Dillon, *ibid.* (November and December 1922), pp. 848 and 1172.

(44) A recent article about the failure of the 1887 Michelson-Morley experiment to detect the ether noted that it "came at a time of transition from a period when science was dominated by wealthy amateurs to the era of true scientific professionals." Malcolm W. Browne, "In Centennial of One of Its Biggest Failures, Science Rejoices," *The New York Times* (April 28, 1987), p. c1.

(45) Robert Francis Smith, Allez, Houpla!," *Radio News 6* (August 1924), p. 168.

(46) Robert Francis Smith, "Cent from Heaven," *ibid.* (November 1924), p. 726. This story also illustrates Jerry's lack of humor——he is insulted when the manager wants to sign him on as "the greatest

comedy scientist."

(47) Sam Moskowitz, "The Ultimate Hugo Gernsback," in Hugo Gernsback, *Ultimate Worls*, p. 8.

(48) Robert Frances Smith, "Drink to Me Only With Thine Eyes," *Radio News 7* (August 1925), p. 160.

(49) Robert Francis Smith, "Ride and Seek," *ibid.* (September 1925), p. 289.

(50) Robert Francis Smith, "The Master Laughs It Off," *ibid.* (January 1926), p. 963.

(51) Robert Francis Smith, "Justice Is Deaf," *ibid.* (December 1925), p. 785.

(52) Ellis Parker Butler, "The Golden Rabbit," *ibid. 5* (April 1924), p. 1404.

(53) Other Butler stories in this vein appeared in *Radio News 4*: "Mr. and Mrs. Brownlee Hold Hands" (February 1923), p. 1468; "Mr. Bimberry Hears the Banquet" (March 1923), p. 1637; "Mr. Brownlee's Loudtalker" (April 1923), p. 1797; and "Mr. Bink's Radio" (May 1923).

(54) Colman Galloway, "Interference," *Radio News 7* (March 1926), p. 1257.

(55) Clement Fezandie, "Dr. Hackensaw's Secrets No. 1, The Secret of Artificial Reproduction," *Science and Invention 9* (May 1921), p. 17.

(56) Clement Fezandie, "Dr. Hackensaw's Secrets No. 39, The Mystery of Atomic Energy," *ibid. 13* (May 1925), p. 76.

(57) John Martin Leahy, "The Living Death," part 9 of 9, *ibid.* (June 1925).

(58) Hugo Gernsback, inset in George Frederick Stratton, "The Gravitation Nullifier," *Electrical Experimenter 3* (October 1915), p. 249.

(59) Hugo Gernsback, "Baron Munchhausen's New Scientific Adventures," *ibid.* (June and July 1915).

(60) I am indebted to Professor David Brion Davis and my fellow graduate students in the "American Cultural and Intellectual History" seminar for reading and commenting thoughtfully on several drafts of this essay; I should especially like to thank Jonathon Cedarbaum for his comments. I am also grateful to Sam Moskowitz for reading the manuscript and offering me his comments and suggestions.

Book Reviews

A BIOGRAPHICAL DICTIONARY OF SCIENCE FICTION AND FANTASY ARTISTS by Robert Weinberg. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1988. xvi-347 pp. 24 cm. $75.00.

This book has been many years in gestation and its publication is much welcomed. It is the first reference work to study seriously the contributions made to science-fiction and fantasy by the artist. Unlike previous s-f art books, which have often unscrupulously used artists' work with little if any payment and which offer scanty data about the artists themselves, this volume contains no artwork at all but is crammed with biographical details. This exclusion is perhaps regrettable, but had it not been enforced the already-high price-tag might have soared even further.

Let us consider the contents. Ably assisted by Richard Dalby for the European entries, Weinberg has provided biographies of over 250 artists who have specialized in or made some mark in the world of s-f and fantasy art. Arranged in alphabetical order, the entries begin with Chris Achilleos and end with James Yost. This arrangement makes the alphabetical artist index at the back of the book totally redundant; I'd have liked to see some sort of chronological index instead. So far as I can tell, the earliest entries are for a handful of French imaginative artists, Grandville, Bayard and Robida, and there is also coverage of such early British artists as Henry Austin, Warwick Goble, Fred T. Jane, Sidney Sime, Harry Rountree and Paul Hardy. But by far the bulk of the entries concentrate on the illustrators for pulp and digest magazines and the paperbacks since the 1950's.

Entries vary in length depending both on the importance of the artist and the degree of information available. Thus for such major names as Alex Schomburg, Ed Emshwiller, Kelly Freas and Roy Krenkel one will find detailed biographical data, notes on style and technique, interesting anecdotes, and listings of major works, the latter covering both hardcover and paperback jackets and covers, and all magazine appearances. The Freas listing, for example, despite the small

print and use of abbreviations, runs for two pages. The whole Emsh entry takes up over four. At the other extreme we find brief entries for minor artists or those about whom little is known. For instance, if one consults this book for information about Alejandro Canedo one will learn very little beyond what one presumably already knew through being acquainted with the name. A few entries are thus disappointing, but these are very few indeed compared to the wealth of information available in the others. Both Weinberg and Dalby have done considerable work in unearthing biographical data about these artists, few of whom were even credited in their day and who seemed to drop promptly into oblivion. I had no idea of Curtis Senf's real age, for instance, or that he became an advertising artist after his days with *Weird Tales*. Weinberg has not tracked down the birthdate of Leo Morey, but I do now know that he died in 1965 and have learned something about his personal background. The book fails to give the date of Hans Wesso's death, and I'm sure we'd all be interested to know what became of him.

As to the accuracy of the material, this is not always easy to check. But Weinberg has done some seminal work here in tracking down data and background details, and the book surely stands as a solid foundation for future research. Especially useful are his entries for the father and son Lawrence Stern Stevens and Peter Stevens. Both produced work under the name "Lawrence," and Weinberg has discovered that many covers were the work of the son, who is still alive, the father having died in 1960.

Less definable are some of the early pulp magazine covers that were not signed. Although those of Paul, Morey, Brown and Wesso were usually easily identifiable, others were not always so. Weinberg has liberally listed all issues to which an artist contributed, whether covers or interiors; but since covers are so much more dramatic, I think it would have been useful to identify these separately, which would help resolve some of the enigmas about early ones that remain.

One other problem is that the bibliography lists the titles of books illustrated by the artists but does not cite their authors or publication dates. Thus we are told that Jeff Jones did the cover for *The Burning Court* in 1969, but if you didn't know the author (John Dickson Carr) his identity and that of the publisher might be hard to track down. We also learn that Paul Lehr illustrated *The Door Into Summer*; I wonder how many readers know the author, publisher and edition date, none of which is given here. I can appreciate that including such data would have increased the thickness of the book substantially, but its absence weakens one of its main features.

Nevertheless, overall I find the entries very readable, marked by much original research, and a major contribution to reference in the field. In addition to the main biographical entries Weinberg has also provided an historical overview in his introduction, which runs for over thirty pages and traces the development of science-fiction art from Albert Robida through the growth of the pulp magazines to today's more sophisticated exponents. There is also an afterword on "Science Fiction Art: What Still Exists" which surveys the lamentable state of the recorded existence of the original artwork. This provides a fascinating yet tragic footnote on the state of fantastic art, and hopefully may generate interest amongst universities and colleges in the collecting of original artwork.

Because of the depth of research that would be required to improve upon this work I expect it will remain the prime reference on science-fiction artists for many years to come. It fits that role admirably.

Mike Ashley

UNICORN MOUNTAIN by Michael Bishop. New York: Arbor House/ William Morrow, 1988. viii-367 pp. 21.5 cm. $18.95.

Eking out a precarious living on a Colorado ranch with only a Ute Indian cowhand to help her, Libby Quarrels hears from her girl-chasing ex-husband that his

cousin Bo Gavin is dying of AIDS. Libby packs and flies to New York City, rescuing the youthful AIDS victim and driving back to Colorado, through a mid-winter blizzard, to care for him at her ranch.

All the way back she carries two objects, both picked up in the men's room of a sleazy filling station: a delicately carved pewter unicorn and a condom wrapped in gold foil like some exotic doubloon.

Here, perhaps unwittingly, Bishop has summarized the contradictory nature of this book. It is not characteristic Bishop, not at least to those of us who remember his Nebula Award-winning time-travel love story "No Enemy but Time." It is an unexpected confrontation of two basically incompatible writing styles—— fantasy and tough, naturalistic narrative. On the one hand, there are gentle unicorns and the innocent, although intricate, Ute Indian culture; on the other, there is the drawn-out, tortured, dying process of the AIDS victim, some unpleasantly graphic deaths of both human beings and unicorns, and enough four-letter words to have made this book a best-seller if it had been written thirty years ago.

Both fantasy and naturalism are valid literary devices, of course. But by all the usual standards they should not work well together: each cancels out the other's impact. Perhaps stranger than even the story-line in this "realistic fantasy," the unexpected mélange works well. As a profound look at the human condition, the novel has limited success; but as a worthy story, well told, its success is very nearly complete.

There are two major plot lines. There is the moving odyssey of Sam Coldpony, Libby's Anglicized Ute cowhand, trying to find his way back to the culture he abandoned when he walked out on his Indian wife and daughter; and with it are the poignant fumblings of his sixteen-year-old daughter Paisley, trying to come to grips with her Ute heritage. Equally poignant are Bo Gavin's strivings to come to grips with the knowledge that although he must die of AIDS he should die with dignity and purpose.

Somehow Bishop manages to contrive a happy ending for Bo in a never-never land, but it comes off as just that——a bit contrived, and Bishop has to veer from fantasy to traditional science-fiction to manage it.

This one obeisance to the conventional science-fiction themes which he used effectively and with originality in the 1970's is his treatment of the concept of alternate universes, perhaps an infinite number of them, existing alongside our own in an undetectable continuum. (The idea goes back to the turn of the century, and was popularized in the 1930's by Murray Leinster.) In Bishop's alternate world, the homosexual lifestyle is considered universally to be equal in every way to the heterosexual lifestyle; John Kennedy was never assassinated by Lee Harvey Oswald; the pope distributes birth-control pills; and Big Band music is still king (but even in alternate realities, Mr. Bishop, Glen Miller's theme should surely remain "Moonlight Serenade," not Beethoven's "Moonlight Sonata"!).

It is this alternate world that accounts for the mysterious appearance of beautiful, luminescent unicorns on Libby's ranch. Dying from a disease much like AIDS in its symptoms, they migrate into our world seeking miraculous cures.

The symbolism of the unicorns is obvious. Both male and female unicorns have phallic single horns. Two AIDS victims die surrounded by inflated condoms dangling from ceilings, one while a ghostly unicorn pops them with the tip of its horn. Bo's last project is a successful TV commercial for a condom named Kartajan——a corruption of the Indian word for unicorn. And he takes his last journey on the back of the ghost of a stillborn, two-headed hermaphrodite unicorn. So you can't possibly miss any of the symbolism, it's pointed out by characters in the book ranging from a Ute religious leader to an obnoxious corporate executive. Sometimes the symbolism gets a bit too obvious.

Bishop's treatment of the American Indian sub-plot is often moving, always sympathetic, and never patronizing. Sam, Paisley and Mama D'lo come intensely

alive, and think thoughts and feel emotions anyone can share. Bishop has done his homework well, and he understands and respects Ute culture. His Ute characters act just as other decent persons would; they happen only to have been born into a way of life different from mainstream America's.

There are muted but intensely touching moments in their story: when the blindfolded Paisley walks unerringly in footprints the Utes believe were left by Christ, when the Utes welcome the dying Bo to their sacred Sun Dance and try to help him, when Paisley forgives her father Sam, and when the ghost of the deserted Mama D'lo, who blew off her own head with a shotgun, finds peace and tells her ex-husband Sam, "Okay, live." There's also a wildly tragi-comic scene in which a drunk but good-natured mob of cowhands and boardinghouse girls, marching out one dark, steamy night to wish Bo well, is sent stampeding for their lives by a flaming wall of seventy unicorns, led in their charge by a bull wapiti elk ridden by Sam.

Although *Unicorn Mountain* is an impassioned condemnation of bigotry in all its forms, Bishop reveals some biased stereotypes of his own. Almost without exception, the WASP characters are bigoted jackasses. When they learn that he's dying of AIDS, Bo's parents excommunicate him from the family circle, and his brother Ned substitutes the gift of a job with big money for the compassion he owes Bo. Even Bo himself is not above unknindness and even cruelty, confronting his closed-minded but genuinely grieving mother in a shouting match at his father's funeral.

The unfailingly kind Libby is a real heroine——but she is no WASP, as we learn from her maiden name of Ruzeski. It is the Indians who conduct themselves with consistent dignity and decency.

When you tear away labels like "stereotypes," "fantasy" and "naturalism," and get down to the narrative itself, *Unicorn Mountain* is a first-rate story with an appropriate social message, with moments both gripping and touching, told extremely well by a Southern writer who ranks among the very best of today's younger science-fiction and fantasy authors.

George Greiff

2061: ODYSSEY THREE by Arthur C. Clarke. New York: Ballantine books, 1988. xiii-279 pp. 24 cm. $17.95.

You're a monolith, a giant intergalactic monolith in a network of monoliths. To date you've evolved early earthbound primates into homids who eventually evolve themselves into space-voyagers. Then you are revealed, turn a highly skilled astronaut into some sort of wraith, and aid in confounding the most advanced computer of the era. Next, around Jupiter, procreating like a fruitfly experiment run amok, you turn Jupiter into a baby sun and its moon, Europa, into Earth II——which is where you pop up next, sternly warning your first project, the hominids, to stay away——or else! Oh, and you also may or may not have transformed the aforementioned computer, HAL 9000, into a wraith as well.

So what do you do for an encore?

Well, for that you need someone who worked out the principles of the communications satellite back in 1945; who won the Hugo, Nebula, John W. Campbell and a handful of other awards in 1961 for *Rendezvous with Rama*; shared an Oscar nomination in 1968 for *2001*; joined Walter Cronkite for CBS's coverage of the Apollo Missions; hosted a TV series seen around the globe; and who has written along the way some fifty books, twenty million copies of which have been printed in over thirty languages, just to tell your monolith story. In other words, you need someone with the stature of Arthur C. Clarke.

Welcome back to the most famous future ever imagined (Star Bores and Star Drek notwithstanding). Yes, friends, it's fifty years since 2010 and those pesky hominids are up to their old tricks, eyeing that inscrutable monolith once again. And naturally that humongous monolith is still acting plenty inscrutable.

The last surviving member of the 2001 expedition and of the 2010 return mission is Heywood Floyd. Technically Dr. Floyd is seventy years old, by the calendar he is 103, but he actually has the body of a healthy, vital sixty-five year old. His hibernations in his previous exploits while travelling to Jupiter and back did more than merely arrest the ageing process——they encouraged rejuvenation; and he has also lived off-planet under acceleration for fifty years, slowing time relative to Earth: hence the assorted age-reckonings. He is now invited on the first manned expedition to Halley's Comet.

That there exist entities which can turn planets into suns is a staggering thought. So while Floyd heads off one way to greet the comet ("Halley's, here I come...."), his grandson is on a crew heading another way to study anomalies on Europa from the shallowest dared orbit. Wouldn't you know it? An extremist hijacks the ship, as the result of which it crashlands on that forbidden planet. Of course it's grandpa to the rescue, and from there on things get very, very interesting. Bobbing up and down like a cork, his starship drifting helplessly on a strange ocean, and surrounded by unknown monsters, the youngster's discoveries while awaiting rescue offer more than enough for Clarke to chew on in a fourth installment.

Dr. Floyd prefers not to talk about the first mission to Jupiter where co-crewmember David Bowman went out to investigate the monolith and became whatever he became, or the second mission when Bowman, who should have been dead for twelve years, appeared to Floyd. *2061* reveals where he is.

The book is a smoothly-flowing page-turner full of thrilling scientific descriptions of things like cometary topography, space travel, the surprising effects of gravity at different potencies and geophysical evolution. The action is set against a background of social and political developments on Earth and its off-planet colonies in the face of an existing superior intelligence. The last two chapters alone are not only worth the price of this volume, but that of its sequel as well. It's a book I heartily recommend buying.

H. R. Felgenhauer

Crise Galactica

Wealth wanders far from timid hunters
But beckons on the bold,
A virgin that, wide-eyed, astounded,
Promises surrender on some future shore.

Panting, we pursue to distant worlds,
To asteroids and moons,
To mine and build and trade in commerce
While vast computers calculate our futures.

But those machines are run by humans,
Prone to bribes, corruption
And incompetence, as well as to
System-shattering electronic feedbacks.

Depressions do not strike only worlds.
Future historians say
That galaxies are vulnerable
And, bending drive-tubes into shovels, we will,
Beneath alien skies, dig ditches.

Thomas A. Easton

Mr. H. and Mr. H.G.

Mike Ashley

I have for some time been researching toward a book about Hugo Gernsback, concentrating on the early days of the science fiction magazines in the period 1926 to 1936. I have also, for some time, been interested in the relationship between the American and British magazines and authors, particularly concerning the business relationships that existed either through the publishers' own rights departments or through literary agencies. Some of my delvings on the latter surfaced a while ago in an article called "Unlocking the Night" in Robert Weinberg's *Weird Tales Collector*. This was reprinted and updated for the 1988 World Fantasy Convention book *Gaslight and Ghosts*.

Recently, through the kind assistance of the University of Illinois Library at Urbana-Champaign, I was able to obtain copies of the correspondence between Hugo Gernsback and H.G. Wells. This correspondence throws light not only on one aspect of the relationship that existed between American publishers and British authors, but also brings to light some of the business practices operated by Gernsback. Gernsback has come to be known for his failure to pay authors for their works or, at best, paying some pitiful sum, and usually late. H. P. Lovecraft's views of Gernsback's practices have become well known, especially with Lovecraft's epithet of Gernsback as "Hugo the rat." It's interesting to see, therefore, how this relates to an extended association as existed between Gernsback and Wells.

There is little doubt as to Gernsback's respect and admiration for Wells's stories. In his oft-quoted definition of "scientifiction" from his first editorial in *Amazing* Gernsback included Wells's fiction by example. Later in that same editorial Gernsback went on to say that Wells's stories, "like those of his forerunners, have become famous and immortal." But even before *Amazing Stories* was launched on March 10, 1926 Gernsback had selected stories by Wells for reprinting in his technical magazine *Science and Invention*. "The New Accelerator" appeared in the February 1923 issue and "The Star" followed in March 1923.

It was "The New Accelerator" that Gernsback chose to reprint again in the inaugural issue of *Amazing Stories* and almost certainly because he believed he had purchased full serial rights to both that and "The Star" in the United States, which meant he could reprint them again without further payment.

Whatever the circumstances, and I shall return to this again in a moment, there does not seem to have been any correspondence between Gernsback and Wells until April 8th 1926. In a letter of this date Gernsback notified Wells that "The New Accelerator" had been used in the first issue of *Amazing* and that a copy was being sent under separate cover. He also informed Wells that "The Crystal Egg" was being used in the second issue. Interestingly, the second issue had already been published on April 5th, but Gernsback does not

state whether a copy of that issue was also being sent to Wells. Finally, Gernsback enquired as to "what price you would wish us to pay you in connection with the serial rights to your stories which are of the scientific fiction type."

A copy of Wells's reply is not available, but his own manual notations appear on the Gernsback letter. This was probably Wells standard practice as he had his own private secretary - his daughter-in-law, Marjorie Wells - who would write letters based on Wells's notes. Wells commented that he wanted to know who had given Gernsback permission to reprint "The New Accelerator" and "The Crystal Egg". He also noted that his usual price for reprints was $100.

Gernsback's response, dated May 4th 1926, is interesting for a number of reasons. First he states that somewhile earlier he had purchased "The New Accelerator", "The Star" and "The Crystal Egg" from William Gerard Chapman of Chicago, Illinois. [Chapman was a literary agent, authorised at that time to act on Wells's behalf in the States.] This purchase must have been about the time the two stories were reprinted in *Science and Invention* and that "The Crystal Egg" had also been intended as a reprint at that time. Gernsback goes on to say that he had paid $50 apiece for these stories.

Let's just consider these points first. Firstly, there can be little doubt that Gernsback had paid for reprint rights to these stories. Moreover $50 is a not unreasonable sum for reprint rights if they are for one-time serial rights only. By my count "The New Accelerator" is a little under 5000 words so that the $50 for use in *Science & Invention* amounted to about 1¢ a word. The fact that Gernsback offered no further payment for either this story or "The Star" immediately halves that rate though it's arguably still a reasonable reprint rate for the time.

There is a further point. Some contracts have a clause limiting the option for the reprint. Certainly this is common in British contracts. Whether this was included in the agreement with Chapman I do not know, but rights can be limited for use within twelve months of the date of the agreement, sometimes less than that. I have seen contracts where the limitation has ranged from three months to two years. If this clause was not included then Chapman's negotiations on Wells's behalf were certainly questionable. It does strengthen the argument that Gernsback would have believed he had purchased full American serial rights to the stories and could reprint them as often as he chose. If the clause was included then not only would Gernsback have known he could not have reprinted the stories without further payment he would also have had to have renegotiated the sum. It would also mean that the right to use "The Crystal Egg" would have lapsed. Since Gernsback reprinted all three stories without further payment we must assume that either there was no clause or Gernsback ignored it. Either way the double use of "The New Accelerator" and "The Star" and the single use of "The Crystal Egg" cost Gernsback $150 at an overall rate for the five printings of 0.59¢ a word.

Okay, back to Gernsback's letter of May 4th. The second paragraph refers to Wells's request for $100 a story. Gernsback accepted this figure on the proviso that it meant "full length" stories, "as, for instance, *The War of the Worlds*..." - in other words, novels. Gernsback continued, "...we do not presume that you would wish this amount for small, short pieces, for which we have never paid more than $25 or $50 a piece."

Despite what Gernsback says, there is in fact a presumption on his part. His initial letter had referred to "The New Accelerator" and "The Crystal Egg" and had asked what fee Wells would ask for the serial rights to such stories. Wells's answer of $100 clearly related to short stories, and could never have been intended as relating to novel-length works. As we shall see, though, Wells, unaccountably, accepted this arrangement although

subsequently must have realised the mistake he had made and sought to make changes.

Gernsback asked for confirmation of Wells's acceptance of the arrangement, presuming that unless he heard to the contrary, it was acceptable. He also made arrangements for Wells to receive complimentary copies of *Amazing Stories* each month. He also added an interesting paragraph about the nature of *Amazing*:

> AMAZING STORIES is a new magazine, facing an uphill fight for recognition by the reading public, and there can be no question about your interest in a magazine of this kind, which is the first to come out with scientifiction. It really deserves your best cooperation to help put this publication on its feet. As soon as the magazine gets going we shall be in the market for original stories from you, and shall then be able to pay you real prices for your work.

There is again a presumption here that Wells has to be both interested in the magazine and to give it his support. It suggests an arrogance in a publisher-author relationship that firstly would normally be intolerable if it weren't that some other publishers did and still do act that way, but secondly, and more importantly, seems to contradict any favouritism one might expect Gernsback to show to arguably the leading writer of non-pulp sf of the day. To my mind it is a betrayal of Gernsback's background. Although a Luxembourger by birth he was basically a Prussian by descent and upbringing which brings with it an almost instinctive belief in superiority. This belief would have ruled Gernsback's business relationships and it probably would not have entered his head to change it to a more personalised approach when dealing with someone of Wells's stature or abilities. But it does show, overall, that Gernsback was positive, shrewd and presumptuous in his business dealings.

Wells response to the letter was brief, if his notations are any measure. He emphasised that there could be no general agreement, but that there must be a separate arrangement for each story. In those circumstances the terms would probably be agreed. I still find it hard to believe that Wells could accept $100 for a novel. $50 per story was not unreasonable, although one should also consider the exchange rate at that time. The British pound sterling was then much stronger against the dollar, and was equal to about $5. $50, therefore, equated to about £10. For a short story of about 5000 words, therefore, payment was equal to about half-a-penny a word, a reasonable, if not excessive figure for one-time serial reprint rights. $100 for a novel, though, converts to £20 and for a novel of, say, 60,000 words, this would be equal to 0.15¢ in America and only 0.08 pence in Britain, an absurd figure and nothing short of an insult.

Nevertheless Wells agreed, and if there was any doubt about it it was confirmed in response to Gernsback's next letter. On June 9th 1926 Gernsback wrote to Wells saying that he would like to reprint *The War of the Worlds* and *The First Men in the Moon*, and also mentioned that he had bought reprint rights to *The Island of Dr Moreau* through Wells's New York agent, Paul R. Reynolds. Wells noted on the letter, "$100 each asked June 19th."

This shows that although Gernsback's presumption seems both ludicrous and insulting, it was accepted by Wells without question. It also shows that Gernsback had taken appropriate action to deal only with Wells's accredited American agent, all of which shows that Gernsback was endeavouring to act ethically and decently in the affair.

This is further evidenced in Gernsback's next letter of June 15th 1926. It refers to two earlier letters from Wells's secretary, dated May 18th and 20th, neither of which are available. We can deduce, though, from Gernsback's response that Wells had emphasised the need for each story to be agreed and arranged separately. Since Gernsback was clearly planning on reprinting a story by Wells in almost every issue, such prior arrangements might not always be convenient. Stories may be shifted around according to the space available and a story planned for one issue might be shifted to another. Also arrangements had to be made with the artists not only for interior illustrations but also covers, when appropriate, and all of this complicated having to make specific prior arrangements with Wells. Nevertheless Gernsback proposed a compromise: "...suppose we cable you just the name of the story wanted, and you can cable back to us just the one word "yes" or "no". We presume this will be satisfactory." Wells accepted this arrangement. How often it was used I don't know but a cable certainly exists requesting permission to reprint *The First Men in the Moon*. It was telegraphed on August 23rd 1926 with an immediate agreement to use for $100. This was to be the lowest word rate Wells would be paid, equating to 0.14¢ a word, but it has to be remembered that Wells agreed to this in advance. It also has to be remembered that Gernsback had gone out of his way to meet Wells's wishes.

The relationship continued on this footing for a while and Gernsback must have believed that he now had an agreeable business relationship with Wells. In fact he even went so far as to reprint in the February 1927 *Amazing* an interview with Wells's son Frank which had appeared in the *New York World*. It appeared under the title "H.G. Wells - Hell of a Good Fellow - Declares His Son." Was this an attempt by Gernsback to pander to Wells? It would seem out of character if it was, but perhaps it was part of a grander plan. On May 5th, 1927 he wrote a more informal letter to Wells where he referred to the hundreds of letters *Amazing* received each week regarding Wells's stories. Gernsback said he would like to publish a letter from Wells on any subject he might choose, though preferably scientifiction. "Perhaps a few words as to your impression of this magazine might not be amiss." It might be seen that Gernsback was endeavouring to solicit praise from Wells, and Wells may have thought anything he chose to say might then be used as publicity. In those circumstances no such letter could be written without reimbursement. It was probably this belief that caused Wells to note, "Take no notice of this", and the letter was filed unanswered.

In truth, though, Gernsback was probably not seeking to solicit free publicity. Already in the pages of *Amazing* he had published letters by many leading scientists of the day as well as emerging big names of scientifiction, and these had not been used as promotional material, but merely presented as interesting and encouraging correspondence in the letter columns. Gernsback had an altruistic zeal when it came to science and science fiction which was totally out of character when seen in the light of his business and financial dealings. When one was viewed in isolation of the other, the two could never be seen as compatible.

Whether Gernsback gave a second thought to Wells's lack of response, I don't know, but it may be that it was a second blow to Gernsback's original esteem of Wells. The first blow had come a month earlier. The *New York Times* had carried a feature about H.G. Wells's views on radio under the heading "Mr Wells Bombards the Broadcaster". Now if there was any subject that was dearer to Gernsback's heart than scientifiction, it was radio. Gernsback wrote at length to the *Times* on April 11th 1927 and his letter was published in the April 17th edition. Gernsback criticised Wells's view of radio as being based only on the European example, where most radio was Government-controlled, and not on the commercially sponsored "free" radio of America. It must have seemed particularly damaging to Wells's image that he had a total lack of

vision about the future of radio. Wells could only see that "the future of broadcasting is like the future of cross-word puzzles and Oxford trousers, a very trivial future indeed." Gernsback took issue on this:

> But the greatest days of radio are as yet to come, and what surprises me most is that the prophetic Mr. Wells has not looked into the near future when every radio set will be equipped with its television attachment - a device, by the way, now being perfected by one of his own countrymen, Mr. Baird.

In truth the H.G. Wells of the 1920s was not the same visionary as in the 1890s - he was rapidly becoming a disillusioned man with a belief that science would be the end of the world, not its freedom. This was poles apart from Gernsback who firmly believed that science would be the answer to all ills provided man approached it with a sense of vision and purpose.

We find then, that by the end of May 1927 Gernsback's opinion of Wells might well have slipped a notch or two. Not only was Wells lacking the vision to see the future and benefit of radio, he had failed to respond to a reasonable request regarding his views on scientifiction. We also now find that regardless of what business relationship Gernsback may have believed he had established with Wells, Wells was not of the same opinion.

On May 20th 1927 Gernsback had written seeking permission to reprint *When the Sleeper Wakes* "in accordance with our usual arrangement." Wells's handwritten comments on the letter declare boldly, "What is the usual arrangement? This is a long book and not a short story and cannot be dealt with in short story terms." Also added to the letter, probably in his secretary's hand, is the price of $200.

Now we're beginning to see some sense on Wells's behalf. *When the Sleeper Wakes* is about the same length as *The First Men in the Moon* for which he had agreed a straight $100. $200 still only came out at about 0.3¢ a word, but at least it was some improvement. Gernsback paid the fee without question. The novel was eventually used as the lead in the new *Amazing Stories Quarterly*. As an historical aside, though, it was clear in Gernsback's letter that he was planning to use the novel in *Amazing Stories*. There had been no plans for the *Quarterly* in May 1927, though the first (and only) *Amazing Stories Annual* was about to be published. This, incidentally, reprinted Wells's "Under the Knife" without any extra payment. It had previously been reprinted in the May 1927 *Amazing*. Again it suggests that Gernsback believed he was purchasing more than one-time only serial rights.

That lapse aside Gernsback had regularly reprinted and paid for Wells's stories in accordance with what he believed to be a standard arrangement, despite Wells having said earlier that each story should be negotiated separately. A full schedule of these is given at the end of the article where you will see the great variance in wordage rates that arose through the use of a flat fee. It swung from 1.4¢ a word for "The Remarkable Case of Davidson's Eyes" in the April 1927 issue to only 0.3¢ for "The Time Machine" in the very next issue. However it is also evident that Gernsback paid regularly either directly upon publication date (the 5th of the month preceding the cover date) or within a week or two of that date, at least for most of 1927.

As 1927 progressed, though, it became evident that Wells was not happy with the standard arrangements. On August 6th Gernsback wrote asking for permission to reprint three stories "in accordance with our usual arrangement." The stories were "Aepyornis Island", "The Story of the Days to Come" and "The Story of the Stone Age". Wells was content to accept the

standard $50 for "Aepyornis Island" but because the other two were both a connected series of five stories each he requested $250 for each of them.

This rocked Gernsback on his heels. He replied on September 29th stating that there must have been some misunderstanding. "We could never afford to pay $250 for this, as we always thought that stories of this kind were to some to us at $50 apiece." This wasn't strictly true. "The Story of the Days to Come" is equal in length to "The Time Machine" for which Gernsback had happily paid $100 and should have anticipated paying the same. But his letter continues. "We understand that on the full length stories we are paying you $100 apiece, but you certainly, by no stretch of the imagination, can call "The Story of the Days to Come" five single stories. You might perhaps call it one story in five chapters, but if you take any one of the five chapters out it would be impossible to run them separately. Certainly, therefore, they are not separate stories. Will you please confirm this, as we could not afford to pay more than $50 per story."

Wells was adamant: $250, or no deal.

Gernsback responded on November 1st 1927 in another long and interesting letter the copy of which is abundantly covered in Wells's notations. It's an important letter for several reasons.

Firstly Gernsback begrudgingly accepted the $250 fee. "While we have put through the check for $250, we must call to your attention, that we are doing so under protest." First point, the surviving remittance note shows that payment for this story was not processed until January 3rd 1928. It suggests that either Gernsback was rankled over the increased fee and therefore deliberately delayed in paying it, or the Experimenter Company was in some financial difficulties and had problems in raising that sum or, as is most likely, Gernsback hoped, through his letters, to reduce the fee.

Gernsback continued. "We also find out, much to our amazement, that most of your stories are not copyrighted in this country and therefore can be used by anyone who cares to do so. We recently noted that a number of periodicals are publishing your articles along these lines, and we know very well that they are not paying for them."

This is an interesting paragraph. Was Gernsback calling Wells's bluff or had he done some research to determine whether Wells's stories were registered for US copyright. I do not profess to know the ins-and-outs of international copyright law which is tortuous to say the least, but as I understand it, at the time Wells's stories were originally published, they had to be published in a United States publication within thirty days of their British publication. They were then protected by American copyright which ran for 28 years from the date of publication when copyright then had to be renewed.

There is a possibility that some of Wells's early stories published in the newspapers *Pall Mall Gazette* and the *Pall Mall Budget* may not have been reprinted in America within thirty days but there is no doubt that many of his later stories were automatically lodged in America for copyright protection. This was either done by resale to an American magazine, or by an American edition of the British periodical. For instance, *The Strand*, which had published "The New Accelerator", "The Empire of the Ants" and "The Stolen Body" amongst others of Wells's short fiction and had serialised *The First Men in the Moon*, had an American edition which was published in the States thirty days later. Likewise *Pearson's Magazine* which had published "In The Abyss". *The Idler*, on the other hand, had an arrangement with *McClure's Magazine* for the reprinting of many of its stories thus giving US copyright protection. As Wells's reputation grew so his British agent, A.P. Watt, would have arranged for the best deal possible in American sales whilst also ensuring copyright protection. Hence when *The War of the Worlds* was serialized in *Pearson's*

Magazine starting in April 1897 its American serialisation began in *Cosmopolitan* in May 1897, within the thirty days.

There seems little doubt, therefore, that the majority of Wells's stories were covered by American copyright, although there may be some doubt as to whether the copyright had been renewed after 28 years. Application for renewal could only be made by the copyright holder or an accredited proxy. It seems unthinkable that Wells or his agents should have overlooked this situation, but it's one that needs serious consideration. In Gernsback's situation this related chiefly to those stories published before 1900 which includes the bulk of Wells's pseudo-scientific fantasies.

Wells was firm in his own belief, however. In his annotations he wrote, "No, you are in error. Nearly all my work is copyright and can and will be protected." In a further note to his secretary he asked that copies of the magazines reprinting his stories be requested and that the situation be pursued with "the offenders" and "a penalising price" sought.

It should come as no surprise to readers of *Fantasy Commentator* that the main magazine reprinting Wells's stories and almost certainly the one Gernsback was alluding to was *Ghost Stories* published by his rival Bernarr Macfadden. It had reprinted five of Wells's stories during 1927 including, most galling to Gernsback, "The Plattner Story". This had appeared in the June 1927 issue just one month ahead of Gernsback reprinting it in the July 1927 *Amazing*. But how did Gernsback "know very well" that Macfadden was not paying for them? By fortune amongst the papers that the University of Illinois at Urbana sent me was a remittance slip from Macfadden Publications for "The Story of the Late Mr. Elvesham" The sum is not disclosed, but the story was paid for on June 25th 1927 and published in the issue dated August 1927.

Unless Gernsback had other examples, he did not have a supportable case, and indeed Wells was not enamoured by the letter. He initially noted "We have considered the position and have decided not to sell you further stories." He must then have had second thoughts and crossed this out changing it to a standard clause for a fee fixed in advance and negotiated separately for each story.

Gernsback did not pursue the matter and generally the relationship simmered for a few months.

Then on March 1st 1928 Gernsback put a new proposal to Wells. Under a new corporation, Gernsback was planning to issue a line of ten-cent books to be sold only by subscription. Gernsback was seeking a uniform contract with his authors based on a two-and-a-half percent royalty on a print run of between 10,000 and 25,000 copies. Wells was not interested unless Gernsback could offer a large advance against royalties. As if Wells needed reminding his secretary had made a note on the letter:

> This is the same man who edits AMAZING STORIES which has been reprinting your short stories and some of your long ones. They pay up all right in the end, but we have had some trouble with them. They insist in saying they have a permanent arrangement with you, while they have not.

From here on the arrangements between Gernsback and Wells deteriorated. Wells was now asking larger, though more realistic, prices for his reprints. For *The Invisible Man* he demanded $200 and for his short fiction he sought $75. Gernsback, in the meantime, had reprinted "The Stolen Body" and paid only $50. He'd also reprinted "Pollock and the Porroh Man" for the same fee. In the case of "The Stolen Body" Wells had specifically asked for $75. In the case of "Pollock..." Wells had said the story could not be used until past payments had been made.

In a letter dated March 20th 1928, which was clearly copied to serve as a matter of record, Wells's secretary emphasised that there was no standard agreement between them over the reprinting of stories and that each one had to be negotiated separately. Further, in response to Gernsback's request to reprint "The Flowering of the Strange Orchid", the price was firmly set at $75.

Gernsback's response, dated April 4th 1928, is most revealing. "Our office took it as a natural thing that if they used some of your older stories of the same length as the ones before, they should not pay more than $50.00 for such stories, inasmuch as we paid that price right along. It certainly would be most unfair, and we do not think that you would wish to take the stand that just because we did not go through a pure formality of writing for the stories first, we should be penalised $25.00 per story. Of course, now that we understand the matter thoroughly, we shall hereafter write you first, and shall not use any stories on which we have not a clear understanding as to the price."

Gernsback really had no defence. In the first place Wells's secretary had said repeatedly that there was no standard agreement and that each story had to be negotiated separately, but Gernsback still maintained the office believed the $50 was an acceptable standard. Secondly, despite Wells stating clearly that the fee for specific short stories was $75 and that a further $25 was therefore due on top of the payments received, Gernsback sees this as unfair - in fact, as a penalty.

Gernsback was now clearly rankled. Wells's secretary hammered home their advantage in a letter of April 13th 1928 reminding Gernsback that he had paid $75 for "The Country of the Blind". This time Gernsback did not respond, but left the task to his associate editor, T. O'Conor Sloane. Sloane's excuse was that "The Country of the Blind" had been a much longer story than the others. This was true, but Gernsback had earlier paid $50 for "The Plattner Story" which is almost as long as "The Country of the Blind", so it was not a watertight defence. Sloane went on to add that "Mr Gernsback is very much dissatisfied with this arrangement." In other words we are now learning that Gernsback disliked an arrangement where a major author sets his own not unreasonable fee on a specific story by story basis, an arrangement that in his letter of April 4th, Gernsback had accepted.

A response came promptly from Wells's secretary stating that $75 a story was not high, but in fact could be considered rather too low. In response to an earlier request by Gernsback for a schedule of stories available for reprinting together with their fees, Wells now listed a number with the fee in pounds sterling. Thus short stories were now set at £20 a time and novels at £200.

In the midst of this Miriam Bourne, an assistant in the editorial department, wrote to enquire about the availability of "The Moth". In the light of past correspondence, which clearly indicated that the price would be at least $75, and more likely £20 (or about $100), Miss Bourne managed to say, "Please let us know immediately whether the usual price of $50 is correct for this story."

This calls into question both the internal communication at Experimenter Publishing, and the filing system. Unless Gernsback had his own private set of files, Miriam Bourne must have known that there was no "usual price of $50." In fact to say as much after all the recent correspondence was tantamount to a slap in the face.

Wells's secretary responded patiently, reminding them that the fee for short stories was now £20. This elicited a response from O'Conor Sloane on June 11th 1928: "...the prices you now quote for rights to reprint stories becomes entirely prohibitive. We believe we have shown in the past that you had a rather nice income from our source, but at the prices now quoted, we are

afraid we will have to do without these stories for a long time to come. At any time later, if you can see your way clear to reduce these prices, within our reach, we shall be glad to take it up with you again."

Wells annotations on the copy are quite clear and quite precise. "File. No reduction. No reply."

Yet Gernsback still went ahead and published "The Moth" in the August 1928 *Amazing*. Moreover no payment was forthcoming until Marjorie Wells wrote on July 26th by way of reminder. A cheque for $100 was despatched on August 15th.

Throughout all of this it was evident that Wells's name in the magazine must have had considerable sales potential, because Gernsback and his associates always conceded to the full payment in the end, whatever it was. Nevertheless, they made one last valiant try to reduce the figure. In a letter of August 27th 1928 Miriam Bourne said that "we were not quite sure that we understood your prices..." as if anything could have been more clear. But she enquired whether the $ and £ signs had been confused and that the £200 sought for novels was in reality the $200 previously paid. Wells's secretary promptly responded that the £200 was correct, in other words $1000! In fact we see from this that the fee for short stories set at £20 is equal to about $100, the same figure Wells originally quoted in his response to Gernsback's first letter back in April 1926! It suggests that either Wells or his secretary may have originally confused $s and £s and the $100 agreed for novels was intended to have been £100.

In the same letters Wells reminded Gernsback that Wells had only sold him the rights to reprint the stories for circulation in America. Wells now realised that *Amazing* was also being circulated in England. "[Mr Wells] did not authorise you to circulate *Amazing Stories* in England, and he has the strongest objections to your doing this," wrote his secretary. "Mr Wells would therefore be glad to have your assurance that no copies of *Amazing Stories* containing any of his stories will be imported into England."

There was no way, of course, that Gernsback was going to limit his British sales, but Wells had a valid point. The British rights for the short fiction were then owned by Collins and Gernsback should have paid an additional fee to them for the right to circulate the stories in serial form in Britain.

Gernsback neither paid Collins a fee nor withdrew *Amazing* from British circulation. With the publication of "The Moth", though, came an end to the run of Wells's stories in each issue of *Amazing*. But there was one more. A few months later Gernsback printed "The Lord of the Dynamos" without permission. When Marjorie Wells pointed this out and requested the £20 ($100) fee, Gernsback paid only $75, and a letter, dated January 29th, requesting the balance of $25 went unanswered. That's not too surprising as by the time Gernsback would have received it the bankruptcy proceedings would have been taken against the Experimenter Publishing Company and Gernsback was already considering a new company and a new magazine.

When that new magazine, *Science Wonder Stories*, appeared the first issue, dated June 1929, sported another story by Wells, "The Diamond Maker". Alas I don't have any correspondence that may relate to that and I cannot tell whether Gernsback persisted in his erroneous payments or whether he sought to make amends. Whatever the circumstances it was also the last story by Wells that Gernsback reprinted. Although he may well have had sufficient new manuscripts to use, I doubt if that is the reason why he ceased reprinting Wells. After all he almost certainly had a good supply of new manuscripts by late 1928 but he still reprinted Wells in *Amazing* due to the selling power of his name and the status it helped give the magazine. I suspect, and it is only supposition, that either Wells had had enough of Gernsback's financial dealings and refused to allow further stories to be reprinted, or Gernsback

was unable to meet the rate Wells was asking. After all, Gernsback could not now fall back on his excuse of following "the usual arrangement."

So, what does all this tell us about Hugo Gernsback and H.G. Wells. Some may cast allegations at Gernsback that he was openly dishonest, but I don't believe that. It strikes me far more that he was naïve. It was a naïvety linked, perhaps, with his Prussian background that gave him an innate sense of superiority. Remember, he sought to acquiesce to Wells's terms at the outset and generally seemed to deal fairly and genuinely with Wells. In fact I firmly believe Wells made a mistake in accepting the initial terms for his novel-length works which only exacerbated the situation when he tried to make the terms more realistic.

Nevertheless subsequently, once Wells did endeavour to seek a realistic rate, Gernsback's activities do not shine in a good light. He registered dissatisfaction with an arrangement that is not only reasonable, but is one he had already accepted, and seemed to believe he could continue with his own arrangements regardless. This is where both his arrogance and naïvety severely damage his credibility as a publisher for rather than debate sensibly with Wells over the reasonableness of the revised fee he resorted to the unprofessional standards of citing (erroneously) other publishers, and in ignoring agreed demands and pursuing procedures known to be wrong. If this was Gernsback's attitude to his other authors and creditors it is of little surprise that bankruptcy proceedings were so readily taken against him.

Yet, in the final analysis, I think only someone who was both arrogant and naïve could have launched *Amazing Stories* and made it successful, because it needed someone who was prepared to take a gamble and to believe in it, and that was Gernsback's strength. If the Wells example is typical, and I have sufficient other papers to suggest that it is (and these will be explored in full in my book on Gernsback), then it is clear that Gernsback's strength as a publisher and promoter of scientifiction and of scientific achievement was also his weakness as a businessman and financial manager and that ultimately it was the weakness that prevailed.

[Note: The book referred to on Hugo Gernsback is a collaboration with Robert A.W. Lowndes. It is as yet untitled and is still in draft form, but should be completed for publication by Starmont House in late 1990 or 1991.]

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DETAILS OF H.G. WELLS'S STORIES PUBLISHED BY HUGO GERNSBACK.

The following shows the stories by H.G. Wells reprinted by Hugo Gernsback together with the magazine issue in which they appeared, the sum paid for the story and the date paid, when known. Also shown is the story wordage and the wordage-rate paid.

The New Accelerator. *Science & Invention* February 1923; *Amazing Stories* April 1926. $50, date unknown. 4,900 words, 1¢ a word.

The Star. *Science & Invention* March 1923; *Amazing Stories* June 1926. $50, date unknown. 4,000 words, 1.25¢ a word.

The Crystal Egg. *Amazing Stories* May 1926. $50, date unknown. 6,500 words, 0.77¢ a word.

The Man Who Could Work Miracles. *Amazing Stories* July 1926. $50, June 15, 1926. 6,900 words, 0.72¢ a word.

The Empire of the Ants. *Amazing Stories* August 1926. $50, date unknown. 6,350 words, 0.8¢ a word.

In the Abyss. *Amazing Stories* September 1926. $50, date unknown. 5,700 words, 0.88¢ a word.

The Island of Dr. Moreau. *Amazing Stories* October-November 1926. $100, date unknown. 42,000 words, 0.24¢ a word.

The First Men in the Moon. *Amazing Stories* December 1926-February 1927. $100, November 10, 1926. 69,000 words, 0.14¢ a word.

Under the Knife. *Amazing Stories* March 1927; *Amazing Stories Annual* 1927. $50, February 5, 1927. 5,200 words, 0.95¢ a word.

The Remarkable Case of Davidson's Eyes. *Amazing Stories* April 1927. $50, March 21, 1927. 3,600 words, 1.4¢ a word.

The Time Machine. *Amazing Stories* May 1927. $100, April 14, 1927. 32,000 words, 0.31¢ a word.

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The Plattner Story. *Amazing Stories* July 1927. $50, June 3, 1927. 7,500 words, 0.67¢ a word.

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A Story of the Stone Age. *Amazing Stories* November 1927. $250, January 3, 1928. 20,500 words, 1.22¢ a word.

The Country of the Blind. *Amazing Stories* December 1927. $75, January 3, 1928. 8,900 words, 0.84¢ a word.

The Stolen Body. *Amazing Stories* January 1928. $50, February 17, 1928. 5,750 words, 0.87¢ a word.

When the Sleeper Wakes. *Amazing Stories Quarterly* Winter 1928. $200, date unknown. 65,000 words, 0.31¢ a word.

Pollock and the Porroh Man. *Amazing Stories* February 1928. $50, February 17, 1928. 5,500 words, 0.9¢ a word.

The Flowering of the Strange Orchid. *Amazing Stories* March 1928. $50, date unknown. 2,700 words, 1.85¢ a word.

A Story of the Days to Come. *Amazing Stories* April-May 1928. $250, date unknown. 32,250 words, 0.78¢ a word.

The Invisible Man. *Amazing Stories* June-July 1928. $200, date unknown. 51,500 words, 0.39¢ a word.

The Moth. *Amazing Stories* August 1928. $100, August 15, 1928. 3,600 words, 2.8¢ a word.

The Lord of the Dynamos. *Amazing Stories* February 1929. $75, January 29, 1929. 3,100 words, 2.4¢ a word.

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The Mythmaker in the Catacombs

Bruce Boston

He moved in their darkness,
With cat eyes he saw.
On their damp cavern walls
The shapes he did draw.

Those shapes ran with moisture,
The colors would prance
Strange images writhed
Like a snake in a dance.

He swayed to that motion.
He called out for more.
His splayed toes slapped sound
On the stone of the floor.

The tribesmen were taken,
They came as a crowd.
They knelt down about him,
Their faces they bowed.

His quaking voice rose
In an animal roar.
They shivered and cried
On the stone of the floor.

With reality burning
In a fire so bright,
With vision so crazed
And eyes all agleam,

The people bent forward,
The people bent back.
Their thoughts circled higher.
They learned how to dream.

Acknowledgements: The editor is indebted to Sam Moskowitz for furnishing the cover illustration on this number. Stuart Napier's book review appeared in abbreviated form in *The Bloomsbury Review* and "The Martian Drug" was first published under a different title in *The Humanist* for 1985; both appear here by permission of their authors. All other material in this issue of *Fantasy Commentator* is new.

Tips on Tales

Short Reviews of Books Old and New

J. B. Priestley's *The Thirty-First of June* (1962): Two magicians bring about the transfer of characters between an advertising agency in present-day London and the ancient castle of King Meliot of Peradore, a tiny kingdom under the overlordship of King Arthur. Sam Penty is an advertising writer preparing copy for Damosel stockings. He draws his ideal girl, which is an excellent likeness of Princess Melicent of Paradore. Princess Melicent sees Sam in her magic mirror and falls in love with him. She appears in modern London, and is drafted for a television commercial. Sam appears in Peradore and must not only compete in a tournament, but also fight a dragon——and what a dragon! The magicians manage to construct a banquet hall with one end in London and the other in Paradore. Here true love triumphs in spite of space and time, and the couple's wedding feast is celebrated. If you've read Mark Twain's *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court* this story provides a nice dessert after the main course; if you haven't, you have two treats in store for yourself.

——*Winston F. Dawson*

Kevin J. Anderson's *Resurrection, Inc.* (1988): Bringing the dead back to life has traditionally been a theme for supernatural fiction, but it has occasionally surfaced in science-fiction, too: the first example I can recall reading is "No Medals," a short story which H. L. Gold wrote under one of his pseudonyms over half a century ago. Now Anderson has written a novel-length paperback exploiting this idea in up-to-the minute terms, and a well plotted and exciting one it is. At an indefinite time in the future researchers perfect resurrection, and the process is put to commercial use. Through use of synthetic blood and an artificial heart a corpse may be revived; and by implanting a microprocessor in the skull its mental capabilities can not only be salvaged, but controlled. Such creatures are sold as servants who will unerringly obey every command. But since each such servant takes the job of a living worker, the profits of Resurrection, Inc. are paid by all of society. Unemployment and dissatisfaction increase, and a stratified, bureaucratic dictatorship comes into being. This is accentuated by dissident underground groups such as the Cremators, who guarantee to destroy a citizen's body after death, and the Neo-Satanists, followers of a synthetic religion. In the end, revolt against the regime succeeds, and the novel comes to a satisfying climax. One scene along the way (it's in chapter 14) is particularly notable. This describes the fatal experience of a searcher whose mind, divorced from her body, traverses the remote and intricate energy paths of the gigantic computer which controls all data about this civilization and all communications within it. This is superbly empathized and compares favorably with memorable interludes within works that are now classics in the field (I think, for example, of the spider sequence in chapter 18 of Smith's *Gray Lensman*, and of the gratifying climax in van Vogt's *Slan*). Fine descriptive narration like this not only adds a dimension to the quality of *Resurrection, Inc.* but makes one await Kevin Anderson's next work with great interest.

——*A. Langley Searles*

Michael Bishop's *Light Years and Dark* (1984): Despite the commercial success of several science-fiction novels in the 1980's, notably the apparently endless Foundation series of Isaac Asimov and Frank Herbert's recently terminated Dune stories, the shorter forms remain the mainstay of the genre. Indeed, many feel its golden era was during the 1930's and 1940's, the heyday for pulp magazines featuring short stories and novelettes filled with "a sense of wonder." Not to fear: the short science-fiction story is still a vibrant and influential form. Yet it is not an easy length to write. The characters and plot must be deftly blended into lean prose that carries the reader to a conclusion with few, if any, lulls or pauses allowed. Anthologies, either original or previously published, are an excellent way to sample what's going on in the field.

The emphasis in *Light Years and Dark* is on contributions from the "baby boom" generation——or, as editor Bishop says, "writers who came to prominence in the 1960's, 1970's and 1980's . . . who were born no earlier than 1940." (He only breaks this rule twice, both times for good reason.)

These are the writers who grew up with the threat of nuclear holocaust ever present, and began their careers during the turbulent 1960's; the pessimistic, often bleak point of view found in those times is reflected in many of his choices. Bishop has done a fine job of assembling some of the more exciting work from writers of this generation, including altogether over forty stories.

They range from Gregary Binford's prophetic "Doing Lennon," which involves a complex attempt to cheat at suspended animation, to the absurdist "Terrific Park" by George Alec Effinger, where two star-explorers find what they assume must be "hell" at the edge of the universe——an exact duplicate of Rubbermaid, New Jersey. My personal favorite is "Dinner Party" by Gardner Dozois, a truly frightening bit of alternate history. This focuses on the period immediately following the Kent State incident, and has never been published, perhaps because of the powerful statement it makes about the "insanity" of those times in particular and violence in general. Finally I must mention James Tiptree Jr.'s "Painwise in Yucatan," a warm and witty piece of non-fiction from one of the genre's best prose stylists. Tiptree, one of the *non*-"baby boom" authors, recounts here the difficulties of an unscheduled heart attack in a developing nation. There are entries for every taste in Michael Bishop's collection, and I can recommend it to new and veteran readers alike.

——*Stuart Napier*

J. Storer Clouston's *Not Since Genesis* (1938): A giant meteor is observed approaching the earth. It is expected to strike somewhere in Europe, and whatever country it hits will be largely destroyed. The author follows the action in five countries—England, France, Germany, Italy and Russia. His satirical description of the roles played by Goering, Goebbels and the unnamed dictator of Russia would not have endeared him to those worthies. There are numerous other amusing sequences. One, in Germany, deals with a search for a double for Hitler. The only one located is a Jew then serving the fatherland in a concentration camp. A countess falls for this pseudo-fuhrer and unwittingly aids his escape from Germany. In Russia Stalin (referred to only as "the Beloved") receives a so-called workers' delegation from England. Most of its members are actually well-to-do liberals, so there is considerable consternation when they are advised that their first task on returning home should be to kill the king and queen. A "treason trial" for astronomers who predicted the meteor could fall on Russia closely follows those held for opponents of Stalin. In England, a religious organization called "The Group" (shades of the Oxford Movement!) tries to convince people the meteor is a sign of God's displeasure. Strenuous efforts on the part of youthful aristocrats enlist the sporting element to support their cause. This support is conditional, however, on the meteor's fall not coinciding with the Wimbledon tennis matches. A

later prediction indicates the meteor will fall in the North Atlantic rather than on any land surface, though doubt is expressed by free world journalists as to the accuracy of this revision. Where it does actually fall and the aftermath make up a decidedly interesting and unusual story. This is an account of an event that has often been treated in science-fiction, but never with the light and humorous touches this author provides.

—Winston F. Dawson

Leslie Halliwell's *The Ghost of Sherlock Holmes: Seventeen Supernatural Stories* (1984): The British author of this paperback has been a movie and TV buff all of his life and has written several books on these media, but this is his first excursion into the outré. In its quiet way it is happily a good one. The themes are traditional (more than half of the entries deal with ghostly returns after death), but the writing is brisk, up-to-date and businesslike; it has none of the amateurism or affected mannerisms that, for example, so many imitators of M. R. James often exhibit. Halliwell is said to admire James, but the masters most distinctly echoed in his down-to-earth prose are E. F. Benson and A. M. Burrage. This makes his stories throughly believable, and perhaps to your own surprise you find yourself enjoying the old familiar gambits all over again, even though none of them ever knock you back on your heels. There are also a few novel variations (as in "The Beckoning Clergyman," "Lady of the Midnight Sun" and the title tale) which provide added dollops of pleasure. The stories vary in length from two thousand words to about ten thousand, and my only complaint is that some of the shorter ones might be improved by expansion. Thus "The House of the Future," a venture into science-fiction—it involves a neat little time-travel paradox—would certainly be the best item in this collection instead of merely my own favorite if more time had been spent in motivating the chief characters. Halliwell's occasional acerbic asides on the disadvantages of modern civilization are an additional plus. I enjoyed this book, and I think most readers would, too.

—A. Langley Searles

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"T. S. Stribling, Subliminal Science-Fictionist"—continued from page 243

person of the beggars who slept in the temple, and they also are being held in custody. On questioning them Poggioli finds that each had experienced a nightmarish dream and been served tea and rice as had he. In one particularly vivid dream a beggar found himself assuming the role of the god Siva; he held the world in his hand and on biting into it got a bitter taste in his mouth as if he was experiencing all its ills.

Poggioli visits Hira Dass, who passionately expresses a thought much like the beggar's dream: "I have eaten the world, Mr. Poggioli, and found it bitter." He confesses to feeling like an outcast, neither Hindu nor English, and talks of casting off his Western indoctrination. To Dass, Poggioli confides his suspicion that the man who served the tea and rice had doped them all and then murdered the bride. Dass offers another suggestion; he says the beggars had told him that a white man slept in the temple with them, and had left before the police arrived.

The two visit the police station and speak to the chief, a Mr. Vickers, about the case. Vickers throws suspicion on Poggioli himself when the psychologist admits he was the white man who slept in the temple overnight and, like each of the beggars, had found a jewel and a piece of gold in his pocket on awakening.

A search of Poggioli's room results in finding the bulk of the stolen gold and jewels in his trunk. He is arrested and placed in jail. There on meditation he succeeds in recalling the dream he had experienced in the temple:

> It seemed to the psychologist that as he stared upward the Krishna stared upward, both gazing into an unending space, and presently he realized that he and the great upward-staring Krishna were one; that they had always been one; and that their oneness filled all space with enormous, infinite power. But this

> oneness which was Poggioli was alone in an endless, featureless space. No other thing existed, because nothing had ever been created; there was only a creator. All the creatures and matter which had ever been or ever would be were wrapped up in him, Poggioli, or Buddha. And then Poggioli saw that space and time had ceased to be, for space and time are the offspring of division. And at last Krishna or Poggioli was losing all entity or being in this tranced immobility.
>
> Finally he thought: "I would rather lose my oneness with Krishna, and become the vilest and poorest of creatures——to mate, fight, love, lust, kill and be killed than to be lost in this terrible trance of the universal."

It was at this point that he had awakened in the temple from his drugged sleep. Aware that the dreams of the five beggars were like his——first experiencing exultation and then unhappiness——and that Hira Dass had expressed similar sentiments, Poggioli wondered if the "settled condition" of Dass's thinking might have been transferred to all sleepers in the temple. Suddenly he feels he has found the solution to the murder.

He begins shouting and after some time a turnkey arrives with a lamp. He tells the turnkey that if Vickers will check the gold pieces found in his trunk he will find the fingerprints of Hira Dass on them. If they check the chemists they will find it was Dass's man who bought an opiate for drugging the rice, and that Dass hired someone to put the gold in his trunk. By applying pressure they will be able to determine his identity.

"'They've done all that ages ago,'" the turnkey tells him. "'Further, Hira Dass has confessed everything.'" He willed that Poggioli should sleep in the temple, killed the girl, and framed Poggioli. "'But why did the old devil pick on me for a scapegoat?'" he asks. The turnkey explains that if a white man was under suspicion Dass felt sure the police would make a thorough investigation, and that he, Dass, would be found out.

Dass was desperately unhappy with his present status as a wealthy but lonely old man, accepted neither by Hindus or Westerners. He wished to die and be born again. He could not commit suicide, however, for then there would be no telling into what sort of creature he might be reincarnated. But if he was executed——slain by someone else——he would be reborn instantly, hopefully as a great man with a wife and children.

On learning this, "Poggioli looks directly at the man with the lamp. 'Turnkey,' he snapped with academic sharpness, 'Why didn't you come and tell me of old Hira Dass's confession the moment it occurred? What do you mean, keeping me locked up here when you knew I was an innocent man?'

"'Because I couldn't,' said the form with the lamp sorrowfully, 'Old Hira Dass didn't confess until a month and ten days after you were hanged, sir.'

"And the lamp went out."

"A Passage to Benares" is an outstanding, sardonic tale of the supernatural. It indicates that Stribling has done at least some reading in the occult. Along with other stories featuring Henry Pogglioli it appeared in book form as *Clues of the Caribbees* (1929), now a very rare volume much sought by collectors of detective fiction. "A Passage to Benares" has been included in several anthologies of mystery and detective stories, but never in one of the supernatural.

In its issue of April 8, 1926, a little over six weeks later, *Adventure* published Stribling's least known fantasy, "Christ in Chicago." This is a 30,000-word novelette whose action is laid in 1976. It has never been reprinted. A helpful foreward to the story was either purposely or inadvertently omitted, but appeared in "The Camp-Fire," a readers' department, in the following (April 23, 1926) issue:

> The author would be loath to think this story a probability or even a possibility. However, it was suggested by the minutes of the proceedings of the American Association of Progressive Medicine held in Chicago some years ago. In developing in fictional form the implications of these minutes, the writer has frankly abandoned any realistic treatment for fantasy.
>
> While the time of the story is laid some fifty or sixty years in the future,

for the sake of simplicity no reference is made to the many new mechanical inventions which undoubtedly will be in use at that time. The narrative itself deals with a theme which the author feels lies beneath the accidents of that mysterious changing flux which men have agreed to call Time.

Finally the writer wishes to acknowledge the assistance of one who helped him in the construction of the plot of this story, and he ventures to dedicate the work itself to

MR. TRAVIS HOKE
in memory of our Chicago days.

Gloucester, Mass.
June, 1925

T. S. S.[14]

In this future world Chicago is a skyscraper city, home of 14,000,000 souls. There are so many people that anti-noise campaigns have become a necessity. Sidewalks are surfaced with crepe rubber to reduce the noise of the walking hordes. People who break out in loud laughter are admonished by policemen. The protagonist, Larry Page, notices that among the thousands streaming past him there are no cripples, no defectives, no blind. People seem to be enjoying good health and are in splendid physical condition.

In the Chicago of 1976 news is transient; editions of newspapers appear every two hours. The bulk of the population lives in immense apartment buildings each of which holds ten to twenty thousand people.

On the street Page encounters an old man engaged in an animated argument with a young woman. The man, Col. Thomas Morgan, wants to see a surgeon, Dr. Person, to cure his defective vision; the girl, a Roumanian named Vita Orloff, is urging him instead to go back to Father Hevish, a faith healer. Page persuades them to see Dr. Person, and accompanies them to his address.

This proves to be an antiquated villa sandwiched between skyscrapers. A caretaker ushers them in and escorts Morgan to the doctor, leaving the girl in the waiting room. Page bids her good-bye and makes his way to a cab-stand, where he buys the latest edition of a newspaper. This he reads while seated in his moving cab. One item in it concerns an I. V. Hevish, who has been warned by the police for practicing medicine without a license. Beneath this he is shocked to read that Col. Morgan, the man he has just left in Dr. Person's office, has died during surgery! The impossibility of so instantaneous a death and news of it reaching a paper in time for him to buy it makes the event incredible and suspect.

That evening Page dines with his friend, newspaper editor Henry Meachem, at the home of a Mrs. Harran. Meachem's response to his question of how the death of Morgan could have been printed so quickly is unsatisfactory and evasive. Another dinner guest is a Dr. Strachan, who expounds on the desirability of government control of marriage to improve the health and intelligence of the populace. "'The real reason of the old Russian debacle was that Trotsky and Lenin imagined the fundamental ills of humanity were economic,'" he says. "'They were not; they were vital——uncontrolled reproduction. As if a gardener should sow weeds, grass, fruits and thistles all together. . . . When a child is born, it is too late to attempt to educate it. Begin with the parents. Select them.'" Discussion turns to the faith healer Hevish, who Strachan is convinced practices medicine illegally. They decide to track him down and observe exactly what he is doing.

As Page and Strachan drive into the area where Hevish lives, Strachan observes the "rabble of squalid children," saying "'The hopelessness of this situation is that these people do not so much fall into squalor as they pursue it . . . it's hereditary. To allow these people to breed and then attempt to cure them is like killing one mosquito at a time and allowing your drains to remain open.'"

They find Hevish and witness him pass his hand gently over a beggar's leg sores. The beggar hands him a coin as a gift, but Strachan insists it is a payment, and searches for a police station where he can report the incident. Although not a deeply religious man, Page cannot help equating what the faith healer has done with the healing methods attributed to Christ, and asks himself, "'Did Christ make friends with the germs in a running sore or did he slay them?'"

Page follows Hevish to the building where he lives, which is a soaring, grimy tenement. In the hall he overtakes the faith healer, who is on his way to Vita Orloff's room to ask her to care for the baby of a scrubwoman while the latter is at work. Page volunteers to help her. They give the baby a dose of the medicine obtained from the city clinic. Moments later it dies.

Back in his hotel room Page recalls that the name of the doctor on the medicine bottle is Nathan O. Person, and that Person was also the name of the surgeon in whose hands Col. Morgan died. Then Millie Harran, daughter of the Mrs. Harran whose guest he was earlier, arrives with a newspaper in which Dr. Nathan O. Person reports the death of a number of people who had physical or mental defects, among them Morgan and the baby. She and Meachem are engaged to be married, and Meachem has an appointment with this same doctor.

They visit Meachem in his office and learn that he has been refused a marriage license because he has a tumor on his spleen. While there they hear that Hevish has been arrested and accused of killing the baby through the practice of illegal medicine. Page sets out to help Hevish, and is hailed by a reporter who tells him that he is wanted as a material witness in Hevish's trial, which is now underway. On the basis of Page's testimony in court that Hevish did not administer any medicine to the baby the faith healer is released.

Word comes from Millie Harran that Meachem has disappeared, and remembering his appointment with Person, Page and the reporter go to the address where Morgan was last seen. They force their way in and confront four white-aproned men; when they ask these about Meachem they are told that he has died during an operation for intestinal cancer. There is no Dr. Person——this is simply the name under which all four work. They also admit to being part of a group of doctors formed to rid society of the unfit. Previously the sole occupation of the medical profession was saving lives. But they believe that the elimination of disease and the advances of science merely prolonged the lives of those who were mentally and physically unfit to reproduce, degenerating the gene pool of the human race, so they are bringing things back into balance. Even the work of the City clinics and Board of Health has been subverted to this end. They claim that Meachem, who had editorially supported their program, had voluntarily submitted to euthanasia upon learning that he had an incurable condition, in the hopes of advancing the cause.

The reporter regards finding this out as a great scoop——not merely as an exposé, but as a milestone in the advancement of the human race. For the first time in history, the scientists have taken over.

> "Today is the beginning of a new millenium!" he enthuses.
>
> "To what end will they improve the human race?" Page asks.
>
> "Why, my——, to make it more efficient, more energetic, more brilliant," responds the reporter.
>
> "But efficient for what?" asks Page. "To build higher skyscrapers, faster aeroplanes. . . ? I don't know——Meachem was a lovable fellow."
>
> "He made a splendid sacrifice," the reporter counters. "He'll go down in history."
>
> "I don't think I would care for a world with everybody in it sound and efficient——and heartless."

Page leaves the reporter to seek out Vita Orloff. As he does so newsboys are hawking extras of the story: "Death Penalty for Invalids," "Sickness a Crime." Men he passes on the street call him a stool pigeon. At Vita's apartment he learns that Hevish has been there with a man sick from cancer, whom he appears to have revived from the dead. The faith healer has left a message: "Twelve minutes after eight."

The father of the baby Page inadvertently killed pounds on the door of the apartment, looking for him. As Vita guides him down the fire escape they are immersed in the swelling sounds of rage from people who have read the story of what the doctors plan to do. In the distance they see the glow of the great downtown skyscrapers that have been set afire, and hear explosions of others being blown up.

A copy of Meachem's newspaper is blown by the wind against his legs. He retrieves and scans it. "Doctors Will Improve the Human Race," read the headlines. A wide program has been outlined by Dr. Strachan, and Meachem's great sacrifice is extolled. On page four a brief three-line item rivets Page's attention. At the Hospital of the Good Shepherd, it says, a so-called healer, Immanuel Hevish, has succumbed to an operation to relieve a tumor on the brain. "Mr. Hevish died at twelve minutes after eight o'clock."

On completing the story one understands why the editor postponed the foreward to "Christ in Chicago" until the next issue of *Adventure*, and even then buried it in the small type of the readers' column. Without this foreward the concept of applied genetics is merely a plot device. But with it Stribling risks the accusation of writing a fictional polemic based on a premise he himself takes seriously enough to dignify with a source ("the minutes of the proceedings of the American Association of Progressive Medicine some years ago").[15]

Judged on either of these grounds, "Christ in Chicago" does not succeed. The cardinal reason for its failure may also be found in the foreward: "for the sake of simplicity no reference is made to the many new mechanical inventions which undoubtedly will be in use" at this future time. This is comparable to Huxley omitting the background of *Brave New World*. Stribling's haste to present his message causes him to abort the very elements with which it could most convincingly be conveyed. One might add, however, that if the story had appeared during the 1940's when the Nazis were actually practicing such wholesale slaughter and conducting fruitless medical torture, it would have been a convincing topical warning.

Judged on the validity of its extrapolations, "Christ in Chicago" is equally disappointing. Two generations have passed since its composition, and in that time theories supporting the application of eugenics to human beings have been widely repudiated, and both biology and medicine have advanced far beyond anything the author suggested. Cries for mercy deaths, moreover, arise now not from the medical profession but the general populace.

Stribling's characterization of minorities deserves comment here. In general he takes a pro-humanist viewpoint in his fiction, and is tolerant of his characters' foibles. In *Birthright*, for instance, he advocates fairer treatment of the negro, but he also editorializes on negative aspects of their life and behavior. Nevertheless, what he sets forth is based on wide observation throughout the South. This is not true of his Jewish characters. These surface in a number of his works, particularly in *Backwater* and *The Sound Wagon* (1935), and although their roles and actions are positive, untrue and unfavorable racial innuendos surface repeatedly. Here his knowledge seems to be based on having lived for a short time in New York City; but the Jews he writes about are portrayed as living in Chicago, Washington and the South——which makes his extrapolation suspect.

One of the doctors who leads the movement to exterminate the mentally and physically unfit is a Jew described in very unflattering terms (he has a "yellowish Mongoloid face of the most changeful, eager moods," for example). Since many Jews are doctors, a Jew becomes a prime motivator of this inhuman procedure. Giving the faith healer's full name as Immanuel Hevish at the very end of the story establishes him also as a probable Jew. Since Hevish represents the second coming of Christ, this time in Chicago, the Jews, as represented by the medical profession, again rear a Judas to betray him to his death.

VI

As a social study documenting that small town people and their environment are not as pleasant as American mythology (augmented considerably by portrayals of novelists and moving pictures) would make them, Stribling's novel *Teeftallow* (1926) warrants a booklength thesis. But the purpose of this article is to document

touches of fantasy and science-fiction in his mundane novels. The title of the book derives from the name of the protagonist, Abner Teeftallow, who at the age of eighteen is released from an orphans' home and introduced to the people and economy of Lane County, Tennessee and, inadvertently, to women. It is a county without a railroad, its main dirt road only seasonally passable. The manager of the county orphan home never bothered to send young Abner to school, and is now afraid that a political opponent will make capital of this.

He takes his problem to the town's mentor and most successful business man, Railroad Jones (so called for his efforts to get a railroad to serve the area). Jones is middle-aged, obese, and cannot himself read or write. There all condescension must end, for he is literally as much a superman as any in science-fiction. His memory is photographic, his recall total. He can remember effortlessly every detail in every contract he has ever made, and can locate whatever paper he needs in what appears to be a hopeless mass of confusion. His self-acquired knowledge of law and his ability to apply this to his own advantage transcend the talents of the finest lawyers giant corporations can hire——and he demonstrates his prowess on a number of occasions. "Mr. Jones gave precise directions to one and all," states Stribling. "He knew instantly the whole situation and the solution necessary. He was like one of those expert chess players who sit blindfolded and play a half-dozen games simultaneously. And as he performed this mental feat he waddled along as if he really had his mind on something else."

In advising the orphanage manager Jones remarks with considerable sarcasm: "Why, Jim, you done exactly right. Don't you ever teach that boy to read nor write. Readin' and writin'll just ruin anybody's ricollection. Why, it just makes a plum blank out of a man!"

Stribling has disguised Jones by giving him a nickname, putting him in a backwoods town, portraying him as fat and unpolished, and having him speak in regional dialect——but he is no less a fictional superman than if he could read minds.

Another character in the novel of interest to us is A. M. Belshue, who is in the jewelry and clock-repair business. As he glances around his shop "the round-faced chronometers returned his stare impassively. In the silence . . . their many tickings filled his ears as with the flight of numberless tiny feet. As he listened to it with fancies tuned to disappointment, it sounded as if Time might be a Lilliputian army double-quicking (to what purpose) down the endless slope of eternity."

Another description that might well have come from a science-fiction writer is of a gasoline-powered generator: "It was an oddly human sort of thing, a little entity which knew how to do perfectly just two things, but all else was excluded from its queer electric intelligence."

Belshue is a militant atheist. (Presentations for atheism in both subtle and blunt form appear in many Stribling works.) Here he uses phrases commonly associated with science-fiction in having Belshue state:

> "If the whirl of nebulous gases can develop worlds which produce creatures of such profound sacrificial instincts that they refuse to look truth in the eyes for the benefit of the unborn, creation cannot be judged to be Godlike. Consider the pains and the trouble the human race goes through never to think coherently on any question; it is as beautifully pathetic as the stork which feathers its nest from the down plucked from its own bleeding bosom. All other animals see things simply as they are, but man has reached a point where he sees nothing at all. Only a God could accomplish that!"

It can thus be seen that in *Teeftallow*, which is regarded as pioneering in bringing realism to Southern literature, there are philosophic asides, literary allusions, larger-than-life characters, and word-choices in phrasing that could come only from a writer whose interests probed much deeper and whose imagination was far more ranging than is customary in simple, realistic fiction.

Yet at that time it was the element of realism that made the difference in the critical and economic acceptance of novels. Consider the experience of

the Book of the Month Club. This had been founded in 1926. Its first selection was Sylvia Townsend Warner's novel *Lolly Willowes*, a fantasy, which it sold to fewer than 5000 members. The club's second selection was *Teeftallow*. Members bought 12,500 copies of it, and another 12,000 were sold through regular bookstore outlets. Subsequent printings and later editions raised the total to some 40,000. In a prospectus to members the book was accurately characterized as a "shrewd and enormously powerful study of a country boy in the Tennessee mountains, his ignorant struggle for love and happiness in a community of religious bigotry, economic struggle and almost primitive social forces. . . ." In an unusual bit of candor for promotional literature, however, the prospectus admitted to "minor deficiencies" in the work, including dialog that was "a little too literary." This doubtless includes the passages previously quoted here which mark Stribling's inclination towards science-fiction.

Stribling's *Bright Metal* (1928) is another portrayal of the backwardness and religious superstition of Tennessee whites, this time as seen through the eyes of a Northern woman who comes there to teach school. In *Teeftallow* the popular anger and resistance to Darwin's theory of evolution were mentioned peripherally; here they play a major role in the philosophical background. Stribling demonstrates again, as he would do in the future, that any attempt to educate these people to a more modern outlook will necessarily be a long and tedious process. No crusader is going to win over these Southerners quickly, no matter how logical and eloquent are the arguments. He also goes to great length and detail to explode once more the myth that small-town and rural people are somehow nicer, more moral and less violent than city people. He portrays them as largely ignorant, superstitious, bigoted, vicious, violent, immoral, dishonest and not a little mean and decadent. Stribling also disputes that the small towns and rural areas in the South of his time were pleasant areas in which to live, showing the farms primitive and unproductive, the housing run down, educational standards deplorable and officials corrupt. One becomes convinced that he is narrating the truth, and the evidence he presents becomes overwhelming.

It is interesting that although as early as 1922 Stribling's prose had risen above the pulp level, he never disdained these magazines as markets. Indeed, he needed them, for not until *Teeftallow* had any of his serious novels made much money. One of his favorites had been *Adventure*, because its rates occasionally matched those of the slicks (during its heydey in the mid-1920's it had been known to pay as high as ten cents a word).

Adventure, as we have seen, was published by the Ridgeway Company. This was in turn owned by the Butterick Company, successful publisher of *Delineator*. In 1928 *Delineator* had the fourth largest circulation and advertising revenue of any magazine in the country. The company published other magazines as well, so it was not unusual for them to launch a new one, and they had the finances to do so properly. With the issue of November 1928 *Romance* magazine was reinstated as the companion of *Adventure*. Its editor was Henry LaCossitt, who was to have a distinguished career as editor of *The American Magazine* and *Collier's*. *Romance* was a pulp of 176 pages, appeared monthly, and sold for 25¢; despite the fact that it was being revived, it began as volume one, number one. As before, its policy was to run stories of adventure with an element of romance, and on the roster were many authors from *Adventure*, including Talbot Mundy. Its first big feature was Stribling's new novel of Venezuela, "Strange Moon." This was a four-part serial, beginning in the March 1929 number, with a cover by Hubert Rogers; it appeared as a book later the same year.

"Strange Moon" is the story of an American involved in a search for South American oil and his romance with a Venezuelan girl. It is fast-moving and crammed with excitement, action and mystery. Like most of the author's other novels of realism or romance, it contains a sequence that is fantasy-related. Here

this occurs when the American, Eugene Manners, finds himself imprisoned in a gloomy dungeon. There he asks a shape leaning against a pillar near him how many prisoners there are in the cell. "Eight and Melchisedek," is the reply. This man has been in the cell longer than any guard can remember. He was given this name by a priest once incarcerated there, for no one any longer knew his real name.

Melchisedek rarely utters a word, but possesses a certain supernormal power. "He is discarnate," one inmate explains. "He always knows nine minutes in advance when food is coming." No matter how irregular the meals, and even if the keeper skips a day or two, Melcisedek always arises and prepares himself exactly nine minutes beforehand.

> "I believe," uttered the second voice, "that some time long ago, back in the world, the man was a glutton, and now his soul floats out of his body and is earthbound for food. It cannot see anything but food; I think it floats about Marocarbo from restaurant to restaurant seeing nothing but the sago bread, the coffee, the arrox, the sepulpa. Everything else is blank and empty. There is no sun, nor trees, nor houses, nor ships, just pieces of sago bread dipped in oil."

There is another highly unusual aspect to this novel which should be mentioned. Before the appearance of magazines like *Spicy Detective Stories* and *Spicy Adventure Stories* in the 1930's, there was virtually never the slightest hint of eroticism in pulp fiction, and very, very little of it in the slicks. But "Strange Moon" furnishes one of the rare exceptions to this rule. The last paragraphs of the second installment in this novel portray Sola, the South American girl who aids Manners, running from the jungle to him, badly scratched and with her clothing in tatters.

> He touched the torn cloth, and ran his fingers along the crimson streak on the soft mound it exposed.
>
> "Sola. . ." he said, with his heart beating through his voice. "If we had some salve. . . or something . . .for your breast. . . ." He laid the palm of his hand on the warm white sphere. A profound shiver ran over him, whether of voluptuousness or pain he did not know. It filled his whole body with its tremor. The girl leaned down to his face. She was shaken as painfully or as ecstatically as he.

There are also erotic touches in "Christ in Chicago" (though less forthright than this example), and we shall encounter other instances in later works. It is possible that editors hesitated to make changes or deletions in Stribling's manuscripts because of his high reputation.

As for *Romance* magazine, by late 1929 it had changed its policy, excising the adventure element and featuring out-and-out love stories. With the January 1930 number it expired. The Great Depression was about to begin, and periodicals were being cut back and dying everywhere. By 1932 even its once prosperous companion *Adventure* had to drop its price to ten cents and its pages to 96, eventually being sold to Popular Publications. It is also of interest to note that *Everybody's Magazine*, likewise owned by Butterick and scarcely two decades ago one of the half-dozen leading publications in the United States, had so far degenerated that it was merged with *Romance* with the latter's April 1929 issue; by then it had become a men's adventure pulp, except for title indistinguishable from *Adventure*.

Stribling's next novel, "Backwater," takes readers to eastern Arkansas and the banks of the Mississippi River. "Backwater" was serialized in *Argosy* magazine in six installments (January 4 to February 8, 1930). The protagonist is Jim Murdock, who has returned to the home of his moonshining father after being graduated from an agricultural college. There he had "entered a new world, at first extraordinary, then fascinating. He had become interested in bacteriology, those tiny universes held in a test tube."

The *Argosy* cover illustrating the first installment shows Murdock on horseback, swimming the Mississippi with six-shooter in hand and a steer in tow. This steer has Texas fever, a fatal cattle disease which when spread can destroy

the herds in an entire region. At college he had "planned to pursue his work in microscopy and bacteriology when he returned home. . . . His microscope was wrapped in a blanket in one of his boxes. He had test tubes, beakers, retorts, cultures." Now he is fulfilling his vision. He aims to keep the infected creature quarantined, and research a vaccine that will immunize healthy cattle and possibly cure infected animals from the disease's onslaughts.

This portrayal of a young scientist on the verge of discovery is immediately recognizable as a traditional icon of science-fiction. The vocabulary and phrasing of the protagonist's philosophizing is also typical of the genre. Driving through the rain Murdock muses:

> It seemed somehow as if the rain were Time. His horseman father was riding on before in Time and he and Mary Sue were following in a motor car, and behind them somewhere in this Time-Rain, if he should turn and look, he might see his own and Mary Sue's son following—perhaps in a flying machine.
>
> And all of them were lonely and lost in Time. They could barely see each other. The flying machine would creep after the motor and the motor creep after the horse. And no generation down the whole stretch of humanity ever really would see where they were going or know why they were going. But all followed the misty forms just ahead of them, doing what they did, going where they went.
>
> There was a pathos and a truth about his fantasy that moved the youth.

The drama of the novel arises from the mounting of the river following upstream rainstorms, and the desperate efforts of puny men to keep from being flooded as they frantically build higher dikes to keep back the relentlessly rising torrent.

As in most of his writings of the South, the interactions between whites and blacks in this novel are frankly and vividly depicted, but Stribling's ambivalent attitude towards Jews reappears. Cohen, the town's Jewish clothing store owner, who has a "metallic Semitic voice," moves his best stock to the second floor so that it will not be damaged should his store flood, but leaves his slow-selling goods where they are so that he may collect insurance on them if they are damaged. Yet this same man sells levee workers boots and clothing for half price or gives them away free to the needy who have no money. Although Stribling delivers no judgement one gets the impression that the Jew would be more moral if he left his merchandise where it was and gave away needed goods to everyone. Somehow Cohen is made to seem more reprehensible than Murdock's father, who is a bootlegger, and his sweetheart's father, who proves to be a bank embezzler.

VII

Stribling's persistent defense of Darwin comes to a climax in a tale of real science-fiction, "Mogglesby" (*Adventure*, June 1, 1930). Here all the isolated, tantalizing thoughts we have noted come effectively together. However, it is his last forthright work in the genre. Having scored a critical and financial success in realistic portrayals of the small towns and rural areas of the South, he doubtless felt that science-fiction was not a field in which he could afford to work seriously.[16]

In describing the story's protagonist Stribling writes: "In person Mogglesby, the hero of this West African chronicle, was not a prepossessing man. He was huge and sun baked. He looked like a great sagging brown leather edition of a medical book describing what whisky and the native women will do to an Englishman in equatorial Africa." Mogglesby is also a man of extraordinary physical strength. On one occasion, instead of pulling a drink closer to him, he reaches out and with his thumb and forefinger lifts an entire table with its bottles and glasses into the air and sets it down in a more convenient spot.

In conversation with the local governor Mogglesby hears of a tribe of black men called the Baloongas, who seem to be drifting back towards cannibalism.

When Mogglesby asks why, he is told it is because a species of apes which inhabits a nearby area steals Baloonga women. The natives do not regard the apes as animals, but rather a different (and frightful) tribe of humans. When they catch one, they roast and eat him. By that method they believe the strength and courage of the ape will pass into them. Since the natives do not have a clear line of demarcation between these creatures and human beings, the governor fears that their practice may easily be extended to the latter.

Mogglesby offers to go to the land of the Baloongas with a friend who is a doctor and attempt to educate the natives. The governor feels the experiment would be interesting, but warns that it is also dangerous. Nevertheless, the two set out, accompanied by a guide.

As they near their destination they find the remains of an anthropoid form which has been cooked and partially eaten. Close examination reveals it is not a human being but a species of gorilla, which the guide calls a "wood-man." When Mogglesby offers the opinion that eating a gorilla is no different than eating any other animal the guide disagrees. "They talk," he says. "My cousin, old Luomo, can talk with the wood-men." He explains that Luomo was stolen and lived with them for five years, during which time she learned their language. If the wood-men can speak, and they live with human women, does that not lift them from the status of just another animal to something closer to mankind?

They arrive at the village and find the Baloongas friendly. Mogglesby meets Luomo, who confirms what the guide has said. She tells him that after five years with the wood-men they had sent her back to her tribe. A group of the Baloongas are about to set off on an expedition to hunt a wood-man, and their guide asks permission to go along. (The inference is that he might also participate in eating one.) Still convinced in his original reasoning, Mogglesby consents, repeating that wood-men are just animals, and that eating one is therefore not cannibalism. The doctor plans to accompany them. They set out that night.

The next morning the doctor enters Mogglesby's tent and tells him what has happened. The hunt was unsuccessful, but some miles away the Baloongas built a fire and danced around it. The doctor suddenly realized that, lacking a wood-man, they intended to kill and eat one of their own party. The victim turns out to be the guide——and the doctor confesses that he participated! He tells Mogglesby there is something uplifting in the ritual which makes him think that he and all his companions are brothers. Mogglesby accosts the chief of the tribe, who says what they have done is not murder. When they eat a strong, brave man like the guide they assimilate his strength and bravery and tribe is the better for it.

A wood-man swings into the village and seizes a girl. Mogglesby gives the alarm and runs in pursuit. The creature is cornered and killed, but suddenly other wood-men appear as reinforcements. After they are driven away Mogglesby reflects that the incident could have been strategically planned; and if the wood-men can talk and plan they must have evolved above the level of apes. They must be treated like intelligent beings, and the first step is to make peace with them.

He asks the help of Luomo, who agrees to arrange a meeting between him and the leader of the wood-men. She takes him to their territory and acts as interpreter. When asked why they wreck the banana groves of the natives, the chief replies that the Baloongas kill and eat wood-men. When Mogglesby explains that they do so because wood-men steal their women he responds that all wood-men are subject to "the follies of youth." Mogglesby replies that the war between the two groups is also folly, and it should cease. The chief asks why his young males should be deprived of their right to mate with whomever they please. Mogglesby explains that doing so would ensure the safety of all.

After some discussion the chief offers to return all the captured females on condition that the Baloongas give up killing and eating wood-men. But Mogglesby refuses to bargain away cannibalism, for at that moment a strange theory

enters his mind.

> It grew upon Mogglesby that perhaps cannibalism and blood sacrifice were the foundation stones upon which all human civilizations had been built. . . . The cannibals would always believe they could absorb the strength and cunning of their enemies and this would bring a distinct psychological advantage. Further, the feeling that a man's life had been given for their own would hold them together by its drama and its pathos.
>
> Moreover, out of this drama and pathos would bloom the spirit of patriotism and self-sacrifice which had been so entirely lacking in the monkeys.

So instead of agreeing to the chief's suggestion he makes a counter-offer. Each group will select its best member, and these two will fight. The group the loser represents will move away and no longer disturb the other. But he has difficulty in convincing the wood-men of the value of sacrificing a single individual for the good of all, and this causes "Mogglesby to see more clearly than ever how necessary it was that cannibalism and human sacrifice enter into the foundation of every great civilization." Eventually, however, the chief accepts. But when Mogglesby tells the Baloongas, they are stricken with fear, for they doubt if they have a man strong enough to defeat whoever the wood-men choose. But by telling them that they can practice cannibalism until the day of the battle Mogglesby gets them to agree.

Mogglesby takes the doctor into his confidence. The wood-men are unable to understand the concepts of patriotism, public spirit or brotherly love. In contrast, human "emotions of pity, sacrifice, hero worship; our feeling for drama and pageantry; our temples, the beginnings of our sculpture, our feeling of brotherhood, are all based fundamentally on cannibalism."

The Baloongas call for a cannibalistic feast in order to work up the courage to pick an opponent for the wood-men. The doctor feels certain that he will be the victim this time. Mogglesby tells him to announce that they need not feast tonight, because he will volunteer to fight as their champion. He also realizes that a primal fear and hatred of the wood-men has risen within him that is out of all proportion to what he could have developed against simply an animal. He compares it to "some ancient inheritance, a racial hatred that had sprung up when the Cro-Magnons had struggled with the Neanderthals for the possession of Europe."

The fight begins, and Mogglesby realizes that his arms are puny compared to those of his opponent. As these reach out powerfully towards him he ducks and drives hard blows to the stomach of the creature. Its short legs give way and it falls, but now he has to cope with four arms, since the wood-man's toes are as long and prehensile as his fingers. Additionally it has deadly fangs capable of ripping his throat out. Mogglesby jams his thumb under his opponent's eyeball and pulls it loose. As the wood-man retreats in agony he grasps it from behind, lifts it nigh off the ground and dashes it down on the head, smashing its skull.

The natives are overjoyed, but their reaction is unexpected. En masse they pounce upon Mogglesby, overpower him, pile dry grass around him, and cook and eat him. When the feast is over the chief announces that they have absorbed not only Mogglesby's incredible strength and courage, but also his beliefs. Since it had been his desire that they give up cannibalism and adopt Christianity, the next day all the warriors set out for the coast "and became communicants of the Anglican church in the port of Ghandis."

"Mogglesby" may very well be the finest in a long list of fine stories about men discovering intelligent ape-like creatures. In organization, philosophical concepts, and sheer quality of writing in this vein it has no equals. It is an unrivalled masterpiece. It is presented in the form of a factual report which Stribling states has been obtained from the doctor some months after Mogglesby's death. Because of this he felt constrained to remark in the readers' column in the back of the magazine: "In a former fantasy of mine which ran in *Adventure* ["The Green Splotches"] I received many letters inquiring into its truthfulness.

It is with pain that I must admit that "Mogglesby" is a base fabrication from start to stop-light." To this editor A. A. Proctor added:

> Of course it goes without saying that "Mogglesby" is an off-the-trail story. The author himself admits it is almost sheer fantasy. Although there really isn't the slightest reason why this should be taken as an apology. Some of the finest adventure stories ever written were fashioned largely out of the stuff of the imagination. . . .
>
> If Mr. Stribling's apes are too intelligent, if they exhibit caprices and and tendencies rather perilously like those of *Homo Sapiens* perhaps we ought to be tolerant——even the more practical minded of us——and not attribute it to an exaggerated Darwinism or to just plain gullibility on his part, but rather to his sense of humor. . . .

There are also erotic overtones in Stribling's story. As we have already noted, these were normally eschewed by pulp editors; but to paraphrase a policy of the old *Saturday Evening Post*——no fantasy except by Stephen Vincent Benét——apparently *Adventure* had a policy of no eroticism except by Stribling.

Science-fiction such as this novelette was a rare indulgence for him, but an indulgence of extraordinary merit that reveals his complete mastery of the form. When "Mogglesby" appeared he was on the threshold of writing his most famous and successful works. For the sake of pursuing the theme of this article completely these shall be explored to ascertain whether they follow the pattern of fantasy intrusion we have previously established.

VIII

In 1930 Stribling married a Louella Kloss from Clifton, Tennessee, the place of his own birth and the locale of his first regional novel, *Birthright*. There seem two reasons for his late marriage (he was 49 at the time). First, he had always been a footloose person, enjoying travel whenever possible, and it was not until middle age that this wanderlust began to diminish. Second, it was not until the late 1920's that he actually earned enough from his writing to support a wife comfortably. By now, however, he was well established.

The Forge (1931) is the first volume in a trilogy that was to bring Stribling wide recognition, a Pulitzer Prize, and some money. It is the beginning of a chronicle of an American family that would do for Southerners what John Galsworthy did for the British middle class in *The Forsyte Saga* (1922), following the fortunes of the Vaidens from the early 1860's to about 1920. *The Forge* shows their lives and relationships with neighbors and Negro slaves before the Civil War, the traumatic changes taking place during that war (including negative aspects of both the Confederate and Union armies), and the desolation and chaos of the post-war era.

In describing the work Wilton Eckley states: "The first American novel to be selected by the English Book League, *The Forge* represents Stribling's best literary effort up to that time. Marked by humor, irony and objectivity, *The Forge*, as social documentation, hits hard and cuts clean; and in doing so it represents a significant step forward in the treatment of the tragic complexities of the South both during and immediately following the Civil War."[17]

The book was not a best-seller, but was widely reviewed and discussed even though it had appeared at the start of the worst economic depression in the nation's history, a time when books were regarded as a luxury and entertainment was limited to an occasional movie. Stribling had gone into literary ascendency.

There is but one fantastic aside in this novel, and it echoes the supernatural rather than science-fiction. When the negro slave George steals a silver spoon, his plan is to melt and cast it into a bullet. He then draws two circles on a log which represents his master, who has on occasion whipped him, and fires the silver bullet into this symbolic effigy, whispering "I gwi kill you, Mas'

Milt." Long before 1931 a silver bullet was known as a sure-fire way of dispatching werewolves and other supernatural beings, and it had been popularized by Eugene O'Neill's superb play *The Emperor Jones* (1920).

In this novel Stribling also makes the interesting point that the only way we can have justice and morality is by having plenty of injustice and immorality around. "If we didn't have this contrast the human race would pursue the way of virtue with the automatism of the insects. Without vice good would become mere habit, it would drop into moral non-existence." Recalling his claim that cannibalism was essential for the advancement of the human race in "Mogglesby," we can imagine how he might have expanded this concept in a tale of pure science-fiction!

Stribling's father had owned a general store, and although a store is not the center of the action in the next volume of his trilogy, *The Store* (1932) (any more than a forge is the focus of his previous book), it is a symbol he can manipulate to his advantage. For this novel Stribling received the Pulitzer Prize.

The story of Miltiades Vaiden, introduced in *The Forge*, is continued here. A series of underhanded and criminal acts involving the sale of stolen cotton eventually results in his exposure and the death of his wife; but it leaves him also a substantial profit and frees him to marry a woman of whom he had long been fond. Near the end tragedy intrudes, as a young negro is hanged for a rape he is innocent of, and Vaiden discovers that he was his own mulatto son.

The elements of a plot of a fantastic story are introduced when in a conversation the postmaster is told:

> "I mean her mother, before the daughter's conception, had your image so impressed upon her soul, that she bore her daughter to you instead of the actual physical father of her child."
>
> "I wouldn't be sure of that," answered the postmaster. "A great many races believe in telogony. The Jews made laws on the subject."
>
> "Because man desires only one woman?"
>
> "It suggests to me," said the postmaster, "that love is directed by spirits not yet born. They use a mother to frame a universe for themselves, just as the first effort of life in the scum of a pond is to frame a universe for itself."
>
> "I think that the force that matter feels when it is being drawn to serve life is love."

Another fantasy connotation involves Jerry Catlin, a character who is studying occultism, and is "trying to learn how to float up in the air." He ponders on a girl he likes very much, thinking ". . .if he should ever gain the power to dematerialize himself he would send his soul across from the Vaiden boarding house into Synda's bedroom and appear before her bed in a white mist. The thought of himself being in a white mist bending above Synda sleeping in her bed filled Jerry with ecstasy and tenderness."

Stribling's next work was an 80,000-word novel of adventure and romance on the Mississippi, set in the period when railroads were replacing the picturesque river boats as the main method of transportation. It was titled "River," and appeared in *Argosy* magazine in six installments (July 22 to September 2, 1933). It might be asked here, Why would a Pulitzer Prize winner whose works were being chosen by book clubs——at the apogee of his fame——be grinding out a novel for a pulp magazine, even a good one like *Argosy*? The answer is the Great Depression. An estimated quarter of the country's work force was unemployed, and only a few months earlier President Roosevelt had closed the banks to prevent the collapse of more of them. The famous Zane Grey, who had been getting $75,000 a novel from the slicks, couldn't sell them any. Edgar Rice Burroughs, who had been paid $8000 a novel by *Blue Book* in 1930, was glad to settle for $2000 in 1933. Pulitzer Prize winners received only $1000. *Argosy*, whose base rate was 1½¢ a word on acceptance, and whose checks did not bounce, paid Stribling at least as much as that for "River." And in the Tennessee backwaters or on the Florida coast at that time, one could live modestly but comfortably for a year on such a sum.[18]

"River" shows signs of haste, though no actual carelessness, in its

writing. Although every character in it serves a function, Stribling has not sufficiently realized the potential of his plot, in which the son of one of the river's leading steamboat owners goes to work for the railroad because he believes that is the wave of the future, and then falls in love with the daughter of a competing steamboat line owner. An old, crochety, dishonest and unscrupulous Tennessee judge is the best etched character in the story, and the ruthlessness of the railroad in obtaining citizens' property is driven home to readers with effective irony. Again the backwardness of small town natives and their reprehensible morality are relentlessly laid bare. The Negro serves as an object of mockery but at the same time is cast in a heroic mold.

As in Stribling's other mundane works we have here a philosophical aside reminiscent of a science-fiction plot. As the riverboat passes people on rafts and on the shore, and they gradually dwindle into insignificance, the old judge comments: "That's true . . . of everybody we know, even our nearest and dearest. We are little figures of dust; knowing them for a moment; feeling the tragedy and comedy of their lives, and then losing them in the silence of eternity."

When the story opens the protagonist's father, owner of one of the big riverboat lines, is meeting with a competitor to divide territories. The railroad is disdained as a threat, though the son has taken a job there, accurately forseeing the demise of riverboat trade. The novel ends *in the future*, with the riverboat owner's son now president of the railway, meeting with his associates on the 81st floor of a great skyscraper. Their voices are drowned out by a gigantic six-engined plane that flies by, shaking the buildings. (In 1933 airplanes that large had not yet been built.)

The novel ends on a note of irony. One of the men questions whether such planes will ever be safe enough for passenger transportation in a large commercial way. The president shakes his head and puts the notion to rest. "This was felt to be the last word on the subject because Clive H. Donelly's whole meteoric career proved him to be a man of extraordinary foresight. Had he not given up the inheritance of two great companies of steamboats, in the height of the packet days, to throw in his fortunes with the railroads? It was not likely that such a brilliant analyst would draw a false conclusion here, in the height of his power."

The final volume in Stribling's trilogy is *Unfinished Cathedral* (1934). Here Vaiden is ninety, and his final objective is to build a magnificent edifice which will house his remains. His goal is never attained, for he is killed by a bomb placed in the cathedral by white unionists because he has hired cheaper Negro workers instead of themselves. As in Stribling's other novels there are passages with fantastic adumbrations.

In one of these a shabby man on a train sees Jerry Catlin sitting morosely and on conversing with him learns he is depressed over a woman. He says:

> "Had you thought what a little while you would have had to stay with [her] . . . a few more years . . . not long . . . but when you join her after that, brother, this—thing we call Time ain't going to be no more. It kain't be, because the sun won't go around the earth where you and her are. The earth'll turn under you, but you'll be in the sunshine."
>
> "Listen, listen," cried Jerry, staring at the fellow,"I know you are an uneducated man, but can even you really believe such nonsense? Don't you know that up in the sky there is just space, cold interstellar space, absolute zero?"
>
> "There, that's the point, brother, exactly . . . a friend of mine's been there . . . he really has. He was drowned in a creek up clost to Florence."
>
> Jerry turned his face from the fellow.
>
> "Oh, my goodness . . . I know who you're talking about . . . I was there."
>
> "Was you . . . was you, brother?"
>
> "Yes, and it was just the ordinary hallucination of a drowning man. It has occurred over and over and over.
>
> "I know it occurred once before, brother, angels came and attended to a man once in a garden called Gethsemane."
>
> "That was a long time ago," said Jerry; "that really happened. That went

> on record for the faith of mankind, but since then there have been no miracles, nothing but hallucinations."
>
> The man gave a puzzled frown.
>
> "Brother, may I ask you what is your trade, a doctor, or a lawyer?"
>
> "I'm a minister," said Jerry.

Earlier, that same Jerry Catlin became involved in a conversation about the reasons people marry. He feels they almost never marry for love, and not for money either.

> "You see, our period of human mating has remained where it was in the Stone Age, from seventeen to twenty years old. That is the period of the greatest biological intensity and efficiency. But our technical civilization has advanced the age of efficient productivity to about thirty or forty. . . . That's why divorces increase with advancing technological complexity of our modern life. It will continue until the family is pulled completely apart and our civilization dies; then some other race of men will rise up and repeat the performance."

The above represents a succinct plot for a sociologically based science fiction story, one which Stribling may have thought of writing, and which found expression only in a conversation that had no real relevance to the progression of the action in *Unfinished Cathedral*.

At another point in the novel a girl is expecting an illegitimate child and protests when her mother urges her to have an abortion: "I'm not going to have it! I won't have it taken away from me. . .the poor little tadpole sort of thing . . .not even a human being. . .groping and groping. . .I'm its whole world, its sea and sky and land. . . . Suppose a hundred million years ago, when we were tadpoles, God had operated on the world and killed Life, and all this. . .everything. . .was blank." This quotation strongly suggests that Stribling had read Langdon Smith's famous poem "Evolution" (1895-1904), which linked Darwin's theory with that of soul migration. The pertinent stanzas are one and eleven ("When you were a tadpole and I was a fish. . . .").

The concept of a child having an imaginary companion is very old, and Stribling introduces it again in *Unfinished Cathedral*. There a child called Junior claims he has an invisible companion, a negro he names Luggy. Jerry Catlin is "deeply amused at such a fantastic discovery. . . . Junior's invisible companion was a little negro ghost. . .spirit. . .illusion. . .whatever it was."[19]

Unfinished Cathedral was a Literary Guild selection, and proved financially and critically successful.

IX

At this point Stribling suspended his novel writing to capitalize upon his reputation by writing shorter works for more lucrative markets. These were chiefly the slick-paper women's magazines *Delineator*, *McCall's*, *Pictorial Review*, and most especially also *The Saturday Evening Post*, which purchased fourteen stories from him over the next four years. This was an era when a middle-class American could live adequately on $2000 a year——and the *Post* sometimes paid as much as that for a single story. Stribling and his wife spent most winters in the Fort Myers area of Florida, where living costs were even less.

His next novel, *The Sound Wagon* (1935) was also a Literary Guild selection. Here he deserts the rural South to portray the falsity and corruption of politics in New York City and Washington. Again we search for evidence of science fiction overtones and we find it.

Early in the novel we are introduced to an inventor who has perfected an improved explosive and an electrical gun which can kill invisibly and silently without a bullet. These can change the balance of military power in the world. He works for a giant corporation which will legally own anything he invents, and fears that, completely amoral, they may sell these weapons to foreign governments.

Stribling's fascination with the theory of evolution surfaces again when one of his characters says, "When the first animal in the course of evolution

developed the first eye in the world, don't you imagine its companions stood around and said, 'You are a logical fellow, why do you think you see anything?'"

Following appearance of *The Sound Wagon*, Stribling accepted an appointment to the staff of Columbia University, where in the spring of 1936 he taught English U4G, The Technique of the Novel. His experiences there gave him the material for his last published novel, *These Bars of Flesh* (1938). This is a satirical exposé of academic and scholarly pursuits, written with a pleasantly light touch; it received generally favorable reviews. Here again we encounter a reference to the fantastic: a medium who claims clairvoyance is the centerpiece in experiments to determine if life exists after death.

In 1940 Stribling began writing his autobiography. He probably completed the work around 1945, although he continued to revise it for many years. The manuscript was finally published posthumously under the title *Laughing Stock* (1982).[20] It is unusual in that by design it consists entirely of reminiscences, contains no anchoring dates, and is not written in careful chronological order. One has to be already somewhat familiar with Stribling's life and career to appreciate it. Those who are (and reading these pages is preparation enough) will enjoy it very much. *Laughing Stock* confirms a number of conclusions drawn in this article, showing, for example, how autobiographical many of the author's most famous novels were. It reveals also that *Teeftallow* was turned into a play,[21] and "Railroad" into a radio serial.[22] Stribling considered his happiest days were those when he wrote for pulp magazines, and he gives us vivid vignettes of acquaintances in the publishing industry; those of Bob Davis and Arthur Hoffmann, and descriptions of the offices where they worked, will especially appeal to readers with nostalgic recollections of *Adventure* and the old Munsey magazines.

Stribling spent almost all of his remaining life in his beloved home town of Clifton, Tennessee. In addition to his autobiography he wrote *The Philosophy of Yes and No*, a 1500-paged treatise setting forth his ideas on science, religion, sociology, history, ethics and many other topics, including those embodying the fantastic which have been singled out in this article. He also completed seven additional novels, knowing as he wrote them that their subject matter and treatment were such as to make them unsaleable. The earliest one was *Chance*.[23]

> It was written around two themes which I knew could never become popular. One was a discussion of beauty, an argument that our perception of beauty is unduly influenced by art and custom, and that within every human being lies a natural impulse toward a beauty that is unique for him and is completely appreciated by himself alone. . . . The other theme . . . was somewhat abstract. It suggested that the religion of mankind was shifting from faith to experiment. The action in my story represented the last struggle of faith and the beginning of experiment. It is a fact that the older a man grows, the more absorbed he becomes in the intellectual and spiritual intricacies of life, and while he may not lose himself in a jungle of metaphysics, he can lose his reader, and, most easily, his reader's interest. That was what I knew every paragraph of the way through *Chance*.

With the cessation of any new published novels, Stribling's name gradually faded from the public eye. The decline of his reputation may have been accelerated by attacks of several Southern writers who were jealous of his success and winning of the Pulitzer Prize. Among these was the noted poet and novelist Robert Penn Warren (1905-1989), who came from the same state but whose background and interests differed from Stribling's. Warren wrote an article highly critical of Stribling's work, claiming that it deserved no more than a paragraph in the history of Southern and realistic literature.[24] Warren himself later won a Pulitzer Prize for *All the King's Men* (1946), but in retrospect his criticisms seem patricidal, for his own novels bear the clear stamp of Stribling's influence. On the other hand, William Faulkner thought well of Stribling, as did such Northern writers and critics as Theodore Dreiser, John Erskine and Burton Rascoe.

Stribling's last appearance in a major periodical was "My Cousin Ji-Um" (*The Saturday Evening Post*, January 3, 1942). Then Fred Dannay of *Ellery Queen's*

Mystery Magazine began to urge him to write a new Dr. Poggioli detective story. Stribling agreed, but never submitted one. When Dannay queried him he said he had written the story, and felt it was suitable for *The Saturday Evening Post.* But the *Post* rejected it, so "The Mystery of the Chief of Police" did eventually appear in *Ellery Queen's Mystery Magazine* (July 1945), with a prelude of almost a page and a half of fanfare. It was followed over the next ten years by thirteen others, the last, "The Telephone Fisherman," in January 1955. In blurbing the fourth in the series, "Count Jalecki Goes Fishing" (September 1946), Dannay intimated that there was a mixed reaction to the stories from readers, but obviously he liked them, for they continued to appear.

Selling to *EQMM* was a distinct comedown for Stribling. At that time it was a thin, digest-sized publication, unillustrated, and carrying many reprints. Such new stories as it bought were paid for at no more than two or three cents a word——a respectable figure for its own field, but scarcely comparable to the rate of the *Post.* But Stribling was probably in need of the money.

In 1952 - 1953 several Dr. Poggioli stories appeared in *Famous Detective* and *Smashing Detective* magazines. Their editor, Robert A. W. Lowndes, would probably have paid a contributor of Stribling's reputation a cent and a half a word, about three times the standard rate.[25] These may very well have been rejects from *EQMM.* From 1953 to 1956 Leo Margulies printed a series of Dr. Poggioli stories in *The Saint's Mystery Magazine,* all of them originals. Margulies paid writers one cent a word on acceptance.[26]

Stribling died of cancer in Florence, Alabama on July 10, 1965. He was 84, and there is no indication that he had been writing for some time. It is unfortunate that he never again tried has hand at science-fiction, particularly during the period when he was again reduced to writing for the pulps. From 1949 on the field was booming, and he might have had enough imagination left to click. *EQMM*'s companion, *The Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction,* should have been ideal for him, since it was receptive to the adult style in which he wrote.

During his lifetime Stribling was sometimes criticized for not being particularly literary, and once even for not being a writer at all.[27] To the contrary, he was a superb and versatile writer, with the ability to alter his style subtly to suit the type of story he was composing. He was as good at dialogue as he was at narrative, able either to write pulp action at a breakneck pace or to sustain interest through leisurely conversation. My criticism of him would be based solely on his overuse of a single word, which he picked up as a pulpster and never discarded. That is the verb "ejaculate." In all of his fiction characters ejaculate their speech with jarring consistency. One dictionary defines the word as "to eject; emit suddenly; to exclaim; blurt." Dime novelists early in the century used it frequently in the last two senses, but it has been out of fashion now for two generations. Indeed, in recent decades its use has been confined to the description of a male orgasm. Stribling's characters frequently ejaculate words that cannot be ejaculated; we even find it even in *Laughing Stock.* Why his editors didn't delete each ejaculation passes understanding. Only in the early novel *Birthright* does one feel they tried to do so, but missed several along the way.

Stribling has also been criticized for ambivalence in his portrayal of negroes, incorporating jarring slurs at them and at the same time showing they had been treated unfairly and inhumanly. But he had been reared and indoctrinated in an era of bigotry; he saw it around him in word and deed every day of his youth. Although through his own efforts he was able to rise above it,[28] remnants of his thinking always remained. He himself was probably not even aware of them.

To a lesser extent we find this same ambivalence when it came to Jews. He knew far less of them than he did of negroes, and was less qualified to comment. Yet in the same works that display, if not extoll, certain virtues of the group and unfair attitudes towards them, Stribling includes stereotypical inferences and irrelevant slurs. Doubtless this came from early religious influences.

This article has attempted to determine how a writer who became internationally famous as a pioneering realist in depicting the American South could have in 1920 had published in *Adventure*, a magazine with a policy of printing little or no science-fiction, a story so advanced in prognostication and so skilfully organized, plotted and written, that seventy years later it still stands out as a masterpiece in the genre. To help our understanding we have, in the process, described much of his work and explored a number of interesting byways. We have found that an author who won a Pulitzer Prize by apparently writing as an honest and impartial observer was at the same time also philosophically questioning the world and the universe around him, and that these questions are reflected in all of his non-science-fiction works. We find also a streak of mysticism, based at least partially on personal experiences,[29] that resulted in his composing several tales that are outrightly supernatural.

Of course Stribling, at least at first, was unfamiliar with the term "science-fiction." He himself referred to his early work in the field as "horror tales," "fanciful adventures" or "preposterous invention."[30] Yet he must have realized that such fiction fell into a category all its own when *Adventure* labelled it "off-the-trail." Had the genre magazines in the 1920's paid higher rates, he might very well have written considerably more science-fiction and even become a major figure in its history. As it is, Stribling's reputation in science-fiction now rests on the novel "Web of the Sun" and three lengthy novelettes, "The Green Splotches," "Mogglesby" and "Christ in Chicago." All but the last are outright masterpieces; and in the realm of the supernatural, "A Passage to Benares" is also an outstanding short story.

None of his fiction remains in print today, although it is still easy to find his later novels in second-hand bookshops. His name is in total eclipse even among academic specialists. His realistic work has been imitated so frequently by other writers that it no longer has its original impact. The situation reminds me of a conversation I had nearly forty years ago. H. G. Wells's *The Time Machine* had just been reprinted in *Two Complete Science Adventure Novels* (Winter 1951) and I asked a teen-age fan how he liked it. "Nothing but a take-off on van Vogt's *Masters of Time!*" he replied. I told him I agreed this was a fine story, but that it was derivative, and if he reread *The Time Machine* carefully he would find values and nuances that are easily missed on the first reading.

The same thing is true for T. S. Stribling. Acquaintance with comparable later work by William Faulkner, Thomas Wolfe and Robert Penn Warren will not detract from the enjoyment of Stribling's novels. They make easy and pleasurable reading, and possess values and nuances not found in their distinguished successors.[31,32]

NOTES

(1) Those who have not seen the original can find it reproduced in color in Anthony Goodstone's *The Pulps* (1970).

(2) He said further: "Here is a story that mixes science with fiction to the *n*th degree. It is a story that will persist in your memory for many years. You can never forget it. Then, also, you will get more out of it by reading it a second and a third time than you did the first time. With each reading the story will improve and will give you more food for thought."

(3) It has also been reprinted in *The Pocket Book of Science-Fiction* (1943), edited by Donald A. Wollheim (the first paperback anthology in the field); in *Famous Fantastic Mysteries* (August 1952); and in *Fantastic* (September 1967). J. O. Bailey described and commented in detail on "The Green Splotches" in his *Pilgrims Through Space and Time* (1947).

(4) Hoffman (1876-1966) edited the magazine from 1911 to 1927.

(5) This will be found in "American Novelists 1910-1945" part 3 in volume 9 of *Dictionary of Literary Biography* (1981), edited by Mari-Sandoz and Stark Young.

(6) This is reproduced on the opposite page.

(7) Cox was still with *Adventure* in 1926, running its "Ask *Adventure*" column. He was well known to Alden H. Norton, editorial director of Popular Publications, which bought the magazine during the depression. Norton told me that after leaving *Adventure* Cox worked for *The Jersey Shore Herald*, a news-

The Men Who Make The Argosy

T. S. STRIBLING

Author of "East Is East," "Backwater," etc.

AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL sketches are dangerous things. They confront the writer at unexpected places. Once I was to speak before a woman's club. The chairman, by way of introduction, drew out and read an autobiographical sketch I had written for some magazine. It was so much funnier than anything I had to say my speech fell flat and the club refused to pay my traveling expenses. I then and there lifted my right hand to the wall paper and vowed I'd never be that funny in a sketch any more.

Now if a person is going to write an honest autobiography, if he isn't going to be funny, there is just one thing left for him to be, and that is shameless.

The following is a shameless sketch:

I was born in Clifton, Tennessee, a dilapidated little village on the Tennessee River, and I think, if the truth be told, that village is I. It is a village of hill people, about three hundred white people and three hundred black. In my boyhood the older men used to say that in the patent office at Washington they had a green mark around Clifton to show the inventor that no matter how stupid was his invention he could go to Clifton and sell it. Patent right men are not so numerous now, but some years ago Clifton citizens were heavy purchasers in patent rights to make glass coffins, potato bug exterminators, folding automobiles and silent baby rattles.

Another peculiarity of Clifton is the men of the village are entirely without any social function that brings them together. They have no golf, no banquets, no clubs, nothing. They see each other about their businesses in the village, whose business section is about half a block long. I find this same attitude in my own psychology rather to my own amusement. I know perfectly well social functions are not absurd, but that knowledge never affects my instinctive summation of them.

Here is another droll village attitude: women are naturally better than men, but what they do is seldom quite sensible; women are far more faithful than men, but that never applies to individual cases; Heaven is populated mainly by women, angels and preachers, with a light sprinkling of deacons here and there, while the destination of men by and large is not so much hell, as you just don't know where the men go. Nobody knows. It isn't discussed.

Now I myself reflect this feeling about women. I feel if there should be a heaven in despite the sacred writings of Saint Einstein (cf. 6th chap, 15th verse) that the women will take to it like ducks to a mill pond, while I personally don't believe it would suit me at all if we can trust the sacred descriptions of Saint John on Patmos.

Then there is the colored population of Clifton. For example, when I came back from New York this Autumn I learned that a black woman and her daughter had killed the man of the family. But it was a little uncertain just who had done it. The daughter said her mammy made her stab her father, and the mother said her daughter had done it—there was a doubt somewhere, but it was too subtle for me to understand. At any rate, owing to this uncertainty, no legal action was ever taken in the matter. The loss, the village felt, was not very great, and the woman wouldn't do it any more because she is past the age of a second marriage, so why bring up that?

I consider the above a very intimate autobiographical sketch of myself. The village, it is I.

paper located in central Pennsylvania, where in the 1960's he ran a lively column titled "Shore Lines."

(8) At this time *Century* specialized in well written but strongly sentimental short stories, appealing brief articles on topical and cultural subjects, and probably the best poetry of any popular magazine in the world; during 1921-22 alone it published work of Robert Frost, Amy Lowell, Sara Teasdale, Elinor Wylie, Walter de la Mare, Louis Untermeyer, William Rose Benet, Carl Sandburg, Conrad Aiken, Vachel Lindsay and Babette Deutsch. It rarely printed more than two serials a year, and these were seldom of first rank.

(9) Frank remained editor of *Century* for six years, during which time he published much distinguished material. He left the magazine in 1925 to assume the presidency of the University of Wisconsin, a position that his ability as a publicist helped him obtain. When he lost the post because of politics in 1937 he became editor of *Rural Progress* magazine. He also wrote three books on current affairs.

(10) *Fombombo* appeared in book form in 1923.

(11) In a letter to *Famous Fantastic Mysteries* (February 1953, p. 8) Stribling stated that he believed "Web of the Sun" had been reprinted; but no one has ever been able to verify this.

(12) Hoffman said in part: "One critic, whose judgements seem to me personally of first-rank value. . . gave his opinion with an almost fierce enthusiasm unusual in him—that this story ranks Mr. Stribling with Voltaire and the greatest satirists of all time, without a line of preachment or prejudice."

(13) Many tales involving giant spiders are known. One that shows particular similarity to this work is Walter Rose's short story "The Lurking Death" (*Amazing Stories*, February 1936). Here a series of unexplained disappearances on London streets at night is explained by giant trap-door spiders which raise manhole covers and snatch unwary pedestrians to their death.

(14) The issue of *Adventure* in which "Christ in Chicago" appeared was the first to cut back publishing frequency from three times a month to twice a month. The magazine now appeared on the 8th and the 23rd of each month. It also marked the beginning of the end of Hoffman's distinguished editorship. Travis Hoke, with whom Stribling had become friendly, handled advertising at Reilly and Britton, the firm which published his first novel, *The Cruise of the Dry Dock*.

(15) This organization is Stribling's invention.

(16) "Mogglesby" was reprinted in *Avon Fantasy Reader* #11 [1949].

(17) *T. S. Stribling*, p. 72.

(18) Stribling was not the only well known but impecunious Southern author extant. As late as 1946 William Faulkner entered a contest for new detective stories sponsored by *Ellery Queen's Mystery Magazine* and was grateful to receive the $250 second prize ("An Error in Chemistry," June 1946).

(19) This incident, like many others in the trilogy, is based on Stribling's early experience. During and after World War II the comic strip *Barnaby*, about a child with a companion only he could see, gained considerable vogue. Probably the best known modern examples are the play *Harvey* and John Collier's short story "Thus I Refute Beelzy."

(20) The work was edited by Randy K. Cross and John T. McMillan and published by St. Luke's Press, Memphis, Tenn. It is distributed by Peachtree Publishers, 494 Armour Circle NE, Atlanta, Ga. 30324.

(21) *Laughing Stock*, pp. 187ff. It was written in collaboration with David Wallace, produced by James W. Elliot, and titled *Rope*. It ran from February 22 to March 17, 1928 at the Biltmore Theater in New York.

(22) *Laughing Stock*, pp. 215-216. It ran as a sustaining program for about four months in 1934-1935 on the Columbia Broadcasting network, and ended because no sponsor could be found.

(23) *Laughing Stock*, pp. 229-230.

(24) "T. S. Stribling: a Paragraph in the History of Realism," *American Review 2*, 463-486 (Feb. 1936).

(25) Personal communication, Robert A. W. Lowndes.

(26) In conversations with me Margulies remarked that during this period Stribling lived in Miami Beach, and referred to him as a "beachcomber" with all the traditional inferences of a man broke, down on his luck, and possibly even a drinker. This contrasts widely from the picture of Stribling's later life as found in *Laughing Stock*.

(27) In his review of *Unfinished Cathedral* Herschell Brickell said, "I am willing to admit that Mr. Stribling is a remarkable example of how far a writer can go without knowing how to write." (*The New York Post*, June 2, 1934, p. 11.)

(28) "*Birthright* did a very odd thing to me. Until the time I wrote it, I had looked upon the Negroes in the South precisely as the majority of Southerners looked upon them, as a slightly subhuman folk . . . not much, perhaps, but just a little "sub." But by the time I had written the life and adventures of my brown hero, it dawned upon me that the Negroes were people just exactly like everybody else." (*Laughing Stock*, p. 177).

(29) For example, see *Laughing Stock*, pp. 197-198.

(30) *Laughing Stock*, p. 115 and 151-152.

(31) I am indebted to T. G. Cockcroft for details on the reprintings of "The Green Splotches."

(32) *Editor's note: Because of the length of this article an installment of "Bernarr Macfadden" unfortunately had to be omitted from this issue.*

WISH YOU WERE HERE

The kids had lots of fun
At the lunar themepark
Pushing Granny through
The hissing outer airlock,
Just so they could watch
Her silently explode.
We let them play this game
Three times, then we said
That it was time to stop:
"Pull Granny back inside——
She'll only get upset
And have another headache."

—— *John Francis Haines*

Open House

Letters From Readers

We hear first from Gavin Smith:

I am writing to respond to Lincoln Van Rose's review of *The Scallion Stone* (*Fantasy Commentator* #39, page 213). I take no issue with the main body of the review, because that volume rests still unread on my shelf, like so many things I have yet to get around to. What prompts these remarks is his coda about "what can happen when the assets of small fantasy publishers exceed their expertise and judgement."

It seems to me that this last remark was not called for by the constraints of the task of reviewing the book, which he obviously did not care for, and wished to defame the man who caused him to spring for the purchase price. If he read a free reviewer's copy, this is even worse——but I have no way of knowing if that was the case. If Mr. Van Rose envies Mr. Schiff for publishing books, he should not clothe such sentiments in the form of a literary review.

To which Lincoln Van Rose replies:

Mr. Smith's remarks are at once interesting and puzzling. I should like to ask him how he feels he can judge a review of *The Scallion Stone* when he himself hasn't read it? My remark about the shortcomings of the Whispers Press derived strictly from the quality of the book and how they brought it out. Most of Smith's stories simply *weren't* very good——and isn't it bad judgement to print substandard material? Further, once the decision to publish has been made, aren't decisions about a book's binding and typography just as intrinsic as choosing the text? Finally, isn't it the job of an honest reviewer to report on *all* aspects of the volume under scrutiny?

The source of the copy a reviewer uses seems to me totally irrelevant to what he says about it, but it may soothe Mr. Smith to learn that I borrowed mine from the editor, who tells me he bought it from the Whispers Press.

I suppose it's inevitable that negative reviews make authors and publishers unhappy, but my policy has always been to call the shots as I saw them——nothing more, nothing less. Envy has never entered into the matter.

We hear next from Robert A. W. Lowndes:

There are a few things in Eric Leif Davin's otherwise very good article and interview,"The Silberkleit Years" that I'd like to correct.

1. (page 184): I did not, as stated here, have anything whatsoever to do with the June 1941 issue of *Science Fiction.*

2. I *did* do *some* work on the final, September 1941 issue. Hornig had selected all the material, and when the proofs came back, Silberkleit turned them over to me to "close" the issue. It so happened that Hornig's just didn't fit, in that a couple of stories had to be left out——which left a gap of some pages in the issue. I selected material already set for *Future Fiction* (but crowded out) to fill the gap. And I also took advantage of the situation to replace Taurasi's "Fantasy Times" with "Futurian Times." You might call that issue something of a collaboration, but that's all; had it been possible to put the issue together using *only* Hornig-selected material, I certainly would have done so. And I think now it would have been better to have just made a few corrections in Taurasi's somewhat sloppy writing and run the sheet he prepared. Partisanship overcame me at that time.

3. I took over *Future Fiction* with the *April* 1941 issue, not the August 1941 issue (which *was* the second one I handled). While, as correctly noted, there had been interference with my selections for the April issue, I had fleshed out the Spring 1941 *Science Fiction Quarterly* with material I had on hand for *Future;* Silberkleit found no fault with those selections, and later, when I turned over my proposed line-up for the August 1941 issue, he gave the mss. right back to me and said he was satisfied that I knew what I was doing, and he didn't need to oversee any story I had accepted. (However he did, later, make a deal with Ray Cummings to reprint a number of Ray's old novels; I knew nothing about this, and was presented with a *fait accompli.* Had I been consulted, I think I should have agreed to most of them. And in fact I did persuade Silberkleit to take a further one which was not on the original list, *Wandl the Invader*; since we had already run *Brigands of the Moon,* I felt we should also present the sequel——which I considered a better story.)

4. The first issue of *Future Fiction* did not come out *in* November 1939; it was *dated* November but came out in September.

5. Footnote 8 (page 192): "Indeed, Lowndes does does believe that Hornig was fired. . . ." Lowndes *did* believe that for a long time, but believes it no more. I cheerfully stand corrected and accept Charlie's account without reservation. There's certainly a difference between "You're fired!" or "I quit!", both of which imply animosity, and "I'm sorry, but under the circumstances I'll have to get someone else," which allows for an amiable separation without hard feelings. I'm glad to know that such was the way Hornig and Silberkleit separated.

Incidentally, while it's true that we Futurians referred to Silberkleit as "Louie the Lug" for a time, that time didn't last very long——at least as far as I was concerned. I grew to like and respect him without being blind to his shortcomings. On the whole my relationship with him was a good one, and I remember him with affection.

6. The Kraus story Charlie didn't remember is Joseph Kraus's "Phantom Monsters." It copped the

the cover of the April 1935 issue. There's an interesting bit of history behind both the story and the illustration.

In "The Readers Speak" section of the December 1935 *Wonder Stories* (p. 766) we find a letter from Henry Lewis, Jr., SFL member 682, praising Paul's cover for "Phantom Monsters" and lauding the story itself. To this the editor (Gernsback) replied:

"We have proven the theory that 'necessity is the mother of invention' with the April cover, which you like so much. The Editor being at a loss for a cover subject that particular month was offered a suggestion by Mr. Kraus—and it met with his approval, as you can see. After suggesting the scene for the cover, Mr. Kraus went ahead and wrote the story."

That was clearly the first time in science-fiction magazines that a cover story was written *ex post facto*, and remains unique in that with later examples, a selected author was presented with a cover about whose subject he or she knew nothing in advance, and invited to write a story around it.

These details also confirm Sam Moskowitz's belief (Fantasy Commentator *#37, p. 64) that it was Gernsback who dealt with Joseph Kraus during Charlie Hornig's régime at* Wonder Stories. . . *Our next letter is from Richard A. Lupoff:*

I was delighted to read in the last issue the material about my friends Frank Kelly and Charles Hornig. Since 1977, along with my friends Lawrence Davidson and Richard Wolinsky, I have been conducting interviews with authors for broadcast at radio station KPFA in Berkeley. Your and our interviews with these two men covered much the same ground, but of course we reach different audiences and the details recollected tend to illuminate different aspects of their careers. So, applause for you, and keep up the good work!

I'd like also to comment on the matter of James Blish's alleged anti-Semitism (cf. the Lowndes and Moskowitz letters in "Open House").

My wife Patricia and I knew Blish fairly well when we were living in Manhattan in the early 1960's. Blish was a frequent guest at our apartment, first at 215 East 73rd Street, later across the street at 210. He was our dinner guest a number of times, as well as attending parties at our home (one of which was in honor of his fortieth birthday). He was also our host at his Manhattan *pied à terre* on Mott Street, at a time when his official home was in Milford, Pennsylvania. From time to time as well Jim used to meet Larry Shaw and myself for lunches at various midtown watering holes.

Some people seem to think that Jim was a dry, cold and humorless man, but in fact he was a very warm person, and on occasion could be very funny. I think a high point in our relationship was the evening when he performed Strauss's opera *Salomé* in our living room. Jim portrayed all the soloists, the chorus, the orchestra and even the stage settings—to the great consternation of our cocker spaniel, who could not accept the presence of a revolving human lighthouse in the living room!

Jim was also endlessly generous with literary advice, and without his guidance and encouragement, I might never have sold a word of fiction. (Whether the world would be better or worse off for that, I shall not presume to say.)

On one occasion, I asked Jim the origin of his long-standing feud with Donald Wollheim. Jim said, "Well, Don is angry because I sued him."

"Why did you do that?" I asked.

"Because he called me a fascist."

"I can see why you'd be angry."

"Of course, I *was* a fascist at the time."

"Then why did you sue him?"

"Because that's a terrible thing to call anybody, even if it is true!"

Jim certainly did admire Ezra Pound's poetry, but he never said anything about Pound's politics (particularly his anti-Semitism)—at least in my presence. In fact, Pat and I are Jewish, and I believe that Blish was aware of that. My recollection is that Avram Davidson was present at Blish's fortieth birthday party, which I mentioned above; certainly odd company for an anti-Semite to keep. As for his alleged low regard for women, once again I've no recollection of his demeaning them by word or deed in the years of our friendship.

Of course one may espouse certain ideas in the abstract, and yet live differently. Robert Lowndes mentioned H. P. Lovecraft in this regard, and a careful reading of Lovecraft's *Selected Letters* yields a more than ample crop of the most scurrilous anti-Semitic comments. Yet in his personal life Lovecraft married a Jew (Sonia Greene), had a Jew as a close friend (Samuel Loveman) and a Jew as his literary agent (Julius Schwartz), as well as any number of other Jewish friends and associates in the world of literature, including Kenneth Sterling, Donald Wollheim and Robert Bloch.

Perhaps the case with Blish was similar, although I know of no instance of his expressing anti-Semitic sentiments, even in the abstract. The Cele Goldsmith incident Sam Moskowitz mentions shocked me. I'd like to see the alleged offending letter!

One final note. Moskowitz recalls Blish's expressing a low opinion of his bio-bibliographic essays in *Fantastic* and *Amazing*. I remember Blish making such comments once or twice in the early 1960's. "Any number of people could do those better than Sam," he once said. (The clear implication, it seemed to me, being that Blish thought that *he* could do them better.)

I responded by making reference to the famous story of Columbus and the egg, the punchline of which is, "Yes, anybody *could* have done it, but I *did* it!" Blish seemed somewhat unhappy with that notion, but did not directly rebut it.

From England B. Terry Jeeves writes:

The Dold illustration on the cover of the last *Fantasy Commentator* particularly struck my eye. I suppose it can be criticized as being dated, but doesn't it make you wonder what's happening? And isn't it evocative of all sorts of ideas about some high-tech future? By comparison I find *Analog* today bland and tasteless, too taken up with causes, issues, saving endangered species, banning all sorts of things and pleading for weird issues.

Take the current (for me, anyway) number, for July 1989. It has a rather feeble Freas cover which depicts a jovial-looking alien about to eat an orange and has little connection with the story. The interiors by Freas are even worse—full of bits of jagged triangles, etc. that make me think he said to himself, "I'm in a rush, so I'll just dash off something vaguely symbolic." I'll admit Warren is

(continued on the bottom of the next page)

RETURN TO THE GRAND CANAL, MARS

Steve Sneyd

a white log bumps
back of my knee washer-woman wrinkled

with prolonged immersion
from wading

my drowned lover tied to me
i had to otherwise i shd surely

lose her as near as possible
to a landmark left inside my life

revisiting predictably
the scenes of my triumph

after long donkeys'
of failure elsewhere

a bisected aboriginal chapel looms
the view through the empty middle

out onto red nowhere till we filled it
with my new lilyshape launch towers

used to be regarded as elegiacally
picturesque but of little use

now brings together best of us of them
a concrete gesture to dead culture

letting their work
continue to share our space

why did we come
not just weary with our world

sloughing it like skin along *n*
parameters found we here regrew

near enough the same again
we rebuilt our vision

here among tracks of non-men
suddenly my wrist computer

activates of its own accord
printout spills its tip down into

water as she swirls as i stop to read
momentum checked bumps me again

like pet cat after attention
the words are threat or perhaps

promise "Here Time is a trick
of sand turned mud"

her nose nuzzles my ankle
it is shallower here or the water

is escaping through the reclaypuddled
canal bottom even my greatest

triumph failing me
release of buried ocean i remade

canal flow like Venice here
it is sinking away before my very

eyes stinking pools only
remain she stinks too my loved

prisoner
out of the mud they arise

as dust devils as horns it is them
the Martians back again

to restore status quo to go
back to the beginning she is no longer

white wrinkled flesh i wished were
wood to sail upon she is

dust devil ascending too to choke
me all my life is

back to the beginning
my lilyshape launch towers

crack crumble fallen
the wound of their chapel heals

without trace before my eyes
now i too am dust ascending

till i see curve of the world
"Here Time is a trick

of mud turned sand"
here after all we and they

across millenia are
become one

martian she me
trinity's work is done

now thank god mars
can rest in death again

• • •

usually amusing, but his illo showing two beetles about to collide does nothing for the story, whilst Brian's for "Moonsong," showing merely a woman (?) holding a mike, could illustrate any one of a thousand tales. I wish there were a better connection between the stories and the interior art!

Several readers had follow-up questions on the interview with Frank Kelley in the last issue. These were put to Mr. Kelly, who responded in a letter to Eric Leif Davin as follows:

(1) I can't remember why I sent my first story to *Wonder*, because I did read both *Amazing* and *Wonder*. I think I was encouraged by the wider scope of the stories in *Wonder*, which also seemed more open to new writers than *Amazing*. That's my hazy recollection, anyway.

(2) I think it was David Lasser who signed my contract with Stellar publishing, but I don't have that contract now.

(3) My parents never objected to my reading science-fiction. And when I got a couple of substantial checks from *Astounding* they were favorably impressed by my ability to earn money from my wild flights of imagination.

(4) I glanced at the readers' columns, but they

didn't have any effect on my writing. I wrote what poured out of me; I never stopped to think of whether it would please readers or not. I pounded the typewriter as fast as I could go, and I was amazed myself at the words that appeared on the pages, at the ideas I had, at the people who emerged in my stories. I don't think I ever corresponded with any of the readers.

(5) I have no clear recollection of why I shifted from *Wonder* to *Amazing*. I don't think it was because Lasser had left. I wasn't much concerned about the names of editors. I just wrote stories and sent them in. I can't recall if someone at *Amazing* solicited a story from me, or getting any letters from *Wonder* after I stopped sending stories there.

(6) When I sent in my first story to *Wonder*, I didn't know what the payment would be. I didn't even think of getting paid—I just wanted to get a story published. I think I addressed this to "the Editor," but I may have addressed it to Gernsback.

(concluded on column two, page 304)

Voyagers through Eternity

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

PART X

Sam Moskowitz

Verne had scored a modest success with the publication of *A Winter Amid the Ice*, but at this point a chance event detoured his writing career. An old university friend, M. Lelarge, was to be married in Amiens on May 12, 1856 and he invited Jules. At the wedding Verne met the widow Honorine Morel and her two children Valentine and Suzanne, and fell hopelessly in live with her. He pressed his suit successfully, and prevailed upon his father to buy him a seat on the Paris stock exchange so that he could afford to marry. He entered the office of Fernand Eggly in December 1856, was married on January 10, 1857, and virtually quit writing as he settled down to the serious business of being a stock-broker.

It was not until February 8, 1860, at his birthday party, that his life took a different direction. There he met Felix Tournachon, better known as Felix Nadar, one of France's greatest photographers and caricaturists. Nadar had taken the world's first aerial photographs from a balloon, and he captivated Verne with possibility of an Atlantic crossing as suggested in Poe's "Balloon Hoax." The two engaged in serious calculations to gauge the practicality of such a project. Not long after this he Verne resumed writing plays. They were produced, but brought more acclaim than money.

When he next met Nadar, the latter was planning a balloon to be called The Giant, large enough for bunks, kitchen, dining room and dark room. He hoped to use the money made from displaying The Giant for experiments on other heavier-than-air craft, including a primitive helicopter. A series of visits while Nadar was constructing his balloon motivated Verne to begin writing a history of ballooning. The work was begun in early 1862, shortly before his thirty-fifth birthday. Nadar encouraged Verne in this writing, and promised that he would arrange an introduction to a publisher.

The publisher Nadar had in mind was Pierre Jules Hetzel. Hetzel had been politically active after the Revolution, holding offices of Chief of Foreign Affairs, Minister of the Admiralty and Secretary-General. Prior to 1840 he had been a publisher of annuals which were noted for their profuse illustrations in a time when these were expensive and rare. His books also stressed superb typography. With Victor Hugo and others he had gone into exile after opposing the election of Louis Napoleon, but pardons had been extended in 1859, and by 1862 he had returned to Paris to reëstablish himself as a publisher. Not surprisingly, since he himself was a noted author of juvenile literature, he decided to specialize in children's books.

Verne's history was ready by October 1862, and with a letter of introduction and an appointment arranged by Nadar, Verne set out for no. 18 Rue Jacob, where Hetzel had both his home and office. Hetzel read the proffered manuscript carefully, saying he would be interested in it providing some changes were made. The historic portions should be played down, he told Verne, and more emphasis put on dialogue and the elements of adventure, excitement and thrills. In two weeks Verne had completed these revisions and brought back the manuscript, now titled *Five Weeks in a Balloon.*

Hetzel liked it so much that he drew up two contracts on the spot and offered them to Verne. One was for 10,000 francs for *Five Weeks in a Balloon;* the other would commit Verne to write two novels (or the equivalent wordage) annually *for the next twenty years* at the rate of 20,000 francs a year. In terms of living costs in France at the time, this was a princely stipend; as a stockbroker, Verne had earned no more than 15,000 francs in the best of times. He did not even bother to read the contracts, but signed as fast as they were thrust in front of him. These contracts gave Verne independence, but they also shaped his entire life and writing career, putting him in bondage as a happy literary slave; they explain why he wrote what he wrote, the way that he wrote, the attitudes he adopted, and his ambiguous status in a limbo somewhere between that of an adult and a juvenile author.

It has frequently been said that stories about balloons, even in Verne's day, were not science-fiction. The answer to that is that Verne invented a completely new type of balloon, with features no balloon of its day possessed. First of all, it was really *two* balloons, one inside the other, so that if the outer wall was damaged, the vehicle could still sustain itself in air. Secondly, it was *navigable.* This solved the chief problem with all previous balloons: they could not routinely be directed where they were wanted to go. Verne's balloon was inflated with hydrogen. It carried twenty-five gallons of acidified water and a galvanic battery. This battery electrolyzed the water into oxygen and hydrogen, so that it was possible to replace any gas lost during flight. The balloon also had a heater to expand the gas, and thus cause the craft to rise. With the ability to rise or descend at will, the navigator could direct the balloon to various air currents at different levels and thereby find one moving in the direction he wished to travel. With a new type of vehicle mapping previously unexplored areas, then, one has two major elements of science-fiction: a new invention and unknown lands.

For quickening the pace of his story through dialog Verne's experience in writing for the theater now stood him in good stead. Part of that dialog is a breezy exchange about travelling to the moon and exploring the planets of the solar system. (Verne had expansive ideas even then.) An exploration of Africa is successful. Lake Victoria is established as the source of the Nile, and in the process Verne has his balloon ascend and descend often enough to involve the passengers in altercations with natives, all manner of wild creatures, and the natural forces of the weather.

The book was published by Hetzel on January 17, 1863 as *Cinq Semaines en balloon,* taking Paris and the French by storm. Everyone realized that some-

thing new and different was being offered. Despite the great gobs of scientific explanation, Verne's straightforward style and simple, flowing dialogue made the novel easy to understand and enjoy. Its appeal spanned the entire spectrum of society, and public demand warranted bringing out new editions.

Nadar, capitalizing on its popularity, started a fund-raising campaign to complete The Giant, collecting 200,000 francs and finishing his silken beauty. Its first flight was on August 4, 1863 at Champ-de-Mars Square in Paris. There was a fantastic turnout to witness the launch, and in four hours in the air the balloon travelled twenty-five miles. Other ascents were made. In the most dramatic of these the balloon started to fly out over the Atlantic Ocean, and Nadar held the passengers at bay with his revolver so they would not abort the flight; the air currents changed and fifteen hours later The Giant had travelled inland 800 miles. It finally landed roughly in Germany, fracturing Nadar's right leg and injuring his wife. There were other flights, but after this they were not popularly supported.

XIX
THE UNTOLD FACTS ABOUT JULES VERNE

Biographies of Verne often make statements like "Very soon his works were translated into all the languages of Europe." Some even specifically cite the languages. But the facts do not support such claims. The earliest translation of Verne's work into English occurred in 1869. It was not translated into German until 1874. Verne's first great wave of popularity was confined to France, and extended to other countries only through people there who were able to read French. His influence outside France, therefore, was at first quite small.

Biographers also seem not to have realized the greatest significance of Hetzel's arrangements with Verne. Hetzel wanted two novels a year (or their equivalent) because he was planning a magazine, and he was convinced that Verne was a writer who had the qualities that would assure its success. He launched his magazine as soon as Verne had completed his second novel, *The English at the North Pole*.

This is a grim, remorseless account of the Arctic, and the adventures that might befall a party of explorers there. It portrays wild storms, the danger of icebergs in polar seas, whale-hunting, fights with polar bears, mutiny at sea, the peril of cravasses, and the rigors of survival of men trapped on ice-floes. All this takes place over a period of five years, and as it ends the ship and all of its supplies have gone up in flames, its mutinous crew has disappeared over the horizon, and those remaining behind must find some way to survive. Except for the discovery of the north magnetic pole there is little in the work that can be called science-fiction.

It should be remembered that Hetzel had been an author and publisher of literature for juveniles. His suggestions for revision of Verne's novel were intended to make it appeal to young and middle teen-agers; its simultaneous appeal to adults was simply an unexpected dividend. Hetzel's new magazine was titled *Le Magasin d'Education et de Récréation*, and it also was aimed at young people. The stories it printed were by deliberate intent educational, teaching facts with the sugar-coated pills of fiction. It appeared semimonthly, and the first issue was dated March 20, 1864. It was 10½ by 7 inches in size, with thirty-two pages in each number, and was printed on a high grade, smooth-finished paper in two columns, utilizing an easily readable ten-point type. Each number featured ten to twenty woodcuts by some of the greatest illustrators in France.

Under the pen name of P. J. Stahl, and with the aid of Jean Macé, Hetzel himself edited the magazine. In addition to editing, he wrote a number of children's books which he serialized in the magazine and later published in hard covers. Both Hetzel and Macé wrote an incredible amount of material for the publication,

even translating works from foreign languages. In 1866 Verne joined the editorial staff, and the three men wrote most of the magazine's contents. The average issue contained six featured items, most of them serials Hetzel later printed as books.

The reason Hetzel had insisted on a contract requiring two books a year for twenty years was to ensure that there would be a Jules Verne story in almost every issue of his magazine. That objective was met. Among the Verne novels that appeared in *Le Magasin d'Education et de Récréation* in its early years were (their English titles are cited): *The English at the North Pole, The Desert of Ice, In Search of the Castaways, Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea, Measuring a Meridian, The Fur Country, The Mysterious Island, Michael Strogoff, Hector Servadac, or, Off on a Comet, The Begum's Fortune, The Steam House* and *Dick Sands.* In later years the magazine printed *The Southern Star Mystery, The Castle in the Carpathians, Propellor Island, For the Flag, The Sphinx of the Icefields, The Village in the Tree Tops, Master of the World, The Tales of Jean-Marie Cabidoulin* and *The Invasion of the Sea.* A few of these works have never been translated into English. Some were serialized as long as two years before they appeared as books; biographers who rely on the dates of book publication, then, frequently are not revealing the correct year of their first appearance in print.

To check on the accuracy of its material, *Le Magasin d'Education et de Récréation* took advice from a highly distinguished group of consulting editors which included Joseph Louis Francois Bertrand (for mathematics), Gratiolet (physiology), Jean Macé (nature), John Tyndall (physics), Jean Jacques Élisée Reclus (geography) and Michael Faraday (chemistry) among others. Referees who judged the literary quality of contributions included Alexandre Dumas, Leon Gozlan, Eugene Muller and Erckmann-Chatrain.

Perhaps even more important than the advisors were the artists. Though Gustave Doré never illustrated a Verne story he was a contributor. Others are famous because they *did* illustrate Verne's work. Hetzel's techniques was to have up to eight illustrations with each installment of a serial. When serialization was complete, these same illustrations would be used in the book——sometimes as many as 180 of them. Their cost had already been allocated to the magazine, so they added nothing to the cost of the book. This gave Hetzel an enormous advantage over competing publishers.

The true picture of Jules Verne's life now comes into focus. Up to the age of thirty-five he had done poorly as a lawyer, author, playwright and stock broker. After marriage he was guided by a perceptive editor and publisher into a type of fiction that caught the fancy of the public. This publisher sold juvenile books and a juvenile magazine. Thus Jules Verne by deliberate plan and intent wrote juvenile fiction. Since he was connected with that magazine for the rest of his professional life he rarely deviated from that style. When Hetzel died in Monte Carlo in 1886 he was listed, along with Hetzel's son, as the primary editor, a position he retained until his own death in 1905.

Verne was a remarkable story-teller, and because his style frequently seems to alternate between an adult presentation and that of a boy's adventure writer it has been suggested that his translators have not done him justice. While Verne translations could be improved (particularly by correcting their technical errors), we now know that his work reads simply and straightforwardly *because it was deliberately composed that way.* Readers have also been puzzled over not encountering any love interest in his novels. Before his association with Hertzel Verne had written bedroom farces, and could have been "racy" or "adult" if he had wanted to. But since his stories were aimed at young people, there was logically little love interest and negligible sex. Such knowledge shows the futility of the frequent comparisons that have been made between Verne and Wells. Sociological or philosophical concepts would not have interested Verne's readers, so they are only rarely found in his work.

(to be continued)

INDEXES

TITLES

CONTRIBUTORS

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(7) I read *Astounding* in 1934-35, and was immediately impressed by the first issues I saw. The literary quality of the stories was consistently high. I admired Tremaine; he raised the editorial standards. I think I read in a writer's magazine that *Astounding* paid 2¢ a word on acceptance. *(That referred to 1930-33 Clayton rates. —editor.)*

(8) Back in those years, I think my favorite story was *The Skylark of Space* by E. E. Smith. I liked many stories by Jack Williamson and David H. Keller, but I can't recall their titles now. I read many of Wells's tales——*The War of the Worlds*, of course; *Men Like Gods*, *The Sleeper Wakes*, *The Time Machine* and *The Island of Dr. Moreau*.

(9) I've never stopped reading science-fiction. I've enjoyed Asimov, Bradbury, Clarke and others. In recent years I've read Pohl's *Marabedla*, Heinlein's *The Cat Who Walked Through Walls* and *Land's End* by Pohl and Williamson.

I had my 75th birthday recently, and I notice that some things are slipping out of my memory. I still seem more interested in the future than in the past.

BACK NUMBERS

#29 Articles on H. P. Lovecraft, Olaf Stapledon and Stapledon's own forecast of man's biological future.

#30 Articles by Sam Moskowitz on C. L. Moore and Olaf Stapledon; by Stapledon on telepathy; the first installments of a biography of Edward Lucas White, and of a description of White's unpublished s-f novel of life in 50,000 A.D.

#31 Continuation of the White serials and the beginning of Sam Moskowitz's history of s-f, "Voyagers Through Eternity."

#32 Articles on the rediscovery of the lost s-f of San Francisco writer Robert Duncan Milne, plus continuing serials.

#33 Sam Moskowitz describes the first college course in s-f, and Lloyd Eshbach tells the history of Shasta, an early s-f publisher.

#34 Mike Ashley reveals his research into Algernon Blackwood's early history, and Blackwood himself describes how he got story ideas. Conclusion of the serial articles on Edward Lucas White, and the continuation of Moskowitz's history of s-f, "Voyagers Through Eternity."

#35 Articles by Moskowitz on Stapledon, by Ashley on Blackwood, and by S. T. Joshi on the history of Lovecraft's "Supernatural Horror in Literature."

#36 Begins Moskowitz's account of Bernarr Macfadden's obsession with s-f, articles by J. J. Pierce on survivalist s-f, and Gary Crawford on the fantasy writer Robert Aickman.

#37 Eric Davin interviews the early editors of *Wonder Stories*, David Lasser and Charles D. Hornig.

#38 Everett Bleiler reveals the inside story of how *The Checklist of Fantastic Literature* came about; Eric Davin interviews s-f author Raymond Z. Gallun.

#39 Eric Davin interviews Charles Hornig about his wartime editing years and Frank K. Kelly, s-f writer of the 1930's; Mike Ashley describes the middle years of Algernon Blackwood; Sam Moskowitz continues his account of s-f and Bernarr Macfadden, and his history of s-f, "Voyagers Through Eternity."

#40 Sam Moskowitz describes the s-f in the writings of T. S. Stribling; Mike Ashley and Deborah Elkin tell about Hugo Gernsback's early publishing experiences and his relationship with H. G. Wells.

In addition to these individual features, every issue prints reviews of new and old important books, a column of letters and discussions from readers, and outstanding s-f and fantasy verse. If your local dealer cannot supply you, these may be obtained from the publisher at the address given below. Price, postpaid: $4 per issue, any four for $15, any ten for $30. Send remittances to:

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