FANTASY COMMENTATOR

no. 43

The cover is an illustration by Frank R. Paul for Nat Schachner's "Emissaries of Space," which appeared in the Fall 1932 issue of *Wonder Stories Quarterly* magazine.

FOUNDED 1943 ISSN no. 1051-5011

FANTASY COMMENTATOR

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Vol. VII, No. 3 ——oOo—— Spring 1992

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This is the forty-third number of *Fantasy Commentator*, a journal devoted to articles, reviews and verse in the area of science-fiction and fantasy, published semi-annually. Postpaid subscription rates in the United States: $5 per copy, six issues for $25; foreign postage 50¢ per copy extra. All opinions expressed herein are the individual contributors' own, and do not necessarily reflect those of the editor or the staff as a whole. Material is accepted subject to editorial revision if necessary. Unless correspondents request otherwise, communications of general interest may be excerpted for the letters column, "Open House."

The Science-Fiction of Nat Schachner

Sam Moskowitz

I

The next issue of *Astounding Stories* will contain a story that will awaken *more controversy* than any story ever published in a science-fiction magazine. *ANCESTRAL VOICES* by Nat Schachner slices daringly through the most precious myths, legends, and folklore of mankind, and attacks boldly a present-day wave of race-hysteria. This is not just "another story." You will LIKE it; or HATE it; and will read it again.

The above announcement appeared in the November 1933 issue of *Astounding Stories*. *Astounding*, formerly a Clayton magazine, had recently resumed publication, after a hiatus of six months, under the aegis of Street & Smith. These were terrible economic times, for the nation was in the depths of the deepest depression of its history. A quarter of the working population was unemployed. Banks everywhere had been closing, often with the complete loss of their depositors' savings. In Europe, Hitler and Mussolini had institutionalized dictatorships in the name of Fascism, and the country once known as Russia had done the same under the guise of Communism. Under Hitler there emerged the concept of racial superiority which threatened death to millions and servitude to tens of millions more.

Economic pressure was constricting the microcosm of the science-fiction periodicals. *Amazing Stories* and *Wonder Stories* had skipped issues and changed format. *Wonder Stories Quarterly*, *Astounding Stories* and *Strange Tales*, the companion to *Astounding* which featured supernatural fiction, had all ceased publication. Street & Smith, which owned its own printing plant, had to keep its presses rolling, so after acquiring the Clayton units, it revived *Astounding* and continued such other Clayton titles as *Clues*, *Cowboy Stories* and *Romance Range*. To run them the company hired former Clayton editors F. Orlin Tremaine and Desmond Hall.

Tremaine, who was in charge, brought with him a backlog of material from *Astounding* and *Strange Tales*——stories which had been paid for but never printed. With the October 1933 *Astounding*, the first under Street & Smith ownership, he began to use them up, but he realized there was little hope of increasing readership with the same type of fiction which had previously failed. He had to inject new vigor and excitement into the revived magazine.

Now, Nathan Schachner had contributed previously to *Astounding*. Two of his stories were in the Clayton backlog, and were used in the first revived issue. Whether Tremaine was impressed with them and actually solicited "Ancestral Voices" from Schachner, or whether the latter simply happened to submit the story has yet to be established; but to Tremaine it typified the new type of genre fiction he wanted. He termed this a "thought variant"——something thematically and sensationally different from what had appeared in science-fiction previously.

The story is set against the background of the Great Depression, which is still persisting in the year 1935. Emmett Pennypacker and Sam Carey build a time machine, and travel back to the time when Atilla the Hun is sacking the Roman city of Aqueleia. In self-defense, Pennypacker kills a Hun who attacks him, and the Hun's body is carried into the future. As a result of his death, he sires no offspring. When the time machine arrives in the present, 50,000 people all over the world who would have been his descendants disappear. Schachner missed the concept of alternate, or parallel time streams, but he did make the important so-

ciological point that racism lacked genealogical basis, for among the 50,000 who disappear are people from all ethnic groups, including the head of the German government and Pennypacker himself.

Tremaine continued featuring stories whose concepts he believed were new, or at least sensationally unusual. Indeed, these "thought-variants" became one of his basic editorial requirements, and for the next four years Schachner probably contributed more offbeat ideas to the magazine than any other author. (It is historically important to note that Tremaine's policy determined the major direction taken by science-fiction from 1934 to 1938, when his successor at *Astounding Stories*, John W. Campbell, Jr., began instituting his own editorial experiments.) In fact, during the period from 1934 to 1940 Nathan Schachner may have been the single most prolific writer in the field.

He did not suddenly materialize out of the blue. Prior to this intensely productive period he had shown keen interest in the genre. He was a charter member and then secretary of the American Interplanetary Society (1930), and its president in 1932 and 1933. He published and promoted the first non-fiction book in the English language on space travel in 1931, David Lasser's *The Conquest of Space*. And he had written science-fiction, both in collaboration and on his own, since 1930, including the first story about tourists through time ("The Time Express," 1932).

Nor did he cease writing after the 1930's. He is remembered as author of the first stories on space law in 1940, as a historical novelist of bestseller status in the 1940's, and as a critically acclaimed historian for his later biographies of Aaron Burr, Alexander Hamilton and Thomas Jefferson.

Although these biographies are probably the most notable accomplishments of Schachner's writing career, the sheer quantity of his science-fiction, as well as its forward-looking themes, inevitably make him an influential figure in that field as well. Surprisingly, however, no detailed, descriptive evaluation of his contribution there has ever been made. Such an evaluation has long been needed to deepen our understanding of the pre-Campbell era, and this essay aims to fill that gap. In it I shall describe his science-fiction comprehensively, sketch in relevant details of the man's personal life, and, for the purpose of perspective, touch lightly on his work outside the genre.

II

Nathaniel Schachner was born in New York City on January 16, 1895, son of Bernard Schachner, an Austrian immigrant who worked as a salesman in Bloomingdale's department store, and Dora (Seldon) Schachner, a native of Binghamton, New York. They lived in modest circumstances. The family was Jewish, but Nathaniel was not overly devout, and attended the temple primarily on religious holidays, although in later years he did yeoman work for such major institutions as the American Jewish Committee and The Council of Jewish Women.

He was educated in New York City schools. Upon graduation from high school he changed "Nathaniel" on his diploma to "Nathan" because he thought that his given name was "too fancy." To his friends he had always been simply "Nat." In the Fall of 1911 he entered the City College of New York. So did another young man now well known to science-fiction historians, Arthur Leo Zagat. The two became members of the same campus fraternity. There they formed a friendship which endured for the rest of their lives, as did that between their wives, Helen and Ruth.

It was through Zagat that Schachner met the woman he later married. At the time, Zagat's father owned a drugstore in the Bronx, and his son frequently assisted him there. Arthur had a rotund figure, mainly because of his insatiable appetite. He became friendly with customers, and when delivering prescriptions, he never declined any culinary bounty in the homes he visited, where his amiability and friendliness invariably made him welcome. Among these was that of the

the Lichtenstein family on Kelly Street composed of eight children and their parents. One of the elder children, an attractive young lady named Helen, had fallen and injured her finger. She visited the Zagat drugstore to get something for it. Arthur waited on her and used the opportunity to invite himself to her home that evening. His only problem was a conflicting appointment with his good friend Schachner. To resolve the situation, Arthur told Nat enthusiastically, "I've got a girl you *must* meet!" Nat replied that he wasn't interested in meeting any girl, but allowed himself to be persuaded.

When they arrived Helen showed them a new game she wanted to try. Nat got very involved in this game. Later the two were offered refreshments. But the cake served turned out to be stale. To make it more palatable they dunked it in their tea; this became the focus of laughter and an amusing evening.

Nathan Schachner

Nat felt he had enjoyed himself, and telephoned Helen for a date. Soon he was calling her every Friday afternoon, and she was keeping her Saturdays clear. He had little money at that time, but considerable ingenuity. He kept up with every new museum showing, free concert or lecture, so the two always had something to do. Nat was intelligent, widely read and had an excellent memory, so that he was a walking encyclopedia of information on a wide variety of subjects.

In June 1915 he was graduated from college with a major in chemistry. He had also developed an interest in writing, and was the author of the class play for graduation. He claimed to have sold a story to *Argosy* magazine in 1916, but this has never been identified. It probably appeared under a pen name, and/or may have appeared in another Munsey publication.

From 1915 to 1917 Schachner worked as a chemist for the New York City Department of Health, and conducted research for various chemical firms. When the United States entered World War I he was assigned to the Gas and Flame Division of the Chemical Warfare Service.

While he worked for the city, he enrolled at New York University, studying law in the evening. He read all his assignments conscientiously, and remembered most of what he had read.

One night a week, however, he had to work late at his job and could not attend his scheduled class. But the school enforced attendance by assigning students specific seats, and noting any that were empty. Nat solved this problem by having Helen sit in his seat for him. This worked well for a long time, but eventually an observant proctor realized that a man, not a woman, should be occupying Nat's chair. He asked her who she was and, taken by surprise, she replied that she had just wandered in, and had found the lecture so interesting that she had remained. But she never dared to take his place in that class again.

Nat Schachner ranked first in his law class for three consecutive years. This won him a scholarship which helped pay the tuition for the remainder of his study. But when the time came for taking the bar exam, other duties had prevented preparatory study, and he had to go in "cold." Fortunately his fine memory came to his aid, and to his relief he passed.

The year was 1919, and on the following June 28th he married Helen Lichtenstein and hung out his shingle. Nat found that the real world was even more difficult than his bar examination. Too many lawyers were setting up practices, and additionally the country was exper-

iencing an economic dip following the end of the war. Law was no luxury for the Schachners, and may have delayed the birth of their only child, a daughter named Barbara, until 1924.

During this period Nat maintained his keen interest in all branches of science, including botany, entomology and horticulture. In the arts, the couple attended concerts, and followed the ballet and graphics. They travelled as much as their funds permitted, touring Canada, Mexico and every state in the union. Eventually they visited all of the national parks, and all the scenic wonders of the country. Nat's favorite sport was mountain-climbing. His wife characterized him as a person who was outwardly austere, but who possessed a warm heart.

Helen Schachner

During all this time, Nat maintained his friendship with Arthur Leo Zagat. Zagat finished college in 1916, and had served overseas in the army during the war. While in France he attended Bordeaux University. After returning to New York he worked part-time in his father's drugstore while studying law at nearby Fordham University. He was graduated in 1929, a few months before the great stock market crash. Aware of the struggle Nat had experienced in building his law practice in a field that had become still more crowded, he looked about for a different source of income.

He found it in an unexpected place. While scanning a newsstand for something to read, he discovered and purchased a copy of *Amazing Stories*. The stories in it thrilled him. He related his experience to Nat, urging him to read the magazine also. Nat did, and found that it appealed to him as well. Knowing his friend's deep interest in science, Arthur urged him to try writing some similar stories, offering to collaborate; and then to spur him into action, he bet him that he couldn't write a story good enough to sell. Nat accepted the challenge, and took up his friend's offer to assist.

They titled their first collaboration "The Menace from Andromeda." It was a form of wish-fulfillment for Nat, who more than anything else had always wanted to become an astronomer.

The story opens in an observatory, where the spectrum of the distant star Acoreth is being studied. Analysis reveals that the star, which is luminous but not hot, is composed of protoplasm which feeds off its rocky core. Other stars similarly composed are found, and it is discovered that when the protoplasm nears the end of its food supply it throws off reproductive spores which are borne by the pressure of light to other worlds.

Some such spores, which have been travelling for eons, settle in the Atlantic Ocean. Ships begin disappearing, and eventually a huge mass of luminescent protoplasm sweeps onto the Florida coast, devouring all life and even undermining buildings. Artillery shells, flamethrowers, poison gas and disease germs are all ineffective against it. But the protoplasm proves sensitive to ultraviolet radiation; this halts its progress, and then an injected cancer culture eventually finishes it off.

This is a very early appearance of the idea that astral bodies may actually be living entities, a concept used successfully by Olaf Stapledon (*The Flames*, 1947) and Murray Leinster ("The Living Planet," 1949) among others.

The tale was sent to *Amazing Stories* from Nat Schachner's office address. Soon thereafter he received a telephone call from T. O'Conor Sloane, the editor, asking him to visit his office. Schachner, who it had been agreed would handle all business arrangements because of his legal experience, read-

ily complied. It turned out that Sloane had felt that the manuscript must have been written by someone with extensive background in the field, and wanted to know what well-known author was concealed behind these pen names. Schachner assured Sloane that these were his and Zagat's real names, that this was the first story they had written for a science-fiction magazine, and that if it was good enough to be accepted they were very pleased.

The story had been mailed to *Amazing* in early 1930, but did not appear until the April 1931 issue of the magazine. It was featured on the cover, which showed a wave of protoplasm emerging from the sea and engulfing a battleship. The interior illustration portrayed a girl jumping from a skyscraper onto the wing of a passing airplane, arguably the most unbelievable incident in the story.

"The Andromeda Menace" was not, however, the first work of these collaborators to appear in print. That distinction went to one written later titled "The Tower of Evil," which appeared in the Summer 1930 issue of *Wonder Stories Quarterly*, a magazine published by Hugo Gernsback and edited by David Lasser. If there is a formula for a tale of mystery and the occult with Oriental trappings, "The Tower of Evil" surely follows it perfectly. A Tibetan exploring party led by John Dunton is confronted by the figure of a giant lama suspended in mid-air. An invisible barrier impervious even to bullets prevents the explorers from reaching him. Dunton is seized by some irresistable force and transported to what seems like a black abyss. He loses consciousness.

When he recovers he finds himself clad in silken garments and resting on soft cushions. Before him appears an old man who identifies himself as the Grand Lama, the head of a satanic cult. Dunton is given the choice of joining this or facing death. Among its members are ghouls and demons, and also a beautiful white girl who seems to take a fancy to Dunton. An array of dull-eyed, mind-controlled individuals from all over the world serve the cult as agents and servants. It develops that the Grand Lama is an outstanding scientist who has discovered a means of negating gravity, and can move people and objects from place to place. He is also a master of illusion, and has perfected a "force screen" which nothing can penetrate.

Because he can read minds, he realizes that Dunton will not join the cult, and throws him into a cell with needle-coated walls which slowly begin to close in about him. Dunton is saved by the white girl, the Grand Lama is killed, and intelligence is regained by the robot-like servants, who are returned to their various countries.

Why Lasser ever purchased this story is beyond understanding. It reads like a rejection from *Weird Tales* (indeed Schachner and Zagat later sold fiction to that magazine) that had pseudo-scientific explanations for supernatural events added to the end of the story. But it is interesting as a precursor of the dozens of formula yarns that these two would later write for such "shudder pulps" as *Horror Stories* and *Terror Tales*.

This brings us to the question as to just how this collaboration was conducted. Who contributed what? According to Helen Schachner, one of them would write half the story and pass it on to the other, who would finish it. Since their styles were very much alike, it is almost impossible, in retrospect, to tell who wrote which half. (Schachner did have favorite words which show up in fiction he wrote alone——"inchoate" and "ejaculated," for example——that might aid in identifying his contributions.) Of course, when whoever was at the typewriter encountered a writing block, the other would probably take over.

It may be significant that in their byline, Schachner's name always preceded Zagat's. Since Schachner can be thought of as an "idea man," this may indicate that he supplied the concepts and plots and started the stories. His wife says, however, that it was Zagat's own suggestion, because Schachner also acted as the manager of the team and had additional duties; he conducted all the busi-

ness of submissions and payments, and may also have handled any necessary revisions. An even simpler explanation is that the two may have decided to put their names in alphabetical order.

In fantastic contrast to "The Tower of Evil" was the team's next story, "In 20,000 A. D." This appeared in *Wonder Stories* for August 1930. It must have impressed both Gernsback and Lasser, for the previous (July) issue of *Wonder* forecast its arrival by announcing that "words cannot convey truly the thrill that the editors received when they read this marvelous time-travelling story."

The protagonist, a farmer named Tom Jenkins, enters a coppice of woods avoided by local people and steps into a time-warp which carries him forward to the year 20,000. He is spotted by a twelve-foot, four-armed black creature (who turns out to be a robot), that calls down a wingless ship floating above. In it is a short, bald, toothless white man who has four eyes, hooves instead of feet, and tentacular fingers. Most surprising of all this man, who is named Karet, both understands and speaks English. He brings Tom before a gigantic floating brain which communicates telepathically, and seems to know that he would be arriving. Tom learns that in this civilization there are two groups, the white masters and the black robots (which do all the work). Most inhabitants are neuter, but in a place called the City of the Mothers live fertile women who supply ova for the artificial production of children. Science is highly advanced, and even capable of building rockets capable of interplanetary travel.

Years before there existed sophisticated machines which performed all the labor, but these were given too much intelligence, and revolted. After the revolt was put down their place was taken by blacks who were bred——for they are living beings despite being termed robots——to take their place. Karet is leading a revolt of the blacks against the brain, which controls everything. As a first step he seizes the City of the Mothers, and threatens to destroy it and all means of racial propagation. The brain apparently agrees to a compromise, but instead emerges suspended in a ball of force and kills thousands of blacks assembled in revolt by a heat ray.

Tom Jenkins stumbles back into the wood (which for some reason the men of the future also avoid) and is warped back to the present. For several years he is silent about his experiences, but eventually tells of them to some newspaper reporters. Their doubts are stilled when he shows them a book which is the history of the future.

"In 20,000 A. D." is very carefully constructed, laden with imaginative ideas, and written with forceful clarity. It unquestionably indicated that its authors were writers of considerable potential. Beyond that, the advanced ideas in the story showed that Schachner and Zagat must be knowledgable both in science and what was appearing on the newsstands in science-fiction.

The popularity of this story inevitably prompted a sequel. This appeared in the March 1931 issue of *Wonder Stories* as "Back to 20,000 A. D." The first black robot whom Tom had met, whom he calls Charlie, had escaped the brain's massacre, and ventures through the time-warp into the past. He locates Tom, and also Ned and Sid, the reporters who had interviewed Tom. All four return to the year 20,000. They arrive just in time to see the landing of a space ship, which carries a human being like those in 1931. It is Arkon the 35th, a descendant of a group who had travelled to the planet Neptune centuries ago. There is an intelligent race of beings living on Neptune; at first they were tolerant of the visitors, but as the numbers of Earthlings increased they delivered an ultimatum to leave within two years. Arkon is the first to return.

Ned goes scouting at night, shoots a guard, and enters the City of the Mothers. He finds they are beautiful, tall, unmutated women, who yearn to bear children of their own. (This sequence, and others that appear later in Schachner's stories, points to the influence of David H. Keller. Keller was writing prolifically in the genre at the time, and there were more babies per thousand words of

his fiction than any other science-fiction writer of that period.) In the City of the Mothers, Ned views an exquisite moving panorama of the evolution of life on Earth. He makes a friend of Eona, one of the mothers there, and she tries to aid him escape when the brain discovers his presence. The brain wants him to betray Charlie and Arkon, and in return offers to allow Ned and Sid to return unharmed to the Twentieth Century. In attempting to escape, Ned is struck by a ray from a paralysis gun, but he is saved by Arkon. The two get away, taking Eona with them. A second ship from Neptune lands, providing reinforcements, but the brain emerges from his lair and begins to generate deadly heat-waves. These are insufficient, and eventually, its power exhausted, the brain explodes. The planet will now be resettled by unmutated human beings.

"Back to 20,000 A.D." falls well below the quality of its predecessor. Though readable and mildly entertaining, it strikes one as old fashioned, even for its period. Its most notable point is the imaginatively disguised message that blacks have been unfairly treated by society.

III

Shortly after his first sale to *Wonder Stories*, Nat Schachner was contacted by David Lasser, and invited to participate in the formation of the American Interplanetary Society. Today, formation of such a society seems laudable and visionary; but then, even to some science-fiction fans, it appeared too much like child's play to be taken seriously. But on March 21, 1930, in Lasser's apartment at 450 West 22nd Street, New York City, the society was founded. Lasser was elected president, C. P. Mason (the assistant editor at *Wonder Stories*) the secretary. Other charter members included Nathan Schachner; Samuel Lichtenstein, the oldest brother of Helen Schachner; and the science-fiction writers William Lemkin, Laurence Manning, Gawain Edwards Pendray and Fletcher Pratt. The purpose of the society was stated to be "the promotion of interest in and experimentation toward interplanetary expeditions and travel . . . the stimulation by expenditure of funds and otherwise of American scientists toward a solution of the problems which at present bar the way toward travel among the planets, and the raising of funds for research and experimentation."

Formation of the American Interplanetary Society underscored the fact that people interested in science-fiction were more than simply dreamers, and over the next few years they continued to demonstrate this. They not only built and tested a number of liquid-fueled rockets, but sent Pendray to Germany, where he reviewed the progress and observed experiments made by Der Verein für Raumschiffahrt (the German Society for Space Travel), escorted by Willy Ley.

Records show that the society had Nat Schachner as its feature speaker at its September 5, 1930 meeting. His talk was titled "Can Human Life Exist on Other Planets?," and in it he enumerated the basic requirements for survival, including atmosphere, temperature and gravity. In light of the scientific knowledge of the time he concluded that Venus had the most probable conditions for human survival, followed by Mars; and that the other planets would be impossible to visit without especially constructed hermetically sealed equipment.

Schachner spoke again at the January 2, 1931 meeting on "Equipment for an Interplanetary Expedition and Methods of Steering." First, he calculated the ratio of the weight of a rocket plus fuel to that of its payload. Then, presupposing a payload of four tons, he itemized what essential equipment must be carried to support a crew of three astronauts. He also calculated how long a man could survive in space in a diving suit (*not* a specially constructed space suit) and concluded he could last only about an hour. But he summed up his presentation optimistically: "We are led to the conclusion, however, that there is no inherent impossibility in man's colonizing the moon." Schachner also contributed to a discussion on rocket construction at the February 20, 1931 meeting.

Perhaps the most remarkable meeting held by the society was one open to the public at the American Museum of Natural History in New York City on January 27, 1931. This was to feature a showing of the science-fiction film *Woman in the Moon* (1929) and an address by the French rocketry expert Robert Esnault-Pelterie, who was visiting the United States at the time. The meeting was widely publicized, and brought out some 2000 people. Since the main auditorium at the museum could accomodate only 1500, the entire program had to be repeated for the waiting latecomers. As a publicity and membership recruiting event, it was a triumph.*

The society held its first anniversary meeting on April 3, 1931, and at this Nat Schachner was elected secretary. This further responsibility took an historic turn. David Lasser had been writing articles on space travel for such periodicals as *Nature*, *The Scientific American*, *Everyday Science and Mechanics*, and *The New York Herald-Tribune*. From these, using suggestions proffered by various members, he fleshed out a book-length manuscript, and got Dr. H. H. Sheldon, Chairman of the Physics Department of New York University, to write an introduction for it. There had never been a book on space travel printed in English before, and Lasser was hopeful that a commercial firm would be interested in publishing one. Not a single one was.

At this point Schachner made what, considering his own rather limited financial circumstances, was an unusual and generous offer. He would publish the book himself, he said, provided that Lasser would guarantee publicity in *Wonder Stories* and *Everyday Science and Mechanics*, and also help get exposure elsewhere. According to Lasser, he and certain other members also contributed to the cost of the book, but it seems clear that Schachner actually bore the major burden.

For this publication Schachner organized the Penguin Press, whose headquarters were at 113 West 42nd Street, New York City, the address of his law office. It published *The Conquest of Space* on September 28, 1931. The first mention of the book was an advance notice in the August 1931 issue of *The Bulletin of the American Interplanetary Society*. As promised, it was favorably reviewed in the November 1931 numbers of both *Wonder Stories* and *Everyday Science and Mechanics*. It was likewise praised in the general media. There were short accounts of the work in *The Saturday Review of Literature* (November 21, 1931) and *Books* (November 29, 1931), and longer ones in *The Boston Transcript* (November 21, 1931) and *The New York Times* (January 10, 1932). The last of these, which ran to almost 700 words, was written by the newspaper's science editor, Waldemar Kaempffert. *The New York Herald-Tribune* must have given the book at least passing mention, for in the February 1932 *Wonder Stories* Lasser quoted Lewis Gannett of that newspaper as saying, "It sounds crazy!" Finally, there was a belated, but very laudatory, review by C. A. Brandt in *Amazing Stories* (November 1934).

The book was priced at $3. Lasser has said that it sold slowly, and had but a single printing. This could scarcely have been for more than 500 copies. However, a British edition was brought out in 1932 by the London firm of Hurst & Blackett, which specialized in popular novels of romance, mystery and adventure. That edition may have sold better, for it is more commonly seen than the American one. In an autobiographical sketch printed on the jacket of his book *Alexander Hamilton* (1946) Schachner wrote, "In the mid-thirties [I] ventured into book publishing. Broke even and quit in time." Whatever money received from the British edition probably rescued him from a loss. Just as Lasser deserves recognition for having written the very first book on rockets and interplanetary travel in the English language, so should Schachner be credited for his faith and courage in undertaking to publish it.

Schachner was scheduled to deliver the address "Can Man Live on Other Planets?" at the November 27, 1931 meeting of the society. He had prepared his

*See *Fantasy Commentator VI*, 224-5 (1989) for the details of this gathering.

talk, but became ill and was unable to present it; however, the text (some 4000 words) was published in the January 1932 *Bulletin of the American Interplanetary Society*. The most significant portion——for which he marshalled an impressive array of scientific evidence——dealt with Schachner's opinion that a man with no protection could survive for a brief time in the near-vacuum of outer space. When used as an integral part of Stanley Weinbaum's novelette "The Red Peri" (*Astounding Stories*, November 1935), this same theory became the most memorable and controversial part of the story. Recent expert opinion supports its validity.

On April 1, 1932 the directors of the society elected Schachner a fellow director for the year 1932. A day later they appointed him vice-president and his brother-in-law Samuel Lichtenstein treasurer. By then the society had approximately 110 members, and Schachner was conducting its business out of his law office at 274 Madison Avenue, near 42nd Street. Gawain Pendray resigned from the presidency in July 1932 so that he could devote more time to rocket experimentation. Schachner succeeded him in the post, a position he held until the April 1933 elections. He continued to remain active in the society for many years, advancing its promotion of space travel and guiding it safely through such legal problems as from time to time arose.

His very close association with Lasser within the group and as publisher of *The Conquest of Space* paid off professionally in the pages of *Wonder Stories*. "The Emperor of the Stars," co-authored with Zagat, appeared in its April 1931 issue, and was a precursor of the "thought-variants" which later became synonymous with Schachner's name. Outer space near the planet Pluto turns blue, and all the stars are blotted out. Huge discs appear, and these prove to be worlds that repel rather than attract matter. The space ship of Joe Burns and Al Fries passes through a lighted orifice in one of them, and they find themselves inside a hollow planet with a central sun. This sun repels objects so strongly that it holds them to the planet's inner surface just as would gravity. The inhabitants are dome-shaped creatures which communicate by projecting their thoughts as pictures on a visual screen. They are dominated by a humanoid being in a large, transparent crystal globe. He had suddenly appeared some time in the past and conquered all the populated worlds by means of superior weapons; now he constantly demands slaves in order to exploit all neighboring worlds which are still unpopulated. Burns and Fries search out the globe, and find that the creature is actually a scientist from Earth. A battle ensues in which they destroy him and his globe, and are then somehow returned to their own universe. This story is a conglomeration of familiar elements and a standard plot, and reads almost like a satire on science-fiction. Whether that was the intent is unimportant, for it is simply not very good.

Neither is "Venus Mines, Incorporated," which followed in the August 1931 *Wonder Stories*. Two major trading companies, one from Earth and the other from Mars, have stations on Venus, which is described as a tropical world where rain pours down ceaselessly. The plot involves competition between the two to exploit a source of the rare metal called Jovium, and culminates in an interplanetary battle for this. The sole interesting sequence is the use of a propulsion gun for movement of men in space suits when outside their ship.

IV

Schachner and Zagat did not regard themselves as bound to contribute only to one science-fiction magazine. *Astounding Stories*, owned by Clayton Magazines, had begun publication with the issue of January 1930 under the editorship of Harry Bates. During the 1920's, many of the better pulps paid as much as three or four cents a word to their leading writers. To compete with them, Clayton had instituted a basic rate of two cents a word, paid promptly on acceptance. By contrast, *Amazing Stories* and *Wonder Stories* paid only half a cent a word, and that on publication. Furthermore, *Amazing* might hold a story for several years before

printing it, and *Wonder* often had to be prodded legally to pay at all. It was a financial coup, therefore, when the Schachner-Zagat team cracked the Clayton market with "Death Cloud," which appeared in the May 1931 *Astounding*.

But its acceptance reflected acutely on Bates's editorial judgement, for "Death Cloud" was an example of pure formula writing, and from the standpoint of science and logic a terrible story. The time is the future. Russia, which has succeeded in subjugating the rest of Europe, is at war with America. A strange cloud appears over the Atlantic Ocean, and an airforce dirigible carrying 5000 men disappears into it. Eric Bolton, a master of disguise, is sent to investigate it. He captures a one-man Russian submarine and descends into the waters beneath the cloud. He discovers that a gigantic tunnel is being dug between America and Europe by disintegrator rays to facilitate an invasion. Bolton is discovered by the Russians, gets away, is recaptured, and finally escapes. He frustrates the invasion plans by destroying a Russian power plant, causing the tunnel to collapse.

In this story there appears for the first time the architectural feature of a roofed-over Hudson River, a notion he reused in several later tales. The moving roads and sidewalks introduced in "In 20,000 A. D." are here, and these, too, he utilized again. The imaginary weapons Schachner postulated were named consistently throughout most of his fiction also, even in unrelated stories.

In vivid contrast to "Death Cloud" was "The Revolt of the Machines" (*Astounding Stories*, July 1931), which was competently done and reads well even today. In the distant future, a new ice age concentrated all remaining human beings into a strip along Earth's equator. Society is automated, and run by Aristas (aristocrats), who need only 400 Prolots (proletarians) to operate the machines. Keston, a Prolot, invents a thinking machine which can control the entire civilization. Prolots will no longer be needed, so the Aristas order them into a giant furnace to eliminate them. But when the great thinking machine is turned on and assumes control of all the equipment, it turns against the Aristas; some are killed and other scatter to scavenge for food near the approaching glaciers. Some of the Prolots who did not follow orders and escaped prove more adept at maintaining a precarious survival than their supposedly brainier superiors. In a series of exciting episodes the thinking machine is destroyed, and the remaining humans start to rebuild civilization. "In 20,000 A. D." refers to a similar revolt in the history of mankind, and it is conceivable that the episode prompted this story.

Astounding Stories was not the only conquest the Schachner - Zagat team made that year, for their work was also accepted by *Weird Tales*. This magazine was edited by Farnsworth Wright, who had always been receptive to work of new writers. It paid one-half to one cent a word on publication (or sometimes considerably after) for tales of the supernatural and "weird-science." The collaborators' first story there, "the Dead-Alive," appeared in the April-May 1931 issue.

In that tale, new graves are clawed open, apparently by human hands, and the buried bodies disappear. There are scores of such happenings throughout the New York City metropolitan area. Eventually the dead are tracked to an old mill in upper New York state, where an electrical inventor galvanizes the bodies back into life, his warped objective being to provide automatons for cheap labor. In writing for *Terror Tales* and *Horror Stories* years later, the collaborators independently produced scores of stories about seemingly supernatural events that had realistic endings. This rather awkwardly written effort could have served as a prototype for most of them.

At this time *Weird Tales* had a companion magazine titled *Oriental Stories*, which printed exotic tales of the Far East set in both historical and contemporary times. It was a periodical of high quality but limited appeal. Schachner and Zagat sold *Oriental* "The Song of the Cakes." In this Manga, one of the Manchus invading Peking, spares the life of an old priest, who asks to be taken to the khan. The priest gives the khan an egg-shaped piece of jade on which is carved the figure of a child seated on a throne, and tells him of the prophecy that a

child of a conqueror will rule the Chinese kingdom as long as the jade is in his possession. The khan ushers forth his little son, and then kills himself to assure fulfillment of the prophecy. The story is atmospheric and very well written. The team received a full cent a word for both this and "The Dead-Alive."

The only novel on which Schachner and Zagat collaborated was "Exiles of the Moon," which ran in *Wonder Stories* in three installments (September, October and November 1931). It was at once an interplanetary adventure and a social commentary on their favorite topic, the gulf between the wealthy and the working classes. The heroes of the novel are Garry Parker and Dick Thomas, intercontinental rocket-plane pilots. The heroine is Naomi, Garry's girl friend. She is the daughter of one of the members of the World Council of Five. This powerful group, designated here also as Aristas, rules the globe for the benefit of the upper classes. Naomi has been promised in marriage to the head of the Japanese world police force, whose main duty is keeping disgruntled workers in line. Malcontents are seized, sent to isolated polar or desert spots, and left to support themselves as best they can.

Parker pilots a rocket ship on the Berlin to New York run. It travels at a speed of 3600 miles an hour, and if it used a more powerful fuel it could, in theory, be employed for space travel. (The authors may be indebted here to the article "Berlin to New York in One Hour" by Max Valier, a German rocket experimenter, which appeared in the February 1930 *Wonder Stories*.) He refuses a transfer to the West Coast because it would separate him from Naomi, and with a group of other dissenters is exiled to a volcanic island in the Pacific, one of the World Council's spots for "troublemakers." Naomi has disguised herself as a man, and is flown to the island with them. Among the dissenters is a chemist, Bill Purtell. He discovers that the gases from an active volcano there, when condensed and mixed with the rocket fuel, will create a thrust great enough to propel the intercontinental rocket ships beyond the Earth's gravity.

The Japanese police who accompanied the exiles are overcome, the rocket that brought them to the island is fueled with the new mixture, and the group sets off for the moon. But aboard is a turncoat, Jerris Farr, the villain of the story, who has been obstructing the escapees' progress and predicting that the moon voyage will end in death.

One important part of the ship's equipment, rarely mentioned in early interplanetary tales, is an "integral calculator" (a computer) to plot its course and assess consumption of air and fuel supplies. Most stories either ignored the necessity for this or made a slide rule serve that purpose.) Another is counteracting weightlessness in space by magnetized floor-plates which grip the soles of the astronauts' shoes. The concept of rescuing and reviving someone who has been unprotected in outer space for a brief period, discussed by Schachner in his talk to the American Interplanetary Society, also appears in this novel.

The party lands successfully on the moon and sets about exploring it. They discover underground chambers, and well preserved bodies of "green men," inhabitants apparently killed ages before. The "rays" which emanate from certain craters turn out to be a substance which can absorb incredible amounts of oxygen almost instantly. They store quantities of it in sealed containers for possible use as a weapon should they return to Earth.

Heroic efforts to create a habitat suitable for humans are made. The colonists bring oxygen-generating equipment into the chambers, and manufacture water from materials found on the moon. The walls of the chambers give off light because of their slight radioactivity, and they plant seeds to grow food. This project is put into the hands of Farr, who was once a farmer, and he deliberately sabotages it, thus dooming the group once their food supplies run out. When this is discovered, Farr is punished by being put in a space suit and driven out on the surface of the moon to fend for himself.

Parker, Perrin and Naomi head back for Earth, planning to surround some large city with the oxygen-absorbing material and forcing surrender of the ruling aristocracy under threat of suffocation. But when they land, Parker and Perrin are knocked unconscious with a shovel by Farr, who had reëntered the ship and managed to conceal himself. They are saved by a forest ranger who had once been Naomi's servant. The deadly stones are placed around New York, but the plan backfires when the workers assume that the Aristas are trying to exterminate them, and unsuccessfully revolt. Parker is captured.

He is brought before the Council of the World, where he presents his socialistic manifesto: "All human beings are entitled to equal opportunity to share in the product of the machines, and to equal social status." But Farr has informed the Japanese police, who interrupt Parker's presentation just when it seems that he may sway the council. Meanwhile the police have discovered the secret of the improved rocket fuel, and take off for the moon.

Through her aristocratic connections Naomi is able to free Parker; they secure a rocket and take off for the moon also. However, their ship is immobilized by the Japanese police on landing, and they are forced to flee across the lunar surface in space suits. By a ruse they lure the Japanese searchers out onto the lunar plain and repossess their ship. The Japanese, not realizing the fantastic heat of the lunar day, which has just begun, find it impossible to traverse the short distance back from the dark area where they are congregated, and all die.

The story ends as the revolutionists return safely to Earth with a new supply of oxygen-absorbing stones and force the surrender of the council. A new era then dawns for humanity.

"Exiles of the Moon" owes much to Schachner's experiences in the American Interplanetary Socity. Not only is the society mentioned in the text, but so are such individual experimenters such as Goddard, Oberth and Esnault-Pelterie. The science, however, is a very mixed bag; some of it is excellent, but much seems improbable and unconvincing. The role of the villain Farr is overdrawn, and he eventually becomes merely a device to keep the story-line moving. But that of Naomi is genuinely intrinsic to the plot, and her heroics should elicit cheers from woman activists of today. Yet overall, despite some crude attempts at characterization, the players in this interplanetary adventure remain two-dimensional and stereotyped. But the pace never slows, and must have amply pleased most of the teen-agers who read science-fiction magazines in the early 1930's.

This work was Schachner's last collaboration with Arthur Leo Zagat, and thereafter the two continued their writing careers separately. Why did this happen? Helen Schachner was reluctant to discuss the breakup specifically, stating simply that there were "personal problems." Whatever these may have been, they did not destroy the longstanding friendship between the two. Indeed, they were together on April 3, 1949, when Zagat was striken by a fatal heart attack and actually died in Schachner's arms.

V

In an attempt to isolate the individual contributions each writer made to their collaborations, let us examine the first stories each wrote alone. There seems little to guide us in Zagat's "The Great Dome on Mercury" (*Astounding Stories*, April 1932). Earthmen, employing dull but faithful Venusians, have built a giant dome which sustains liveable conditions on the planet Mercury, and mine metals there. The Mercurian natives, two-foot-high creatures with snoutlike faces who live in underground burrows, resent this intrusion. They are goaded to attack the dome by a tall, beaked Martian, whose people are warring the Earth. Although the Earthmen and Venusians are saved by an arriving supply rocket, thousands of Mercurians perish when the life-sustaining dome is smashed. Zagat's attempt at portraying believable science is unsuccessful, and the story is very poor.

More revealing was his next effort, which bore the unoriginal title "When the Sleeper Wakes" (*Astounding Stories*, November 1932). In the year 2161 there is

war between the East (Orientals and blacks) and the West (Europe and the Americas). The great American airfleets which cruise at 25,000 feet and use ray guns are called "flying forts," closely anticipating the nickname given American bombers in World War II. Helicopters with rockets are also in use. The attempts of each side to wipe out the other with deadly gases has resulted in poisoning the entire atmosphere of the planet.

The hero, helicopter pilot Allan Dale, parachutes to the ground when his craft is incapacitated. He awakens twenty years later. When he landed, unconscious, he had been pulled to safety inside an atmosphere-proof shelter. This is maintained by several scientists who had built it and insulated it with Nullite, their invention, which is impenetrable to the poisonous gas. Here a group of men and women take turns remaining in suspended animation, awaiting the time when the atmosphere is pure enough to breathe. This time has finally arrived.

Dale takes out a helicopter, searching for signs of other life. He lands by chance on a skyscraper which happens to be the one where another scientist has constructed a gas-proof apartment where he and his wife have lived. A daughter has been born to them during this time, and is now grown up. As the years passed and their food supplies diminished, the parents voluntarily left the apartment, committing suicide so that the girl may have longer to live. As Dale threads his way through the building's skeleton-littered halls, he comes upon a room where a giant black has the girl on the floor and is about to rape her. He knocks the man out, and then bests a yellow man who comes on the scene with a ray gun. These two are members of a group of Eastern deserters who had survived in the Arctic, and have now returned when danger from the poisoned atmosphere ended.

Dale leaves the girl to search for food, and returns to find that she has been kidnapped. He tracks her to another building where the kidnappers have started a fire to keep warm, and are playing cards for the girl. He holds them at bay with a ray gun, and turns a hose of flammable fuel on them. When this comes in contact with their fire they are all burned to death.

These stories by Zagat share several common features both with those by Schachner alone and with collaborations of the two. All show a strong narrative drive dependent on rather crude action, and lean heavily on coincidence in development of their plots. All exhibit powerful anti-war sentiments. Both writers are careless about points of logic. Zagat seems more prone than Schachner to use racial stereotypes. In his early science-fiction, Schachner only infrequently introduced women, but when he did in his later work (as in *Space Lawyer*, 1953) they showed the same intelligence and fierce independence of Naomi in "Exiles of the Moon."

The first story Schachner wrote on his own, "Pirates of the Gorm," was featured on the cover of the May 1932 *Astounding Stories*. Grant Pemberton and the Ganymedian Miro (Ganymede frequently appears as an inhabited world in Schachner's fiction) are secret agents of the Earth world government. When five interplanetary ships vanish without a trace they are assigned the task of discovering what has happened to them. Pemberton foils an attempt to assassinate him while on a space ship, but the ship's wall is punctured. Most of the passengers die, but a few, including Pemberton, escape in space suits, and like the ship are drawn toward the great Red Spot of the planet Jupiter.

The Red Spot supports an island of rock on its vapors, and this is the base for the operation of pirates headed by Miro. The area is called The Gorm, and it has the power to repel as well as attract matter (negative gravity is one of Schachner's favorite devices). Nona Gale, a girl whom Pemberton helped rescue from the doomed space ship, distracts Miro's attention, and he is knocked out. Pemberton finds one of the pirates' captured space liners operational and escapes, utilizing the repelling activity of The Gorm. A previously closed circuit-breaker sets up a condition of alternating attraction and repulsion, which eventually destroys The Gorm.

"Pirates of Gorm" is a typical Clayton *Astounding* story, featuring action with little logical rationale. Many elements in it are simply unbelievable: the habitability of certain planets and satellites, the idea that an alien creature would be physically attracted to an Earth girl, and the notion that a dense, rocky mass could be supported on the gaseous Red Spot of Jupiter——to say nothing of the highly improbable acrobatic space feats performed by the characters. The excellent scientific background of the author seems to have departed under the lure of two cents a word.

Schachner's "Slaves of Mercury," a long novelette in the September 1932 *Astounding*, had the same faults of bad science and excessive coincidence, yet it turned out to be a fast-moving and in certain aspects an above average story. By use of heat rays the Mercutians, humanoids larger than Earthmen, have conquered our planet. Though they come from a planet that is (and was then) known to be hot and airless, the Mercutians are conveniently able to breathe Earth's cooler and denser atmosphere with little trouble, and to move about readily despite its much stronger gravitational pull.

The protagonist, Hilary Grendon, sole survivor of a space tour of the planets, lands his space ship in the Ramapo Mountains of northern New Jersey. He travels to New York City on a moving belt-conveyor, which is portrayed as having seats like a train. He is astounded to see the president of the United States, blinded and deaf, strapped into a seat. A fellow-passenger explains that this is a public warning to Americans not to attempt revolt, and explains to him what has happened on Earth since he set out on his space voyage.

Grendon, his informer and several others form a revolutionary group, and fight several fierce battles with the Mercutians. It turns out that the conquerors have installed a rain-making machine that limits precipitation to fifteen minutes each night. The group theorizes that this is because the Mercutian heat rays are powered by the sun. They gain access to the machine and set its controls to cause continuous rain during the daylight hours all over the world. This does indeed render the enemies' weapons inoperative, and Earthmen successfully revolt and reclaim their planet.

Astounding Stories went bimonthly with the issue in which "The Slaves of Mercury" appeared. Some authors have reported that at the same time Clayton changed its payment policy, going from two cents a word on acceptance to one cent a word on publication. Credence for this is the fact that although E. E. Smith's serial novel "Triplanetary" was announced as beginning in the January 1933 issue, and that a cover illustrating it did appear on the March 1933 issue, the manuscript was actually returned to Smith, unpublished and unpaid-for. (It was later printed in *Amazing Stories* as a four-part serial beginning in January 1934.) It is possible, then, that Schachner got no more than a cent a word for this story.

VI

With his most lucrative market gone, Schachner returned to David Lasser, selling him the novel "Emissaries of Space," which appeared complete in the Fall 1932 *Wonder Stories Quarterly*. This work has been undeservedly forgotten by most readers, and when not forgotten, underrated. It has many of the elements found in Arthur C. Clarke's famous novel *Childhood's End* (1953), and conceivably may even have influenced that work.

The story takes place at the time of writing, and posits a hypothetical future for the planet. The Great Depression has persisted for a number of years, and there is no indication that it will not continue indefinitely. Schachner mentions Coolidge and Hoover, creating a clear relevancy to the economic problems of the period.

A violent series of electrical storms occur, and there are unexplained outbreaks of mental delirium, in which people seem to babble a strange language.

Among the victims is John Boling, a power tycoon. Upon recovery, with the aid of his assistant Philip Haynes, he builds an atomic engine. He then sets up a consortium of a dozen influential men to initiate substitution of cheap atomic energy for all other forms of power all over the globe. The philosophy of the group is: "Better a dictatorship in which everyone is taken care of than a democracy that doesn't work." (This was in tune with the times, which saw Fascism and Naziism rise on similar slogans.)

Boling is contacted periodically by visible whirlpools of vapor from the skies, which turn out to be emissaries for transcendental beings from elsewhere in the galaxy. At first he resists their demands, but they threaten storms of such intensity on the Earth that civilization cannot survive if he does not comply.

Boling is told that the emissaries want 250,000 towers built around the equator of the planet over a time-span of ten generations. The reward will be cheap energy for all, of which they will give him the secret. If the world does not agree to this, they will create even more severe storms to destroy it. The president becomes a figurehead and Congress is disbanded. Industries are harried into coöperation, dissenters are executed. On the positive side, the supplies of food, housing and luxuries improve for the working classes, which back Boling unequivocally. The countries of Europe also coöperate, Russia enthusiastically.

Haynes breaks with Boling, and, allying himself with a wealthy religious fanatic, hatches a plan to sabotage building the towers, whose purpose has never been revealed. After a long and tremendous struggle, the atomic engines are blown up. The emissaries respond by causing a frightful storm, but finally agree to let Earth exist free as a studied experiment. However Boling, whom they hold responsible for not upholding his agreement with them, will die.

Generations later the civilizations of Mars, Venus and Ganymede, which had also built world-girdling towers, are drawn out of their orbits to some unimaginable rendezvous, and zones of "solar magnetization" set up by the emissaries to prevent destabilization of the remaining solar system. This would have been the fate of Earth had it complied to their demands.

Not only is the message here to distrust panaceas and demagogues, but the tale is a powerful retelling, in science-fiction terms, of the parable that it is fatal to sell one's soul to the Devil. As I have said, Clarke used a similar plot in *Childhood's End* to raise mankind to a new level of consciousness. Here, two decades earlier, Schachner effectively depicts the dangers in such a course, warning against the adoption of dictatorship in exchange for short-term gains in a world that was already heading in that direction.

An air of authenticity is imbued in the novel also by the incorporation of familiar parts of the greater New York City area. The weakest aspect of "Emissaries of Space" is the lack of effective characterization; perhaps the scope of the work defeated the author here.

In "The Time Express" (*Wonder Stories*, December 1932) Schachner presents for the first time in the genre the idea of having guided tours through the future, "Hook's tours through time." Time travel to the past has proved impossible, but passports are routinely issued for trips to the future as far as the year 4800. Beyond that point all machinery has been abolished, and heads of government will not permit travel then for fear it might be reintroduce either machinery or plans for it into this future period. There is another limitation: one might actually visit with one's future grandchildren and great-grandchildren, but on return all memory of what has been seen is lost.

The story is laid in the year 2124, and its plot involves an attempt to bring into that forbidden span of the future plans for equipment which have been written in invisible ink on the body of one of the tour guides. Schachner's descriptions of future scenes is particularly well done, and his influence on later tales with this same theme is clear. Among those using it are "Liners of Time" by John Russell Fearn (*Amazing Stories*, May-August 1935), "Vintage Season" by Law-

rence O'Donnell (*Astounding Science Fiction*, September 1946), and "Pawley's Peepholes" by John Wyndham (*Science Fantasy*, Winter 1951). "The Time Express" presented a concept that was quite advanced for its period.

Fed up with the tired, trite plots in most of the manuscripts submitted to him, Hugo Gernsback began in 1932 to offer small sums of prize-money for ideas. These he would give to regular contributors to develop, and the resulting stories would be printed as collaborations. One such plot, submitted by R. Lacher, he farmed out to Nat Schachner. The result appeared as "Memory of the Atoms" in the January 1933 *Wonder Stories*.

In the year 2025 most of the world's supply of radium is controlled by a trust. What makes this situation serious is that the United States has been stricken by a cancer-like disease against which only radium radiation is effective. People turn for help to Dr. Harvey Blake. Blake believes that ancestral memories are genetically inherited, and that he can tap them by brain surgery. This is important because they have located the last living descendent of Herbert Wingrove, who is known to have discovered a radium mine in Alaska, and who died before he revealed its precise location. But the operation is not foolproof; if it fails, the subject may become an idiot. The descendent agrees to take the risk in exchange for a one-third interest in the mine if it is located. After much suspense Blake's operation succeeds, but there is intrigue with the trust and narrow escapes from death before ownership of the mine is finally recorded. The story reads well, but in the telling Schachner overuses some of his favorite words, such as "inchoate" and "ejaculating."

He followed "Memory of the Atoms" with "The Eternal Dictator" (*Wonder Stories*, February 1933). As this story opens, Captain Danny Kels of the Rocket Patrol is called before the Eternal One, Vincent Melius, who is heir to the secret of immortality and has been dictator of the world for 250 years. During that time he has kept the people of the globe healthy, prosperous and free from warfare. He orders Kels to the planet's space station, tells him to mount guns in place of its telescopes, and to fire instantly on any object approaching him.

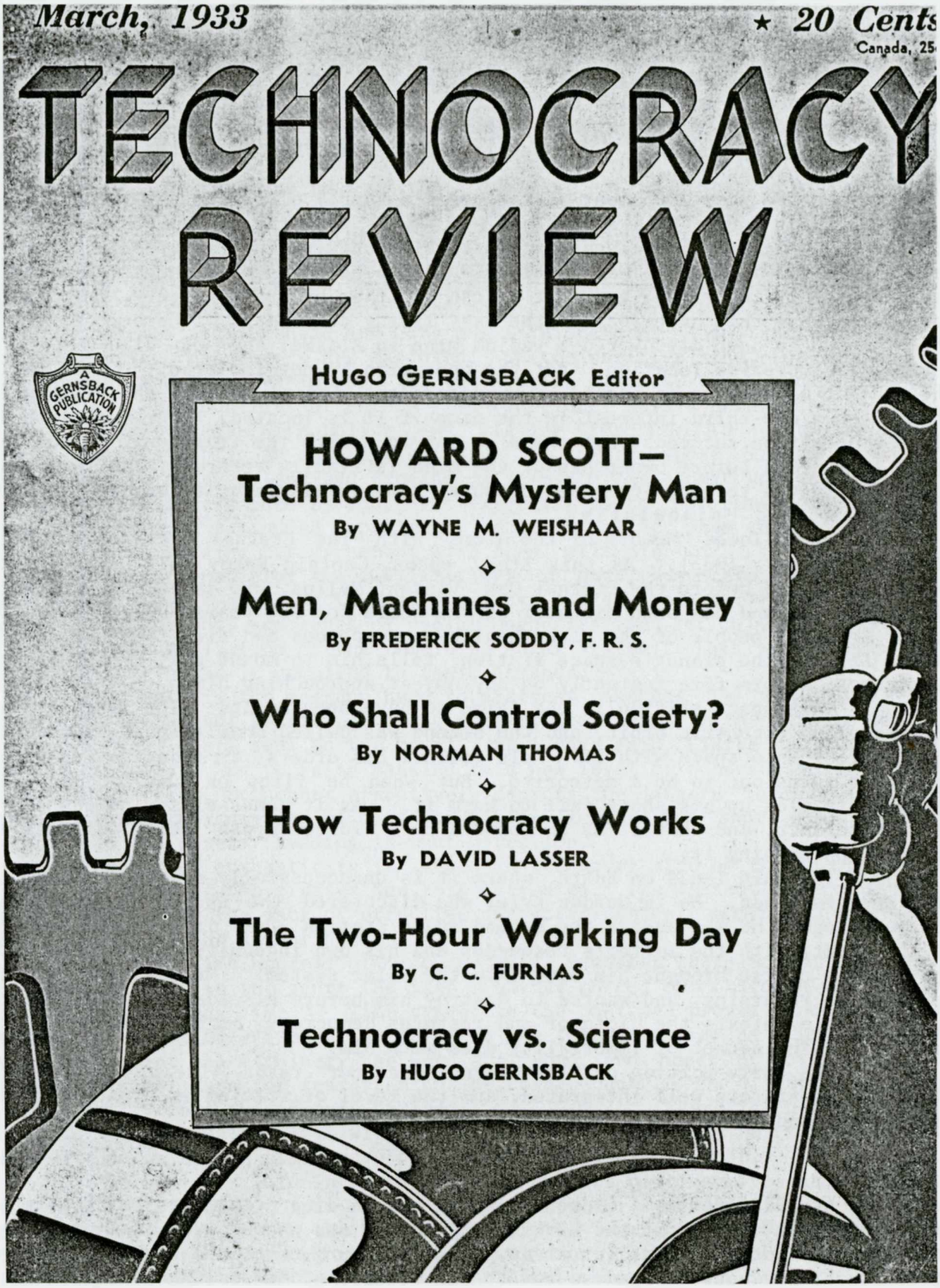
This space station is the third to have been built. The first crashed because of an eccentric orbit, and the second was pulled from its path by a comet, disappearing into space with it. Kels follows his orders, first destroying an object that turns out to be a meteorite. But when he fires on the second object the sensors pick up his shots fail to harm it. As it comes closer he can see it is a space ship, and that it is surrounded by a "force screen" which deflects all objects approaching it.

The ship lands on Earth, where it is unsuccessfully attacked. From the ship emerges a man. He is Gordon Kyle, who discovered the secret of immortality 250 years ago. He was aboard the second space station when it had been captured by the comet; with the latter's resources and his own ingenuity he survived until the comet's course brought him back into the solar system. Melius realized when he might be returning, and wanted to destroy him before his identity could be revealed. Kyle defeats the dictator and restores democracy, but he is killed in the process and the secret of immortality dies with him.

The early portion of "The Eternal Dictator" reads like a good mystery. All the elements are well integrated, and the level of writing is high. This is a fine story, and one of Schachner's best.

VII

As 1932 drew to a close the world was in dire economic straits. In the United States a quarter of the working population was unemployed. Unemployed workers could not buy food, let alone goods. Factories closed and the price of agricultural products dropped so low it was often uneconomical to ship them to market. Russia felt the answer to the situation was communism. Italy and Germany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TECHNOCRACY REVIEW
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HOWARD SCOTT—
Technocracy's Mystery Man
By WAYNE M. WEISHAAR
Men, Machines and Money
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Who Shall Control Society?
By NORMAN THOMAS
How Technocracy Works
By DAVID LASSER
The Two-Hour Working Day
By C. C. FURNAS
Technocracy vs. Science
By HUGO GERNSBACK

adopted Fascism. In the United States advocates of communism, Fascism and socialism vied with one another to convince others that they had the answer to current economic problems. They all agreed that capitalism, democracy or both were obsolete, and needed to be replaced.

Not as influential as these three was a system which had gained increasing attention since World War I, and which in 1919 had been christened "technocracy." This was now seized upon by a convert named Howard Scott, who publicized it under the banner of "Technocracy, Inc." Scott claimed that the price system, the debt system and the traditional worker were all obsolete. He advocated control of the nation by technicians, who would operate a planned economy. Regional factories would be set up to produce what was required, and employment hours would be reduced to what was needed to operate them to maintain the economy. Workers would be issued energy credits which could be redeemed for goods and services. He estimated that the average worker would earn the equivalent of $20,000 a year. In an era when a family could be supported on a tenth of that, such a proposition sounded very attractive. Technocracy also appealed to Americans who were scientifically- or mechanistically-minded.

A spate of books and articles appeared on the subject. Evaluations and appraisal of it received wide media dissemination. Among those fascinated by technocracy was David Lasser. Lasser was already a leader of The Worker's Alliance, an organization purporting to represent the unemployed, and a member of the Socialist Party. He felt that the movement might well be the wave of the future, and convinced a less-than-enthusiastic Hugo Gernsback that a magazine on the subject could profit on current public interest. This led to the first issue of *Technocracy Review*, which was dated February 1933. However, Gernsback carefully hedged his bet, giving as the magazine's credo: "*Technocracy Review* voices no opinions of its own. It aims to publish all opinions whether for or against technocracy." This it did, for in its second and last number (whose cover is reproduced on the opposite page) Gernsback himself printed a lengthy article which shredded many of the movement's concepts.

To promote the magazine Lasser commissioned Schachner to write a story featuring technocracy, and this appeared in the March 1933 *Wonder Stories*, which had a red banner across its front cover and carried Gernsback's editorial, "The Wonders of Technocracy." The latter ended rather skeptically: "Whether this will work out or whether Technocracy is only a theoretical idea, only the future can tell." Facing the editorial was a full-paged advertisement for the first issue of *Technocracy Review*. As a matter of historical interest it should be noted that the magazine was 8½ by 11½ inches in size, had 48 pages, was saddle-stitched, and was printed on good quality coated paper. It was priced at 20¢.

Schachner's story, "The Robot Technocrat," depicts the world in 1954. France, Germany and Italy have gone Fascist, and Russia, Yugoslavia and England are communist. The United States is in near anarchy because of the prolonged depression. A dozen political parties are squabbling with each other, and marauding bands sack towns which call in vain for the central government to restore order. In blind rage against overproduction, the masses destroy machines in the factories.

Hugh Corbin, chief of the Reconstruction Party, is dedicated to returning the country to stability. Corbin receives a message from the Russian mathematical genius Anton Kalmikoff, who has been conducting secret research for nearly twenty years: "Remember Technocracy. Come at once." Kalmikoff had observed in 1932 that political systems were failing, and felt technocracy was the only solution. He has succeeded in expressing most relevant variables mathematically, and has built a computing machine which assimilates the data and generates a solution. The computer can handle as many as twenty viariables (the author points out that Einstein's theory of relativity contains only ten). To complete his work, Kalmikoff needs to evaluate only one more variable: the state of emotion and physical

reaction of the twelve party leaders fighting for control of The United States. To obtain this he must test each with a "physio-psycho-graph." Corbin suggests that they be kidnapped in order to accomplish this.

They succeed in capturing all of the leaders except Adolph Hiller, who shows up voluntarily. When these new data are fed into it, the computer predicts that the country will be recolonized by Europe after a brutal civil war. Kalmikoff's experimental laboratory is then attacked by hundreds of men from Hiller's Nationalist Party. But the Russian is prepared, and his defenders mow them down with gunfire. With the defeat of the Nationalists, the computer predicts that if the nation follows technocratic principles it will recover within ten years.

This was an outrageously activist work. The only more blatant promotion in science-fiction was the long article "Dianetics——the Evolution of a Science" by L. Ron Hubbard (*Astounding Science Fiction*, May 1950), which was presented by editor John W. Campbell when he was working with the Dianetics Institute.

"The Robot Technocrat" proved to be only the first of a series. In all, Lasser commissioned four propagandistic stories from Schachner. The next three are laid in the nearer future (circa 1935), and thematically are quite closely connected. The first of these was "The Revolt of the Scientists" (*Wonder Stories*, April 1933). The protagonist is Cornelius Van Wyck, an immensely wealthy playboy, who is conveyed to a meeting place of a group that aims to take over the world and install technocracy as the form of government. His role is merely to finance the operation, though he is fated to play a heroic part in its implementation as well. We learn that there was an uprising in the name of Technocracy but that it had been put down, and the very word has become anathema. The first task of the secret group is to eliminate bootlegging. This modest aim is accomplished by the installation in a submarine of an instrument called a "sono-device," which seems to operate on the same principles as today's sonar detectors. Several miscreants are caught and a leading gang of bootleggers eliminated.

"The Great Oil War" (*Wonder Stories*, May 1933) describes a far more ambitious plan of the technocrats. They move to nationalize the oil industry, saying that deliberate overproduction is forcing down the price so far that independent producers will be put out of business, and leaving a few major companies in control of this essential energy source. (It should be remembered that when the story was written the United States produced all the oil it needed for domestic use, and even had a surplus to export.)

The technocrats comandeer oil-pumping stations and inject into the lines a substance which turns the oil into a non-viscous wax which will not flow. This substance is also injected into some underground reserves of oil to prevent their being pumped out. The Council of Technocrats broadcasts its terms for control of all reserves, which include legal immunity for their actions. These are agreed to, and the technocrats exultantly map their strategy for taking over the banks, power utilities, and the coal and steel industries.

"The Final Triumph" (*Wonder Stories*, June 1933) begins with a spate of mortgage forecolosures in Iowa on orders from "higher-ups" in the banking industry. 5000 armed farmers gather to resist, and the militia is called up. A pitched battle results. The technocrats drop "sleep bombs" on the combatants to reduce the slaughter, but the banks press for the foreclosures. The technocrats have invented a motion picture camera which can "see" through solid walls. They take pictures of the bankers' meetings and read their lips to discover their plan——which is to dun everyone for unpaid mortgages and debts simultaneously. A bank holiday is declared.

So far, this is social forecasting similar to the novels of the 1980's which predicted deflation, depression and disaster. But now the technocrats come up with a device that transmutes gold into tin. This makes the nation's gold reserves almost worthless, and a new currency is issued, based on the assets held by banks. The technocrats respond by spraying the interiors of the banks with an

ink-remover, eliminating the signatures on all contracts.

The technocrats have a secret camouflaged hideaway in Maine, but when their plane is sighted entering it, government forces attack. A "force field" protects it from bombing, and the defenders project waves of force which prevent their enemy's guns from firing. Soldiers sent into the fray are paralyzed by electrically charged wires. The government is forced to capitulate and the technocrats triumph. A new type of government is set up; the president and the lower house of Congress will still be elected by majority vote, but henceforth the Senate will be composed of scientists, and most powers put in their hands. Anarchy has been averted, and the nation is back on the road to stability.

In plot, characterization and action, these three stories are on a level with the Tom Swift books. It seems likely that "The Final Triumph" was designed to wind up the series quickly when news was received from distributors that sales of *Technocracy Review* were extremely poor. Had it sold well, the series would unquesionably have been strung out, industry by industry. "The Final Triumph" also marked the end of Nat Schachner's *overt* political activism. His socialistic leanings did continue to appear in his fiction, however, as did an awareness of the nation's current economic problems.

Meanwhile David Lasser's involvement with The Worker's Alliance continued unabated. One day in the summer of 1933 Hugo Gernsback, dismayed at the time he took from his job for such activity, called him into his office and fired him. He had been getting $75 a week, roughly equivalent to $750 today. Gernsback soon replaced him with 17-year-old Charles D. Hornig at $20.

Schachner's work never appeared in *Wonder Stories* again, but that may not have been due simply to his association with Lasser. Gernsback was in an increasingly difficult financial position, either paying writers slowly or not paying them at all. He may not have been anxious to tangle with a writer who happened also to be a lawyer.

Now as we have seen, Schachner's other market, *Astounding Stories*, had vanished from the field with its March 1933 issue. What was left? He could write for *Amazing Stories*, but they not only did not pay until publication, but often held accepted manuscripts for years before printing them. He chose to write no science-fiction at all, and fell back on his law practice for support. For awhile he was kept active with bankruptcy cases, but obviously there is little money for a lawyer in bankrupt clients, and his spare time increased.

This he devoted generously to his early love, the American Interplanetary Society, leaving its cheering section to become again a major worker. It must be remembered that Schachner had been trained and had worked as a chemist, so it was natural for him take part in formulating rocket fuels and designing the machinery that used them. The society was working simultaneously on five different experimental rockets, and he was assigned to one of them, "Project 5." Working with him were H. Franklin Pierce and Nathan Carver. In his book *Rockets Through Space* (1936) P. E. Cleator described it has having the most unconventional design of all:

> A single cone-shaped head served the dual purpose of combustion chamber and exhaust. And instead of there being the usual separate fuel tanks, the petrol and the liquid oxygen were contained in a single, tubular tank, the two fluids being separated by a movable plunger or piston. By this ingenious method, the necessity for a nitrogen feed for the petrol was obviated. It was arranged that the evaporation of the liquid oxygen would force not only the liquid oxygen into the combustion chamber, but the petrol also——by acting on the movable plunger.

Herbert S. Zim in his *Rockets and Jets* (1945) also describes this, calling it "a clever idea." Neither writer assigns individual credit, but it is entirely possible that Nat Schachner worked out the theory involved. Records do not show if the society ever built or tested the experimental rocket designed in Project 5.

(to be continued in the next issue)

Moonshiners

In the Old Folks' Home beside the Sea of Storms
I watch the planet turn above my head.
Retired astronauts swap hoary yarns
While playing poker, drinking rum, instead
Of watching TV quietly in the lounge.
You *can* sit here and let your brain cells rot——
We'd rather grab each moment we can scrounge
And give our lives' last years a final shot.
I watch the Chinese Wall creep into view
As continents gavotte across the sky:
A perc for members of that lonely crew
Who can't return to Earth before they die.
The poker-players' yarns will get rehashed,
Retold, before their chips are finally cashed.

After the Android Wars

Some had to be deprogrammed, others felt
The only way was back to pushing broom;
Knowing we'd never exorcise the guilt
We sued for peace, our cause for certain doomed.
Our humbled high command all changed their shapes
And hid in the cities till the armies went:
That final battle saw our frail, vain hopes
Scattered over half a continent.
We ate their dust and grime for several weeks
After the convoy's twenty-five-mile sprawl
Had noisily gone its way and left us bare.
Their women followed, dignified and tall,
Walking behind the rumbling tanks and trucks,
Carrying ammunition, tools and spares.

Transfer of Power

Treason. The word was a whisper in the land
Though none dare articulate it to his face,
The planet was quiet and offered him no guess
At thoughts which lurked within the plotting mind.
Hints had been few. A civil servant moaned;
A general sulked; strange messages from space:
Such disaffection could be commonplace
Without suggesting anything was planned.
They struck at dawn——a wave dismissed his guards,
Still half-asleep they bundled him below,
Gave him a script to read upon the air:
This service done, his new ascendant lords
Had to remove him from the public glare
And paid someone to strike the fatal blow.

John Francis Haines

"Our Eyes Have Seen Great Wonders"

THE LOST WORLDS OF ARTHUR CONAN DOYLE

Andrew Darlington

I

> It is imperative that now, at once, while these stupendous events are still clear in my mind, I should set them down with that exactness of detail which time may blur. . .
>
> —*The Poison Belt*

The original lure of science-fiction was the fantastic journey, which grew out of the traveller's tale. A voyage into uncharted here-there-be-dragons. Exotic lands, bizarre fauna, unknown civilizations. Homer could populate the Aegean with phantasmagoria and still retain the suggestion of credibility. Marco Polo and Cortez could penetrate alien-ness fully as awesome as any fictional *terra incognita*. Gulliver could sail to fantasias when there were still islands to discover as unsuspected as the moons of Mars. But increasing world exploration meant that fantasy options had to be pushed to greater and greater remoteness, their realms secreted in crevices and niches of increasing inaccessibility, if some element of plausibility was to be retained. Finally aerial reconnaissance and geo-sats filled even these spots, and fantasists had to nudge their Dragon Isles out beyond the stratosphere, and race the reach of telescopes to other worlds, other stars, other galaxies.

Therein lies the sub-genre of the "lost race," or "lost world." Between Gulliver and Gagarin it was just barely conceivable that the world still held secrets of fabulous romance. Rider Haggard found his lost world in Africa. Arthur Conan Doyle discovered his—what Arthur C. Clarke called "my candidate for the perfect specimen of its genre"—on a South American plateau. And his adventure stands yet, even though whatever vestige of what-if has gone with the rain forests.

The Lost World, originally serialized in *The Strand* (April through November 1912) when Doyle was 53, is an amazing novel. It contains all the traits we identify as the attractions of wide-screen s-f—the "ripping yarn" urgency of wide-eyed, breathless heroics joined to a near-sublime sense of wonder and of limitless possibility. "Apparently the age of romance was not over," wrote one critic, "and there was common ground upon which the wildest imaginings of the novelist could meet the actual scientific investigations of the searcher for truth." In the work's Professor Challenger, Doyle creates what is to my mind the most gigantically memorable character of his long writing career—even if the ubiquity of Sherlock Holmes *does* dominate his reputation in a way that seems to eclipse all else. Remove Holmes from the equation and Doyle's fame would still be secure.

The Lost World was an immediate best-seller which rapidly migrated onto celluloid—first in a 1925 silent version, and again with sound in 1960. The book itself continues to sell, and Challenger's further exploits are regularly reprinted—for example, *The Complete Professor Challenger Stories* (1952 and 1976), *The Poison Belt* (1982), *The Adventures of Professor Challenger* (1985) and *When the World Screamed and Other Stories* (1990). They alone would ensure the author's high profile, but he wrote much other horror, fantasy and science-fiction as well.

(Even a brace of his Sherlock Holmes tales, "The Adventure of the Devil's Foot" and "The Case if the Creeping Man," cross the mundane line into the genre.) Doyle used what he termed "the universal pass-key of imagination," and with it he unlocked realms of wonder.

"The big blank spaces on the map are all filled in," he has the news editor of *The Daily Gazette* say early in *The Lost World*, "there's no room for romance any more." He was wrong. By dispatching reporter Edward Malone to interview Professor Challenger, he initiates the process of disproof. And in *When the World Screamed* (*Liberty*, February 25 through March 3, 1928) Challenger sinks a shaft eight miles deep into Hengist Down and pierces the glutinous living core of the planet itself. Here this monstrous egoist is described as "a primitive caveman in a lounge suit. . . . some people are born out of their proper century, but he is born out of his millenium."

The Lost World is more explicit: Professor George Edward Challenger, born 1863, educated in Edinburgh University, is "a stunted Hercules whose tremendous vitality had all run to depth, breadth and brain." He is a genius characterized by "insufferable rudeness and impossible behavior, a full-charged battery of force and vitality." Through the pugilistic and pugnacious personna of Challenger, Doyle out-Hoyles contentious astrophysicist Fred Hoyle (and even anticipates him: ". . . had the germ of it [life] arrived from outside upon a meteor? It was hardly conceivable."). Challenger is "a frontiersman from the extreme edge of the knowable." But it's on the South American expedition with Malone, Lord John Roxton and Professor Summerlee that the fiction *really* ignites; the bickering professors are drawn as huge, larger-than-life caricatures, which gives them their contagiously infectious appeal.

Although Challenger may be Doyle's most complete creation, it's the power of the tale that gives him fascination. The style is unobtrusive, the details just right. Flora and geological features are prosaically narrated to help the most skeptical reader suspend disbelief; there are magical evocations of the swamp of the pterodactyls, the glade of the igaunodons, and of the lake and its inhabitants during Malone's solo nocturnal venture into the center of the strange, isolated plateau. Yet there's no phrase wasted on unnecessary introspection or studied artifice. The story is related through Malone's bulletins; "what I am writing is destined to immortality as a classic of true adventure." He isn't wrong. From bulletin one through the final scene of a pterodactyl loosed from Queens Hall flying over the roofs of London, the pace never lets up.

II

> . . . a dreadful thing has happened to us. Who could have foreseen it? I cannot foresee any end to our troubles. It may be that we are condemned to spend our whole lives in this strange, inaccessible place. I am still so confused that I can hardly think clearly of the facts of the present or of the chances of the future. To my astounded senses the one seems most terrible and the other as black as night.
>
> —*The Lost World*

Echoing Malone (Celtic temperament, Irish ancestry), Conan Doyle, born May 22, 1859, was Scots by birthplace (Edinburgh) but Irish by parentage. He had a strong-willed Catholic mother, and an artistic father with a history of epilepsy complicated by alcoholism, who was eventually confined to a Yorkshire asylum. Five years after Doyle's birth Jules Verne was finding his own prehistoric lost world in *A Journey to the Center of the Earth*, a book popular at the time the young Doyle was enduring Jesuit education at the bleak Sonyhurst Academy and finding escape in Walter Scott's "Waverley" novels. This was followed by a more agreeable but equally Jesuit spell at Feldkirch in Austria, where his reading taste graduated to Edgar Allan Poe. Echoing Challenger, he served time at Edinburgh (1876 - 1881), studying medicine. (It is said that this was the origin of Sherlock Holmes, for Doyle met there a Professor Joseph Bell, whose precise analytical methods alleg-

edly presented the germ of the great detective's technique.) Doyle may also have found at Edinburgh early models for Challenger in a fusion of stentorian lecturer William Rutherford and fellow student George Budd. The volatile and extravagantly eccentric Budd is also recreated in *The Stark Munro Letters* (1894), which relates semi-biographically their eventful shared medical practice in Plymouth. To Doyle biographer Ivor Brown, Budd was "both physically and temperamentally freakish. . . a gift to the future novelist." He "did not live very long and a post-mortem revealed an abnormality of the brain," which Brown infers was alike the cause of his alarming genius and his outrageously unpredictable social behavior. Doyle transferred both traits to Challenger.

As an academic adventurer, Challenger can be seen as the direct link between Rider Haggard's Allan Quartermain and George Lucas/Stephen Speilberg's Indiana Jones, and hence a timeless creation——but there remain many of Doyle's sensibilities that are difficult for the modern reader to reconcile. After his brief medical apprenticeship in Birmingham he spent seven month as medical officer on an Arctic whaler (March-October 1881), instinctively disliking the April seal-cull for the fur trade he witnessed there. Yet Lord John Roxton is presented as a wholly heroic figure, based largely on hunting prowess, "his eager hunter's soul shining from his fierce eyes." On first sighting fresh iguanodon dinosaur prints in the mud of the Lost World, instead of showing fear or scientic curiousity, he "looked eagerly around him and slipped two cartridges into his elephant gun."

By August 1885 Conan Doyle had split acrimoniously with Budd, ripping his brass name-plate from the door with bare hands. He sailed from Liverpool to Sierra Leone, again as ship's surgeon, and once back in England began scrimping a medical practice in Southsea, a suburb of Portsmouth. He married Louise Hawkins, a widow he had met through treating her son, and then began writing in earnest.

This is the period of his first flirtation with fantasy fiction, the "less respectable" material produced for a variety of periodicals to supplement his income. These early stories sometimes appeared anonymously in ephemeral journals now long extinct, and many were never collected in book form until after the author's death. His second fiction submission, but first acceptance, was "The Mystery of Sassasa Valley" which, uncredited, graced the pages of the "mustard-coloured" *Chambers's Journal* (September 6, 1879). The story is set in South Africa——"this abominable country"——and its fantasy appeal centers about a "haunted valley" avoided by the native Kaffirs. The protagonist sees "what the n[redacted]s talk about": a "frightful fiend" with "a strange lurid glare, flickering and oscillating." However, after a false start and a diversion or two, the "Sassasa Demon" is discovered to be merely a huge diamond reflecting light. Doyle was paid three guineas for the tale, conditional on editorial deletion of an expletive "damn."

His use of other words would be more likely to offend sensibilities of modern readers, although there is no evidence to suggest that "n[redacted]" or "Kaffir" betray anything more than the vocabulary of his time. Doyle considered himself to be socially liberal——he stood as Liberal-Unionist and Tarriff Reform candidate in the 1900 and 1906 elections——and although such words occur in as late a story as *The Poison Belt* (e. g., "a sick n[redacted] in Sumatra") there's no evidence of any real feelings of racism. Thus in *The Lost World* the expedition's mighty porter Zambo is called "a black Hercules, as willing as any horse," and even though the qualities we are expected to admire in him——extreme loyalty and tenacious obedience——may be just as applicable to a large and friendly dog, the character is respectfully drawn. (Doyle's vehemence is reserved for Gomez, a "villainous" and "notorious" half-breed.) His actions in life clearly vindicate him of all such accusations. He campaigned vigorously against Belgian racial atrocities in the Congo, and opposed the pervasive xenophobia of his day by staking time, wealth and reputation in the defense of two men he felt were unjustly imprisoned, one a German

the other a Parsee. He also displayed unwavering support for Irish Nationalist Roger Casement, even through a period of gay-smear stories deliberately disseminated by British authorities. Indeed, in *The Death Voyage* Doyle's biographer Owen Dudley Edwards claims to find traces of Casement in the personality of Lord John Roxton.

III

> . . . had Ceasar remained faithful as a General of the Republic and refused to cross the Rubicon, would not the whole story of Imperial Rome have been different? Had Washington persuaded his fellow-countrymen to wait patiently until a Liberal majority in the British Parliament righted their wrongs——would not Britain and all her Dominions now be an annexe to the great central power of America? If Napoleon had made peace before entering upon the Russian campaign . . . and so on.
>
> ——*The Death Voyage*

Conan Doyle had deeper literary ambitions which generated longer works. After a number of rejections the first of these, *Micah Clarke*, was published by Longmans in 1889. It is an historical novel, siding with the West Country commoners in their insurrection against James II. Two years later it was followed by *The White Company*, a romance of medieval chivalry.

But meanwhile the short fiction continued, "scattered about amid the pages of *London Society*, *All the Year Round*, *Temple Bar*, *The Boy's Own Paper* and other journals," he confided in his autobiography *Memories and Adventures* (1924). The extremely odd "An American's Tale" (*London Society*, Christmas 1879) is a Western in which are "heard the fearfulest screams in the stillness of the night," and a would-be ambusher is consumed by a giant Venus fly-trap "with leaves eight and ten feet long . . . for all the world like some great sea squid with its beak." The victim of this proto-Triffid is "torn and crushed to a pulp by the great jagged teeth. . . ." Doyle also wrote about the occult ("Selecting a Ghost," in *London Society*, December 1898); the perverse ("The Retirement of Signor Lambert," in *Pearson's Magazine*, December 1898), which involves the macabre destruction of a singer's vocal chords; and the scientific curio ("The Voice of Silence," in *The Strand Magazine*, March 1891), which displays a new type of phonograph as a comic romantic device, and side-swipes the then-current Darwin vs. creationist dispute. There is telepathic vampirism in the short novel "The Parasite" (*Harper's Weekly*, November 10 through December 1, 1894), an electric-chair overdose in "The Los Amigos Fiasco" (December 1892), and dust-to-gold and back again alchemy in *The Doings of Raffles Haw* (1891). In "The Captain of the 'Pole Star'" Doyle drew on his Arctic experiences and also, perhaps, on Poe's *Narrative of A. Gordon Pym*. The story was a favorite of Lovecraft, who wrote that it "struck a powerfully spectral note."

In "A Pastoral Horror" (*People*, December 21, 1890) a series of murders in the Tyrolese Alps allows Doyle to employ fantastic phrases like "ghastly pallor," this "awful demon who haunts us," "the vampire" and "something almost supernatural"; but he defuses horrific expectations when the villain turns out to be a homicidal mania afflicting the eloquent priest Father Verhagen. With some irony, the priest is identified when he raises his hand to bless the congregation, thus exposing wounds inflicted by his last victim. "Our Midnight Visitor" (*Temple Bar*, February 1891) is Scottish Gothic set amidst the vividly documented bleakness of Uffa (possibly a conflation of the real islands Ulva and Staffa). The tale is awash with dialect, and suggests ghostly visitations of "a wraith or bogle," who turns out to be merely a French diamond thief. But the narrator strikes a genuinely effective note of the macabre as he describes Achille Wolff and his father drowning, "revolving in each other's embrace until they were nothing but a dark loom." (The fictional Uffa is also mentioned in the Sherlock Holmes exploit, "The Adventure of the Five Orange Pips.")

In his book *Conan Doyle: a Biographical Solution*, Ronald Pearsall suggests that the man was an unsuccessful writer of horror stories because he did not understand the psychology of fear. A large, physically active individual, Doyle

thought in terms of adventure and heroism——he boxed, a pupil of Scottish champion Charlie Ball, he was an enthusiastic cricketer who once "bowled out" the great W. G. Grace, and he even played as goalkeeper for Portsmouth F A in 1887. He ran a frontline hospital during the Boer War after being turned down for active service. (He had volunteered despite already being in his forties.) He had little empathy with either fear or introspection; instead, he learned the techniques of the genre from others, in particular from Poe. A later story, "The Leather Funnel" (*McClure's Magazine*, 1900), recaptures Poe's morbid fascinations exactly in its dream of a torture chamber. Another, "The Ring of Thoth" (*Cornhill Magazine*, January 1890), recalls Poe's "Conversations with a Mummy." There are more overt cross-overs. The creation of Sherlock Holmes himself was to some extent based on Poe's sleuth C. Auguste Dupin of "The Murders in the Rue Morgue." Doyle seems to admit as much in "The Fate of the *Evangeline*" (*The Boy's Own Paper*, Christmas 1885), a bizarrely convoluted tale of maritime romance, a lover's self-imposed exile on the Scottish island of Ardvoe, and the lost and haunted ship of the title. In this story he introduces spoof newspaper reorts (as he would do in *The Lost World*), and goes so far as to quote Poe directly, to the effect that "those simple rules as to the analysis of evidence laid down by August Dupin. 'Exclude the impossible' he remarks in one of Poe's immortal stories, 'and whatever is left, however improbable, must be the truth.'"

Holmes discusses the shortcomings of Dupin in "A Study in Scarlet," yet Doyle continued to champion Poe over his own creation as late as his American lecture tour of 1894, as well as in his book of literary criticism, *Through the Magic Door* (1907). "A Study in Scarlet," whose copyright he sold to the 1887 *Beeton's Christmas Annual* for £25, was the first of four long and fifty short stories to feature Holmes, a character which made him famous and guaranteed his financial independence for the years to come.

IV

> My copy of *The Lost World* (John Murray, 1914) has as its frontispiece a photograph showing Challenger and the other members of the party to that great adventure. The Professor himself, with his huge beard and busy eyebrows, looks very much like one of our distant ancestors. . . . The model is Doyle himself, heavily disguised, and I suspect that the irascible scientist was much nearer to his heart than his more famous creation, Sherlock Holmes.
>
> ——Arthur C. Clarke, *Astounding Days*

Conan Doyle was dismissive of academic attempts to link Holmes with Joseph Bell. In a newsreel interview he termed such a connection "a monstrous growth from a comparatively small seed." No doubt he would have been equally dismissive of attempts to reduce Professor Challenger to a similar combination of personal memories. With his Assyrian luxuriance of beard Challenger, like Holmes, is the hugely accomplished product of a rare and prolific imagination. And if he rapidly tired of Holmes ("that pale, clear-cut face," he said, that "was taking up an undue share of my imagination"), Challenger's roots remained a mature and growing enthusiasm. More specifically, Doyle's interest in archaeology came late in life, after he had moved to Crowborough on the Sussex Downs in 1908. He had become famous and wealthy, showed an avuncular and paunchy figure, and seemed faintly benign, mustachioed in the Wellsian style.

He began collecting flints and axe-heads, and acquired a large plaster cast of a prehistoric footprint. A direct result of this enthusiasm was *The Lost World*, the first draft of whose outline he wrote on the cover of an archaeological journal. And although the work was preceded by a series of tales ranging over the whole spectrum of antiquity (collected into *The Last Galley*, 1911), *The Lost World* was by far its most incandescent manifestation.

A chapter titled "Tomorrow We Disappear into the Unknown" sets the tone as the ill-matched expedition follows clues found in a notebook left by the American artist and explorer, Maple White. What they discover as "Maple White Land,"

the Lost World, is meticulously detailed; they are able to walk around the perimeter of the plateau in just six days, so it is as large as an English county. It is "an oval contour, with a breadth of about thirty miles and a width of twenty." Its general shape is that of a"shallow funnel, all the sides sloping down to a considerable lake at the centre." The geology is described in a convincing fashion, and there is even speculation on the natural balance of the fauna——why the carnivores haven't multiplied unchecked and thus wiped out their prey.

Subsequent lost worlds (and there were plenty to come) seldom seemed so plausible. A. Hyatt Verrill also used a South American locale for "The Bridge of Light" (*Amazing Stories Quarterly*, Fall 1929); so did A. Merritt in "The Snake Mother" (*The Argosy Weekly*, October 25, 1930 through December 7, 1930), whose hero discovers a lost civilization in an inaccessible Peruvian valley; and L. R. Sherman's "The Throw-Back" (*Argosy All-Story Weekly*, February 21, 1925) takes place in a forbidden Mexican valley of the Sierra Madre inhabited by monsters from the "Secondary Era." In "The Beetle Horde" (*Astounding Stories*, January and February 1930) Victor Rousseau explores "Submundia," a world hidden beneath the South Pole where titular beetles rule a race of degenerated troglodyte humans.

James Hilton's widely known *Lost Horizon* (1933) qualifies, as does *The Man Who Missed the War* (1945) by Dennis Wheatley. But the greatest uncoverer of lost worlds must surely be Edgar Rice Burroughs. His stories set in Pellucidar, "at the Earth's core," rival his two "land that time forgot" novels as probably the finest examples of his work, while in the Tarzan sagas his protagonists stumble across forgotten African civilizations with monotonous regularity long after such possibilities have become absurd. Even the original movie *King Kong* (1933) has more than a passing similarity to *The Lost World*, probably because Willis O'Brian created its special effects——just as he had for the cinema version of Doyle's work in 1925.

Ivor Brown calls this late phase of Doyle's career proof of his "Man-Boyishness," a kind of wilful refusal to age. More likely, having been denied the literary respectability he had sought to achieve through his historical novels——denied by the vast and continuing cult popularity of Holmes, whose adventures he ranked in "the lower stratum of literary achievement"——he decided instead to enjoy that celebrity through a series of playful fantasies. Easily the most impressive of these is a short story with the Lovecraftian title of "The Horror of the Heights" (*The Strand Magazine*, November 1913). This opens with the chilling lines, "There are jungles of the upper air, and there are worse things than tigers which inhabit them." The narrative includes what is called the "manuscript known as the Joyce-Armstrong fragment," which details the experiences of an astronaut who climbs to 41,000 feet and discovers a new and weird aerial realm. "Conceive a jellyfish such as sails our summer seas, bell-shaped and of enormous size——far larger, I should judge, than the dome of St. Paul's," he reports. "It was a light pink colour veined with a delicate green, but the whole huge fabric so tenuous that it was but a fairy outline against the dark blue sky. It pulsed with a delicate and regular rhythm. From it depended two long, drooping, green tentacles which swayed slowly backwards and forwards. This gorgeous vision passed gently with noiseless dignity over my head, as light and fragile as a soap-bubble." The aeronaut is soon attacked by less attractive denizens of the sky——"threatening and loathesome" with "goggling eyes . . . cold and merciless in their viscid hatred." The details of the ascent, the technical description of the biplane's operation and the problems encountered in its maneuvering are authentically described, and the appearance of Doyle's unearthly creatures stunningly imaginative. Above all, the order of literacy is something only occasionally achieved in science-fiction. This work, too, had its feeble imitators. Arthur C. Clarke comments on the similarities, too close to be coincidence, between it and S. P. Meek's short story "Beyond the Heaviside Layer" (*Astounding Stories*, July 1930). Conan Doyle not

only did it first, says Clarke, but his story was written "only ten years after the first heavier-than-air machines had staggered off the ground."

A second story, "The Terror of Blue John Gap" (*The Strand Magazine*, September 1910), tells of a "monstrous inchoate creature, not dissimilar to Stoker's "White Worm," living beneath the "hollow" country of Derbyshire,"a creature as no nightmare had ever brought to my imagination." Doyle even hints at a larger subterranean world of such animals from which this monster originated. These tales, and some further Challenger exploits, show his science-fiction at its sophisticated best, competing favorably with comparable efforts of H. G. Wells. In addition to "When the World Screamed" (already cited here) there is "The Disintegration Machine" (*The Strand Magazine*, January 1929), a light comical squib about a Latvian scientist's odd invention.

The Poison Belt (1913) has divided critics of the genre. In his *Trillion Year Spree* (1986) Brian Aldiss dismisses it as "a tepid performance, much under Wells's influence," and to David Kyle it is merely an "almost-the-end-of-the-world story again reflecting Poe" (*A Pictorial History of Science Fiction*, 1976). But in his *Science-Fiction / the Early Years* (1991) Everett Bleiler finds this novel, in which the Earth drifts through a region of cosmic gas which threatens to destroy all animal life, "one of Doyle's finest stories, with moments of humor, good insights, and the usual dynamism." Challenger, Malone and *The Lost World* crew escape by use of air-purifying cannisters, and emerge into an aftermath of vast desolation, fictional territory later revisited by the "School of Cosy Disaster" novelists such as John Christopher and John Beynon Harris (as John Wyndham). Mankind's dreadful fate is averted only when people begin to revive from what turns out to be not death but merely a comatose state.

V

It would be kind to leave Doyle at this point, for what follows is a slow decline. Something, possibly his increasing age and the horrific scale of slaughter in World War I, to which he lost his son and brother, affected his vision. He had long since abandoned Catholicism in favor of agnosticism, but now he began to succumb to the comforting lures of spiritualism. A younger Doyle, after seeing action against the Boers at Bloemfontain, had written, "Wonderful is the atmosphere of war. When the millenium comes the world will gain much, but it will lose its greatest thrill," and his swaggering Brigadier Gerard swashbucklers delighted in bloodshed. But now the tone changes. In *The Land of Mist* (1926) he laments on "how everything has been turned to evil. We got knowledge of airships. We bomb cities with them. We learn how to sail under the sea. We murder seamen with our new knowledge. We gain command over chemicals. We turn them into explosives or poison gas. It goes from worse to worse. . . ." Yet Doyle himself forsaw some of these happenings. His short story "Danger" (*The Strand Magazine*, July 1914) predicted submarine warfare in a fictional siege of England by "Norland," just one month before European hostilities began; and "The Death Voyage" (*The Saturday Evening Post*, September 28, 1929) is an alternative history postulating an imperial melodrama around events in the war's final hours. Here, as the German war machine disintegrates, the Kaiser is carried to safety across Europe in a sealed railroad car to lead his fleet into a "death voyage" against overwhelming odds. Doyle's attitude is respectful of this "great adventure of the supreme sacrifice," this "armageddon of the sea."

But the key work in this phase of Doyle's life is *The Land of Mist* itself, a hideously inept propaganda text for his new-found faith, thinly disguised as fiction. "Postwar conditions and new world problems had left their mark," says Malone. Doyle had toyed with Buddhism and Theosophy, hypnotism and Oriental mysticism, and had pored over F. W. H. Myers's study of psychology, *Human Personality*, all in an attempt to find meaning and explanation for the Great War's carnage.

It could be argued that Doyle's interest in spiritualism had deep roots. He had attended séances as early as 1879, and although remaining a skeptic he incorporated spiritualism in his fiction. Thus his short story "Playing with Fire" (*The Strand Magazine*, April 1900) deals playfully (yet warningly) with a séance which conjures up a unicorn.

The Land of Mist uses the "Lost World" personnel to detail Doyle's own experiences of seeing and smelling ectoplasmic manifestations, and an annotated index of sources follows the story. Lord Roxton is seduced by the idea after a spirit visitation by the then late Professor Summerlee; "having exhausted the sporting adventures of this terrestrial globe, he is now turning to those of the dim, dark and dubious regions of psychic research." Initially, Challenger is fiercely hostile, snorting "like an angry buffalo" at the very mention of visiting a spiritualist——"next week the lunatic asylum, I presume?" Perhaps Doyle should have taken note of his character's commendable contempt ("there seems to me to be absolutely no limit to the inanity and credulity of the human race") instead of contriving the professor's unlikely conversion, and abandoning him as an apostle of pseudoscience. Whatever rationalist bias marked Doyle's earlier flights of imagination are completely missing, and the work is a sad and undignified end to the career of the contagiously powerful George Edward Challenger.

After 1920 Doyle devoted most of his time, money and still considerable energies to promoting his new faith. He wrote books on the subject, including a well-researched two-volume *History of Spiritualism* (1926), and even *The Coming of the Fairies* (1922), which credulously presents what are clearly faked photographs to show the existence of these little creatures.

His last book, and final "Lost World," was *The Maracot Deep* (1929), published in the year before his death. To Ivor Brown this is "a descent into nonsense as well as into the Atlantic." Maracot himself, a kind of fusion of Doyle's most successful characters, Challenger and Holmes, discovers Atlantis, battles forces of evil on the ocean bed, and uses psychic forces to destroy a monstrous "Lord of the Dark Face" who menaces the subaquatic civilization. The denouement is totally unconvincing.

But as his best, during his finest years, Conan Doyle's forays into science-fiction stand up well in comparison with those of the best of his contemporaries, while *The Lost World* rightly remains a classic of the genre——a fantasy as rich as "the wild dream of an opium smoker, a vision of delirium. . . ."

"Evolution," he wrote through the mouthpiece of Mr. Waldron, "was not a spent force, but one still working, and even greater achievements were in store." In those words lie all the promised wonder and anticipation of the most visionary science-fiction.

Author's note: In addition to titles specifically mentioned in the text above, I have consulted the following books in the course of writing this article: Ronald Piersall's *Conan Doyle: a Biographical Solution* (1977), Owen Dudley Edwards's *The Quest for Sherlock Holmes* (1983), *The Unknown Conan Doyle / Uncollected Stories* (1982), edited by John Michael Gibson and Richard Lancelyn Green, and Arthur Conan Doyle's *Memories and Adventures* (1989). I am also indebted to Sam Moskowitz for furnishing me the original publication dates of several cited Doyle stories.

——oOo——

UNHEARD PLEA

I brave the winds of wintered sky,
Snowflakes in my eye,
And trek the fields of frozen white,
Gleaming skull-face bright.

I clutch my hand-carved amulet,
Trudging bravely yet,
And pray the gods will somehow lift
Snows that pile and drift.

WEAPON

(Upon finding a rose in
a book of Emily Dickinson)

Yes, rose petals battle with Time,
They sever and slash Death down,
So fling me a rose when I'm
Jailed in Death's grim town.
I'll swing it at Death's own crown,
Sundering Death's black evening gown.

—*Steve Eng*

BERNARR MACFADDEN

AND HIS OBSESSION WITH SCIENCE-FICTION

PART SEVEN: CONCLUSION

Sam Moskowitz

In December 1927, the first (January 1928) issue of a quarterly publication titled *Your Body* was brought to the attention of Bernarr Macfadden, probably by his printer, the Art Color Company of Dunellen, New Jersey. This magazine was published by Hugo Gernsback, who also issued *Amazing Stories*, *Radio News* and *Science and Invention*. All of these were printed at the same plant that produced Macfadden's many magazines.

Your Body was subtitled "Know Yourself," and carried the legend "devoted to the welfare of the human body." It was "bedsheet"-sized, 112 pages, printed on thick, book paper, and priced at 50¢. The cover, and all future covers under the Gernsback ownership, were artists' renderings of famous statues of nude women, duly credited to their sculptors and the museums where they could be found. The magazine's editorial directors, who were also contributors, included six medical doctors and three doctors of philosophy; one of the latter, M. H. Frank, was managing editor. Full-paged advertisements for other Gernsback titles appeared in *Your Body* regularly.

The editorial in the third (August 1928) number declared, "Our publication is not a 'health magazine.' It is an encyclopedia of what every man and woman should know to live an intelligent physical life, a working manual of 'popular practical knowledge' by aid of which you may sanely 'know yourself.'" Articles in this number included "The Chemical Importance of Appetite," "Poisoning from Food," "Marriage and Social Disease," and serious scientific treatment of such subjects as evolution and the function of the heart.

Despite any editorial disclaimers, however, comparison between *Your Health* and Macfadden's magazine *Physical Culture* became inevitable. Probably it would be accurate to state that the former stressed the educational aspects of its subjects, and the latter the sensational ones. It would also be accurate to state that *Your Body* printed higher quality, more authentic material and presented a considerably more dignified appearance; there was nothing in it comparable to Macfadden's proselyting of his pet theories. Nevertheless, since both appealed to a popular readership, *Your Health* was a competing threat to *Physical Culture*.

Now, Macfadden was thoroughly familiar with Gernsback's magazines, and sometimes ran full-paged advertisements for *Physical Culture* in *Science and Invention*. He was probably also acquainted with Gernsback personally, since both men lived in the same New York City apartment building. But his best source of information was the printer they both used, the Art Color company.

It should be emphasized here that among many large customers, Macfadden was Art Color's largest. It sometimes printed as many as fifteen million copies a month of his periodicals. A request from Macfadden for information on Gernsback, even confidential information, could be ignored only at considerable financial peril. Furthermore, Macfadden paid his bills promptly. To the contrary, Gerns-

back was a slow payer, always leaving a big balance in arrears which was covered by promissory notes. Thus in part he actually ran his business on someone else's capital.

Macfadden, an aggressive competitor, would have no hesitation in collecting information about Gernsback, and what he learned gave him some definite ideas. *Your Body* had a printing-run of 50,000 copies and sold only 25,000, but its price was double that of *Physical Culture*. The circulation of both *Radio News* and *Science and Invention* were declining, yet they still earned a modest profit. Gernsback's moneymakers were *Amazing Stories* and its *Annual* and *Quarterly*, which sold upward of 100,000 copies an issue. And as we have seen, Macfadden enjoyed science-fiction, but had no science-fiction magazine of his own.

The crucial element in the situation was Gernsback's debt, which made him vulnerable to attack. His two largest creditors were Art Color and Bulkley, Dunton & Co., his paper supplier. They exerted pressure and succeeded in installing on the staff of The Experimenter Publishing Company an accountant named Ernest O. Macklin. The ostensible purpose was to ensure that Gernsback's creditors received preferential treatment, and to reduce the Experimenter debt systematically.

But to his chagrin, Gernsback soon found that Macklin and S. John Block, a lawyer representing the creditors, were urging him to expunge the debt by selling his firm to Macfadden. Gernsback later claimed that they had threatened to throw him into involuntary bankruptcy if he failed to do so. Since this was possible under laws then in effect, he had no choice but to enter into negotiations with Macfadden and his representatives. Gernsback was convinced that his corporation was financially viable, and of course had no wish to sell. Further, the price offered was scarcely more than enough to pay off his indebtedness; he would be left with little or nothing to start over with. Macfadden offered to let him remain on a salary basis as president, but Gernsback's business sense did not succumb to his ego. Discussions were protracted, and the position became deadlocked.

The negotiations were terminated when Block arranged for the transfer of small portions of Gernsback's debt to three paid members of his office staff. They were: Robert Halpern, a young lawyer (for whom this would be the first participating case), in the amount of $2,095.24; Daniel Walters, also a lawyer, $2,030.65; and Marie E. Bachman, a secretary, $2,094.20. These three pressed their claims together and threw The Experimenter Publishing Company into involuntary bankruptcy on February 20, 1929. Macfadden was apparently piqued by Gernsback's obstinacy and delaying tactics as he bargained for the best deal he could get, and probably felt he could buy Experimenter more cheaply if it was up for forced sale under bankruptcy proceedings. And subsequent developments strongly suggest that he was operating behind the scenes to bring bankruptcy about.

When the Experimenter assets were put up for sale, Macfadden was among the bidders, but he withdrew in favor of the Mackinnon-Fly Company, possibly because Gernsback's lawyers had begun attempts in Bankruptcy Court to nail him on conspiracy charges, and he felt it expeditious to keep a lower profile. It did not mean that he had lost interest in acquiring Experimenter, as we shall see.

MacKinnon-Fly was the publisher of *Plain Talk*, a short-lived woman's magazine, and two minor pulps, *Wild West Stories and Complete Novel Magazine* and *Complete Detective Novel Stories*. At best, these were only modestly profitable. Yet the company was able to offer for Experimenter the sum of $457,000 plus whatever was needed to pay any of the bankrupted firm's unrecorded debts. Where could this money have come from? Clearly it could never have been accumulated merely from earnings, and even in 1929 no bank would loan MacKinnon-Fly, a small firm, so substantial a sum. Nor were its founders affluent: Bergan MacKinnon had been only an advertising salesman for *Pictorial Review*, and H. K. Fly a publisher of two-dollar adventure, detective and western novels so minor that he is not even mentioned in John Tebbel's definitive *A History of Book Publishing in the United States* (four volumes, 1975).

Now, postal regulations require that all magazines print periodic statements listing their owners and editors. Inspection of those for *Wild West Stories* and *Complete Detective Novel Stories* reveal that their editor at this time was H. A. Keller. Keller was an editorial director at Macfadden Publications; he had previously supervised its *Ghost Stories* and *True Detective Mysteries*, and at the time of the bankruptcy was editing *Physical Culture*. (After the MacKinnon-Fly purchase of Experimenter he also showed up on the statement of ownership in the Winter 1929 issue of *Your Body* as editor of that title as well!) It seems incontestable, then, that Bernarr Macfadden either owned MacKinnon-Fly, or had acquired a controlling interest in it.

This could have been managed very easily. Because the circulation of all his magazines ran into the millions, Macfadden had set up his own company to distribute them, and was thus independent of the American News Company and other major distributors. Any publisher can have its periodicals disseminated through such companies on a percentage-of-sales basis. MacKinnon-Fly was probably already having its pulps distributed through Macfadden's company.

Now, distributors often give advances against sales to their customers. (There is no record of these ever being refused.) If MacKinnon-Fly had received cumulative advances far in excess of what their sales covered, and was unable to return the balance on demand, they could have been taken over by Macfadden's distributor. (Such takeovers frequently happen in the publishing world.) Once MacKinnon-Fly was under Macfadden's control, it could be funded to whatever extent was required——for example, by being given inordinate advances——for successful bidding on Experimenter's assets.

At almost the same time that Gernsback's Experimenter Publishing Company was being spun into involuntary bankruptcy, something else was happening in the publishing world which involved members of Bernarr Macfadden's staff. The adventure pulp *Brief Stories* announced in its February 1929 number that it was under "new editorial management," and that the man replacing William Kofoed as editor was W. Adolphe Roberts. Roberts had been a staff writer at Macfadden Publications since 1926, and will be remembered as having edited *Ghost Stories* magazine in 1927-1928. Of even more importance was the simultaneous announcement that Fulton Oursler, head of all the Macfadden magazines, would contribute to *Brief Stories* a fictionized biography of the famed stage performer Adah Isaacs Menken titled "The World's delight." As if that were not enough, Oursler's wife, Grace Perkins, would have a number of short stories in future issues. With the June 1929 number the name of the publisher changed from The Personal Arts Company to The Lexington Publishing Corporation, and in August Macfadden staffman H. A. Keller was listed as author of the lead story, "The Nefarious Hotel," whose underworld scene echoed his experience as editor of *True Detective Mysteries*. It was evident that Macfadden must now have a major interest in (if not complete ownership of) *Brief Stories*.

In the January 1930 issue the owner is listed as The Novel Magazine Corporation and the publisher as MacKinnon & Fly. Advertisements began to appear regularly for the special booklets of the Experimenter Publishing Corporation, and in March 1930 there was one for *Amazing Stories Quarterly*. Clearly, *Brief Stories* had not only become a part of the MacKinnon-Fly organization, but a bonafide companion magazine to *Amazing Stories*. To commemorate that fact officially, there was begun the first science-fiction in the magazine's history, Roy Norton's serial novel "The Toll of the Sea" (December 1929 through June 1930). Although not identified as such, the story was a reprint of a book published by Appleton in 1909. (It had also appeared as a serial under the title "The Land of the Lost" in *Popular Magazine*, March through August 1909, and in abridged book form in England in 1925.)

The question of why *Brief Stories* would run a novel-length reprint arises, as does that of whether its other stories might also be unidentified reprints. One answer to the former presents itself. In its two other pulps MacKinnon-Fly used reprints of hard-cover novels. This may have happened with "The

Toll of the Sea," and the publishers may not even have been aware that it ever had been printed in another magazine.

"The Toll of the Sea" is one of the better lost race novels, and is by any definition true science-fiction. It deals with an advanced civilization, new inventions, geological catastrophe, and its canvas eventually involves the entire planet. There is plenty of action, and the characters are notably more than two-dimensional. (I am confining myself to this summary only because a recent reference book has described its plot in considerable detail.*) Norton is the author of several other science-fiction works in both magazines and books, but "The Toll of the Sea" is clearly his best. Its only fault is its rather slow pace, which is not uncharacteristic of the age in which it first appeared, but this was probably mitigated to some extent by its appearance in *Brief Stories* in serial form.

One additional facet of this magazine's history deserves mention here. It once had a companion devoted to occult fiction and articles on magic and mystical experiences titled *Tales of Magic and Mystery*. It was also edited by Kofoed, assisted by Walter Gibson. It lasted but five issues (December 1927 through April 1928), and featured covers by Elliot Dold and Earle Bergey (among their earliest). Fantasy collectors will remember the magazine because it printed stories by Frank Owen and one by H. P. Lovecraft ("Cool Air," March 1928).

After the bankruptcy the changes in corporate name on *Amazing Stories* and *Amazing Stories Quarterly* were rapid. While in receivership, the owner was listed as The Irving Trust Company. The publisher's name changed from The Experimenter Publishing Company, Inc. to Experimenter Publications, Inc., then to Experimenter Publishing, Inc., followed by Radio-Science Publications. Early in 1931 Mackinnon & Fly was replaced by a new executive staff, with W. Z. Shafer as as president. Finally in December 1931 Bernarr Macfadden was listed as publisher and owner. It had taken over two years and many adroit legal shenanigans for him to come out in the open.

Along with *Radio News*, *Amazing Stories* and *Amazing Stories Quarterly* were transferred to Teck Publications, with Lee Ellmaker as president. (By no coincidence Ellmaker was the general manager of Macfadden Publications.) The stationery of Teck Publications carried the sub-heading "The Macfadden Group." At some unknown time during 1932 Teck became the property of Lee Ellmaker.

The only mention of the Macfadden takeover ever published in the early fan press appeared in *The Time Traveller* for June 1932, in Mort Weisinger's gossip column "Out of the Ether":

> But how did "The Doubt" ever land in *Amazing Stories*—its total lack of science shows that Bernarr Macfadden is exerting his influence...and while we're on the subject, when we first learned that Macfadden had taken over *Amazing*, we thought that Bernarr would probably retain the sensational title and turn the magazine into one of those confessional things. . . . Can you imagine Capt. Meek or Dr. Breuer giving the lowdown on his love-life? Whoops!

When questioned about this item shortly before his death in 1978 Weisinger could not remember that he had ever known about Macfadden taking over *Amazing Stories*.

There are good reasons why this coup went largely unnoticed. Despite his gigantic ego, Macfadden's name never appeared in the magazine except in the Statement of Ownership. More important, probably, was that there were no changes in the nature of the stories or the stable of authors. Highlights such as "Skylark Three" by E. E. Smith and John Taine's "Seeds of Life" still appeared periodically; and "regulars" such as Harl Vincent, David H. Keller, A. Hyatt Verrill, Stanton Coblentz, Miles J. Breuer, Jack Williamson, Edmond Hamilton, Bob Olsen, R. F. Starzl and G. Peyton Wertenbaker continued to contribute.

Bernarr Macfadden's next acquisition was totally above-board. In 1931 he gave J. M. Patterson and Robert McCormick of *The Chicago Tribune* his successful newspaper *The Detroit Daily* in exchange for their *Liberty Magazine*. *Liberty* had

*E. F. Bleiler, *Science-Fiction / the Early Years* (1991), pp. 564-565.

been established in 1924 as a five-cent weekly competitor to *The Saturday Evening Post* and *Collier's*. It was slightly smaller in size than these, but like them it slanted its offerings towards women, though there was always something for men in every issue. It attained a circulation of two million, but was never a favorite of advertisers. In the seven years they ran it, the original owners were reputed to have lost twelve million dollars.

The most popular feature *Liberty* had ever run was a novel of future war, "The Red Napoleon" by Floyd Gibbons. Gibbons was a famous *Chicago Tribune* columnist and radio news commentator, and had been a war correspondent during the Mexican Revolution and World War I. Subtitled "A Correspondent's Inside Story of the War of the Races (1933-1936)," "The Red Napoleon" appeared in *Liberty* in eighteen installments (April 6, 1929 through August 3, 1929). Each one offered retouched photographs, improvised headlines from existing newspapers, and frequent maps to show progress of the battle action. Gibbons tells the story as one of its participants, and from the standpoint of excitement, superior writing and the illusion of authenticity it is certainly a strong contender for the best future war novel ever written.

"The Red Napoleon" is populated with many contemporary world leaders, and Gibbons's foresight in understanding the military role air power would play in the future is remarkable. His detailed history of the life of the would-be dictator of the world is extremely well done, and results in a well-rounded villain instead of a cardboard "nasty." On reading the story one can believe, as *Liberty's* editor Sheppard Butler claimed in promotional material, that Gibbons actually did consult military experts in plotting the fictional campaigns. The novel, with all its maps, appeared in book form immediately after magazine publication; it went through several printings, and was later issued in a cheap edition.

Now science-fiction of any type, including future war, was a rarity in high-circulating slick magazines, and its success in *Liberty* failed to encourage imitation in its competitors. But this stance was modified to some degree when Bernarr Macfadden took over the magazine. On April 1, 1931 he placed Fulton Oursler in charge of the publication. Oursler was at first ambivalent about his added duties. He was already supervising nine titles, and addition of a weekly with a multimillion-copy circulation would literally double his work load. On the other hand, managing one of the nation's leading and most influential publications was an attractive challenge.

Oursler's introduction of imaginative pieces were shorter in form than Butler's, speculations like "What the World Will Be Like in 50 Years" by H. G. Wells in 1931 and Billy Mitchell's "Will Japan Try to Conquer the United States?" in 1932. There were also occasional short fantasies, such as "M. Cliquant's Mistake" by Douglas Newton (February 20, 1932) and Ben Ames Williams's "In the Midst of Death" (May 28, 1932). Newton and Williams were then well known writers, and both had experience in the genre (Newton had written a series of stories about a master villain seeking to conquer the world for *Flynn's Detective Weekly* in 1927, and Williams had contributed several fantasies to *All-Story Weekly* in 1917-19); but Fulton Oursler was looking for bigger game. He was trying hard to build circulation, and a sure circulation-builder would be Tarzan of the Apes.

In this effort he was successful, for negotiations with Edgar Rice Burroughs secured for *Liberty* the newest Tarzan novel, "Tarzan and the Lion Man." For this Burroughs received $10,000, the highest amount he was ever to get for first magazine serial rights to one of his novels. (He was not the magazine's highest paid author, however; *Liberty* paid up to $50,000 for works of famous women writers.) The novel began in the November 11, 1933 issue and ran for nine weekly installments through January 6, 1934. It was very competently illustrated by Ray Dean, some interior illustrations being in two colors (red and black or red and blue), and of course was preceded by Oursler's fulsome introductory blurbs.

In "Tarzan and the Lion Man" a movie company journeys to Africa to film a picture like *Tarzan of the Apes*, about a white man raised by lions. A muscular, athletic actor named Obroski is to play the role of the Lion Man. His build and features are so similar to Tarzan's that it is difficult to tell the two men apart. Heading the company as producer and director are Tom Orman and Bill West. To play the leading feminine roles in the picture are Rhonda Terry and Naomi Mason.

As the company traverses darkest Africa, it comes under repeated ambush by the Bansuto tribe, which picks off a few of the porters every day. Eventually all the natives with the party except a few of the Arabs desert. (During this episode the blacks are frequently referred to in dialogue as "n[redacted]s," "coons" and "smokes.") Obrowski then disappears, captured by the natives, and the Arabs leave, taking the girls. Only the male members of the troupe are left.

Tarzan has been in the background, observing these events, but he does not figure in this first portion of the novel. He is influenced to intervene, however, by watching Obroski put up a heroic but losing fight against a thousand natives before being overpowered. He succeeds in freeing him, and then leads him through the jungle to his friend Jad-Bal-Ja, the Golden Lion and a lioness. But Obroski falls ill of an African fever.

At this point several lines of action proceed simultaneously: that of the girls, who have managed to escape from the Arabs; the pursuit of the Arabs by West and Orman, who do not know this; and Tarzan's intervention to help all members of the party. (This is typical of Burroughs, who usually keeps at least two meshing stories running at the same time.) At this point, too, the novel veers from jungle adventure into biological science-fiction.

Rhonda's horse is killed by a lion, and as she continues her way on foot she is approached by two gorilla-like, English-speaking creatures who say they will take her to "God." They guide her to a strange city at the foot of a cliff. There other gorilla-like creatures cultivate fields of crops with crude tools. They live in structures composed of brick and bamboo and carry axe-like weapons. The city is called London, the river running past it is The Thames, and Rhonda meets a creature named Henry the Eighth. She learns they are all subservient to "God," who lives in a nearby castle.

Meanwhile, Naomi's horse, running away from the attacking lion, carries her back to the Arabs. She bargains with them for her freedom, promising to lead them to The Valley of Diamonds. This spot is shown on a map her company carried with them; everyone had presumed it to be legendary, but as more and more of the features the map shows are actually found, they are coming to believe that the valley may actually exist. The gorilla creatures attack the Arabs, kill most of them, and seize Naomi. She is rescued by Tarzan, whom she takes for Obroski (who has been left to recover from his fever in a friendly native village). Tarzan returns her to Orman and West.

He then enters the castle, where he is trapped in a dungeon with Rhonda. There they meet "God," who is half man and half gorilla. He tells them he was once a white man, born in England in 1838. He was discovered stealing tissue from the bodies of long-dead monarchs, and fled to Africa. There he continued his biological experiments, transferring certain human genes to gorillas. Gradually they changed, taking on human traits and increasing their capabilities of speech. New generations improved their minds and ability to communicate. He taught them agriculture and architecture, gave them laws, and set up a ruling class of royalty with himself as supreme "God." He also found that through a combination of cannibalism and a transfer of certain cells from the gorillas he could indefinitely prolong his own life, though in the process he began to take on some of the gorillas' physical characteristics. At this point the narrative becomes a satire on religion and royalty. (Burroughs had previously satirized religion, particularly in his Martian novels.)

With the aid of a fire, Tarzan escapes from the castle, carrying "God" with him. They take refuge in the cave of a disciple. It develops that "God" had made the map of the Valley of Diamonds, and that it is truly authentic. Additionally, there is nearby another village of mutants, creatures which are more like humans than gorillas; some of them, indeed, are indistinguishable from humans. Rhonda is captured by one of these. A member of this mutant pack is a beautiful, golden-haired girl of tremendous ferocity and fighting ability, who swings through the trees with the same alacrity as Tarzan. (She may well have been the inspiration for Sheena, a character featured later in *Jungle Stories* magazine.)

Tarzan frees Rhonda and captures the golden-haired girl. Together they find The Valley of Diamonds, and rejoin Ormund, West and the movie caravan. Everyone believes Tarzan is Obroski, so he takes over the latter's film role, supplying natives and wild animals as they are needed. Obroski, meanwhile, has died of fever in the village where he had been left.

They all return to Hollywood, where the wild girl becomes a movie star. Another studio is casting for a Tarzan picture and Tarzan applies for the role, but is rejected by the producer because "he is not the type." They do offer him a bit part, playing a white hunter, which he accepts. During the filming a lion on the set goes beserk and Tarzan is forced to kill him, whereupon he is fired for destroying a $10,000 property. The novel ends there as a satire on Hollywood.

In "Tarzan and the Lion Man" Burroughs is much too slow to get into the heart of the action. Leaving Tarzan out of the early plot is also detrimental to the work. Not until the last third of the novel, when the gorilla-men, the mutants and the lost city are introduced does does either the imaginative detail or the writing approach the author's better standards. This, along with other examples which could be cited, lead one to believe that Burroughs did his best work when he was at his most imaginative. His writing seems to become more rich and engrossing when he is mining new veins of speculation. Although some of his Tarzan plots are repetitive, I feel that at heart he was a creative writer who retreated into self-parody when forced to use unvarying plots. His problem was that editors wanted the same formulas that had established his popularity.

When comparing the text of the serial with that of the later (1934) book version, one finds that occasional sentences are deleted, but there is no significant rewriting. The magazine version is therefore slightly shorter, but not markedly different.

During 1935 and 1936 *Liberty* ran a series of fictionized presentations of future development under the heading "The World of Tomorrow." These were written by the veteran science-fiction author Ray Cummings. Typical of these was "No Office Wife for You" (December 21, 1935). Here a sales manager dictates letters which are typed from his voice by machine. He holds a national conference with his salesmen, whose images appear on twenty television screens. At five o'clock he commutes to his home by air. He has spent a full, productive day without speaking in person to a single human being.

The next major science-fiction work in *Liberty* was "The World Goes Smash" by Samuel Hopkins Adams, serialized in ten installments (September 19 through November 20, 1937). Adams was a prolific contributor to the pulps and slicks, had already written another science-fiction novel (*The Flying Death*, 1908), and was also famous as an editor, historian and biographer.

The novel is set in the near-future, 1940, and describes an attempted take-over of the United States government by a militant politically-oriented crime ring. Several new futuristic weapons are introduced, and after much aimless destruction the coup is defeated and the country starts to rebuild. "The World Goes Smash" is completely unconvincing, sensationally melodramatic and only weakly related to the trends toward dictatorship then prevalent in Europe. Despite these grave deficiencies, Adams's name was sufficiently well known to insure the novel's appearing in book form in 1938.

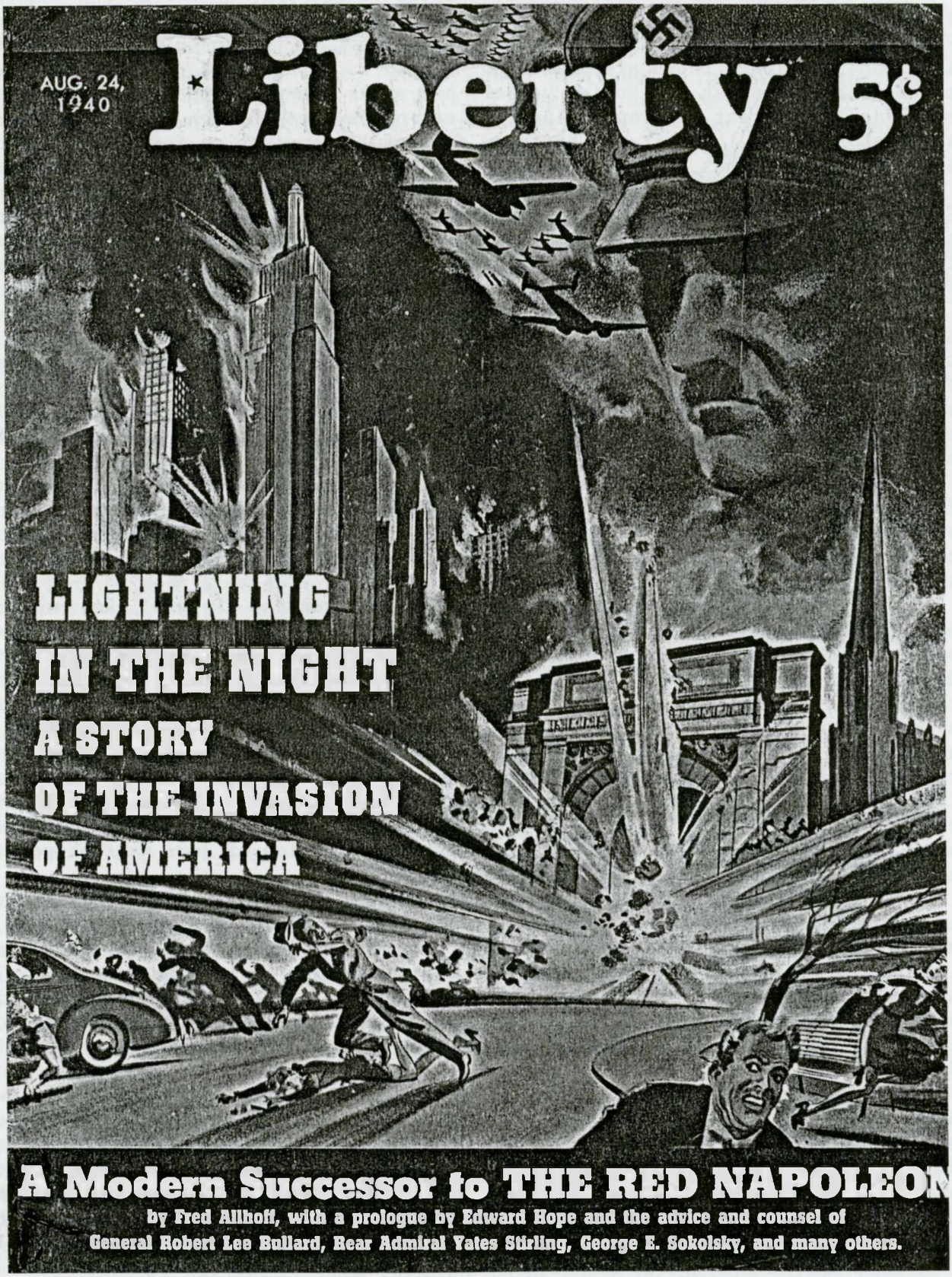
The incredible number of Bernarr Macfadden's employees who were involved with fantasy and science-fiction has already been cited, and it is interesting to note that during the *Liberty* period it was augmented by William Charles Oursler, Fulton's son. Will Oursler had been an intimate of the Macfadden family since his earliest days. In fact, he literally owed his life to Mary Macfadden, who saved him from drowning at the age of eight. Like his father, he achieved his greatest success through religious writings, but his first story, "Mandolin," was sent to *Weird Tales* magazine. It was originally submitted under the pen name of Virginia Richards, but some time between acceptance and publication he apparently had a change of heart, for it was printed under his own name. It appeared in the June 1934 issue, and Will Oursler received a cent a word for it.

Although *Liberty* consistently printed work by some of the greatest names in contemporary writing, old timers and occasional readers' letters never let the editor forget that the most popular story the magazine had ever printed was "The Red Napoleon," Floyd Gibbons's future war epic. By 1939 World War II had broken out; under Adolf Hitler Germany overran country after country in Europe, France was prostrate, and England was battling for survival. Hitler's success raised the not far-fetched spectre that his ambition was actually world conquest. The United States was still an isolationist country, with a pitifully small army and air force for so rich a nation. Fulton Oursler saw this situation as an opportunity. At a stroke, he would at once duplicate the Gibbons shocker, perform a national service by demonstrating the urgent need for rearmament, and at the same time provide the sensationalism that would greatly increase *Liberty's* circulation.

At that time he had three full-time writers on his staff. They were: Frederick L. Collins, a veteran editor of such publications as *Woman's Home Companion* and *McClure's Magazine*; Edward Doherty, who was primarily a features editor; and Fred Allhoff, who had come to *Liberty* in 1937. Though Alhoff was primarily a writer of articles, he had produced fiction for Street and Smith's *Detective Story* and *Dime Detective*, and also contributed to Macfadden's *True Story Magazine*. In Alhoff Oursler felt he had the right combination: a man who through past experience in non-fiction could give the impression of authenticity, yet who could write fiction smoothly enough so that his planned feature would not read like an article.

The result was Alhoff's "Lightning in the Night," a novel that began in the August 24, 1940 issue of *Liberty*. (The magazine cover of this number is reproduced on the opposite page.) This is an alternate future story: what would be the significance to the United States if England collapsed? Edward Hope's prolog consists of 4000 words of simulated newspaper stories which summarize what could happen in the next five years of the war. The headline for the first of these is: "British Sign Nazi Peace, Yield Navy, Possessions to Save Unblasted Cities." In the "deck" to the headline it is revealed that Canada, Australia, South Africa and India have ceded from the British Empire and become independent states. By 1945, flaunting the Monroe Doctrine, Germany has taken over all British, French, Dutch and Danish colonies in the New World. A pro-German regime is elected in Mexico, and numerous border incidents ensue. Germany has consolidated her gains on the European continent; a carefully planned coup results in the seizure of Mussolini, who is now mentally unbalanced, and he is then exiled to the tiny isle of Corvo, from which he periodically delivers public speeches on the glories of Fascism. All is ready for the takeover of the United States. (All that is known about the man who concocted this prolog is that his real name was Edward Hope Goffee, Jr., and that he was another Macfadden staffer and an ex-newspaperman.)

Hitler, who is in control of the combined navies of Europe, now rules the seas. He establishes bases in Newfoundland and in the Caribbean, and threatens America with a devastating war if she does not disarm and agree to form an alliance with Germany for world economic denomination.


AUG. 24, 1940
Liberty
5¢
LIGHTNING IN THE NIGHT
A STORY OF THE INVASION OF AMERICA
A Modern Successor to THE RED NAPOLEON
by Fred Allhoff, with a prologue by Edward Hope and the advice and counsel of
General Robert Lee Bullard, Rear Admiral Yates Stirling, George E. Sokolsky, and many others.

When the United States refuses these terms, 300 planes from the combined fleets of Japan and the U. S. S. R., in accordance with a German master plan, attack Pearl Harbor. Our ships are not in port, but most of the installations and the airplanes stationed there are destroyed. Alaska is also bombed. Our Pacific fleet takes on the Japanese and Soviet vessels and sinks enough of them to induce the remainder to retreat, and our Atlantic fleet heads west through the Panama Canal as reinforcements. But it all has been a carefully engineered feint. The Germans seize the canal, thus trapping our entire navy in one ocean.

The United States no longer has enough ships in the Atlantic to stop a German invasion, and it will take weeks for units of the navy, harrassed by submarines, to return via Cape Horn. Nevertheless, they set out. The Japanese and the Soviets take advantage of the relaxed pressure and establish bases in Alaska, from which they begin systematic bombing of our west coast cities.

After a devastating bombing, Seattle is occupied. The message is driven home that America needs an air force as a separate arm of defense, and that splitting control of defense between the army and the navy is a grave tactical mistake. This is emphasized when 250 German bombers attack New York City. They are met by an inadequate number of fighter planes; fires break out in the streets, and an even greater number spread from flaming storage tanks of oil and gas on the nearby New Jersey shore. Gas bombs are also employed.

But again, the bombing has been a feint to distract the coastal air force from the Germans' real landing objective, which is further south. Through the use of commandos they silence the defensive guns of Baltimore and occupy the city. A concentration camp for prisoners is set up on the island of Assateague, off the southern tip of Maryland.

There are two characters, Lt. Douglas Norton and Peggy O'Liam, who appear in the narrative of "Lightning in the Night," but they are no more than cardboard characters used to convey a sense of immediacy and cohesion to the events. Here, as in much panoramic science-fiction, what happens is more important than the people to whom it happens, and the unusual event becomes the true focus of the story. At one point Norton is assigned aboard a submarine which is commanded by an American-born German, assisted by a Jew. (This seems an obvious attempt to remove any onus from Germans of American descent.) He proves to be the most valiant commander in the American submarine fleet, and plays an important role in the rescue of Peggy O'Liam the night before she is to be executed as a spy. (In 1940, when this story appeared, the Nazi plan for extermination of Jews was not general knowledge, and no reference to it is ever made.)

To save its public buildings and monuments from destruction, Washington is evacuated, and the president moves to Cincinnati, Ohio. Hitler flies there to meet with him and discuss terms for peace. He had requested that America's leading physicists be present also. At this meeting Hitler springs his surprise. The German scientists have learned how to split the atom, and in one month they will have purified enough uranium-235 to destroy all American cities. America has only thirty days in which to sign a dictated peace if it wishes to be spared utter devastation.

Then the President of the United States springs a surprise of his own. Here, too, scientists have solved the problem of atomic fission, and at that very moment planes carrying atomic bombs are in flight over the Atlantic towards Germany's cities. If Hitler does not sign an American-dictated peace at this conference (a generous one, since it does not oblige Germany to pay any reparations) all the major cities of that country will be destroyed. At first Hitler refuses, but his generals ask to confer with him privately. A single shot is heard and Hitler is found dead with a gun in his hand. His generals then sign the peace terms.

The novel ran to thirteen installments, concluding in the November 16, 1940 issue of *Liberty*. While it was running, the magazine achieved its highest

circulation ever——probably about 2,500,000 copies. During the period of serialization, a German radio broadcast devoted about five minutes comment to the work.

Because of its accurate predictions of the bombing of Pearl Harbor and the invention of the atomic bomb, Prentice Hall published "Lightning in the Night" as a hard-covered book in 1979. The edition included an excellent new introduction by Terry Miller, describing the world situation at the time the story appeared, and a new (but unsigned) afterword pointing out that the narrative ended with Germany's military and political conquests intact. That situation, it emphasized, was comparable to the cold war with the U. S. S. R. which actually developed in the postwar years, where two powerful nations with opposed ideologies confronted each other with nuclear weapons. For the record, it should also be noted that Alhoff's novel appeared both before the famous Manhattan Project began, and before Cleve Cartmill postulated an atomic bomb in his story "Deadline"(*Astounding Science Fiction*, March 1944). "Lightning in the Night" was a remarkably prescient work.

In the November 2, 1940 issue of *Liberty*, right in the middle of an installment of "Lightning in the Night," Fulton Oursler inserted a provocative notice: "Fu Manchu Is Not Far Away! Watch Out! He may be behind a curtain! In the dark of an upstairs corridor! Or lurking in the shadows on the lawn! He comes and goes mysteriously, this all-powerful Chinese man of mystery. One place you can be sure to find him——in *Liberty*, very soon."

That was an accurate prediction, for the issue in which Alhoff's novel ended saw the first installment of Sax Rohmer's "Fu Manchu and the Panama Canal." Oursler's success in obtaining the work was something of a coup, for up to that time Fu Manchu novels had always appeared in *Collier's*. Obviously he hoped to retain all of *Liberty's* readers by offering them more unusual and attractive fare. That Oursler was well aware of Fu Manchu's sales appeal is shown by the excellent cover he commissioned from Arnold Freberg, which has been described by the Rohmer authority Robert Briney as "one of the best" that author ever had. Oursler may have hoped also to capitalize on the publicity from the release of *The Drums of Fu Manchu*, a movie circulating among theaters as a fifteen-part serial in 1940.

The novel begins in London, where the expected tumultous action involves Fu Manchu's dedicated enemy, Nayland Smith. Rohmer introduces the usual secret doors, mysterious murders and wild chases to maintain an exotic atmosphere and to keep the narrative moving at a breakneck pace. Smith is joined by Kerrigan, a protagonist who has appeared in previous Rohmer stories, and Lionel Barton, a middle aged adverturer. The scene shifts briefly to New York City, and then to Haiti.

On this island they intend to explore underground caves where the legendary leader Christophe is supposed to have hidden vast treasures. Barton possesses a map showing an entrance to these caves, and Fu Manchu has reputedly used them as a laboratory and a base hiding a fleet of submarines. The expected adventures ensue. These are notable for having more of a science-fictional than an occult cast, and include devices such as a force-screen that can stop bullets, an anti-gravity metal, a longevity drug and one to induce catalepsy, and something called an "Eriksen generator," which derives energy from the atmosphere and uses it for propulsion.

Fu Manchu emerges from this novel as a reasonable and constructive figure rather than merely a cardboard villain. (He even offers his aid to the governments of United States and Britain if in exchange they will recognize him as a bona fide world power.) He is portrayed as a brilliant scientist with excellent organizing powers, and has assembled a group of top-notch specialists who conduct original and basic research. Though willing to commit crime to achieve his aims, he is not without feelings or emotions. His accomplishments may be presented with an occult overlay, but all of them turn out to be based on science rather than on the supernatural. The fault here is that Rohmer has simply produced new inventions on demand, with few attempts to rationalize their workings. The novel also

reads as if not carefully planned in advance; many of the events have little or no relevance to the main theme, and seem introduced merely to add wordage.

The work was published in 1941 in book form as *The Island of Fu Manchu*, and went through a number of paperback printings in 1963 and 1976.

We now return to the career of a man well known to followers of science-fiction, Frederick Orlin Tremaine. When we last saw him, he had spent a year with Macfadden Publications as editor of *Brain Power* and *True Story Magazine*.* In 1924 he left to work for Hearst's *Smart Set*, which he edited for two years. After that he was involved with *Crossroads*, *Everybody's* and the Clayton Magazine chain, where he rose to the top executive post by 1933, when the firm went bankrupt. His most memorable contribution to the genre was his editorship of Street and Smith's *Astounding Stories* from 1933 to 1938. In less than a year he made it the leading science-fiction magazine, and also steered the entire field away from simple adventure to stories that emphasized mood, characterization and originality. Before he left Street and Smith he hired as his assistant John W. Campbell, Jr., who would replace him, and become a notable in his own right. In 1940 he returned to the genre with *Comet* and started the Orlin Tremaine Book Company, which produced the "Crimson Shelf" books, so-called because of the uniform color of their binding. During the early years of World War II he edited *Plus*, an inspirational publication distributed to war plant workers, and briefly edited a revived *St. Nicholas Magazine*. He was also writing science-fiction for *Fantastic Adventures* and a series of "Easy Bart" mystery stories for the detective pulps.

In 1944 he returned to Macfadden Publications. There he worked under the direction of John Brennan, who had been the first editor of *True Story Magazine* back in 1919, and knew Tremaine well. The company was then located at 205 East 42nd Street, New York City. (This had also been the address of Harry Steeger's Popular Publications, which put out *Super Science Stories* and *Astonishing Stories* under the subsidiary aegis of Fictioneers, Inc.) This was called the Bartholomew Building, and Macfadden had a subsidiary book publishing company located there appropriately named Bartholomew House.

Now observing the success of paperback publishing backed by good newsstand distribution, Macfadden Publications wanted very badly to enter that business. But it was wartime, and every company was restricted by government paper allocations, which permitted using only a stated percentage of the paper each firm had used before the war. Bartholomew House had specialized then in hard-covered "how to" books, so they had an allocation of book paper; this they now decided to transfer to paperbacks, which Tremaine would choose and edit.

At that time most paperbacks sold for a quarter and the standard royalty to authors was a cent a copy. Generally 100,000 copies of each title were published. But Bartholomew House's limited paper supply permitted editions of not more than 50,000 copies. This left them at a disadvantage, for other publishers could offer an advance of $1000 to an author, while they, with but half the usual press run, could offer only $500. It was up to Tremaine to use his connections to get worthwhile material despite this handicap. By and large, he succeeded.

One category that he edited was called Bart House Mysteries. Now, Tremaine had been impressed by the work of H. P. Lovecraft and had even bought two Lovecraft tales for *Astounding Stories*. He decided to slip a Lovecraft collection into this mystery line and see how it sold. He managed to acquire a copy of *The Outsider and Others*, and selected five stories from it: "The Outsider," "The Whisperer in Darkness," "The Shadow Over Innsmouth," "The Festival" and "He," and issued these under the title *The Weird Shadow Over Innsmouth* as the fourth paperback in his 1944 schedule. This was the very first Lovecraft paperback printed. The same year he brought out a lengthened and revised version of the novel *Rebirth* by

*_Fantasy Commentator VI_, 168, 172 and 175 (1989).

Thomas Calvert McClary. This work, about a world where all memory has been wiped out and mankind must relearn everything from bodily functions to language, created a deserved sensation when it first appeared in *Astounding Stories* in 1934.

During the period when Tremaine was editing *Plus* and *St. Nicholas Magazine*, he rented desk space in the offices of a good friend, the literary agent Ed Bodin. Bodin even had a hardcovered book titled *Scare Me!* (1940) printed by the Orlin Tremaine Publishing Company. He now submitted for the Bart House Mystery line *The Waltz of Death* by P. B. Maxon. This novel has an unusual history. Back in 1935 it won an Honorable Mention in a mystery story contest sponsored by *Liberty* magazine. The story concerns a man apparently murdered while listening to a piano recital. There are many witnesses among the audience, but nobody sees anyone attack him. There are only two clues: a box of aspirin in his pocket disintegrates in a cloud of smoke, and an autopsy shows that his organs have been ripped and shredded as though by an inner explosion. The pianist is finally revealed to be the murderer. He has discovered that certain musical sounds will make aspirin disintegrate violently, and these are repeated in the Brahms sonata that he plays, knowing that his victim uses aspirin.

Since the theme brings the work into the realm of science-fiction, it was submitted to Hugo Gernsback, who bought and published it in the May, June and July 1935 issues of *Wonder Stories*. Then in 1940 Bodin sold the hard-cover rights to "The Waltz of Death" to Mystery House. But by then he had lost touch with Maxon, who was unknown at the addresses he had given Bodin. Finally, on November 3, 1940, Ed Bodin appeared on David Elman's WOR radio program "Contact," which was dedicated to searching for lost heirs and property owners. There he told how Maxon, an unemployed newspaper reporter, had written the novel out of desperation, and that he had a check for him which he was unable to deliver. It turned out that Maxon had died the very night he had returned from mailing Bodin the revised manscript some time before, and since he had lived in a boarding house alone, he had been forgotten by everyone there.

In 1945 Tremaine produced a second collection of Lovecraft in paperback titled *The Dunwich Horror*. In addition to the title story it included "The Shadow Out of Time" and "The Thing on the Doorstep." Tremaine was negotiating with Brandt and Brandt for Philip Wylie's superman story *Gladiator*, but was unable to reach a financial agreement with them. That marked the end of his fantasy publishing for the company. The Bartholomew House line was dropped, for as the war ended and paper shortages disappeared, other publishers crowded it out of business. Only later did another line of Macfadden paperbacks appear. Tremaine had no further connections with fantasy or science-fiction, and was forced by illness to retire from work in the 1950's. He died on October 2, 1956.

At the time he had returned to Macfadden Publications, both Bernarr Macfadden and Fulton Oursler were long gone. Macfadden still ran sanitariums that offered his health and physical culture treatments to the public——for a price. He never lost his obsession of becoming President of the United States. When he repeatedly failed in efforts to be named a candidate——of either party, he didn't care which—and when his relationship with Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt failed to produce an appointment to the cabinet as national minister of health, he made what proved to be his last and fatal attempt in the realm of politics.

Feeling it could be a stepping stone to the White House, he ran for the governorship of Florida. He actually came in a close second because of the large sums of money he had spent in the campaign. But this money had come from the coffers of the Macfadden Corporation, not from his personal funds. In early 1941, as a result, the stockholders forced him to resign. It also turned out that *Liberty* and *True Story Magazine* had been claiming fraudulent circulation figures. Competitors tore into them without mercy, and the company was forced to refund large sums to all of its advertisers.

Under the terms of reorganization, old-time employee O. J. Elder was made titular head of the company. Under pressure, Fulton Oursler resigned shortly after Macfadden's departure. So did his son Will, who had been working as a staff writer for the company. After a few rough years, Oursler obtained an excellent post at *The Reader's Digest;* and following his conversion to Catholicism went on to great financial success as the author of *The Greatest Story Ever Told.*

But for Bernarr Macfadden it was all downhill. When he was ousted he pleaded with the corporate hierarchy to let him retain rights to his beloved *Physical Culture* magazine, which after unsuccessful attempts at modernization had been abandoned. They literally gave it to him out of pity for his rapidly declining fortunes——though with the proviso that the title could not be used for five years.

In 1946 he revived it as a digest-sized publication called *New Physical Culture.* It had 112 pages and sold for a quarter. There were few muscle men in evidence, but a photo section featured bathing beauties, most of them movie starlets, with captions implying that physical culture had elevated them to their exalted status. There were articles vehemently against vaccination, and others promoting fasting as the wonder cure for many illnesses. The old milk treatment was back again, as were warnings against hospitals, prescription drugs and the medical profession. For awhile Macfadden promised to issue a string of new digest periodicals——westerns, detective, love stories——but nothing ever came of it. Obviously he simply no longer had the resources to do so.

A number of times while in his eighties he made parachute jumps to publicize his publication and his health spas. To most observers these seemed remarkable and courageous; but Macfadden had an airplane pilot's license, and had made many such jumps when he was younger.

His personal life continued under pressure: in 1946 he had divorced his wife Mary to marry a much younger woman named Jonnie Lee, who was now suing him for divorce. Near the end of his life he was living in a single room in a small hotel in Jersey City, a few yards from Journal Square, its business center.

There he fell ill from what eventually was diagnosed as jaundice, and tried to cure himself through fasting. He was found in a coma from dehydration, and died at the Jersey City Medical Center on October 12, 1955, at the age of 87. At his death all he had left of his $30,000,000 empire was an annuity which, ironically, had many years ago been purchased for him against his wishes. There were rumors that he had buried quantities of cash in tin cigar boxes in various wooded areas, and then forgotten their locations, but they were never confirmed.

One important sidelight to Bernarr Macfadden's career remains to be described. When he was forced out of the company he had founded, the news received wide coverage on the business pages of all major American newspapers. None found it more interesting than Irving S. Mannheimer, the former treasurer of the Experimenter Publishing Company. He had participated in the negotiations when Macfadden tried to buy out Gernsback, and had witnessed first-hand his successful efforts to throw Experimenter into involuntary bankruptcy. He had never forgotten being harrassed during his testimony at the bankruptcy proceedings by intimations that he, and other officers of the company, had acted illegally.

Mannheimer became a key figure in Gernsback's newly formed Stellar Publishing Company, and remained there for several years. During that period he conceived an idea that not only made him rich, but whose implementation had a profound influence on the history of science-fiction. Under the American distribution system, pulp magazines depended predominately on newsstand sales, and rarely sold more than half of the copies that were printed. The rest were returned for credit to the distributors, who shipped them back to the paper mills for repulping. Mannheimer now began making arrangements with the publishers to buy the returned copies *by weight.* They were then used as ballast on ocean freighters with empty holds en route from United States ports to English-speaking and -reading nations

such as Great Britain, South Africa, India, Hong Kong, Australia and New Zealand, and wholesaled for a few pennies a copy to such retailing firms as Woolworth's who sold them in their stores as low-priced remainders. That they were widely bought is shown by the many letters in the magazines' readers columns that originated in countries where American science-fiction magazines had no newsstand distribution. This is probably the cardinal reason why domestic magazines in the genre were not published or, when initiated, did not succeed in foreign countries in the 1930's. They simply could not compete with the discounted price of American magazines, let alone match the quality of their contents.

To add further to his income, in 1939 Mannheimer launched the Publishers Distribution Corp. At that time, the most effective national distributor of periodicals was The American News Company. It had its own offices and warehouses throughout the country, owned its own trucks, and could exert absolute control of the magazines from publisher to newsstand. In addition, it controlled The Union News Company, which had some of the best locations in high-trafficked railroad and bus stations. There were other national distributors, but there were often gaps in their geographical coverage and in the quality of their outlets; and as we have seen, some individual publishers like Macfadden, Curtis and Munsey were so large that they could manage their own distribution. What Mannheimer did was organize the best national distributing company short of American News on an independent basis. He corralled many of the mass-circulation magazines, and was able to lower his rates to such an extent that he even induced some firms with their own distribution to discard it in favor of PDC's. PDC became a money machine.

With his profits Mannheimer began quietly buying Macfadden stock, but on so gradual a basis that he retained his low profile. And on February 26, 1951 he and three associates announced to the management of Macfadden Publications that they owned the controlling interest in the company. Mannheimer cleaned house. He forced O. J. Elder to resign, fired 170 employees, and recalled H. A. Wise, a former Macfadden executive, out of retirement to be head of the company. E. V. Heyn was made vice-president and editor-in-chief. Mannheimer now controlled Macfadden Publications, the firm that had tried to humiliate him and had forced The Experimenter Publishing Company into bankruptcy——and he had accomplished this legally. It must have given him deep personal satisfaction.

Bernarr Macfadden was still alive at this time, and one wonders if the irony of the situation was lost on him. Despite all his machinations and all his contributions to science-fiction and fantasy, it is doubtful if he ever realized the historical importance to the genre of his actions——in particular, his handling of Hugo Gernsback. In early 1929 there had been one company and two magazines in the field. A year later there were three companies and six magazines——seven if one counts *Scientific Detective Monthly*——and the field would never shrink to one company again. Gernsback's creation of The Science Fiction League would then bring into being the unified fan movement responsible for producing the next generation of editors, authors, artists and even publishers.

Until the early 1980's, Macfadden's own lack of discernment was matched by fans and genre historians alike. Yet here was a man who, beginning in 1904, was active in the genre for over a generation. He included science-fiction and supernatural stories irregularly in half a dozen of his publications; he founded *Ghost Stories*, a magazine devoted entirely to the supernatural; he owned for several years *Amazing Stories* and *Amazing Stories Quarterly*; and he was the only publisher to run science-fiction in a mass-circulation family magazine like *Liberty*. His obscurity came about initially because he used science-fiction to promote other causes, as in *Physical Culture* and *True Story Magazine*; it continued because *Ghost Stories* never equalled the popularity of *Weird Tales*; and when Macfadden finally acquired out-and-out science-fiction magazines he was so legally vulnerable that he had to disguise his ownership and was not identified with them.

It is only now that we can see him as the third leg of the tripod, supporting with Frank A. Munsey and Hugo Gernsback the development of magazine science-fiction in America.

Book Reviews

THE COMPLEAT CROW by Brian Lumley. Amherst, N. Y.: The New Establishment Press, 1987. 192 pp. 21.5 cm. Illustrated by Stephen Fabian. $21.00 hardbound, $7.50 softbound, $35.00 signed, numbered and slipcased.

Brian Lumley is well known for fiction which follows the tradition of H. P. Lovecraft, even though he himself was born less than a year after the latter's death. He has written at least twenty books, and has roots not only in the macabre vein, but in the *Weird Tales* school of Robert E. Howard and Clark Ashton Smith. Indeed, their two fantasy sub-genres combine nicely in Lumley's stories about Tarra Khash, a noble barbarian warrior who is a near-contemporary foil for the horrid Cthulhu Mythos figures.

Titus Crow, the protagonist of this collection, fights such dark deities from the black recesses between murky stars with more sophisticated weapons, and operates in a more sophisticated age. He is an occult investigator, a psychic sleuth; an agent for Good in the detection and destruction of Evil. During World War II, as a young man, he worked in London for the War Department, where he was concerned with cracking Nazi codes and advising on Hitler's strange predilection for the occult——those forces which Der Führer attempted to enlist in his campaign for world domination. Crow may be regarded as a white magician; in any case he is a staunch foe of the mythos deities.

A few years ago, luckily for us, Lumley retired, and since then has devoted all his time to writing. His work has been widely translated, and in the 1970's DAW Books and other publishers brought out a number of his Titus Crow novels as paperbacks. This book now collects all the shorter Crow tales, enabling us to fill some important gaps in his life.

Seven are from the Arkham House magazine and short story collections. Also here are several never previously in book form: "Name and Number" (from *Kadath* #5, a scarce Italian fantasy magazine); "Lord of the Worms" (from *Weirdbook* #17); and "The Black Recalled" (from the 1983 World Fantasy Convention booklet). In addition there is one brand new story, "Inception."

All these are presented chronologically, and along with "The Burrowers Beneath" and the "post-transition" Lumley novels they complete the Crow canon. In addition to those in which Crow is the primary actor, there are three other tales which are closely related: "The Mirror of Nitocris," a personal chronicle of Crow's apprentice and fellow-traveller, de Marigny; "Inception," in which Crow has but a cameo role; and "The Black Recalled," where he does not appear at all——or does he? (This is definitely "post-transition.")

The Compleat Crow begins a week before Christmas in 1916——Crow's birthday——with "Inception." This is not an origin tale ("Lord of the Worms," which comes next, is that); instead it illustrates exactly why Crow was the way he was. The book ends with his strange disappearance on October 4, 1968 in a freak storm.

In between are the macabre yarns of mystery, horror and suspense set in the blood-curdling reality of the star-spawned Old Ones, those primeval entities banished into exile from an Earth beginning to bud with life of its own. In those prehistoric times Cthulhu and his spawn had come down from strange stars to an in-

choate, plastic Earth and built their cities. They were the greatest magicians. Their magic was an inconceivable science of alien abysses, a knowledge of dimensions beyond the power of humans to perceive. Yet something of their weird science always found its way down the eons. In ancient times, even as now, some under its influence became great wizards and warlocks. These are the villians in Lumley's tales. They have collected the writings of wizards who have gone before, read them, and absorbed the knowledge they found. So, in order to fight them on their own ground, has Titus Crow.

"The Caller of the Black," where he wrestles with evil magicians who invoke these malignant forces, is chronologically the first Crow story; it appeared in *The Arkham House Collector* in 1969, and August Derleth used it as the title tale in the author's first Arkham House book in 1971. In "The Viking's Stone" (from *The Horror at Oakdeene*, 1977) Crow and de Marigny confront a ghost and an ancient curse, and in "The Mirror of Nitocris" find a legendary mirror not only has magic optical powers, but can be as well a hellish gateway. "An Item of Supporting Evidence" (1970) and "Billy's Oak" (1969) were also written for Derleth's house journal; they are short, to the point, and should be successful in making skeptics uneasy.

By the time Lumley wrote "Darghud's Doll" (1977), Crow had had dealings with mythos critters, Roman remains and ghosts; here he encounters voodoo. This story is very well executed, and breathes new life into an old formula. "De Marigny's Clock" (1971) tells of a large, coffin-shaped timepiece that might have come from the pages of Lovecraft. Weird hieroglyphics are carved on its dial, which is swept by four hands in odd intervals that coincide with no Earthly system of chronology. It turns out to be "a door on all space and time; one which only certain adepts——not all of this world——could use to its intended purpose."

Of the penultimate tale, "Name and Number" (1982), Lumley says, "So many stories had been written about the Anti-Christ, and I wanted to do it differently." In approaching the subject by way of numerology he certainly has. The last entry in this collection is "The Black Recalled," whose introductory note reads: "Crow has gone, dweller now in ELYSIA. Nothing now remains of him in this Earth. Or does it. . .?" Readers can find out by reading *Elysia: the Coming of Cthulhu*, which I have reviewed briefly on page 237 of this magazine.

I found Lumley's prose so compelling that I could scarcely pause long enough to savor all Stephen Fabian's lavish illistrations before eagerly turning the page. They are stunningly eerie. Fabian has also done the excellent painting in color that graces the dust-jacket.

My conclusion? If books bound in human skin, mummified claws, decomposing zombies, bat-infested labyrinths and bubbling blotches are *your* cup of cyanide, welcome! Jump in——the primeval ooze is fine, and the native gnawers are fiendly. Expect to have a wonderfully terrifying time.

H. R. Felgenhauer

J. ALLEN ST. JOHN: AN ILLUSTRATED BIBLIOGRAPHY by Darrell C. Richardson. Memphis, Tenn.: Mid-American Publishers, Inc., 1991. 111 pp. 27.8 cm. $15.00 (softbound).

When the name Edgar Rice Burroughs comes to mind, the artist most fans associate with him is J. Allen St. John (1872-1957), his most famous illustrator. Beginning in 1916, with *The Beasts of Tarzan*, his cover paintings have brightened over two dozen Burroughs book jackets, and over two hundred black and white plates have depicted dramatic incidents in the stories' action. Between 1932 and 1955 St. John was responsible for 110 covers on various fantasy magazines as well. His genre work, of course, was but a part of an output which, beginning in 1900, embraced a wide range of subjects——his illustrations for classics, the magazines, children's literature, bookplates, movie posters and advertising copy for newspapers.

(continued on page 229)

Empress of the Stars

A REASSESSMENT OF LILITH LORRAINE, PIONEERING FANTASY POETESS

Steve Sneyd

Introduction

"Discontinuity" is probably not too strong a term to describe the gap in the field of genre poetry between the late 1950's, when it effectively disappeared from the pulps and most fanzines, and the late 1960's, when following the widespread use of poetry in *New Worlds*, this mode of expression began to recolonize genre outlets of all kinds. Although it lasted for only a little longer than a decade, this gap created a near-total "memory-hole" for what had gone before. Post *New Worlds* genre poetry was, in the main, free verse, heavily influenced by New Wave ideas and indebted, however indirectly, to the Surrealists and the Beats. There was little awareness of or interest in previous genre verse, which had been mostly traditional in form and in a direct line of descent from Poe.

Only recently have today's "speculative poets" begun to look back past that discontinuity——and the more they do so the clearer it becomes how much important work has been overlooked, and how much the era needs reassessment. I hope to show convincingly in this article that a particularly notable case is the work of Lilith Lorraine.

This is not solely due to her sex, though on present evidence she seems indeed to be the first important woman poet of the fantasy field. Gender aside, an unprejudiced reading of her genre work, which spans science-fiction, fantasy and horror, shows that it stands up well to comparison with that of (male) contemporaries who today are much better known. That is particularly true of her collection *Wine of Wonder* (1952), the first modern book totally devoted to genre verse. And despite the fact that time has turned to cliché many themes which when she used them were evocatively new (nuclear holocaust, for example), her finest poems still have the power to move and chill. It is entirely clear why Lorraine's work was generously praised in her own time by, among others, Stanton A. Coblentz and Clark Ashton Smith.

Her importance, moreover, does not lie solely in the poetry she wrote. She also devoted many years to editing a variety of poetry publications, and one of these, *Challenge*, is of particular importance within the field because, during its brief existence, it proved the viability of a periodical devoted solely to genre verse. Like *Wine of Wonder*, it was the first of its kind. *Challenge* lasted for only a little over one year, but as a pioneer and examplar of possibility, it deserves recognition as a notable landmark to stand alongside Lorraine's genuine poetic attainments.

Around these achievements cluster other related activities. I shall examine them in some detail both because they are important contextually, and because they are among the factors that caused her work to be forgotten. These activities included issuing publications aimed at instructing other poets and would-be poets, and founding an overarching organization called The Avalon Arts Academy. Administering them appears to have had the dual effect of consuming vast amounts of her energy and gradually detaching her links to the genre.

These links date back to 1930, when fiction by her appeared in professional science-fiction magazines, and they have inevitably led me in this article

to examination of Lorraine's life as a whole. This, unfortunately, is far from completely and consistently documented. But although areas of uncertainty still remain, it is nevertheless possible to reconstruct an absorbing story of a woman whose independence of spirit and willingness to accept challenge makes her seem in many ways a highly modern individual.

It may be fanciful to imagine that her childhood under the vast skies of Texas began that constant preoccupation with the stars, and the possibilities they offered of other existences, which led her so naturally to explore the themes and images that were beginning to be recognized as science-fiction's province.

Yet time after time her restless journeyings in varied occupations——radio announcer, reporter, teacher, administrator, and many others——always brought her back to her beloved state. It was as if her life orbited around that point of origin, and found echo within her poetry in a vision of the mutability of all things which is at the very heart of science-fiction.

Lilith Lorraine[1]*

The mood of her visions altered with passing years. A socialistic utopianism in her early stories turned to a darker tone of nuclear warning, especially in many of the poems in *Wine of Wonder*, which were written when she was well into middle age. Yet she clearly remained open to new developments, both in the world as a whole and in science in particular; and to the very end her work retained, at its truest, that "sense of wonder" essential for gaining acceptance among genre poets.

Finally, I hope to convey here also something of Lilith Lorraine's uniqueness as a person as well as a poet of genre importance and genuine memorability. Such a portrayal would be impossible without the aid of those who knew her, and it is therefore essential for me to close these introductory remarks by expressing the enormous thanks I owe to the unstinting help of many people. A full list might make another introduction in itself, but I do wish to thank, generally and individually, all those referred to as sources in the notes appended to this article. Very particular thanks for the exceptional amount of help given to "an enquiring stranger" go to (named in the order in which they became involved in my search) A. Vincent Clarke, who introduced me to Lilith Lorraine's existence; those people of Rogers, Arkansas, (where she seems to have spent her happiest and most fulfilled time) who shared their memories with me; and most especially to two friends and collaborators of the poet herself, Raymond McCarty and Vernon Payne, without whose generosity of time and material this article would have been but a shadow of itself.

I

A JOURNEYING LIFE

Although the general outline of Lilith Lorraine's life is clear, there are minor inconsistencies among the biographical details she included among Avalon publications or provided for newspaper interviews. It is not possible to piece all of these together into a logical, definitive sequence in terms either of occupations or chronology. The general progression of events, however, can be set forth. These depict an existence which, from her early 20's to her 60's, was crammed with enough variety to bewilder——though whether the many changes in job and location were matters of choice or financial necessity can only be speculated.

Lilith Lorraine was born as Mary Maud Dunn on March 19, 1894 in Corpus Christi, Texas. She was the daughter

*Notes for this article begin on page 226.

of John B. ("Red John") Dunn, a former Texas Ranger whose father Matthew had been "a founder of Corpus Christi,"[2] and Lelia (Nias) Dunn from Springfield, Missouri. Mary Maude was educated at The Incarnate Ward Academy (a convent school), various state schools and by private tutors.[3] At the age of sixteen she left school to become a schoolteacher herself in the little town of Falfurrias southwest of Corpus Christi. There she met her husband-to-be, Cleveland Lamar Wright. He had been born in 1888 in Lockhart, Texas, and was earning his living as a cowboy. While on horseback one day, we are told, "he came upon a scrap of paper and swooped it up, to find that it had on it a poem obviously written by a young girl. He vowed he would marry the author of the poem." Of course the story has its proper fairy-tale ending: "About six months after their marriage he showed her the piece of paper——it was one of her poems."[4] Whatever the truth of this picturesque episode, the two were to remain happily married over fifty years, dying within a few months of each other in 1967.

Following the wedding, on April 12, 1912, there is a period of nearly ten years when we have no information about the couple's life. Perhaps some of the locations and activities not otherwise easy to fit into our overall picture took place at this time. For instance, it may be then that they lived in Kerrville, Texas, one of the many places listed as a home during their lives.[5] It is also possible Wright at that time "was a ranchman (raising polo ponies)."

At any rate, in the early 1920's the couple moved to California. There Mary Maude worked on the staff of the *San Francisco Examiner*, and other Hearst newspapers as police reporter, feature-writer and byline columnist.[6] Her husband, meanwhile, was an instructor of motormen and conductors in that city.[5] (As he is described as also having held the same job in Tucson, Arizona and San Antonio, Texas, and since an instructor could scarcely teach a job he himself had not performed, Wright was probably a motorman and/or conductor while still in Texas.) In 1927 they drove by car from Laredo, in southern Texas, to Mexico City.[7] This appears to be the beginning of a connection with Mexico, which at some point totalled "seven years" spent living there.[8]

At some time during the late 1920's Mary Maud Wright adopted the pseudonym "Lilith Lorraine." Because practically all of her activities were undertaken under it, I shall hereafter refer to her in this article under that name. During this time she was taking college courses, presumably as a part-time student, since reference is made to her having been "educated at the Universities of California, Arizona and [later] Old Mexico."[9] She never seems to have earned a degree——her only official qualifications being a teacher's permanent certificate from the state of Texas and one in office management from the University of Texas. Since the 'twenties were pioneering days of radio, it seems probable that it was in this decade, also, that she became "one of the first women radio announcers."[10,21]

Late in 1928, Lorraine began writing saleable science-fiction. This has already been examined in detail elsewhere,[11] as have her relations with editors,[12] so I shall touch only briefly on this part of her career. Hugo Gernsback published two of her "feministe socialist utopias," "Brain of the Planet" (whose protagonist is from the University of Arizona[13]) and "Into the 28th Century" (which is set in Corpus Christi). Clearly, Lorraine believed in writing about what she knew. Although a letter dated 1934 indicates that she had had no stories published in the previous two years, her agents (Julius Schwartz and Mort Weisinger) did place fiction for her in *Wonder Stories* in 1935.[14] Thereafter, except for self-published work, she vanishes from the fiction market.

The Wrights moved back to Texas in 1934, first to Corpus Christi, then to San Antonio. In early 1936, additional family responsibilities suddenly arose. "My uncle recently died of a heart attack and left over a half-million in property to my aged father, and I have to take charge of the entire management of the big estate, besides our own," she wrote a correspondent.[15] Lorraine did, however,

seem to have anticipated returning to writing fiction eventually: "However, with all the housework off my hands, I'll soon have lots of leisure to write more yarns." This running of two "big" estates may explain the biographical statement that she had been an "efficiency expert for a large corporation."[16] The two years prior to 1936 could be the time she was Assistant Principal of Edgewood High School;[17] it seems unlikely that someone as young as she would have had a senior post earlier.

During World War II, Lilith was for a time a political, city hall, crime and courthouse reporter on the *San Antonio News*.[18] In 1943 she moved back to Corpus Christi because "business interests in her home town required her personal supervision."[2] Thereafter, the rest of her life seems to have been devoted to aspects of poetry——composing her own, editing magazines and anthologies of verse, writing instructional books on the subject, and above all acting as the driving force behind the Avalon organization, which she had founded in 1940.

Before following the many moves the Wrights made after the war, we must address the puzzle of the "seven years in Mexico," and, more specifically, Emilio Carranza Academy of Commerce and Languages[19] in Saltillo, capital of Gahuila state, which is just across the Rio Grande from Texas. Lilith Lorraine is clearly stated to have received a Mexican government charter to found this organization in 1928, and to have seen it firmly established.[20] This agrees with the statement that her husband was then foreman of an orchard-planting project in Saltillo "during the administration of President Calles,"[5] (1924-1928).

As opposed to this, Lilith's obituary implies that these events happened in the post-war period. It is impossible to reconcile a continuous seven-year period in Mexico with either account. I have concluded that this length of time must represent several conflated shorter periods, starting in 1927, such as the visit to Morales in 1950 to celebrate Poetry Week; and that the Wrights always maintained a place of residence in the United States.

I have gone into "the Mexican question" in this detail to indicate how the Avalon biographical notes for Lilith and her husband, though ostensibly quite detailed, in fact to raise questions that any full-scale biography would need to resolve. Here, where the aim is setting an indicative context for her poetry, they merely reinforce the picture of a life adventurous, restless and always willing to "dare the new."

From Corpus Christi the couple moved to Dallas; and then on February 2, 1946 to Rogers, Arksansas, a town in the northwest Ozarks. This had a lively tradition of writing, and seems to have proved a suitable and happy location for them. In early 1951 Lilith began editing "The Torch," a weekly poetry column in *The Staten Island* (New York) *Advance*.[22] In 1952 the couple were in Mexico City, and later in Long Island, New York, where they remained until 1954, although Avalon kept its Texas address. Except for brief periods in San Antonio and New York in 1958 they lived from 1955 to 1962 in Alpine, Texas. Around May 1962 they moved back to Corpus Christi, which was to be their final home. Although telling a reporter that this move had been "her retirement,"[23] Lilith continued to be actively involved in poetry. By now her husband was described as Avalon's Business Manager, Vernon Payne had become editor of the organization's magazine, and her official role was as its Poetry Consultant. She suffered heart attacks in 1965, and strokes during 1965-1967. She died on November 9, 1967 of a cerebral hemhorrage, only a few months after her husband's death on April 19th. He was buried at Fulfurrias, the town where they had met and courted, and her ashes were interred beside him. Hers had been a restless life, though her physical journeyings are as nothing compared to the "journeys of the mind" encountered in her poetry.

II
POETRY THROUGH A LIFETIME

Lilith Lorraine's involvement with poetry began early. By the age of

nine she is said to have memorized "hundreds of poems, including those of Shakespeare, Byron, Milton and Poe," and wrote her own first poem at ten.[17] Poems written between that age and sixteen made up one of her later collections, *Trailing Clouds of Glory*.

The next chronological mention of her comes from Walter Gillings, an early British fan and later editor of the first commercial British science-fiction magazine.[24] In 1954 he wrote his recollections of events in 1931-1932. These included a description of what happened after his letter about the activities of a local fan group was printed in the March 1931 issue of *Wonder Stories*. "I heard from three well-wishers in America," he says. These included "one of s-f's three women writers, Lilith Lorraine, who now runs the Avalon World Arts Academy." She had written him, he adds, to enquire about her chances for success in "launching her own s-f magazine——in England, if she could be assured of its success in a country to which, it appeared, she intended to come very soon." The two exchanged letters.

> The resultant correspondence did not last long, however. To a woman of 37 (though I did not know her age, then; nor that she was married) my earnest affirmations must have sounded much too eager. Anyway, after pronouncing her views on the standardisation of American s-f and declaring her more expansive policy for any magazine she might establish, she postponed the whole business for two years, while soliciting from me contributions for a poetry magazine she was editing; whereupon my enthusiasm, and my hopes, waned.

This indicates that Lilith was planning——or running——a poetry magazine twelve years earlier than *The Raven*, which her biographical notes say she founded in 1943. Now it is possible, of course, that Gillings has conflated his first contact with his later knowledge——in 1954 he was aware of Avalon and her "poetry magazine *Different*." But is equally possible that she was indeed planning a poetry magazine in 1931, and that it was aborted; or, if it was published, that she later became dissatisfied with it and preferred to erase it from the official records.

Whatever the truth may be, poetry is definitely in the picture at that time: her poem "Requiem" appears in her father's autobiography, which she edited in 1932. Two years later, moreover, she makes clear to a correspondent her new direction (or return to a first writing love):[25]

> I turned to poetry after my series of science fiction rejections, and have appeared in nearly all the verse magazines, a large number of paying publications and in *The Literary Digest*. Really made more money in poetry and acquired national recognition in a short time, but I still like to do science fiction and have over twenty-five thrilling yarns laid away for future attempts at marketing.

From the choice of words in the last sentence I infer that she had not yet begun to use science-fiction themes and images in her poetry at this time. That would explain why, although Gernsback's pulps were increasingly printing verse,[26] none of hers ever appeared there——or, for that matter, in any pre-war science-fiction magazine. This point seems confirmed by her agent, Julius Schwartz, who says he "was never involved with her poetry";[27] had she been attempting to sell verse to these markets, he and his partner would certainly have been involved.

In a 1936 letter she mentions poetry once more ("Did you see my poem in *The Literary Digest*?").[28] In 1937 Lilith's first collection, *Banners of Victory*, was published by the Banner Press of Emory University in Georgia. Her first appearance in a genre pulp was "Earthlight on the Moon," printed in the Canadian *Uncanny Tales* (#12, December 1941). (This may have been reprinted from an American magazine or fan magazine of the Futurians.[29])

As we have seen, the Avalon organization was founded in 1940, and was at first called The Avalon Poetry Shrine. Its first major publication was an anthology of its members' verse, *Wings Over Chaos* (1942), the first of many which Lilith was to edit. Avalon's time-consuming activities did not prevent her from founding and editing *The Raven* (1943), nor from producing further collections of her own poetry. Three of these appeared during the war years: *Beyond Bewilderment*

(1942), *They* (1943)[30] and *The Day Before Judgement* (1944). As well as poetry, she was also writing about the art of verse——formulating advice which by the end of her life became laws of almost Mosaic rigidity, but which in earlier forms served as useful tools of instruction for apprentices in the craft. These included *Lilith Tells All——the First Avalon Textbook*, *The Lost Word——a Poetry Textbook*, and *Let Dreamers Wake*. All were Avalon publications, the third being dated 1945. It is impossible, at this distance in time, to know whether these pamphlets helped or harmed her general acceptance as a poet, a point to which I shall later return.

In 1947 came her Avalon book *Character Against Chaos*. The New York Public Library lists it under "ethics," while Avalonian material variously describes it as "a book on the poet's personality," "a psychology manual for poets," etc., as if even the author was unsure as to its nature. The intriguing claim is also made that it was based on her studies of "normal and abnormal psychology in several universities and through clinical experience."[17] If this is not merely imaginative advertising, it poses yet another biographical puzzle.

In the same year came two more gatherings of poetry, *Call on the Rocks 1944-47* and the afore-mentioned collection of juvenilia, *Trailing Clouds of Glory*. Finally Lilith ended the year with a third Avalon book, *Let the Patterns Break*. This is a collection of collections, a thick omnibus volume that reprints the contents of all her previous books of poetry. (As an aside, it is worth noting that although her own notes refer to the existence of only seven poetry collections, there are least ten titles.)

III
THE CHALLENGE OF FANTASTIC VERSE

At this point I shall pause briefly to describe another Avalon project that began two years earlier, the periodical *Different*. This was the official organ of the Avalon National Poetry Shrine (renamed in June 1947 the Avalon World Arts Academy), edited and published by Lilith Lorraine. It was subtitled "a Voice of the Atomic Age," and described as being "of general interest, with emphasis on all the arts and with unbiased and informative aricles on world events." It absorbed two separate magazines, *The Raven* (which I have cited previously) and *Now*, a poetry magazine edited by Lucille S. Jackson; and for a time these remained as separate sections in *Different*.[32]

Different is important in terms of Lilith's career, since it was through this magazine that she seems to have reëstablished contact with the world of science-fiction and science-fiction writers. Although the verse it published was only occasionally fantasy, the stories were predominately science-fiction: so much so that the magazine is indexed in *Monthly Terrors*.[33] *Different* paid for material——not lavishly, to be sure, but enough to draw the attention of genre writers. Robert Silverberg, for example, made his first sale here,[34] and some of Lilith's own science-fiction appeared in its pages.[73]

This renewed involvement may have encouraged her to use more genre themes in her own poems, and to offer them to pulp markets. By 1950 the results became visible. "The Tall Terrible Women" appeared in *Nekromanticon* #2 (Summer 1950) and her "Avalon" in #3 (Autumn 1950), while *Super Science Stories* printed "The Titan's Goblet" in its September 1950 number.

During the next two years there were further successes. In mid-1951 *Nekromantikon* published "Witch" and "The Golden Woman," "Mutation" was used in *Super Science Stories* (June 1951), *Fantasy Book* used "Warning" and "We'll Launch Our Spaceships Yet," and Stanton Coblentz's *Wings* printed "Termopolis," "Quo Vadis" and "Only the Black Swan Knows." Thereafter, except for "The Mad Wild Angel" in Joseph Payne Brennan's *Macabre* (1957), she vanishes from the field.

It was in 1950 that Lilith brought out what I consider to be by far the most significant (and certainly the most original and far-sighted of all her magazines, *Challenge*. This quarterly publication was devoted solely "to fantasy or

science fiction poetry"——possibly the first such, and one which would not have a successor until Mark Rich put out *Treaders of Starlight* in the early 1970's. To launch it successfully she must have solicited material in advance from science fiction fans and professionals known to her on a wide scale. Certainly fan editors in Britain were contacted, though no material from there seems to have been received.[35] But response from America was sufficient to fill four issues before, with #5, *Challenge* was merged back into *Different*.[36]

The masthead of *Challenge* gives Lilith Lorraine as editor and publisher, with Stanton Coblentz and Evelyn Thorne as associates, and Avalon as the sponsor. (I feel there is no truth in the suggestion that there was funding from within the science-fiction community.[37]) I have already described in detail elsewhere the contents of a typical *Challenge* issue,[38] but Lilith's definition of "Prophetic Poetry" is worth repeating because its sentiments are so clearly reflected in all of her own verse: "Prophetic Poetry is not an escape but a challenge, not a day-dream but a blue-print, not a Swan-song for an old world but the Dawn-song for the new."[39]

There are three other points of general interest to mention. First, it is clear that although the magazine was Avalon-sponsored, acceptance of material was in no way limited to Avalon members. Second, there were contributions from "name" poets in the genre——not just Coblentz, but also Lin Carter, John W. Jakes and Clark Ashton Smith. (From outside the field, the well known Ozark poet Edsel Ford[40] was also represented.) Thirdly, Lilith was not prepared to abandon her didactic attitude towards *Challenge* contributors:[39] "We also want to thank the authors, especially the poets in the science fiction field, who have been so very co-operative in accepting our suggestions for bringing their work up to our standards."

Despite the discontinuance of the magazine, Lilith's thoughts must have still been centered on genre poetry, for *Wine of Wonder*, a collection entirely of science-fiction, fantasy and horror verse appeared late in 1951.[41] (This will be dealt with in part V of this article.) Under the adapted name of Lila Lorraine she contributed a regular column to a local newspaper at some time in the 1950's.[42] A further collection of her poetry, *Light from other Stars*, appeared in 1963; this is a selection of 100 poems from the "800 published between 1960 and 1963." Her final collection of "poems unpublished elsewhere" was *Not for Oblivion* (1964).

Throughout the remainder of her life she continued, as editor or consultant, to select contributions for the various publications which, in turn or overlappingly, bore aloft the Avalon banner. She also wrote articles and verse for them, and edited an ongoing series of Avalon anthologies. Her own work had already appeared in three anthologies of sufficient standing to be indexed by Grainger:[43] *Poems for the Great Days* (1948), *Masterpieces of Religious Verse* (1948) and *Christ in Poetry* (1952).

Finally, in 1961, came what readers here will probably regard as the high point of Lilith's poetry career: her recognition by a genre publisher of special standing. August Derleth had already produced one anthology of fantasy verse, *Dark of the Moon* (1947), drawing heavily from masters of the past. Now he brought out another, *Fire and Sleet and Candlelight*, which emphasized the best work being produced contemporaneously. Lilith is represented there by five poems,[44] two of which are reprinted from *Wine of Wonder*.

IV
THE LIMITS OF RECOGNITION

I propose now to examine——tentatively and speculatively, since it is not an area where one can safely be dogmatic——why the poetry of Lilith Lorraine did not achieve major standing in her own time, and why it seems to have suffered neglect since, both by advocates of science-fiction and in the wider literary community. This is attempted in an exploratory rather than a denigrative spirit, with considerable dependance on hindsight; and hindsight, I freely admit, may be

misleading, since attitudes and conditions change constantly with the times.

Lilith's problem in obtaining recognition in the general literary community was inevitably that faced by any poet: the competition of numbers. She herself estimated that there were then two or three million poets in America,[45] so the odds against wide recognition were enormous. Then as now, moreover, the world of poetry was scattered and factionalized; it had its cliques, establishments and fashions. The circulations of the countless little magazines distributed to small groups and isolated individuals were a few hundred each at most. Very few such magazines survived long enough to become opinion-formers, even locally. Finally, though perhaps not as acutely as in a centralized European country, the metropolitan/East Coast Establishment would function judgementally also: acceptance into the poetic elite depended on whether the "school" chosen or formed was in some way experimental.

Now Lilith was not prepared to cede primacy to such major intellectual centers. She saw herself and her Avalon organization as very much a central focus——and she did so in terms that grew increasingly didactic as the years passed. Detailed instructions for poets became virtual laws describing correct poetic content and form. This was coupled with an unwillingness to take cognizance of new poetry movements,[46] and a confident feeling that it was her right and duty to take poetic "wrongdoers" to task (even to the extent of writing comments on manuscripts ——a very quick way to make enemies[47]). Tenets like these would scarcely have endeared her to writers who could have furthered her claims for recognition.[51]

Further, the links between the Avalon structure and all her publications (except, to some extent, *Challenge*) made it possible to tar her publishing activities with the "Vanity Press" brush. That does not seem to have been deserved. Her magazines used work by non-Avalon members, *Different* paid for the fiction it used, and so on; but her rules and regulations left the way to this imputation open——and it rubbed off on the credibility of her own writing.

Within that writing, quite apart from the fact that any serious connection with science-fiction has long been seen as debarring a work from serious consideration (the well-known "ghettoization" phenomenon), there were elements which militated against critical acceptance. These were elements of content, not form. Lilith felt society was in a near-terminal crisis, and used her poetry to appeal for——indeed, demand——spiritual and social change.

Literary establishments are traditionally wary of anything that smacks of political poetry, the more so if its tone (as here) is strident and hectoring. Moreover, she used symbolism and personification which could be interpreted as having an air of crankiness, particularly when taken in conjunction with some of some phenomena connected with Avalon——the Raven-focussed Shrine and the interest in occultism.

Finally, Lilith was also highly prolific——and critics, perhaps because they prefer a poet to leave a manageably small corpus of work on which to comment, traditionally regard a prolific poet as suspect. (This is true even if the total body of work adds up to what for a novelist would be called a slim output.) Two notable modern women poets, Lyn Lyfshin and Ruth Moon Kemper, satirized as Diana Moon Glampers in Kurt Vonnegut's *God Bless You, Senator Rosewater*, have suffered critically for just this reason.

In addition to all these reasons, there is an ancillary factor which worked against Lilith's "mainstream" credibility. This had nothing to do with the content or quality of her verse, but it would hamper its being read seriously by the opinion formers of the poetry world. We might call that factor Avalon's publicity machine. It put forward on her behalf claims which in a few cases are plainly untrue, and which in others, even if accurate, stretch credulity. Since she was Avalon's driving force, some felt these claims were self-generated. Among them are that she was the author of "the first SF story written by a woman."[49] that

"her books have been reviewed over the British, Australian, New Zealand and Canadian networks,"[50] and that she had trained a third of all publishing poets in the United States.[48] There was even a claim that her husband was "of English ancestry with a title of knighthood dating back to 1066." (There were no hereditary knighthoods in the Britain until the Seventeenth Century.[52])

In summation, let me reiterate that none of these things affect the intrinsic value of Lilith Lorraine's poetry. But taken together, I feel they militated against its being taken seriously by mainstream critics.

For its parallel posthumous neglect within the genre different explanations must be sought——and once again I think these have little to do with its quality. They are, however, very different from the reasons given above.[31]

Being prolific, for example, is actually expected of a science-fiction writer, or was in those days. Colorful personal claims went "with the territory" like garish magazine covers and melodramatic story blurbs. Traditional forms were then almost universal in genre poetry, which did not begin to open its doors to change until the mid- and late 1960's; and when Michael Moorcock, editor of *New Worlds*, then did open them (as he did so many others) to form a "New Wave" in poetry as well as fiction, he released what many saw as ravening monsters. The Avalon organization, as such, impinged little or at all on those who read her work or contributed to *Challenge*. As to Lilith's sermonizing, both in general about society and specifically as to how poetry should be written and how poetry-cum-SF could uplift mankind, I suspect those who were not neutral were in close to total agreement with it.

Within science-fiction, moreover, she had the cachet of being not only an early fan, but "a pro writer." Sam Moskowitz mentions her in *The Immortal Storm* as being one of the "luminaries" appearing in *The Comet*, the field's first fan magazine.[53] And while her fiction had been published in science-fiction magazines well before her poetry appeared there, no one could dismiss her as an amateur who knew little about the field. Finally, the acceptance of her poetry by figures like Coblentz and Derleth made clear that it had genuine merit. With all this going for her, then, why did total forgetfulness set in so soon?

I feel that it was purely adventitious——Lilith was a victim of two phenomena traceable to the evolution of genre poetry. The first was its entire disappearance (except for humorous verse) from newsstand and fan magazines alike. Perhaps the relationship between poetry and the average fantasy reader had always been uneasy, and the implosion of the pulp market meant jettisoning what were seen as merely frills and fillers; and at the same time fanzine editors seem to have extended a long-standing prejudice against "fan fiction" to verse as well.

The second was that, when this "poetry discontinuity" at last ended, the contributors who irrupted into genre consciousness via *New Worlds* were out of an entirely different mold. They were mainstream poets seeking mainly to explore aspects of the soft rather than the hard sciences——mind-benders rather than metal-bashers. They used the forms——predominately free verse——they were already employing for their mainstream work (where, it must not be forgotten, free verse had been familiar and everywhere accepted since World War I——"free verse is as old as the warplane," to quote some anonymous wit).[54] So, when people already within the science-fiction community, or those from outside drawn to its rich store of imagery, began writing verse again, the majority followed the trend set in *New Worlds*. The precursors they looked to for form and content would have been such writers as William Burroughs back to either the Surrealists or the Beats. The tradition stemming from Poe was largely ignored. (There are of course exceptions to such generalizations; in the fields of horror and dark fantasy, for example, the Poe/Lovecraft tradition in poetry *was* kept alive.) Few looked back into the very different heritage of genre poetry in the pulps and fanzines of the 1930's, 1940's and 1950's, and only recently have steps been taken to explore it.[55]

Thus, although Lilith Lorraine has been a victim of neglect within the science-fiction world, she has suffered along with a whole group of poets, not because her individual work was assessed and found wanting. Poets and other readers have not "looked and looked away"; in the main they have simply not looked at all.

Newspaper reports and Lilith's own biographical notes mention sixteen honorary degrees and a variety of other awards, such as the key to the City of New Orleans and a Mexican Poetry Day medal; but these appear to have been as much for publishing, editing, services to world poetry and world understanding and the like as for her own writing. The highest individual award for her poetry as such appears to be the 1962 Old South Award from the Poetry Society of Texas. This she received for "Death of a Minor Poet on a Desperate Day," which perhaps reflected her own inner feelings, normally hidden by a busy and confident facade, about the degree of genuine recognition her own work had received. (She also received the same society's Critics' Prize, and was a member of its council.)

It may be significant that although it is claimed that "she has been published in about 95 per cent of all poetry magazines in the United States," no names of any publications are given——though newspapers using her work are specically cited: "*The New York Times, The Herald-Tribune, Denver Post, Dallas News, Portland Oregonian, Boston Globe* and others."[50] The implication seems to be that she could not claim to have appeared in the "name" journals of "the poetry establishment," and felt that citing regional magazines would not add to her prestige.

She has also had her modern denigrators. Damon Knight, for example, remarked, "it can be definitely said that [Correy's] Manning is a worse poet than Lilith Lorraine."[72] With one exception[56] she is ignored by all science-fiction encyclopedias, and her lines "We are the builders of brave tomorrows / We are the dreamers at last awake" were chosen to caption a widely circulated cartoon "of a scruffy fan in his scruffy den."[57]

In summary, however, what has been recounted is a long, prolific career: some two thousand published poems; ten hard-bound collections of verse, several from thoroughly reputable publishers; editing poetry magazines and many anthologies of verse; and composing several instructional books about the poetic craft. Yet all this did not bring her critical recognition outside the genre field, and little within it.

In recent years attempts at a balanced assessment have begun. Steve Eng, for example, has drawn attention to her role in the field with a major article.[58] Historically he sees her in poetry as, "along with Coblentz the heir of C. A. Smith after George Sterling and Bierce."[59] Ray Nelson's view is similar.[60]

V

DRINKING THE WINE OF WONDER

It is time to turn to the poems themselves, and in particular to *Wine of Wonder*. Despite a certain unevenness, this collection contains many fine and beautiful poems that are well worth reading. Although four decades have made many of their themes more familiar than they were when written, and although tastes and styles in verse have in many ways changed (or at least expanded dramatically), the book still gives great pleasure. Taken as a whole, it should rightly be considered, at the very least, a minor masterpiece of genre verse. And it is also, of course, of undoubted interest as the first such collection by a woman writer. (It may, as claimed, be "the first book of the poetry of science fiction written by any one person."[61] as well.)

The book's dust-jacket carried blurbs by Evelyn Thorne (a mainstream poetry editor), Rog Phillips (editor of "The Club House," the readers' letter column in *Amazing Stories* magazine), and two of the foremost genre poets of the time, Stanton A. Coblentz and Clark Ashton Smith. Coblentz said, *inter alia:*

> In these days when science fiction and fantasy have won wide new audiences in the field of the novel and short story, there have been few signs of a correlative poetic activity. Lilith Lorraine, however, has been among the few to point the way. In her poems . . . this age turns self-examining eyes upon itself from the vantage-point of other ages and worlds. Her meanings are often subtly implied, and the answers she gives are sometimes antidotes for complacency. . . . in her fluent stanzas [are] one author's answer to the questions: Whither is science leading us? What . . . is to be the end of the fantastic cycle of development of this twentieth century world?

Clark Ashton Smith remarks that she "remembers the ancient wonder and magic, but walks intrepidly the ways that modern science has opened into the manifold infinities," and says of her "poems on paintings" that "not too often has one art been interpreted so revealingly in terms of another." He concludes that the book "can be recommended unreservedly both to poetry lovers and devotees of science fiction."

Such whole-hearted statements put the prestige of both these writers firmly behind the validity and value of *Wine of Wonder*. What, in fact, were they recommending to the reader?

The collection appeared when Lilith Lorraine was 58 years old, and thus represents her most mature work, most of it probably written during the previous six years. It contains 79 poems. (Since seven and nine are "magical" numbers, one could speculate that they relate to her interest in the occult.) All of them are in traditional rhymed forms, mostly of the *aabb* or *abab* pattern. Although in her later years Lilith did write strikingly in free verse forms, nothing of that kind appears here.

It is not easy to allocate these poems among the genres of science-fiction, fantasy and dark fantasy/horror. The usual difficulty in drawing precise boundaries is accentuated by Lilith's tendancy to use the language of fantasy even when writing on science-fictional themes (as did other genre poets of her time). But even if the results have an arbitrary cast, they clearly indicate an overall predominance of science-fiction. I put at least 48 poems in this category, as against 23 which are fantasy and eight which either are horror/dark fantasy or not classifiably genre at all.

Well under half (34) of the entries are credited with prior publication. Among the sources cited, seven are genre or partly so: *Fantasy Book*, *Challenge*, *Different*, *Nekromanticon*,[62] *Super Science Stories*, *Wings* and *Spearhead*.[63] Two newspapers are credited, as well as thirteen mainstream poetry journals. The latter include Evelyn Thorne's *New Atheneum* and *Epos*, co-edited by Thorne and Will Tullos. The remaining 45 poems may have been written specifically for this collection. This seems plausible in view of the consistency of their styles and themes. (As a warning against easy assumptions, however, it is worth remembering that a poem published elsewhere, and described as having been written when Lilith was just ten, includes imagery that would not be out of place in *Wine of Wonder:* "Lord of the far-flung empire of the stars, Prince of the flaming fortress of the sun."[64])

Several general points may be made about the poems themselves. Although their subjects vary, certain ones appear frequently. Indeed, it could be argued that the book would have been improved by omitting the weaker pieces where several poems say similar things in similar ways. Thus the theme of cities beyond time, of future women of overmastering power, and of nuclear holocaust and its aftermath all occur multiple times. Repeating the last of these is not surprising and may be excusable: the Cold War was at its height, nuclear threats were proliferating in current science-fiction, and Lilith had a clearly-felt need to utter urgent warnings of their danger and the necessity of working towards peace.

A half-dozen of the poems are inspired by paintings, including work by surrealists Max Ernst and Salvador Dali, and the pre-war German satirist George Grosz. In contrast only one, "The Cup Bearer," has a dedication to a fellow-poet, Clark Ashton Smith.

Lilith has followed her own advice as to the writing of science-fiction

poetry: "Space is wide, and its conquest makes a good theme if you use imagery and not scientific prose terms."[65] Very little scientific terminology appears——the word "atom" is used (perhaps overused) and there are rockets, galaxies and the like, but no terms unfamiliar to the average reader. This is in no way a collection which limits its readership to the genre aficionado. "Axiom," a favorite of the author, is used several times——a reminder of her credo "Axiom-smashing is immeasurably more consequential than atom-smashing."[66]

Many subjects are treated in *Wine of Wonder*. Despite this multifacetedness, one can discern a single overriding theme or message. It is a poetic expression of a belief Lilith expressed vividly in prose twelve years later during a lecture to the Poetry Society of Texas: "The poets will inspire and are inspiring the heroes who will face the last frontier. Let us only hope that they will not lead an ape shambling into the Pleiades armed only with the club of the atom, but one who is more than man, armed with divinity and glorified with humanity."[67] In the same lecture she spoke of the need for "galactic poets" to convey "the poetry of a united world," and with it "the music of the spheres, the voice of the galaxy, the call of the stars," and instructed them to use "prophesying, warning, teaching, inspiring" voices.

Does this mean that we shall find in this book nothing but humorless, high-minded preaching? No, indeed. When Lilith wrote these poems she was still clearly in touch with her pulp roots; and although she denounced pulp excesses[68] there are still plenty of colorful creatures from Outer Space in the book. Witness, for example, the roll call of beings in "We'll Launch Our Spaceships Yet," which includes "the spider-kings of Pluto," the cold sardonic saurians "that rise from Neptune's waves" and the like. Space war is absent and atomic fission appears as a final curtain to our Earthly civilization rather than a tool of interstellar adventure, but there are enough colorful props redolent of the "space opera" approach at its liveliest to ensure that this collection is no bloodless sermon in verse.

Nor is humor lacking. When it appears it is slyly veiled and low-key rather than the belly-laugh variety. (The sole exception is "Cosmic Casanovas," with its gleeful mockery of the sexual boasting among assembled spacemen who, having exaggerated to the full their conquests of exotic alien females, "sang 'Annie Laurie' and blasted back to earth"!)

It would be unrealistic to attempt examining *Wine of Wonder* poem by poem, and discussing solely a personal selection would inevitably reflect but one's own taste, thus not necessarily giving a reliable picture of the collection. One way of at least partially overcoming such a bias is to choose a group of poems on an objective criterion. So I shall start by examining the ones previously printed in genre magazines plus those later used in Derleth's anthology, quoting from them briefly. Following that I shall deal with others, and quote the more memorable poems in entirety when possible.

Challenge had used "Until He Shall Discover," a picturesque but rather vacuous piece about the god Pan on Ganymede, and "Empress of the Stars." Beyond saying that the latter conveys to me the essence of how Lilith Lorraine saw herself in relation to the universe, I shall postpone comment until it is reprinted later in this article. The same consideration applies to "We'll Launch Our Spaceships Yet," one of two entries credited to *Fantasy Book*. The other is "Warning," one of several pieces in the collection in which representatives of wiser galactic races attempt to warn humanity of the folly of its race to self-destruction. This particular example, rather tedious and predictable, is neither the best nor the worst of them.

"The Golden Women" and "The Tall Terrible Women" originally appeared in *Nekromanticon*. Both could be categorized as male wish-fulfillment poems (though Lilith presumably saw them as paeans to womankind). The first portrays *les princesses lointaines*, remote and innocent; the second, the dangerous and dominating

type. The "golden women," reward fit for saviour heroes, are to be found "where the star-cats lair, / with bright unbeating bat-wings veined with beauty, / And constellations tangled in their hair." Despite a declamatory final line, "You are lost, you are utterly lost!", the "tall terrible women" are portrayed in more convincing poetic terms: "Whose shapes are as sinuous and flowing / As the amber quintessence of light."

Two poems are credited to *Spearhead*. "Since We Are Property" (later reprinted by Derleth) presents the converse of the "galactic guardians" situation. Here we have a denunciation of those Bob Dylan was to call "the masters of war," working in secret to bring about universal destruction. It conveys an effective arraignment in just sixteen lines and, though somewhat simplistic, some of these are memorable: "Let them boast proudly in the zero hour / How we loved the green earth like a flower, / Crushed it to feed their dark deliriums"; and "Let those who dragged us down from cloud and spire / Let them share with us the eternal night." The curious "Post-Atomic Plea for Mercy Death" is one of five poems cited in *Wine of Wonder's* cover-jacket blurb. There Clark Ashton Smith speaks of its "plangent irony." I prefer the word ambiguity——Lilith portrays a subtle picture of a survivor of pre-atomic Armageddon dooming himself by agitating children in a now-peaceful society with his colorful memories of the addictive excitement of war, and manages, whether by conscious intent or because her artistry overcame any planned message, to leave the reader torn in sympathy between those whose duty to their low-key utopia demands the mercy-killing of the old storyteller, and the storyteller himself, unable to forget the past or keep silent about it. The telling has considerable immediacy and the verse a flowing simplicity. The poem is tightly knit and difficult to extract, but this stanza does perhaps convey its inherent strength and flavor: "And every night he sings these fearsome ditties/By the warm fires that glow eternally, / And every day men raid the ruined cities / And bring back things no child should ever see."

Two pieces are credited to *Super Science Stories*, "Titan's Goblet" (to be discussed later) and "Mutation." While the latter's subject, an atomic radiation spawned parody of humanity, is now somewhat hackneyed, the poem does contain vivid language and images. Its luridly memorable final couplet, indeed, cries out for quotation: "The monster clenched six fists beneath the sky, / Cursed with two mouths and glared with one red eye." (Perhaps it should be stressed that readers will experience a feeling of déjà-vu in a number of Lilith's other poems; topics which were fresh a generation ago are today well-worn genre clichés. This needs bearing in mind, to do justice both to her and other pioneers in the field.)

Coblentz's magazine *Wings* was the prior publisher of "Termopolis," described by Clark Ashton Smith as of "mystic lyric beauty." It is another "lost timeless city" piece, not notably original, though containing some evocative language: "the final city on the gulf of doom," "Beauty's ultimate Acropolis" and so on. *Wings* had also carried "Quo Vadis," a brief "immortal wanderer" poem.

Finally, in this category of material used in genre publications, there is "Legend of the Hills," the other piece Derleth reprinted from *Wine of Wonder*. This is predictable in content——the old-fashioned, rather mysterious new preacher turns out to have been dead for centuries——without being redeemed by Lilith's usual originality of language. It is difficult to say why she included it in her collection, or why Derleth chose to reprint it thirteen years later.

It is a relief to turn from that trite piece to material which shows genuine originality of subject, language or, in many cases, both. I have cited two of the five titles cited by Smith in his dust-jacket blurb. The other three are "Only the Black Swan Knows" plus the "clarion-like annunciations of things to be" of "The Matriarchs" and "Master Mechanic." The first is somewhat Buddhistic, telling of all things ending after "the ages fall like meteors," when at last the "hunter and hounds and hunted / And lotus and pool are one"——not a new idea, but giving a fresh-minted effect through skilful use of language. "The Matriarchs" is

notable for its unconcealed vision of female supremacy——not that of all women, however, but of a secret elite whose aims are unpredictable by lesser mortals: "And will they build the towers of Carcassonne / or doom's last fortress? ... They alone decide." "Master Mechanic" paeans the work of a future technician in vivid, almost Sandburgian terms: "Still let us see him with his groping hands / Whose progeny within the silver cities / Leap to his touch like the flesh of silver women."

To indicate further Lilith Lorraine's capacity for originality in language, image and on occasion idea, a few more poems will be remarked. Some have such freshness that if published newly today they would still rouse that "shiver at the nape" which marks the impact of the truly unexpected. "A Ghost Grows Flesh" produces just that shiver with its final lines "You see, a ghost grows flesh from dawn to dusk, / If no one tells him he is dead." "Apprentice Deity" depicts, with dry humor, a confrontation with what could be called the Ultimate Editor, and includes the jibe, "oh why must every space yarn drip with gore?" "Cycle" has a moon-settler planting there an Earthly dogwood, only to find the result is "mushroom shapes of alien birth," while in harsh contrast "Electronic Brain" depicts the alienation not of organic but of man-made "life." The idea is not particularly original, but the language is: "Half-born it coils within its iron womb . . . listens to the Internationale / of screaming rivets," "cold equations doled in coins of hate," etc. Though genre only in its portraying sinistrals (as "we") undergoing the experience of true aliens, "The Left-Handed" is empathic enough to suggest that either Lilith was left-handed or close to someone who was.

"Only the Bat God Saves" takes the familiar situation of a Morlock-like underground sub-race, but livens it through fresh language and occasional sheer unexpectedness: "Some day you shall shatter the world with rhyme, / For only the bat-god saves" is the surprising final message to those "Who know of no sky-roofed world at all." "Vigil" takes a stance cater-cornered to expectations, picturing the deserted dogs of Earth after humanity's departure into space, and ending with the chilling words "I shall return for you alive or dead." In "Dark Science" a sinister possibility is handled with a restraint which increases the impact. At human request, visiting Martians raise the dead——but the result is not a joyous reunion. "Their eyes . . . / Were cold as ice-flowers on a frozen lake"; then the elegant narrative touch: "They lived among us, patterned to the norm," but the soul of "each well-loved form . . . was distant as a star."

Many other felicities could be quoted, but it should now be clear that at her best in this collection Lilith unites supple poetic language, an eye for a vivid and telling image, and a thrust, whether narrative or descriptive, which pulls the reader along——the pulp years and their lessons had been thoroughly absorbed into her poetic art. We now turn to those poems from *Wine of Wonder* which illuminate the author's greatest strengths. (These are quoted on pages 221-222.)

"Empress of the Stars" is a paradigm of the powerful, truly free——even dominant——woman, the essence of early feminism which was in many ways the core aspects of Lilith's work. It expresses this with a fluidity, a conviction and a judiciously balanced use of the language of awe, and stands out among the several other poems in this collection having a similar theme.

"The Titan's Goblet" illustrates the collection's title——here we do indeed drink the "wine of wonder." There is nothing new about the image——comparison of the excitement of space to drinking the ultimate wine occurs frequently in science-fiction——but Lilith handles it with real panache and some notably original associated imagery.

"Boarder" is one of two closely related poems which suffer dilution by appearing on the same page in *Wine of Wonder*. Although its companion, "Cosmic Sabateur," contains the lovely and memorable lines "They walk among us, star-commissioned spies, / With all our future written in their eyes," it is the less successful of the two. "Boarder" segues subtly from a picture of the room-bound recluse

to an interstellar context, complete with a sensitive introduction of the "we" viewpoint in the second stanza; and in the final couplet, the way a potentially "jingly-jangly" rhyme is transformed by the music of the surrounding words into the core of an image/wording *gestalt* is worthy of a recognized major poet.

"The Lady with the Ivory Hands" is a pleasing representative of the fantasy aspect of the collection. Although Lilith's cherished word "axiom" appears rather unnecessarily, the poem has a simplicity-cum-mystery which leaves the reader mental space to weave his or her explanations of what is really happening. Is the lady destroying a real world? An imaginary one? Or simply indulging in wishful thinking? Whatever the truth, the limpid charm of the poem's image lingers hauntingly after reading.

I think "We'll Launch Our Speceships Yet" is irresistible. Great poetry it could not claimed to be, though it is vividly written and has an inbuilt song-like melody which would probably give it "filk" success. It combines, magically and surprisingly successfully, an almost childlike listing of alien entities of Golden Age picturesqueness with an effective, moving message——the unstoppability of the human impulse to reach the stars.

"Funeral of a Vampire" represents the (very slight) horror element in *Wine of Wonder*. It is deceptively simple; and beneath that surface simplicity lies unobtrusively buried several subtle elements——including an unexpected new angle on the vampire concept, touches of dry humor, and implied comment on the hypocritical feelings of those present at more normal interments.

"Idiot Boy" takes the almost commonplace concept of the seeming subnormal who in fact has remarkable talents, and not only gives it an intriguing genre twist, but effectively moves the reader through time, space and the "multiverse" to explore deeper implications of the boy's curious gift.

"Treasure of Mars" is another instance of what, although not great poetry, is highly effective in genre terms——a strong, well-plotted, clearly-narrated story-poem which in just nineteen lines of economically chosen words combines pace with artistry.

Of the poems in *Wine of Wonder* sharing its theme, "The City Lost in Time" seems the least predictable in image and also the most successful in imparting movement——and hence interest——to a static situation.

Finally, comment on two works outside this collection, both illustrating Lilith's ability to compose free verse. "It May Be Like This"[69] is intriguing not only for its unusual and striking imagery, but for what must surely be conscious echoes of the famous Yeatsian lines "what rough beast/Its hour come round at last/slouches towards Bethlehem to be born." "The Computer,"[70] published just two years before Lilith's death, illustrates a poetic power undimmed by age, and the ability to find a new angle in, and turn a fresh eye upon, the oftenest used genre situations. Its first three lines alone demonstrate her ability to use the unexpected in language in a way that proves justified within the *gestalt* of the work. The paradoxical contrast of of a computer's voice which has both "suave sophistication" and "the ring of an iron angelus" redoubles the ironic impact of the two images; while the Biblical echo in "valley of dry bones," focusing from landscape to an entirely different context, a depiction of a dead entity or race, gives the three lines a multilayered solidity of meaning. This is sharply at odds with the first impression given by much of her work, both in *Wine of Wonder* and elsewhere.

VI
A QUESTION OF NAMES

A few words should be said about Lilith's use of pen-names. As has already been pointed out, Lilith Lorraine is itself a pen name. Her choice of "Lilith" seems to betoken considerable singleness of mind and a willingness to risk disapproval in a conservative, devout part of the country, for that is the name of

THE CITY LOST IN TIME

(Inspired by the painting, "Memory in Retrospect of a Perfect Sunset" by Eugene Berman)

White was the road that led into the city,
The city of strange unrest,
Wide for the wheels of the singing chariots
And the centaurs six abreast;
The centaurs flecked with the foam of madness
Charging out of the West.

Red is the road that leads out of the city,
Broken and battle-flayed,
But many there are who would die with the city,
Hopeless, yet unafraid,
Who would die with the sun that sets over the city,
The city of moon-white jade.

But others there were who went out of the city,
Pity them, all ye wise,
For always the dream of that time-lost city
Will shadow their space-cold eyes,
Since never again will the like of that city
Be raised under any skies.

THE TITAN'S GOBLET

Drink from the Titan's goblet,
You who would ravish space,
Drink till you reel and stagger,
Drink till your pulses race

With the wine that was brewed of moon-blood
At the edge of the chaos-brink
For all that the gods have left you
Is the chalice—and the drink.

Touch your lips to the chalice
Before you quaff your fill,
Savor the mellow cities
Crunch their bones if you will.

Taste of the tall ships floating,
They—they are only foam,
But the wild, sharp tang of waters
And the bells in a sunken dome

Lure you to drink still deeper
Till your mind is the Titan's mind,
Till you whirl through the stars unshackled
By the earth you leave behind.

Drink till the moons melt madly
Under your kiss like snow,
But never ask in your wine-cups
Where did the Titans go?

EMPRESS OF THE STARS

Fleeing across the black and burning sky,
Where the dismembered earth rolled crazed and blind,
Last of a war-seared race that chose to die,
I sought a planet peopled with my kind.
I stopped at many a space-port, exile-tense,
Where strange un-human races, done with wars,
Gave me a deep but questioning reverence,
And told me of the Empress of the Stars,
Whose form was somewhat like to mine, they said,
Who ruled the galaxies with armoured peace. . .
Again through many a firmament I sped,
Swearing that this, my Oydessy, should cease
Only when I had stood before the throne
Of this proud Empress, met with valiant men—
And so again I sped through space alone
Brushing the worlds aside like chaff . . . and then

One dawn my blazing rockets scorched the ground
Of a great planet radiant as the sun,
Where flame-winged beings circled me around. . .
But they were glorious women, every one.
And then, at last I knew, that from the first
Nature had planned this parthogenic race,
That man a temporary role rehearsed,
And women were the sovereigns of space.

And then I saw the Empress of the Stars
Regal and willow-slim with eyes of ice,
With lips to lure celestial avatars
Yet carven not for love's lost paradise.
One maiden watched me close with eyes of fire,
Then whispered to the queen some laughing plan,
"Yes, take him for your pet if you desire,
I think he answers to the name of 'man' "

BOARDER

All of his ways were secret, in his room,
The shades were darkly drawn, the door barred tight,
He walked, a shadow aureoled in gloom
As though his spirit were at war with light.
Or could it be that he revealed too much
Of shapes that walk unseen from age to age,
And was this mind no earthly probe could touch
Linked with some cosmos-wide espionage?

We walk this little earth and half-believe
We are alone in space, yet all the while
Strange ears may listen, alien spies deceive,
Dark stars maintain their embassies of guile.
Yet winged ambassadors may also wait
Unrecognized by many a crumbling state.

THE LADY WITH THE IVORY HANDS

The lady with the ivory hands
Held a mirror to the light,
Waved her tendrils in the air,
Tendrils sprouting from the strands,
From the beauty and the blight
Of her comet-silvered hair.

As the tendrils waved about,
Mountains melted into glass,
Orchids blossomed in the skies
Candles slowly guttered out,
As the oceans turned to brass,
As the axioms turned to lies.

Then the tendrils sank to rest
In the high-massed silvered hair,
Clouds across the mirror passed,
Leaving not a wave-washed crest,
Leaving but the empty air,
And the lady smiling there.

WE'LL LAUNCH OUR SPACE SHIPS YET

The sirens of the satellites are leaning from their stars,
With the purple-crested princes of old, imperial Mars.
The spider-kings of Pluto with their lizard-armoured slaves,
The cold sardonic saurians that rise from Neptune's waves,
The wing-shod men of Mercury, the pale Uranian knights,
The golden maids of Ganymede, aglow with jewelled lights,
The Guardians of the Galaxies, the legionnaires of space,
Are watching from their Palomars a self-destroying race.

Some are watching greedily and some with sorrowing eyes
For some are human-weak and some compassionate and wise,
But all declare in unison as thought-waves meet and blend,
"The earth-men choose the Evil Road that leads to Journey's End.
Soon there will burst a Flower of Flame and all the worlds will know
Another race has gone the road that only mad-men go."

But from the scarred and broken earth a strange new courage springs,
As on the very brink of doom the voice of freedom rings,
The swords of hate fall powerless before the conquering darts
Of freedom's will to brotherhood that glows in simple hearts.
A song floats through immensity as the old earth sways and croons
And sends her challenge echoing through all the listening moons:
"Sheer from the eagle's battlements, with atom-flaming jet,
We'll blaze the trails for brotherhood . . . we'll launch our space-ships yet!"

FUNERAL OF A VAMPIRE

How sibilant the silence
Of the dead who cannot die,
How smug the hollow ritual
Beneath a leaden sky.

How grim the plumed procession—
Perhaps the horses see
They go upon a journey
Into futility.

For That the hearse must carry
Along the funeral track,
Too vile for Hell's receiving
Will soon be coming back.

How thin the mourner's voices,
How strange the requiem toll,
How heavy is the coffin
That's weighted down with soul.

IDIOT BOY

His eyes are cones of emptiness
To superficial sight,
But who looks far and deep enough
Sees cisterns filled with light,
The road he travels coils around
Old serpent cities underground.

His hands are fearfully unstill,
Too certainly aware
That what they touch with reverence
Is neither here nor there
But in that pure dimension wrought
With crystals of unpatterned thought.

His voice is mad and meaningless
To all who hear but words,
Yet past the lying lexicon
The dark and burning birds
Pronounce the leper-curse, "unreal,"
Upon geometry and steel.

The pearl-gray world within his brain
Revolving round its own intents
Shall live beyond our crawling norms
And tilting of the continents,
Creating out of loneliness
Its own divine hypothesis.

TREASURE OF MARS

He left behind the moon-tossed seas of earth
To seek a treasure hid on ancient Mars,
He circled twice her cold and crimson girth,
Then landed, laughing upward at the stars.
For he had heard it whispered in the gleam
Of many a space-port's dim-lit rendezvous
How Mars concealed a treasure so supreme,
That, had she found it when her empires grew
Barbaric in their arrogance and might,
She would have ruled the systems, and the new
And swaggering earth would be her satellite.
But now at last *he* came, the plunderer
Forcing the ravaged planet to reveal
Her holiest treasure in its sepulcher,
Mapped by a chart he'd shed brave blood to steal.
Dying, he stumbled through the rust-red waste,
And hacked exhausted through the sterile sand,
Then reached into the hole with lustful haste.
And gurgling *water* flowed across his hand.

IT MAY BE LIKE THIS

It may be like this at the world's ending
a night like all nights
save for an ice globe splintering,
an ice-beast jungled somewhere in the brain,
or somewhere in space, or just outside the window,
or just—somewhere.
Somewhere more terrifying than geographies,
since it has no need to be anywhere.
A slim wave breaking
on no coast whatever.
While the moon drops like manna
and the stars flow into the mind
and a Carpenter
walking through mushrooms
to be unbirthed in a lost stable
in a grotesque town.

THE COMPUTER

The suave sophistication of your voice
Rings like an iron angelus above
The valley of dry bones that once was man,
Who died of love turned hate
And God reversed.
Now you have learned
The lesson Eden taught and Satan knew.
Eat now the seedless apple that you live
Immortal under the tremendous stars
Unless
Somewhere amid the dust of mortal things
A poet's song rings out
Changing your voice to tenderness and love.

the demonic first wife of Adam. Expelled from the Garden of Eden for her defiance, she went on to live with Satan and become the Mother of Demons. Yet this interpretation seems at odds with Lilith's respect and support for religion in its broader sense, and with her appearance in anthologies of religious verse. The only indication that it ever caused any problems is the contraction to "Lila" in her local newspaper column. The second element of the name is no easier to explain. It was believed in Rogers literary circles that it stemmed from some relationship with the Lorraine family, who were music publishers in Kansas City and book publishers in the East,[71] but there is no supporting evidence for this view. One might also speculate that there could be an element of tribute to Joan of Arc, the "Maid of Lorraine," in the choice.

This pseudonym was accompanied by others. In a magazine she once actually confessed to writing "under five pen-names, three of which are masculine."[50] In a newspaper interview she amplified this: "if the editors and publishers knew I was a woman they wouldn't pay me more than half what they do now," adding that she felt "editors have preconceived ideas about poetry written by women.... Whenever they see a woman's name on a piece of verse, they immediately think it will be too sentimental and mushy. They would consider the same verse strong and dynamic under a man's name." She also stated that she wrote "traditional" verse under the Lilith Lorraine name, and "the free style under pen names."[4] Indeed, she contemplated eventually publishing verse she had written under "her own and several pen names, just to prove the point that women are as poetically proficient as men," but died before this could be accomplished. (All these statements may be taken as accurate, since independent confirmation exists.[74])

Of the male pseudonyms I can say nothing. But a female one, Marilyn Montgomery, was revealed as a "rarely used pen name" for work appearing in *Horisunt*, a Scandinavian magazine.[75] Another——if the name is indeed female——is suggested in the pages of *Challenge*. That publication used light verse as fillers. These, since they had to fit precise, last-minute space requirements, were almost certainly written by the editor. They are ascribed, however, to "Dariell Dunay." This fits the method, shown in Lilith Lorraine and Marilyn Montgomery, of a repeated consonant for first and last names.

People using aliases tend to conform to a pattern in doing so. Therefore it seems plausible that the male pen names, if and when they are discovered, will prove to follow the same form. So, should someone wish to attempt the daunting task of searching poetry magazines of the time for contributors whose first and last names begin with the same letter, and the eliminating those which can be proven real people, Lilith's teasing secret might at long last be revealed.

VII
THE AVALON CONNECTION

The Avalon organization which Lilith headed as founder and director from 1940 until her death has little direct relevance to her involvement in genre poetry. In fact, in some ways it even diminished her poetic reputation (a point to be discussed subsequently). Nevertheless, since it occupied an incalculable amount of her time and energy (she herself estimated between seven and sixteen hours a day on average), it deserves discussion. Since a detailed account of it has already been written, however, a brief description here should suffice.

It was founded originally as the Avalon Poetry Shrine to assist poets because "contact with their contemporaries would do much to banish that sense of aloneness which has often been the curse of those endowed with finer sensibilities," and its aims expanded with Lilith's belief in the "power and mission of poetry." Poets could, she hoped, become "a clarion voice of the cultural Renaissance" needed to cope with a situation where "material values" were "engaged in final combat with the eternal verities" to prevent a situation whereby "our whole

civilization will go down to death."[76]

The name of the organization changed to Avalon National Poetry Shrine, and in due course to The Avalon World Arts Academy. Along with the establishment of the Avalon Press went an expansion into local chapters elsewhere. Initially these were devoted to poetry, but later were designed to cover the needs of "prose writers, lecturers, journalists, radio artists, composers and creative artists in all spheres."[77] Chapters were formed in many states, particularly in the East; and contacts were made outside the United States, particularly in Canada and England. Although the membership of these chapters was small, it was influential in Texas and adjacent areas in giving regional poets a common focus and outlet for their idealism and need for community. Whether this justified the energy Lilith devoted to them is a question which can be answered only subjectively.

It would be tedious to list all the frequent changes of structure and regulations in the organization. But the story of its magazines should be followed to the end, confusing as it at times becomes. *Different*, having absorbed *Challenge*, continued until 1954. Thereafter it was succeeded by *Flame*, a purely poetry magazine, which continued until the end of 1962. Alongside these ran various newsletters. These included *The Avallonian* (1952-53) and *Avalon News* (1955 - 57; during 1953-54, a section within *Different*). In the Spring of 1953 *Flame* was succeeded by *Cyclotron*. This publication, named for the then newly-constructed particle accelerator, showed Lilith's continued interest in technical developments at the frontier of science. Vernon Payne became editor, with Lilith as poetry consultant. Its last issue (volume III, number 4) was dated Winter 1965; it included an index of contributors which shows clearly that, although genre poetry continued to appear——not just from Lilith herself and from the editor, who had a strong and abiding interest in astronomical phenomena, but from others——contact with the science-fiction writers so organic to *Challenge* had disappeared.

Doubtless this was caused by the deteriorating health that plagued both Lilith and her husband in the mid-1960's, and brought about a contraction in her activity. *Flame* was revived as an annual (1964-66), but it replaced the Avalon poetry anthologies (*vide infra*). It merged with *Cyclotron* in 1966 to form *Cyclo-Flame*, which continued after Lilith's death.[78]

As will be clear by now, the task of keeping track of Lilith's many publications is complex. To cast yet another title into a busily bubbling pot, she also issued *Pinnacle: the Bulletin of the League for Sanity in Poetry*. This organization, whatever its degree of separate existence, had apparently been absorbed into Avalon by October 1946, since from then on *Pinnacle* appeared as a supplement within *Different*, running through April 1949. It is unclear what became of the league itself.

Several mentions have been made of Avalon anthologies. These were edited by Lilith until her death, and apparently appeared annually. The first of these was *Wings Over Chaos* (1942). Later ones include *The Avalon Poetry Day Anthology*, *The Minds Create, Today the Stars, With No Secret Meaning*, *The Golden Book*, *Sing Loud for Loveliness* (1962), *Warriors of Eternity* (1963) and *The Avalon Anthology of Texas Poets* (1963). In 1963 and 1964 she also edited two poets' directories.

VIII
THE WOMAN BEHIND THE VERSE

Lilith's wide-ranging ideas were expressed not only through her poetry, but in her articles, lectures and fiction. The latter was "socialist and feminist," says Donaworth,[11] and in 1934 Lilith refers to these views as affecting her sales.[79] To the end she was expressing social concern, including in 1965 an attack on poverty and illiteracy as exemplified in her home city,[80] though by then any socialistic blueprint for change had given way to appeals for spiritual transformation via a poetry elite. She also had an internationalistic outlook, perhaps

stemming from her own diverse ancestry. As biographical notes put it, "Her racial background is English, Indian, French and Irish, but she claims the world for her country." What was she like as a person? One of enormous energy, certainly——very late in life, for example, she was still maintaining the habit of replying to all correspondence on the day received,[81] conducting poetry panels, judging poetry contests (many for organizations other than Avalon) and continuing to write prolifically, both poetry and articles.

Such articles and the "rules and regulations" laid down for poetry submissions certainly give the impression that on paper she could be domineering; and that this could also be so in person——at least in later years——is confirmed by her long-time Avalon co-worker Vernon Payne, who knew Lilith since 1957, when he enrolled in one of her poetry-writing courses. She could be "bombastic," he says, and "embarrassingly domineering at public meetings, which detracted from the other side of her nature." In his view, she was clearly the dominant partner in her marriage: "I had a feeling for Cleve L. Wright, her spouse, who was nominal "vice president" of Avalon Poets. In all my meetings with [them] Cleve never had any effective say-so."[82] Payne also mentions that "The Story of Avalon," credited to Mr. Wright, "was obviously edited by his spouse." But since the couple had no children, Avalon in a sense became her extended family, and perhaps what appeared domineering there can be interpreted as motherly concern for her "family of poets."

One source suggests that there was rivalry between her and a local fellow-poet: "Lilith Lorraine . . . was very much the poet-musician-publisher and held the Literary Salon Evenings in her home there in Rogers. The only cloud in her sky was Arkansas Poet Laureate Rosa Marinoni, who not only did these also, but for a longer time and was the personality that enhanced each. . . ."[83] This implies a a rivalry of memorable local impact, ending in a sort of "salon wars" defeat for Lilith, who "folded her tent, so to speak." But this may be an exaggeration. If any such rivalry did exist, let alone result in a breach between the two, it is hard to explain why Marinoni's work continued to be published in Avalon magazines; it appears, for example, in several issues of *Cyclotron*.

There is an intriguing suggestion that the Poetry Shrine within Lilith's property has entered local folklore——or at least the statue of Poe's raven[84] that was its focus has, in garbled form. "It seems certain that a writer by the name of Lorraine owned and lived in a place known as The Crow's Nest."[85] From raven to crow——a typical, mildly degrading transformation of popular parlance, paralleling that of the lordly lion or leopard on an English inn sign to a mere cat.

Raymond McCarty, whose work had first appeared in one of her magazines in 1946, has given a warm picture of Lilith as she was during a happy time in her Rogers home-cum-Poetry Shrine.[54] It seems appropriate to end this brief look at her as a person by quoting from his memoir and a later letter.[86] He describes "a delightful weekend" he and his wife Margaret spent with "Lilith and her husband. . . in the fall of 1950." The poet-editor Evelyn Thorne was also a guest, and on the trip to Rogers the McCartys met Will Tullos.[87] (Later, in 1952, the Wrights were to be guests at the McCarty home, near Memphis, Tennessee.)

The visit gives a clear picture of the breadth of Lilith's interests, including the only mention I have found that she was aware of L. Ron Hubbard's cult: "We . . . enjoyed many long and profound discussions about poetry, philosophy, metaphysics. We talked about such diverse subjects as Eastern philosophy, astrology, Dianetics, classical music, painting, and the German philosopher, Nietzsche. A short time later Lilith wrote in her magazine, *Different*, referring to our visit as a 'feast of reason.'" Mr. McCarty, whose correspondence with Lilith continued until her death, says specifically of the visit that "She and her husband Cleve were perfect hosts," and mentions Lilith's great fondness for her "several domestic animals. At the time we were there, she had the parrot Coda, the dog Ghandi. and two cats, an 'inside' cat (named Insky) and an 'outside' cat." Margaret Mc-

Carty impressed her by breaking up a fight between the two cats without getting herself scratched!

Raymond McCarty describes Lilith Lorraine thus: "a completely genuine gentlewoman, a gifted poet and a brilliant conversationalist. She was knowledgeable in many disciplines, with an easy self-confidence born of experience, with no hint of arrogance. . . . I do not think she has received the acclaim that I believe she deserves." I believe that in due course that view will be widely shared within both the science-fiction and poetry communities——particularly where the two overlap and are able to recognize her pioneering achievements in the sphere of genre poetry.[88]

N O T E S

(1) This picture, apparently drawn by Frank R. Paul from a photograph, was printed in the Winter 1930 issue of *Wonder Stories Quarterly*.

(2) Rowena Selby, *All About Avalon* (booklet), Rogers, Ark.: Avalon Press, no date.

(3) Joyce H. Braunan, "Pioneer of the New Age," in *The Voice Universal* #50 (June-Aug. 1964): "Her formal education came from many sources——schools, private tutors, and the universities of Arizona, California, and old Mexico."

(4) "Retirement Busy for Local Poet," *Corpus Christi Caller-Times*, November 7, 1965.

(5) "Biographical Notes on Cleveland Lamar Wright," *The Great Plains and Avalon Dispatch*, 1990.

(6) The 1922 San Francisco *City Directory* lists a C. L. Wright, but not Lilith Lorraine.

(7) Letter, Lilith Lorraine to Forrest J. Ackerman, October 25, 1934.

(8) Four years in Saltillo and three in Mexico City, though not continuously.

(9) Details of her enrollment at the University of Arizona are indicative of the rather patchy nature of this education. "Ms. Lorraine was enrolled part-time . . . in the Fall Semester of 1929 in the College of Arts & Sciences in a 'special' status. In the Spring Semester of 1930 she enrolled for a class but withdrew before completing the semester on 3/37/30." (Letter, Herman D. Carillo [Associate Registrar, University of Arizona] to Steve Sneyd, Jan. 24, 1992.) She had a Tucson address at this time.

(10) Ref. 2, p. 11.

(11) Jane Donawerth, "Lilith Lorraine: Feminist Socialist Writer in the Pulps," *Science Fiction Studies 17*, 252 (1990).

(12) Mike Ashley and Robert A. W. Lowndes, *The Gernsback Days*, in press.

(13) He was, in fact, Professor of Psychology there. Mr. Carillo's letter (ref. 9) states that she "did enroll for a psychology class while attending the University of Arizona." This class thus provided not only the central figure in this story, but three short articles during 1930 in *Cosmology*, the first science-fiction fan magazine, as well as background for her later book, *Character Against Chaos*. (Since Lilith for about six months held the post of vice president in The International Scientific Association, which issued *Cosmology*, she can correctly be thought of as a very early member of science-fiction fandom.)

(14) She is reported in the *Corpus Christi Caller-Times* for Nov. 7, 1965 as claiming that her fiction had appeared in *Amazing Stories*, *Science Wonder Stories Quarterly*, *Astounding Stories* and *Thrilling Wonder Stories*. (Actually it did not appear in the last two magazines.)

(15) Letter, Forrest J. Ackerman to Lilith Lorraine, Jan. 21, 1936.

(16) Prior to retirement she is described as having been a "winner of a City Planning Contest, real estate owner and manager, and Texas oil-woman," as well as managing "rental units for middle income families." (*The Nekromanticon* #3 [Autumn 1950]; no author is credited, so presumably written by editor Manly Banister.)

(17) "Biographical Notes of Lilith Lorraine, Founder-Director of Avalon," Winter 1965 version.

(18) *Corpus Christi Caller-Times*, Nov. 10, 1967.

(19) This does not appear in current international educational directories, so has presumably been either closed or merged. Its name is perhaps indicative——Venustiano Carranza, president of Mexico 1917-1920, was a native of Coahuila; the Emilio Carranza whose name was used for the academy was presumably a member of the same prominent local family.

(20) "Lilith Lorraine and the Avalon World Arts Academy," *The Nekromantikon* #3, Autumn 1950.

(21) *The Nekromanticon* #3 gives a slightly different version: She "played pioneer, herself, with possibly the first adult education program ever broadcast, on KGFI in Corpus Christi."

(22) *Different*, March-April 1951, p. 10.

(23) New Orleans may also have been a place of residence prior to finally settling in 1962 at Corpus Christi. It is mentioned in the sources cited in references 4 and 5, and her biographies in Avalon journals state that she was given a key to that city for services to poetry.

(24) *The New Futurian* #2 (1954); reprinted in *Hyphen* #1.

(25) Letter, Lilith Lorraine to Forrest J. Ackerman, July 28, 1934.

(26) "There was far more poetry in Gernsback's pulps than most people realize. Many issues had at least one poem, some several. . . . by 1934, when Hornig took over editing *Wonder Stories*, a lot more familiar s-f names started to appear: Lloyd Eshbach, J. Harvey Haggard, August Derleth and others. But not Lorraine." (Letter, Mike Ashley to Steve Sneyd, July 29, 1991.)

(27) Letter, Julius Schwartz to Steve Sneyd, Sept. 12, 1991.
(28) Letter, Lilith Lorraine to Forrest J. Ackerman, Jan. 21, 1936.
(29) "The Canadian *Uncanny Tales* had some new material, but reprinted mostly from the Wollheim/Lowndes/Pohl magazines, chiefly because at one time or another Wollheim, Lowndes, Pohl and Moskowitz all acted as agents to the editor. The Lorraine poem probably appeared, therefore, in one of these magazines earlier." (Letter, Mike Ashley to Steve Sneyd, Aug. 10, 1991.)
(30) This is an extended (52-stanza) poem of prophecy. It was reviewed in *Acolyte* #4 (Summer 1943), p. 7, by editor Francis T. Laney, who called it "a most successful attempt to say in poetry what the more future-minded stf authors have been saying in prose."

(31) Ray Faraday Nelson, who corresponded with Lilith Lorraine in the 1940's, summarizes how he felt she was regarded in fandom at that time: "I would say that was . . . a function of age. If you were in your teens or early twenties during WW2, you either hated her or had never heard of her. If you were older, you probably liked and respected her. She represented an archetype of the serious (or "sercon") fan of the '30's [and '40's], like Francis Towner Laney during his acolyte-of-H. P. Lovecraft period, but unlike Laney she did not, as far as I know, shift over to the more "fannish" or humor-oriented mode of fanning like nearly everybody else in the late '40's and early '50's. One might say that if you wanted to rebel, she was something solid to rebel against." (Letter, Ray F. Nelson to Steve Sneyd, Feb. 1992.)

(32) Through Avalon, Lilith published 32 issues of this magazine. Starting with the March - April 1945 number, it appeared on a regular quarterly schedule except for suspension between the Autumn 1951 and the Spring 1953 numbers. The last issue was dated Winter 1954. It was printed on glossy book paper, and had two-colored covers. 1945-1951 issues were letter-sized; those of 1953-1954 were pulp - sized. See also p. 224 of this article.

(33) Frank Parnell, *Monthly Terrors* (1985).

(34) "One of my stories was published—for a fee of $5, I think—by an amateur magazine called *Different*, operated by a poetess named Lilith Lorraine." (Robert Silverberg in *Hell's Cartographers* [1975], edited by Brian Aldiss and Harry Harrison, p. 5.)

(35) "I wasn't overstruck on Lilith Lorraine's *Challenge*, but I was an obliging chap . . . so I printed a note for her," says Derek Pickles, former editor of *Phantasmagoria*, a fanzine of the 1950's. (Letter, Derek Pickles to Steve Sneyd, Mar. 18, 1991.)

(36) Lilith explains this as follows: "*Challenge* is discontinued with the Winter issue because printing costs were too high to print it after its first year in mimeographed form." (*Different*, March-April 1951, p. 5.)

(37) Gene Van Troyer, *Star*Line*, July- August 1988. I think was due to a misunderstanding by Van Troyer of remarks by Ray F. Nelson, who had not seen *Challenge*, and was no longer corresponding with Lilith Lorraine in the 1950's.

(38) "*Challenge*—a Prophetic Dawnsong of SF Poetry," *Star*Line*, March-April 1988.

(39) Editorial, *Challenge* #2 (Fall 1950).

(40) Ford was born in Eva, Ala. on Dec. 30, 1928. At eleven he settled near Rogers, Ark., and spent the rest of his life there except for brief periods at the University of Arkansas, in the army, and in New Mexico.

(41) It was announced in *Fantasy Times* (Oct. 1951): "Lorraine stf Poetry Book out in December."

(42) "Opal Beck of Rogers tells me that a Lila Lorraine wrote a column for the *Rogers Democrat/Daily News* in the early 1950's, and she believes this writer to be the same person." (Letter, E. Alan Long [Community Editor, *Northwest Arkansas Morning News*] to Steve Sneyd.)

(43) *Grainger's Index to Poetry*, 6th edition.

(44) "Case History," "It May Be Like This," "No Escape" and "Since We Are Property."

(45) "The Future of World Poetry," *Cyclotron* vol. III, no. 3 (Autumn 1965).

(46) Her comment on the Beatles, linked in implication with poets who respond to them, is perhaps indicative: "The Beatles, a diseased product of a diseased and pressure-ridden world who find an outlet for their fear of action against evil in certain forms of insanity to conceal their self-contempt. . ." (Lilith Lorraine, "The Verdict Is Yours," *Cyclotron*, vol. III, no.4 [Winter 1965].)

(47) Vera L. Eckhart stated: "It was often provoking to have your poem returned . . with her scribbled comments all over." Lilith herself must have recognized that the practice was controversial, for in the first issue of *Cyclotron* she scarifies poets who object to it.

(48) *Cyclotron* #1 (Spring 1963).

(49) Cliff Russell, *Corpus Christi Caller - Times*, June 5, 1954. Lilith's own biographical notes word this more cautiously, however: "the first woman writer of science fiction appearing in several magazines."

(50) *Cyclotron*, vol. 3, no. 4 (Winter 1965)

(51) Yet in *Cyclotron* #4 (Winter 1963) Lilith referred with apparent approval to the avant garde in her article "New Thinking Coming with New Technology."

(52) Baronets inherit the title "Sir"—i.e., are "hereditary knights." Baronetcies were introduced by James I of England as a source of royal income. All other knighthoods have always been a personal, not a hereditary, mark of status.

(53) *The Immortal Storm* (1954), p. 8. See also note 13 above.

(54) Raymond McCarty makes a similar point from a different perspective: "I think she was a victim of the change in literary style. Her hero was Edgar Allan Poe, an expert in the use of melody, rhyme and rhythm. Today's hero among the poets seems to be Walt Whitman, champion of *vers libre*." ("Avalon Recalled: a Memoir of Lilith Lorraine," *The Romantist* #4-5 (1980-1981).

(55) The earliest reference I can find to poetry from such sources is in *Star*Line*, vol. 5, no. 2 (March-April 1982), where a letter of comment from Steve Miller draws attention to this resource.

The next reference appears to be my own article, cited in ref. 38.

(56) Donald Tuck (vol.1, p. 281) is respectful, but does not make her accomplishments clear.

(57) Letter, Walter Willis to Steve Sneyd, Oct. 13, 1987. He adds (re: one of her magazines, probably *Different*): "Any poem with lines too long to go into the columns was rejected, which was the first (and last) time I ever heard of a poem being rejected because it was the wrong shape."

(58) "Fantasy Genre Poetry," in Frank N. Magill, ed., *Survey of Modern Fantasy Literature* (1983), vol. 5, pp. 2415-2421.

(59) Marginal correction on proof sent to M. Simon in late 1989 re: the proposed SPWAO *Poets of the Fantastic* anthology.

(60) Letter, Ray F. Nelson to Steve Sneyd, February 1992: "Her fantasy fandom was the one that formed a faction in the United Amateur Press Association along with H. P. Lovecraft, Clark Ashton Smith and Frank Belknap Long, the fandom that hand-set the type in breathtaking limited editions that have waethered . . . much better than the mimeographed wonders published only a decade or two ago.

"This was the fandom that regarded itself as a branch of artistic bohemia and looked for leadership to the likes of California poet George Sterling, with whom Clark Ashton Smith lived for a while, or or before that to the likes of Ambrose Bierce, poetry's arbiter of taste in the early years of our century and Sterling's mentor and sponsor."

Since one of Sterling's collections is titled *Wine of Wizardry*, one wonders if Lorraine used the phrase "wine of wonder" in tribute to his work.

Nelson also mentions her interest in, as well as poets already cited, Morris and Blake; her advocacy of the latter was in due course to lead to Nelson's own use of him as his protagonist in the novel *Time Quest* (1975; alternate title, *Blake's Progress*), a direct and traceable influence of Lilith Lorraine on more recent science-fiction.

(61) *Corpus Christi Caller-Times*, June 5, 1954.

(62) This publication was edited by Manly Banister of Kansas City, Mo. *Challenge* #2 describes it as printing "amateur weird, fantasy and science fiction."

(63) "The first issue of *Spearhead* featured poems by Stanton A. Coblentz, August Derleth, Lilith Lorraine, . . . Clark Ashton Smith and e. e. Cummings." (*Ibid.*)

(64) The lines are from "To An Unknown God."

(65) Lilith Lorraine, "The Verdict Is Yours, Not Ours," *Cyclotron*, vol. III, no. 4 (Winter 1965).

(66) Quoted, *inter alia*, in *Cyclotron*, vol. I, no. 4 (Winter 1963).

(67) "World Poetry Comes of Age," *Cyclotron*, vol. 2, no. 3 (Autumn 1964); this was originally a lecture delivered in April 1964, and available as a separate pamphlet.

(68) "the first galactic poets, . . . frightened by their own vision," made "the light horseplay of apparent disbelief . . . a nightmare of soap-operas . . . with little green men armed with atom bombs . . . waging a patternless war with the conquering and swaggering earth across parsecs of the universe."

(69) August Derleth, ed., *Fire and Sleet and Candlelight* (1961).

(70) *Cyclotron*, vol. III, no. 3 (Autumn 1965).

(71) "The Lorraine family is prominent in the publishing business, and there still is a company doing music out of Kansas City, and Walter Lorraine *is* the Houghton Mifflin Co. of Boston." (Letter, Maggie Smith [former Director, Ozark Writers and Artists Guild] to Steve Sneyd.

"A discussion with him [Walter Lorraine in Boston] proved of little worth, but perhaps I did not know the proper questions to pose." (Letter, E. Alan Long to Steve Sneyd.)

(72) In *In Search of Wonder* (1956), p. 32.

(73) Probably stories that had been rejected earlier by professional science-fiction magazines.

(74) Letter, Lilith Lorraine to Sam Moskowitz, Jan. 30, 1952.

(75) *Cyclotron*, vol. III, no. 1 (Spring 1965)

(76) The creed of Avalon appears in varying forms in different publications, *inter alia*. *All About Avalon*, cited in ref. 2. Although Vernon Payne has said, as would appear to be true, that the name Avalon was due to Lilith's "associating the thought of King Arthur's Isle of Hereafter," Arthurian imagery seems notably lacking both in her poems and in the organization's literature. A better explanation of her choice may be that legendary Avalon was ruled by women——queens.

(77) Ref. 2, p. 8.

(78) It ceased to appear in 1976. In 1986 it was combined with *Avalon Dispatch*, a newsletter which had run since 1967. In due course this combination became *The Great Plains Canal and Avalon Dispatch* which, still edited by Vernon Payne, continues to appear today. Its masthead slogan is a quotation from Lilith, "Through Poetry to Power."

(79) "one of them [editors] . . . objected to my 'socialistic' ideas (or so they appeared to him)." (Letter, Lilith Lorraine to Forrest J. Ackerman, July 28, 1934.)

(80) "Figures Can Be Horrifying," *Cyclotron*, vol. III, no. 1 (Spring 1965), p. 5.

(81) "My life-long practice of answering all letters the day received." (*Cyclotron*, vol. 2, no. 2 (Summer 1964). This practice is confirmed by Raymond McCarty in a letter cited in ref. 86.

(82) Letter, Vernon Payne to Steve Sneyd, undated (early 1991).

(83) "These remarks were given me from Lottie Mistic, historian, writer who, with her sisters and mother did City Directories that allowed them to be personally acquainted with everyone in all this Northwest Arkansas area." (Letter, Maggie Smith to Steve Sneyd.)

(84) "Her belief in the occult and the clairvoyant" (Vernon Payne, in the 1971 *Cyclo-Flame* annual) could have reinforced memories of the raven in the shrine.

(85) Letter, E. Alan Long to Steve Sneyd. "People who knew previous owners of the property state

that there was a little cabin behind Crow's Nest where an artist or writer worked."

(86) Letter, Raymond McCarty to Steve Sneyd, July 30, 1990.

(87) As well as acting as sole editor of *New Athenium*, Evelyn Thorne co-edited *Epos* with Will Tullos. "It was in its last years the second oldest poetry journal in the U.S. After Tullos died . . . Rollins [College in Winter Park, Fla.] sponsored the magazine, but Thorne edited it for a while longer." (Letter, Sally McClusky to Steve Sneyd, June 30, 1988.)

(88) The author wishes to extend his gratitude also to Sam Moskowitz for furnishing copies of the poems cited on pp. 221-222, for making available his correspondence with Lilith Lorraine (ref. 74), and especially for the information on her connection with *Cosmology* magazine (ref. 13).

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Book Reviews——continued from page 205

Darrell Richardson has assembled samples from all these areas to enliven his listing of St. John's work, though not surprisingly fantasy fans will find that examples from their genres predominate. Listings are by type (book, magazine, etc.) in alphabetical order. Although they represent his gradual compilation of data over a forty-year period, Richardson feels that they may still not be complete; but they certainly are comprehensive enough to warrant my warmest recommendation.

J. Allen St. John flourished late in the period of the great magazine and book illustrators such as Frank Schoonover, N. C. Wyeth, Howard Pyle and Jessie Wilcox Smith, and it is a pleasure to see his versatile contributions which show the influence of that period being given some of the attention that they deserve.

A. Langley Searles

H. P. LOVECRAFT by Peter Cannon. Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1989. xv-153 pp. 22.5 cm. $18.95.

For H. P. Lovecraft to arrive finally in the Twayne United States Authors' series has certainly been worth the wait. (And I have certainly earned the right to be enthusiastic, having attempted sixty pages of an HPL biography myself way back in 1960.) Inclusion in this series is not so much a ratification of literary excellence as it is an acknowledgement of an author's *presence*, whether in history or in mass circulation. Writers as diverse as William F. Buckley, forgotten poet Henry Kirke White and forgettable doggerelist Joaquin Miller have been embraced by Twayne, and should have been, for disparate reasons. Ubiquitous Lovecraft productions——from new paperbacks to countless insular studies—— multiply every year, both on library shelves and dealers' tables at fan conventions. There have, of course, been numerous other academic books on HPL before this one; but to date Cannon's is certainly the most concise and accessible of the lot.

In some Twayne books (such as Sweetser's on Machen) the writer's life is chronicled in a long first chapter, which is followed by an analysis of the work. But since reclusive Lovecraft went virtually nowhere, and did nothing but write, his life is treated chapter by chapter, as it parallels development of his work. To paraphrase Descartes, Lovecraft wrote, therefore he was.

The first chapter here, "Literary Outsider," reviews the spare, fairly bleak facts of the man's upbringing, profiting from the masterly researches of Kenneth Faig, Jr. Lovecraft's amateur press (one is tempted to say Amateur Night) beginnings are examined, in both verse and essays. Chapter two, "Dawn," shows him groping towards fiction in his first professional efforts, from "Herbert West, Reanimator" to his mediocre Dunsanian apeings. (In many paperback collections such work was all too often mixed in with his better productions, and often anthologized merely to get the Lovecraft name into——and onto——a book.) Cannon rightly considers this material separately in his third chapter, "Kingsport and Arkham."

Chapter four, "Castles, Garrets and Tombs," deals with famous yarns like "The Music of Erich Zann" and "The Outsider," and chapter five with stories set

in New York ("He" and "The Horror at Red Hook"), as well as the wisest time-investment Lovecraft ever made——writing "Supernatural Horror in Literature." By immersing himself in the work of past masters in order to write this landmark study, he must have realized how senseless it would be to compete with Poe and M. R. James, and how necessary it was to strike out into new territory——interstellar space, in fact, where he could locate his monsters. (Once he'd gotten them out there, he could still summon them and plop them back into his beloved New England Gothic locales.) Further chapters treat stories set in Boston and Providence, then dream-fantasies, and——finally——the more cosmic stories which are the closest to science-fiction, and have attracted the most critical interest.

Cannon does a superb job of placing Lovecraft in proper critical context, since he has mastered the huge bulk of scholarship which threatens at times to suffocate those who write about the man. He writes clearly and precisely (as did HPL, we might note, unlike many of his explicators), and also judiciously, shunning the severe biases commonly found in writings about his subject. The only shortcoming in the book is the author's self-conscious chatter about "fan-scholars" versus those who are "academic"——itself an *academic* worry if there ever was one! No matter who is writing, permanent scholarship and objective criticism will eventually find their own level (as will their opposite). Thankfully, this book is in the former realm.

Cannon also touches on Lovecraft's ambiguous position in current academic circles, a condition that is scarcely HPL's fault. Contemporary criticism rewards the conventional, or at least the fashionable, whereas Lovecraft is original or he is nothing. The impression he leaves on readers who like him is devastating (there seem to be no in-betweeners——he's either loved or loathed, itself often a mark of genius). He arouses deep emotions, not of mere silly "horror," but of a deep *disquietude* about the universe. Lovecraft may be the only writer in the history of literature who has unforgettably invested homely habitats of the past——sunny and stately New England, no less——with terrifying vistas of a remorseless future. No critical theories are necessary or even possible to assess that impact; every reader attuned to him feels it profoundly. That is why worrying about similarities to, say, Sherlock Holmes is beside the point. The Holmes saga has an enchanting sense of place, and immortal characterization, but our sense of the universe is not changed by our knowledge that Professor Moriarty, like Mack the Knife, is back in town.

This biography is the best introduction to Lovecraft available, and should steer new readers towards him. Cannon happily does not interpose himself between his subject and his readers, but serves instead as an informed and knowing guide. Indeed, he is rather like Lovecraft himself, unobtrusively showing visitors the sights and haunts of his old Providence.

Steve Eng

GHOSTS by Ed McBain. New York: The Viking Press, 1980. 185 pp. 21.5 cm. $8.95.

Once you're past the Stephen King and women's Gothics level, serious novels of the supernatural are rare. Good ones are rarer still. Kingsley Amis's *The Green Man* (1969) is one of the few modern ones that even devotees can recommend. Here, unexpectedly, is another. I say "unexpectedly" because the title-page of *Ghosts* says it's a 87th Precinct novel, and as McBain followers know that means they're getting a procedural crime story with a continuing cast of characters——Steve Carella, Cotton Hawes, Meyer Meyer and the rest. When I picked up this book I didn't believe for a split second it would have any relation to fantasy. And as I read along pleasurably, I could see that most of the supernatural hints were the kind that could eventually be explained away rationally.

But towards the end of the book McBain pulled the rug out. Yes, the phenomena *were* for real. We really *were* dealing with dark forces more at home in

the last century than this one. And a third of the way through chapter eight I found some descriptive touches that rivalled Stephen King's best. King, incidentally, wrote the jacket-blurb for *Ghosts*, which may be fulsome but happens to be accurate——and he, if anybody, should be able to recognize a successful novel in his own field.

Now, you may not be familiar with Ed McBain, even though over the past thirty-five years he's written over sixty novels under his real name and two pseudonyms. It took *The New York Times* two decades to give his 87th Precinct novels the reviews they deserved. (That's not surprising, since the *Times* is a pretty snooty paper. Ross Macdonald, one of America's best mystery novelists, never made the front page of its Sunday book review section until a few years before he wrote his last book.) So if you don't know these procedurals, I suggest you get and read two or three before tackling this one. It helps to get the flavor of a writer's usual work before you tackle the unusual. You may be surprised at how good both are.

Ghosts starts with three murders in Isola (McBain's fictional version of New York City), and shifts to a small snowbound Massachusetts town, a coastal resort, to solve them. The solution involves experiences in two empty houses, one of them a seventeenth century structure that was moved from witch-haunted Salem, and the uncovering of what is probably a fourth violent death. The suspense is tight, the details are vivid, and the unravelling of the mystery is satisfying.

I'll end this review with some heretical revisionism. I've read both books twice, and I liked *Ghosts* better than *The Green Man*. It's true that Amis may have the more original apparition and be the more lit'ry writer. But McBain blends his spooks with the twentieth century world more smoothly——and also more frighteningly. Don't be surprised if you end up agreeing with me.

Lincoln Van Rose

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PLANETFALL

Both death and birth frequent the booths of Thule,
where neither wrath nor lust find leave for stealth.
Here lusty number makes their only wealth,
who fight this hateful globe for keep and fuel.
These furthest out young Goths of spacer kith
found gravities in standing waves, and rode——
some thousand Ship-years past——from node to node,
but scythed this youthful planet to its pith,
till writhing lava scathed their shields and drive.
One sunward pole outglows a furnace hearth:
the other sinks in ice. Between, a hand-turned path
of tilth keeps just the fittest clans alive.
Each year the Mayday Beacon's charged, with mirth
and bellowed myths of once and future earth!

OUR BRAVE NEW EARTHS

A star-blown dust-whale swims the endless flux,
filtering matter from its restless maw.
Under its many smooth self-sealing skins
new gene-pools grow. They come to fear their lot:
"Our Precogs fend convulsions from the future's void!"
But ache, to drift from day to unknown day.
"Our Eidets garner everything their senses graze!"
But the smallest mote can never fade away.
"Our telepaths blend thought at thinking's speed!"
But have no gardens of their own to mind.
A rupturing sun had caused this headlong flight.
We yearn to feel complete——on Brave New Earth!

——*Mark Bones*

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LES VOYAGES
EXTRAORDINAIRES

I imagine its beginning
as I remember the end;
an inspired drunkard
passing through the sea-beasts,
towards the hidden sun where
the Earth neither rises nor sets.
All the large reptiles are gone
and the harp lies untouched
(although I vainly hammer on it).
And when I reach the shore
the boundaries, like the cliffs,
draw straight lines and
the columns come down
across persistent horizons

I'm overdosing
TV intoxication,
my head holocausted
with 625-line images
that leak and spill out
through eyes and ears.
I imagine its beginning
as I remember the end;
the water is planished tin-foil
at placental blood-heat,
the sea-beasts coiling
through the levelled towers,
my fingers webbing,
my fingers webbed,
fingers, webs,
webs . . . .

——*Andrew Darlington*

Voyagers through Eternity

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

PART XIII

Sam Moskowitz

XXI
VERNE'S GREATEST WORK

From December 20, 1865 through December 5, 1867 the *Magasin d'Education et de Récreation* had run the three novels that made up *The Children of Captain Grant* (later sometimes published as *A Voyage Around the World* or *In Search of the Castaways*). In this trilogy, Verne gave superb lessons in geography, disguised by exciting adventures in South America, Australia and New Zealand. Three of its major characters, significantly, were later introduced into *The Mysterious Island*.

But no Verne novel appeared in the magazine from December 1867 through March 1869——and that was a breach of contract. This was partly because Verne had taken time off to travel to America, but chiefly it was due to the slow progress he was making on his next novel. This had been given the working title of *Voyage Under the Sea*, and after six months was only one-quarter completed. (Verne was writing it aboard his yacht, the *Saint-Michel*, and he may also have been doing more fishing than writing.) Hetzel, his publisher, finally became worried, and summoned Verne to explain his slow progress. But a reading of the completed portion convinced Hetzel that something outstanding was on the way, and he eased his pressure on Verne. The novel was written slowly and carefully, then polished and repolished (something Verne did not commonly do), and given a new title, *Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea*.

There were actually other causes for the delay. While the work progressed, Verne interrupted work to finish other stories, and even assisted in the editing of other authors' manuscripts for the magazine. At the same time, a running argument continued with Hetzel, who felt that some viewpoints expressed in the new novel would be too strong meat for youthful readers. He also objected to the nationality of certain characters——Nemo, for example, was depicted as a heroic Pole fighting villainous Russians——because France was walking a political tightrope between the two nations, and he feared diplomatic consequences. Though Verne refused to tone Nemo down very much (indeed, some portions of the novel were deleted in the original serial publication), he did agree to leave Nemo's nationality vague; eventually he became an Indian prince fighting the powers of the entire world rather than the evil of Russia.

Serialization of *Vingt Mille Lieues sous Les Mers* took up a full thirty numbers of the *Magasin d'Education et de Récreation* (March 20, 1869 through June 20, 1870). It was a remarkable coup for a young peoples's magazine, comparable to a magazine in English printing Stevenson's *Kidnapped* or Twain's *Huckleberry Finn*. Enhancing the novel were the superb line drawings of Riou and de Neuville. To precede the first installment, Verne wrote an editorial telling his youthful readers

that they had been treated to voyages through some of the most fascinating portions of the globe, but that this time they were to be passengers on a journey of exploration no one before had ever attempted. What he did not tell them was that the narrator, Professor Pierre Aronnax of the Museum of Paris, was the author himself. Riou accurately depicts a youthful Verne, potbelly and all, in several of the numerous illustrations.

Considering that the novel appeared during a period of long books and leisurely reading, Verne displayed exceptional modernity in enticing readers into his story by its first few paragraphs. A huge creature, previously unknown, is terrorizing the sea lanes and sinking ships. The United States frigate *Abraham Lincoln* is ordered to find and destroy this creature, but is instead itself sunk by it, throwing several passengers overboard. Among these is Professor Aronnax, who with several of his shipmates finds himself on top of a submarine. By kicking its hull they create enough clangor to reveal their presence. A hatch opens, and eight masked men lead them into the interior of this undersea vessel.

This is a marvel of science and luxury which would be hard to duplicate even with today's technology. There are great lounges, a full-sized organ, picture windows the height of a man with spotlights for viewing the undersea panorama. A library contains 12,000 volumes, and the walls are adorned by original art of DaVinci, Raphael, Rubens, Titian and others. There is magnificent sculpture and even a fountain twenty feet high.

Far more amazing is the incredibly advanced science that has gone into making the vessel. It is powered totally by electricity from batteries far more efficient than any previously known. These drive, heat and light it, and permit such luxuries as hot running water, electric clocks and an electric kitchen serving a superb cuisine. The vessel has a speed of fifty knots an hour and is named *The Nautilis*.

A fascinating point not generally realized is that this name (as well as a great deal of the inspiration for the story) derives from a submarine of the same name built by the American inventor Robert Fulton while in Paris. From 1797 to 1806 Fulton tried without success to interest the French as well as other foreign governments in his vessel. (He might have received more serious consideration had he made his bid after 1807, when he finally constructed the *Clermont*, the first steamboat that was economically feasible to operate.)

The Nautilis is equipped so that the crew may leave it in diving suits with an oxygen supply while it is under water, something difficult even today in conventionally designed submersibles. When people leave the submarine to hunt for fish they trail a cable behind them and communicate with the vessel by telegraph. The ship itself carries immense quantities of compressed oxygen to supply its needs while under water. It submerges and rises much like today's conventional submarines by taking in or releasing quantities of water which change its bouyancy.

In *Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea* Verne's imagination proves inspired. There are jaunts through sea-bed forests, a spectacular view of an erupting undersea volcano, a trip under the ice to the South Pole, a battle fought with a school of monstrous squid, sights of sunken treasure galleons which add to Captain Nemo's riches, and, most thrilling of all, a long and engrossing trek to the ruins of ancient Atlantis.

With the skills of a master word-weaver, Verne unites the wonder of his marvellous underwater vessel not only with such new discoveries and gripping adventures, but with the deepening mystery surrounding the motives and background of its commander and builder, Captain Nemo.

A dark and powerful man of middle age, Nemo is a brooding and tragic figure. A wealthy prince of India, whose wife and family have been destroyed by circumstances never completely revealed, he lives to revenge himself on the world and in so doing exiles himself from it. He follows none of its laws, is bound by none

of its ethics. He is a man of immense compassion, yet he retains a vindictive streak of cruelty. Like a gem turning in the light, his personality reveals perplexing facets of bloodthirsty savagery and deep humanity. The unpredictability of his actions and the wonders of *The Nautilis* constantly compete for the attention of the reader. By the time the novel ends one is aware that Verne has created in Captain Nemo one of the most memorable characters in all science-fiction.

The story is told by Professor Aronnax, who manages to escape in a small boat when *The Nautilis* is caught in a maelstrom off the coast of Norway. As if to dispel the slightest inference that he owes inspiration for this sequence to anything except the earlier stories of Poe, Verne has his narrator state, "I found myself drawn into that strange domain where the jaded imagination of Edgar Allan Poe moved at will. At any moment, like the fabulous A. Gordon Pym, I expected to see that 'shrouded human figure, very far larger in its proportions than any dweller among men,' rise in our pathway to defend the approach to the Pole." The force of the maelstrom's outer rim whirls Aronnax and his friends to safety, but *The Nautilis* is sucked down into it.

Nevertheless, Verne leaves the fate of the vessel and its commander in doubt. ". . . what has happened to *The Nautilis?* Is Captain Nemo alive? Does he still pursue those frightful reprisals? . . . If his destiny is strange, it is also sublime." As most readers know, both *The Nautilis* and its commander did reappear five years later in *The Mysterious Island.*

The impact of Captain Nemo on world literature is shown by the narrative poem *The Death of Captain Nemo* (1949) by the Pulitzer Prize winner Robert Hillyer. This opens on the day of Nemo's death at the age of 100, which is observed by two American sailors who stumble on the volcanic isle where his submarine is hidden. Of Nemo, Hiller says:

> Boyhood betrayed; youth maimed, love, loyalty murdered;
> Chaos roaring above the calls for peace,
> Till, with no backward glance lest hope betray him
> He dived deep down.
>
> But what are these dreams of dreams?
> Those memoirs of a life he never lived?
> Where was the land where no one had a name?
> In most familiar confidence he was
> Most reticent. All was anonymous.

Utilizing the few clues and hints left by Verne, Hillyer proceeds to fill in the remaining years of Captain Nemo's life. Rarely has such an extraordinary tribute been given to an author and his character than the homage that this renowned poet, in the years of his maturity, has rendered here to a work which indelibly impressed his childhood.

Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea was the apex of Verne's literary career, and his correspondence with Hetzel shows that he may well have been aware of this. He had created a masterpiece of science-fiction adventure, fully on a par with such classics as *Treasure Island* and *Huckleberry Finn,* and probably superior to Cooper's *The Last of the Mohegans,* a novel he much admired.

The only thing that prevented Verne from gaining immediate world renown was the onset of the Franco-Prussian War. *Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea* was published in book form by Hetzel in two volumes during 1870. The first appeared on March 12th and the second on June 25th. On August 13th Verne was informed that he had been awarded the Legion of Honor for his contributions to literature. But before he could receive any accolades for this award, the Prussians had invaded the country, and the French were understandably less interested in literature than survival. The ensuing siege of Paris stopped most publishing activities. The government fell on September 4th, and soon after civil war broke out. When all hostilities ended on May 21, 1871 Hetzel was in financial difficulties. The *Magasin d'Education et Recreation* suspended publication for a year,

and did not resume until September 5, 1971. Events beyond his control now forced Verne to mark time.

We too shall mark time here briefly in order to sketch in some pertinent background. Previous to and contemporaneous with Jules Verne, the world's outstanding writer of geographic adventure combined with accurate natural science was Irish-born Mayne Reid (1818-1883). Reid came to the United States in 1838, fought in the Mexican War, and eventually became one of the most popular boys' adventure writers of the nineteenth century. In the mid-1840's he was a close friend of Poe, and a frequent guest at the latter's home; and although he did not regard Poe's verse as of the first rank, he vigorously defended him against charges of having a tarnished character.

Reid's most popular novel was *Afloat in the Forest*, which first appeared as as serial (January through December 1865) in *Our Young Folks*, an American magazine for boys and girls. It came out in book form in 1866, and went through many editions. *Afloat in the Forest* tells about the adventures of a family floating down the Amazon on a log boat. Part of the story takes place in an area flooded to treetop heights for so many miles in every direction that it is impossible to tell where the river ends and land begins. Reid's meticulously delineated description of the Amazon basin wilderness is so atmospheric, so rich in authentic detail, so alien in its handling of life forms, that it reads like the geography and natural history of another planet. The novel epitomizes everything that Verne tried to do in his own geographic adventures, and is stylistically superior.

The question naturally arises, Was Verne familiar with Reid's writings, and if so had they influenced him? Reporters often asked him such questions, and his answers were usually evasive. Among them was Marie Belloc, who interviewed him for the British *Strand Magazine*. The interview was published in its February 1894 issue, and includes Verne's quoted reply: "Unhappily, I can read only those works which have been translated into French. Owing to my unfortunate inability to read English, I am not so familiar as I should like to be with Mayne Reid and Robert Louis Stevenson."

But Verne actually needed no knowledge of English for access to Reid's fiction, for most of it was already available in French! Between 1854 and 1864, before Verne's first successful novel was published, no fewer than 26 of Reid's books, most of them aimed at teenagers, had been translated, and Reid had become the best selling juvenile author up to his time in French history. It was simply impossible for anyone involved in literature not to have heard of him. Between 1865 and 1875 seventeen more of his books were translated into French, and after 1875 another eleven. Furthermore, a majority of these 54 books were published by Hetzel, Verne's own employer!

Finally, Reid's novels were not merely popular; they were praised regularly for their quality by leading French literary lights, including Alexandre Dumas. Reid's first published book, *The Rifle Rangers: Adventures of an Officer in Southern Mexico* (1850) established this pattern, and those following maintained it. He was hailed for the minutely descriptive, accurate and fascinating details of natural science he employed, for the enthralling adventures he recounted, and for his often poetic style. The French poet Alphonse Lambertine waxed ecstatic over his prose.

Clearly, then, Reid anticipated Verne's method, and capitalized on it with great success. The difference between the two authors lay in the magnitude of their imagination. Reid simply offered readers what existed; had he not lacked the interest, inclination and courage to explore the center of the earth, to blast off for the moon, or adventure on the bottom of the seas, he might have preempted Verne. In any event, it seems probable that Verne was in his debt.

There is additional evidence which makes that probability very high. There was published in the May 1865 issue of *Our Young Folks*, while Reid's *Afloat in the Forest* was running, a short story titled "How the Crickets Brought Good

Fortune." It was translated from the French, and its author was given as P. J. Stahl. Stahl was a pen name of Hetzel, Verne's publisher, who printed this same story two months later in the *Magasin d'Education et de Recreation* under the title of "Le Cri-Cri." Now, in those days there was no international copyright law in force, and as soon as a new issue of a foreign magazine arrived in the United States anything worthwhile in it was instantly pirated. The only way a foreign author could realize anything here from his work was to have *advance galleys* sent; these would give his American publisher a head start on any competition. The publication history of this short story makes it obvious that Hetzel had just such an arrangement with *Our Young Folks*, a magazine very similar to his own. That in turn means that there would have been an exchange of the two magazines, and since Verne was a staff member, he could not have helped seeing *Our Young Folks*. His curiosity would surely have been aroused by the excellent and provocative illustrations accompanying each installment of Reid's novel, and he would have also seen the full-page advertisements in the magazine for Reid's other books.

Why would Verne have denied adopting Reid's technique? In his younger days he freely admitted his debt to Poe. But in later years, after savoring success, praise and honors, and with family tragedy and his own illness constricting his personal life, he was unwilling to concede anything further. Besides, when Belloc interviewed him in 1894, who remained to contradict him? Reid and Hetzel were long gone; and in any event her interview would appear in another language outside the country. How many readers there would know or remember that Reid had been a fabulous success in France? Verne's logic was correct, and his prevarications have never been exposed until this writing, long after he was beyond caring.

The authenticity of geography and natural science in Mayne Reid's fiction was based on personal observation. He had landed in the United States at New Orleans and gradually worked his way north, exploring the Mississippi and the Platte Rivers. He lived in the forests, hunting, trapping and trading with the Indians. On December 3, 1846 he was commissioned Second Lieutenant in the First New York Volunteers, and participated in campaigns against the Mexicans. On September 13, 1847 at Chapultepec, as the American drive was faltering, Reid led the charge which turned the tide of battle. He was badly wounded in the thigh, was decorated for bravery, and promoted to First Lieutenant.

When he was able to move about again, he joined a group of volunteers committed to aid the revolutionary movements in Germany and Hungary. He sailed to Europe, but arrived in June 1849 only after both efforts had disintegrated. By this time his leg was giving him so much trouble that he was forced to turn to more sedentary pursuits to earn a living, and adopted an older love, writing. As early as 1842 he had placed verse in the *Pittsburgh Morning Chronicle* under the pseudonym of "The Poor Scholar," and in 1843, the year that began his friendship with Poe, he had two poems in *Godey's Lady's Book*, then one of the nation's leading publications. Much more significant was his five-act tragedy in blank verse, *Love's Martyr*, which was produced at the Walnut Street Theatre in Philadelphia on October 23, 1848. He also wrote a number of short stories, and with the success of *The Rifle Rangers* in 1850, as we have seen, his literary career blossomed.

(to be continued in the next issue)

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"Tips on Tales"——concluded from page 236

lorn, picaresque note of the old English ballads. Excellent poems like these are useful reminders that new voices *can* sing the haunted old tunes anew, and with good effect. Other examples in this collection treat themes of science, and do so just as felicitously. Collings is a professor, an advantage here, since that experience brings to his verse not only a cultured urbanity but a fund of knowledge of the historical panorama of poetry.

——*Steve Eng*

Tips on Tales

Short Reviews of Books Old and New

Marion Zimmer Bradley's *Sword and Sorceress, VII* (1990): The seventh volume in this "Anthology of Heroic Fantasy" series again confronts women (and a few men) of courage and wizardry with challenges of evil. Although there are some physical confrontations, the tales here reek of ensorcelment. And not only is the volume thematically homogeneous, the writing quality is the most consistent to date in the series.

All this bespeaks of Bradley's success in closing a gap she recognized in this fantasy sub-genre. In 1939, over half a century ago, a woman reader responded to the first issue of the magazine *Science Fiction* on behalf of her four sisters by counselling, "If you have to have a female in the picture, make her sensible. . . . Phooey on the huzzies who are always getting their clothes torn off and walling an amourous eye at the poor overworked hero. . . ." In her 1984 introduction to the first volume of *Sword and Sorceress*, Bradley addressed this very complaint: "Women in sword-and-sorcery fiction, when not a mere 'screaming maiden' to be rescued from dragons, dangers and doom-laden evil wizards, remained strictly off stage, emerging now and then to reward the hero with her dower kingdom and a chaste kiss. But women read fantasy too, and we get tired of identifying with male heroes." So, under her editorship, this series has included strong, active women as swordswomen and/or sorceresses, working alone, together or equally with men, successfully meeting various challenges.

However, the area has become as familiar to the devotee as the inside of the starship *Enterprise* is to a trekkie. All the protagonists, even those with six fingers and yellow eyes, could comfortably exchange places with any European-educated Caucasian woman. This familiar terrain mightn't matter so much if the stories generally had what I consider the most important characteristic of heroic fantasy——a changed protagonist at the close of the quest. In *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* Joseph Campbell said, "The basic motif of the universal hero's journey [is] leaving one condition and finding the source of life to bring you forth into a richer or mature condition." Mythic heroes, such as Tolkien's Frodo, Le Guin's Ged and Lucas's Skywalker, all change in some way because of their quest. Contrast them with Howard's Conan or Burroughs's John Carter, who are never developed in this mythic tradition. In spite of experiencing confrontations on their ascending to the trone of Aquilonia or becoming Warlord of Mars neither ever matures.

Susanna J. Sturgis, also a fantasy anthology editor, explains that the hero cannot "walk through fire without being singed." In too many *Sword and Sorceress* tales, once ensorcelment evaporates or swords are withdrawn, the heroine packs up and continues on her way——tired no doubt, hungry, perhaps wounded, but basically the same woman who began the quest. There is little intellectual challenge in reading such fiction, even if it is entertaining.

Undeniably, delight can be found in reading Mercedes Lackey's or Diana L. Paxon's entries here of swordswoman and sorceress pairs questing together. Also, active women heroes certainly *are* preferable to the damsels-in-distress cliché. But compared to stories which also provide deeper conflicts of the soul, *Sword and Sorceress* still offers mostly pure escapism.

——*Anita Alverio*

Brian Lumley's *Elysia* (1989) is the author's 23rd book, and draws on all the elements that have served him so well in the past. Led by Cthulhu, the great Old Ones await the imminent shattering of their bonds. Only the Searcher can save

the good guys now. To do so, he travels through time and space and even into a strange dimension created by the dreams of mankind. In the beginning de Marigny simply wants to find Elysia, home of the Elder Gods, and his friend Titus Crow. In the end, apprentice and master must face the great Cthulhu himself. In between, readers are treated to mad moons, Shrub Sapiens, a robotic curator of a mysterious museum, a zombie queen, dream clocks and even sentient, devouring gas clouds. There are too many weird characters and concepts to mention, and worlds without end. The summary may read as a mish-mash, but actually this mix works out well. A balance of science and the mythos creates a series of episodes the reader traverses like an obstacle course, challenged at every turn, until he arrives at an explosive climax. On the most basic level, the book is classically good-against-evil; but on a subliminal higher level Lumley is writing about the destiny of mankind in an eternal universe. It's a worthy sequel to *The Compleat Crow*.

——H. R. Felgenhauer

Jules Verne's *The Child of the Cavern* (1877): This novel originally appeared as *Les Indes Noires*, and has also been reprinted as *Black Diamonds* and *The Underground City*; most editions are profusely illustrated. It might be classified as a romantic idyll of coal-mining, but there are just enough futuristic touches to edge it into the category of early science-fiction.

Although the Aberfoyle mine was worked out and abandoned ten years before the story begins, Simon Ford, a former overseer, his wife and grown son Harry all continue to live there. Their "cottage" is 1500 feet below the surface, and can now be reached only by climbing or descending thirty fifty-foot ladders. Ford discovers a huge new vein of incredible richness. He summons James Starr, his former employer and an engineer. Starr is astounded, and makes plans to reopen the mine.

The story then jumps ahead three years. Aberfoyle is now booming. The new workings involve an immense underground cavern and a natural lake, and a connecting tunnel has been constructed for trains to travel there from the surface. An actual city named Coal Town has been established on the bank of the lake, and hundreds of miners and their families live there. The town and lake shore are lit brilliantly by electricity.

But over the new mine there hangs a threat. Numerous hostile incidents occur, and there is a threat to drown the mine in a flood which would make Johnstown's look puny. The villain is unmasked, and the heroine, his granddaughter, becomes Harry's bride. The most remarkable thing, however, is how Harry managed to feed himself and his parents during the ten years the mine was closed. The nearest village is an hour's walk away; and then there are those thirty ladders... Try duplicating that, even from your local supermarket! I think Guiness may be missing a record here.

Finally, Verne's description of the climate in Scotland is enough to get his book banned there. But don't let that stop you from reading *The Child of the Cavern*, even if you're Scotch. It presents Verne in an unusual vein, as might be expected in a mining story.

——Winston F. Dawson

Michael R. Collings's *Naked to the Sun* (1985): Michael Collings, who has lately been turning out plentiful monographs on Stephen King, should also be familiar to readers as a persistent poet in the fantasy small press. As might be expected from its subtitle, "Dark Visions of Apocalypse," several titles in this collection fall within the horror genre, notably "Three Songs from *Dracula*." Other entries show the author equally at home in both free verse and fixed forms, although I find his modern verse stronger——probably because of his dedicated prior practice along traditional lines. Yet he is particularly successful in "The Sorceress of the Silvered Wood" and "The Wind from Whirl-Away," both of which capture the for-

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#32 Now out of print.

#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.

#41 The H. P. Lovecraft centennial issue. Now out of print.

#42 The Weinbaum memorial issue features an interview with his widow, articles on his college years and business correspondence, early photographs and examples of his science-fiction poetry. Sam Moskowitz continues his history of science-fiction and describes the last s-f in *Physical Culture*.

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