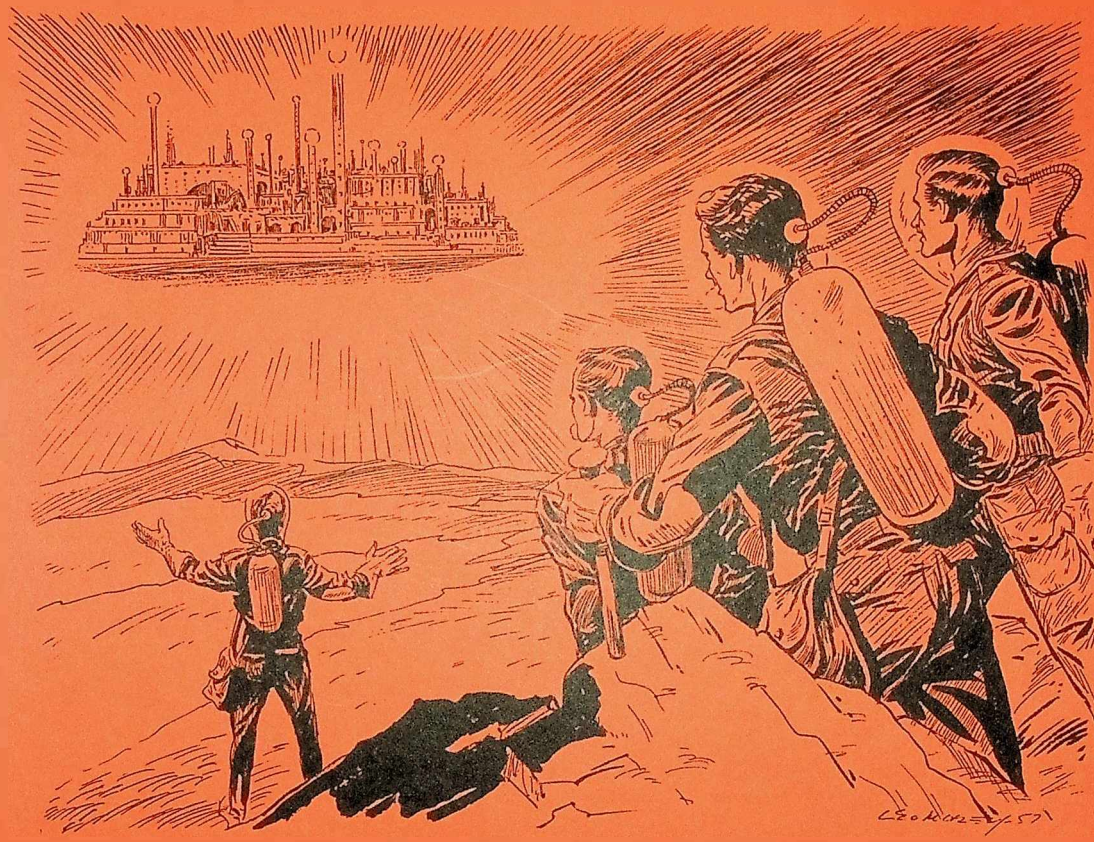
FANTASY COMMENTATOR



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The cover is by Leo Morey. It was originally used in the October 1957 *Satellite Science Fiction* for Alan E. Nourse's story "Rocket to Limbo."

Acknowledgements: The editor is indebted to Sam Moskowitz for supplying the cover illustration, two of the pictures in Andrew Darlington's article, and for the photograph of Georges Gallet; to K. V. Bailey for permission to reprint the sonnet "An Alternative Cataclysm" from his collection *Distant Music* (1987); to Bruce Boston and Steve Eng for permission to print the poems on pages 56 and 21-23; and to Eric Leif Davin, for permission to use from the December 1995 issue of *Sigma* his haiku "Darkness," written in homage to Byron's 1816 poem of the same title describing the dying of the sun and the end of all life on Earth.

FOUNDED 1943

ISSN no. 1051-5011

FANTASY COMMENTATOR

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Volume IX, Number 1 Fall 1996

Articles

Verse

Regular Features

This is the forty-ninth issue of *Fantasy Commentator*, a journal devoted to articles, reviews, checklists and verse in the areas of science-fiction and fantasy, published irregularly. Subscription rates: $5 per number, eight numbers for $35, postpaid in the United States; foreign postage is 75¢ 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. Manuscripts are accepted for publication subject to editorial revision. Unless correspondents request otherwise, communications of general interest may be excerpted for the journal's letter column, "Open House."

Far from Nebulous

A PERSONAL HISTORY OF *NEBULA*, SCOTLAND'S ONLY PROFESSIONAL SCIENCE-FICTION MAGAZINE

Andrew Darlington

> However, even in the very distant future . . . there will still be a demand amongst intelligent and forward-looking people for speculative and philosophical literature as exemplified by the better type of science fiction today .... —Peter Hamilton, *Nebula* #34 (September 1958)

The forty-first and final issue of *Nebula* emerged in June 1959. It featured "Legends of Smith's Burst," Brian Aldiss at his most audacious, with the bizarre exploits of Jamie Lancelot Lowther pitched by a malfunctioning Matter-mitter into gloomy, squalid Glumpalt, a world where mutation is the norm and on which "the black sun still rises." There was also fiction from Bob Shaw, and by Ken Bulmer in the multiple guise of both "H. Philip Stratford" and "Kenneth Johns". To Bulmer, the expiring *Nebula* had been what "many fans regard as the best-loved British s. f. magazine."

In June 1959 Elvis Presley was number one with "A Fool Such as I."

And I was coming up to my twelfth birthday.

But it was not until several years later that I eventually discovered what had been Scotland's only professional genre magazine. By then I was working as a printer's apprentice in Hull, haunting bookshops during my lunch hours. And it was there that I came across a trove of well-thumbed *Nebulas* in a second-hand shop on Prince's Avenue. The place is now an Indian restaurant, but back then, over a period of months, I returned again and again, buying issues at sixpence each, until I'd built up a respectably representative collection.

Nebula was one of the catalysts that weaned me off Dan Dare and Jet-Ace Logan onto adult science-fiction.

Some years before me young Brian Aldiss was also discovering *Nebula*. In his contribution to *Hell's Cartographers* he recalls that "at the time I began to write for publication there were really only two going s. f. magazines over here, *Authentic* and *Nebula*. . . . *Nebula* was more exciting. I found an issue (no. 3) in Freshwater, Isle of Wight, read it, and decided that I could do almost as well as the authors performing" in it. The issue he bought was dated Summer 1953, and the striking cover that attracted his attention was executed by Robert Clothier. Here a planetary surface swirls in magma coils. An aerodynamically tapered spaceship, hatch open, stands at the right, and a helijet is buzzing its passengers across the page towards a kind of tower-block-on stilts complex on the left. Below this picture was the "flash", promising fiction by Temple, Beaumont and Tubb. Within, Aldiss would have encountered these potential rivals. The late Charles Beaumont (an American screen-writer responsible for scripting *The Queen of Outer Space*) had a short story called "This Beautiful Woman"; the William F. Temple novelette, "Limbo," was about a Fascist regime on Earth resisted by "a few incurable invalids in a Martian sanitorium; and E. C. Tubb's novel "Freight" concerned a priceless rejuvenation serum from Venus.

Aldiss would also have read fiction by H. J. Campbell (editor of *Authentic Science Fiction*) and a "Scientifilm Preview" by Forrest J. Ackerman of George Pal's *The War of the Worlds* ("my eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Martians!"). And he might have paused to fill in a few lines of the genre cross-

NEBULA

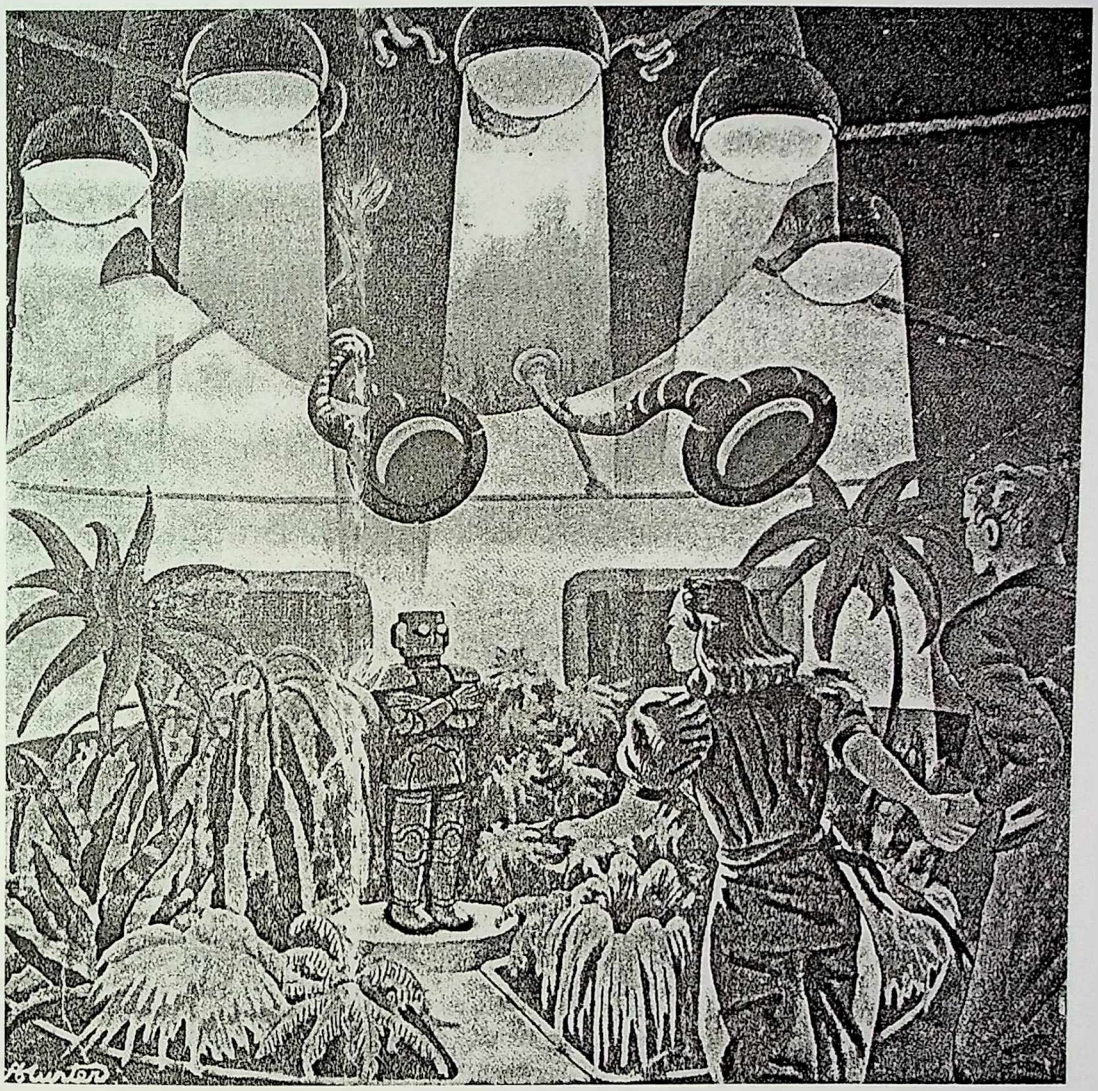
120 PAGES

2/-

AUTUMN, 1952

SCIENCE FICTION

Vol. 1 No. 1

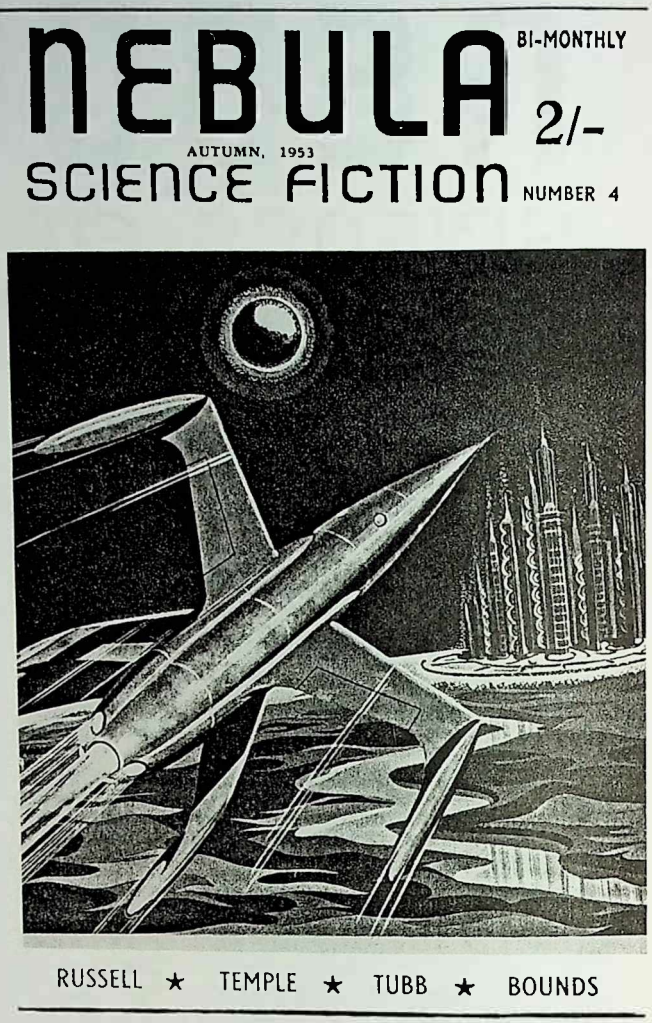


JAMES ★ VAN VOGT ★ RIDLEY

word puzzle; 16 across (three letters) reads: "This, applied to fans, means new readers of science fiction." In our separate time-frames, both Aldiss and myself probably qualified for the answer——"neo."

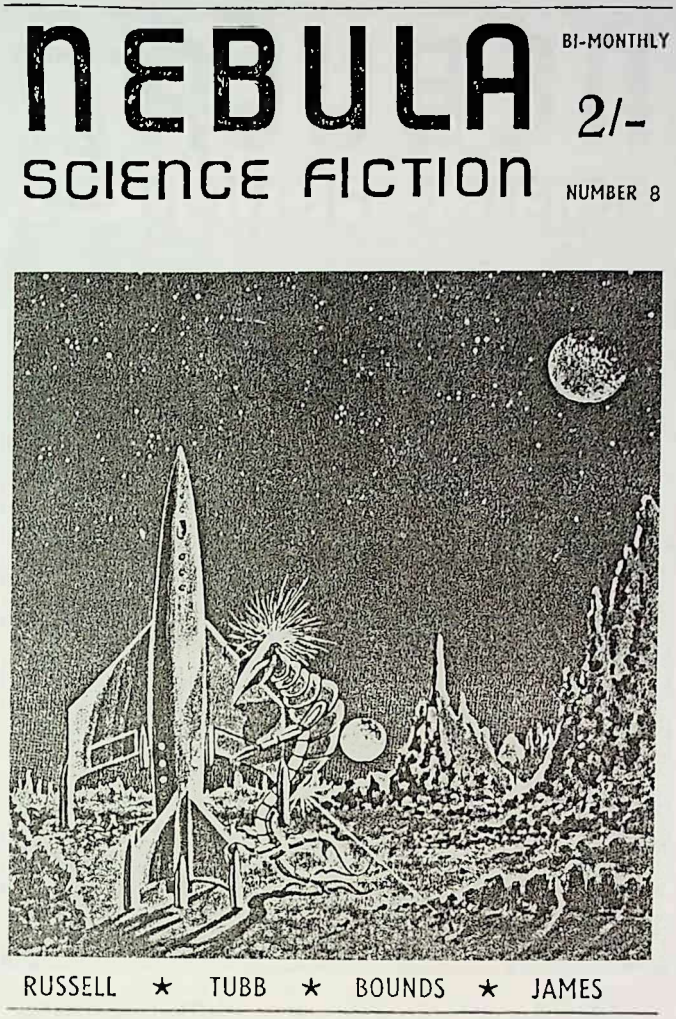
In the Clute-Nicholls *Encyclopedia of Science Fiction*, *Nebula* is described as "part of the 1950s UK sf magazine revival, one of the most important titles along with *New Worlds* and *Science Fantasy*." Mike Ashley added details in an essay for *Book and Magazine Collector* #8, calling it "the only major rival to *New Worlds*," and one which "holds the distinction of publishing the first stories by the leading American writer Robert Silverberg, and also those of the British writer Bob Shaw."

The statistics are revealing: *Nebula* #1 carried its longest ever story (104 pages) as well as its shortest (just 1½ pages). It sold 4000 copies. The second number doubled that readership, and the third almost tripled it (11,000). At its peak, *Nebula* was selling 40,000 copies a month. Total sales of the first 23 issues topped 375,000, and included almost a million words of fiction. Over nine-tenths of this was British-written and an eighth of the stories were by authors who had made their first sales to the magazine. Very few reprints were used, and many *Nebula* stories were themselves subsequently reprinted elsewhere in magazines ranging from the American *Saturday Evening Post* to the Swedish monthly *Hapna*.



Editor Peter Hamilton reminisced that "at the end of 1952 and in the months following, science fiction in Great Britain was enjoying a most spectacular boom, with s.f. books and magazines selling in the tens of thousands and new titles appearing almost daily. *Nebula*, to the casual observer, was but another of these titles, but in actual fact its appearance had been the subjrct of careful planning for some considerable time before the 'boom.' Nevertheless, among the many quickly-planned and poor quality publications which appeared at this time, *Nebula* stood out as a potential 'great' and in the first year of its existence its circulation rose by nearly 300%." Elsewhere he wrote that "in spite of the fact that many of the stories we print concern themselves with outer space, the production of our magazine is unfortunately rooted firmly in the soil of good old Terra."

On the back page of the first issue book reviewer Kenneth Slater



celebrated the launch of "the ninth s.f. magazine to be published in Britain, using original material. Don't look round the newsstand for the other eight, by the way; you won't find them. That nine covers a period of 18 years!"

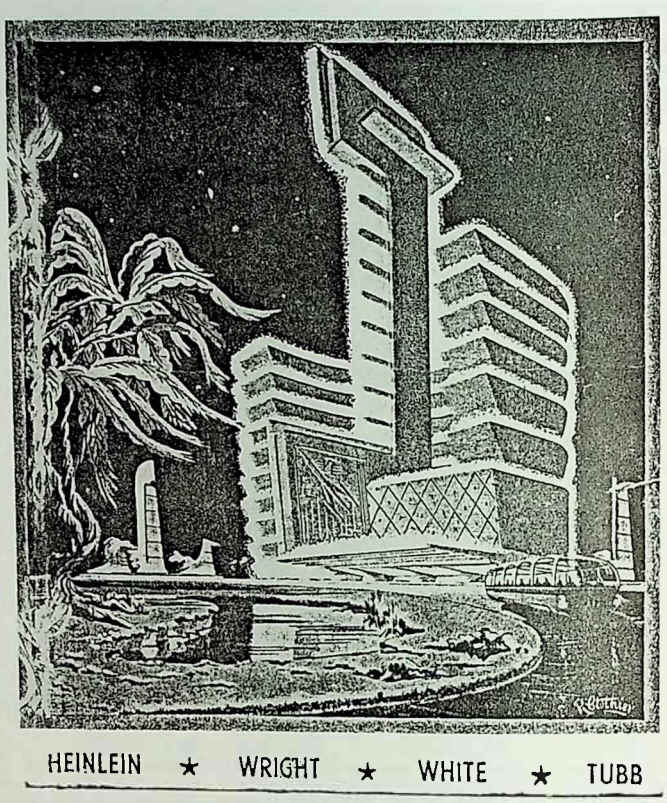
Hamilton (writes Mike Ashley in his introduction to volume three of *The History of the Science Fiction Magazine*) was "a young Scottish fan who loved s f to such an extent that he plunged all his slender resources into his own professional magazine." Aldiss, recounting his hands-on editorial style, says that Hamilton "took a lot of trouble trying to make the stories I submitted publishable, but without much success ——for . . . I've always disliked rewriting at an editor's behest." Actually he published Aldiss regularly——thirteen tales in all, with or without amendments.

The first of these, "The Great Time Hiccup," appeared in *Nebula* #12; it is set in an orbiting space station as all time breaks loose in the solar system. It was commended in the magazine's letter column by Mike Wallace of Hull, and I have idly wondered if the copy he read might have found its way to the bookshop where I bought it.

Covers for the first two *Nebulas* were executed by Alan Hunter; they were done in bright poster colors, and illustrated E. R. James's novel "Robots Never Weep," and F. G. Rayer's "Thou Pasture Us." Robert Heinlein, no less, wrote commending the latter: "I am at the present moment enjoying Rayer's novel about the heavenly toys. *Nebula* is a handsome publication." Hunter was subsequently appointed Art Consultant for the magazine. "The only time I met Peter was shortly after the inauguration of *Nebula*," Alan told me. "He attended a London convention to promote the magazine, but I was unable to be there, so he changed his return route in order to visit me at my home. He stayed overnight and we managed to discuss matters relating to the future of *Nebula* before he returned to Glasgow. I recall him as short, dark-haired, and very active for his avowed constant ill-health. He had a strong Scottish accent. Peter always worked to tight deadlines ——one of my illustrations was to a six-line description in a telegram! I applauded his cover layout, which separated all lettering from the painting itself, but suggested a border 'frame' would give a more balanced and neat presen-

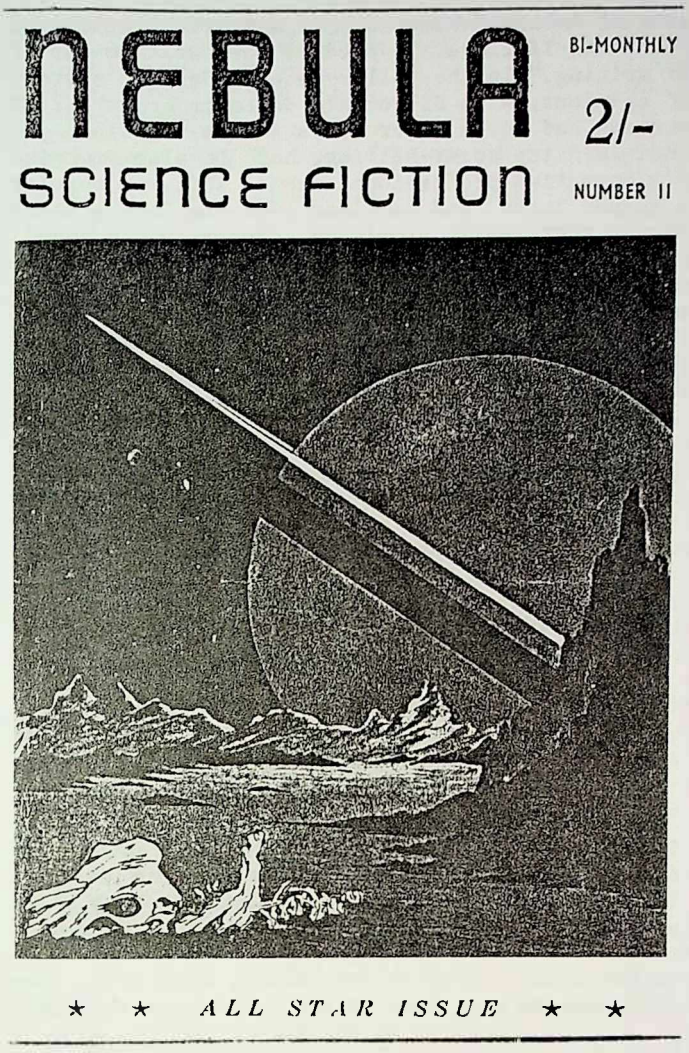
tation. This idea was adopted from issue four onwards."

With that fourth issue *Nebula* had expanded from 120 to 128 pages, and gone from quarterly to bimonthly appearance. An advertisement in *Vargo Statten Science Fiction Magazine* boasted that *Nebula* was "crammed full of the most *exciting* and *enthralling* yarns . . . by all the *well-known authors*," and offered a year's subscription for just twelve shillings. By the tenth number, with the added innovation of back-cover black-and-white drawings, often with a humorous edge, evolution of the magazine's style was complete.



But the quality of the fiction was the bottom-line selling point. And that was where *Nebula* excelled. Aldiss, already playfully perpetrating provocative story imaginings, was pointing to future developments in the genre. So were Robert Silverberg (then about to enter his prolific hack period) and Bob Shaw, who was graduating from fanzines into the pro markets. Then there were Ken Bulmer and John Brunner, also destined for great things; Brunner had six sales, and under his own name Bulmer had twelve (including the four-part "Wisdom of the Gods," the only serial *Nebula* ever ran), plus more under pseudonyms. Writers like Eric Frank Russell (ten stories), William F. Temple (fourteen) and Charles Eric Maine (two) were already regarded as giants—— the pioneers not only of earlier British magazines such as *Tales of Wonder* and *Fantasy*, but of consistent penetrations into the American market.

But the mainstay of *Nebula* (and its 1950's and early 1960's contemporaries as well) was a unique and too-often subsequently neglected stable of hard-science-fiction action writers. Unlike the New Wave that was to follow, they were largely intuitive, distinct from academic writers——story-tellers who turned out thrilling yarns rather than carefully wrought aesthetics powered by artful manifesto. E. R. James, who wrote nine stories for the magazine, was a Yorkshire postman. Bus driver Philip E. High, who created some of the most awesomely horrific weapons in the history of the genre, wrote a dozen. Dominating the scene like a literary colossus was E. C. Tubb. He worked various periods as a printing machine salesman and a traffic warden, managing in betweentimes to produce no fewer



than 27 stories! Other regular contributors in this category were Sydney J. Bounds (five stories), F. G. Rayer (four), Robert Presslie (seven), Lan Wright (six) and Peter J. Ridley (four).

Theirs was in some ways a do-it-yourself, folk literature, created on the bare bones of home-made talents. The raw stuff of their dreams ignited on battered typewriters, giving them access to the poorly paid but addictive arena of print. And an audience. Their stories were two-fisted adventures spanning a consensus of known worlds. Bite-sized, easily digestible planets. A known solar system explored and reinforced by separate but collective flights of daring.

Mars was Egypt thrust into space——a world of vast deserts concealing the menace and tortured romance of tombs and lost cities from forgotten civilizations. Venus was a magnified Brazilian rainforest, a garish, fog-shrouded domain of trackless jungles prowled by fantastic primitive beasts. Mercury was Iceland, where volcanic superheat coexisted across a twilight zone with intense, glacial cold. And beyond the mined worldlets of the asteroid belt were moons beneath the spectacular skies of Jupiter and Saturn, bleakly chill, but not wholly inhospitable to the determined Spacer with a thick parka and thermal underwear.

This kind of writing gave *Nebula* an atmospheric quality that I find both important and admirable——perhaps because it lit up my adolescence with the incandescence of Napalm. The stories I aped and imitated, and I cherish the issues in which they appeared.

E. C. Tubb is quoted in *The History of the Science Fiction Magazine* as claiming that "many authors came to regard *Nebula* with financial reward taking but secondary place, the desire of submitting a good story being of primary importance."

In *Hell's Cartographers* Robert Silverberg recalls his first sale: "I sent a short story called "Gorgon Planet" off to a magazine called *Nebula* . . . and in January 1954 Hamilton notified me that he would use it, and sent me his check for $12.60. That same month I sold a novel to a major American publisher." "Gorgon Planet" saw print in #7 (an issue featuring Maine's "Trouble-Shooter" and "Pilot's Hands," a Temple novel). "Bob, a young native of Brooklyn, makes his

very first appearance in this issue of *Nebula*," boasted the editorial, welcoming him and David S. Gardner to the contents-listings. "I predict they will go far if they can keep up this standard of writing." In the follow-up poll Gardner's story actually rated higher in readers' opinions, with Silverburg collecting amere 7.9% of the vote. Nevertheless, Silverberg had seven later tales in the magazine.

Nebula #9 gave Robert Heinlein top cover-billing, but it also carried "Aspect," award-winning Bob Shaw's inventive professional debut. This was popular enough to warrant a sequel three issues later, and Hamilton editorialized "I think you will agree with me that I have another really promising 'discovery' in Bob."

In *A Pictorial History of Science Fiction* David Kyle said that through his "intense Personal style" Hamilton made *Nebula* "a labor of love, a respected, if sometimes a little amateurish publication." Amateurish? In view of such evidence I'd disagree, and direct Kyle's attention instead to *Vargo Statten Science Fiction Magazine* or even John Spencer's *Tales of Tomorrow*, which really connoted the meaning of that word. Perhaps the accusation comes from the strong "fan" input provided by Walter Willis, legendary editor of *Hyphen* and *Slant*, whose news column was a regular and popular feature. Historian Mike Ashley provides a more balanced judgement: "I tend to delight in small-press magazines because of the passion and commitment that go into them, and Peter Hamilton brought that quality to *Nebula*. It had a feeling of family about it, and thus came across as very personal, which [*New Worlds* editor John] Carnell was never able to do." "*Nebula*, despite its name, was never nebulous," said Ken Bulmer.

The magazine began in 1952. Al Martino was then number one on the recently inaugurated Pop Charts with "Here in my Heart," and Dan Dare was "Marooned on Mercury." It ended, seven years and 41 issues later, in 1959, by which time Dan Dare was adventuring on the planet Terra Nova.

"It seems likely to me," wrote Peter Hamilton in September 1958, "that man will only cease to be interested in imaginative writing when he ceases to be interested in the future itself, and finally calls a halt to all progress . . . ."

Nebula may now indeed be nearly forty years dead, but to me it still reads as if it's very much alive.

Author's note: In writing this essay I am indebted to the authors of the reference works I have quoted, as well as to other people who communicated information to me personally. These latter include E. C. Tubb, Mike Ashley, Alan Hunter, Philip Harbottle, Philip E. High, E. R. James, Harry Turner, Sydney J. Bounds and, of course, Peter Hamilton. Finally, to make the contents of the magazine more accessible, I have compiled indices to it by author, artist and subject. These are given below. The numbers are those of the issues in which the entries appeared.

AUTHORS, FICTION

AUTHORS, NON-FICTION

ARTISTS*

*an asterisk indicates the artist drew the cover illustration.

• • •

DRAWING ON SURPRISE

Letitia is sketching sharks on
broadsheet construction paper, now drawing
their bold, unblinking eyes, her arm
kept stiff so they can move only slowly
while chasing terrorized swimmers
across the pages of her story.

"Just say No to sneak-attacking,
that's all," state Letitia's limiting
strokes. Yet how blackly their brash
outlines chafe the surrounding sea!

As sharks will, they long to escape
and invade those vast reaches of blue water.
And because the artist has shown
their ability to converse, we know
they're plotting her comeuppance:
"Shall we chomp off an arm first?
Or slash right for the eyes...?

However, she is a creator wise to her
characters' trickery, and has all the while
been using a clever protective ink that
slowly fades. So the agressive shark voices
are gradually sinking away,
like pain does when Ben-gay is rubbed
onto the skin over sore muscles.

—James Dewitt

Nightmares of Punch and Judy in Ruskin and M.R. James

Roger Craik

For the fifty-year-old John Ruskin, 1869 was marked by ill health, fretfulness and nightmares. He began to note the latter in his journal, from which we learn that the night of Saturday, October 23rd was particularly troubled:

> Bad cold coming on. Sleep broken. Dreamed I was going up a lovely mountain ravine and met a party of Germans, four very ugly women and their papa and mama——indefinite——and they were arranging themselves to picnic, as I thought, with their backs to the beautiful view. But when I looked, I saw they were settling themselves to see Punch, and warned me out of the way lest I should get any of it gratis; and I was going on up the ravine contemptuously, when, Punch appearing on the stage, I looked back for a minute and was startled by his immediately knocking down his wife without dancing with her first, which new reading of the play made me stop to see how it went on; and then I saw it was an Italian Punch, modernized, and that there was no idea of humour in it, but all the interest was in a mad struggle of the wife for the stick, and in her being afterwards beaten slowly, crying out, and with a stuffed body, which seemed to bruise under the blows, so as to make the whole as horrible and nasty as possible. So I woke, and wondered much at the foolishness, coherence, uselessness, ludicrous and mean unpleasantness of it all.[1] *

In 1919, nineteen years after Ruskin's death, M. R. James wrote his ghost story "The Story of a Disappearance and an Appearance" in which a man seeking his missing uncle meets a bagman who enthuses about a Punch and Judy show he has just seen. That very night the man has the following alarming dream:

> It began with what I can only describe as a pulling aside of curtains: and I found myself seated in a place——I don't know whether indoors or not. There were people——only a few——on either side of me, but I did not recognize them, or indeed think much about them. They never spoke, but, as far as I can remember, were all grave and pale-faced and looked fixedly before them. Facing me was a Punch and Judy show, perhaps rather larger than the ordinary ones, painted with black figures on a reddish-yellow ground. Behind it and on each side was only darkness, but in the front there was a sufficiency of light. I was "strung up" to a high degree of expectation and looked every moment to hear the pan-pipes and Roo-too-too-it. Instead of that there came suddenly an enormous——I can use no other word——an enormous single toll of a bell, I don't know from how far off——somewhere behind. The little curtain flew up and the drama began.
>
> I believe someone once tried to rewrite Punch as a serious tragedy; but whoever he may have been, this performance would have suited him exactly. There was something Satanic about the hero. He varied his methods of attack: for some of his victims he laid in wait, and to see his horrible face——it was yellowish-white, I may remark——peering around the wings made me think of the Vampyre in Fuseli's foul sketch. To others he was polite and carneying. . . . But with all of them I came to dread the moment of death. The crack of the stick on their skulls, which in the ordinary way delights me, had here a crushing sound as if the bone was giving way, and the victims quivered and kicked as they lay. The baby——it sounds more ridiculous as I go on——the baby, I am sure, was alive. Punch wrung its neck, and if the choke or squeak which it gave were not real, I know nothing of reality.
>
> The stage got perceptibly darker as each crime was consummated, and at least there was one murder which was done quite in the dark, so that I could see nothing of the victim, and took some time to effect. It was accompanied by hard breathing and horrid muffled sounds, and after it Punch came and sat on the footboards, and hung his head on one side, and

*Notes will be found on page 14.

> sniggered in so deadly a fashion that I saw some of those beside me cover their faces, and I would have gladly done the same.[2]

The drama continues with the appearance of a figure hooded with a whitish bag, who pursues Punch, catches him, and then thrusts his unmasked face into Punch's.

James's narrator remembers from the dream that the names over the front of the booth were Kidman and Gallop. Later, a real Punch and Judy show comes to the town, and with mixed feelings the narrator decides to watch it:

> I was half delighted, half not——the latter because my unpleasant dream came back to me so vividly; but, anyhow, I determined to see it through, and I sent Eliza out with a crown-piece to the performers and a request that they would face my window if they could manage it.
>
> The show was a smart new one; the names of the proprietors, I need hardly tell you, were Italian, Foresta and Calpigi.[3]

From his vantage point, the speaker sees a terrified head rise into view and, behind it, the nightcapped head of a criminal about to be executed. The two figures break free, the nightcapped one being discovered shortly afterwards in a chalk pit, with his throat horribly mangled yet recognizable as the speaker's missing uncle. The names of the Punch and Judy proprietors turn out to be Kidman and Gallop.

Of course James might not have known of Ruskin's experience: the violence in Punch and Judy shows is distressing enough in itself to give rise to nightmares, and besides, it is a natural response of imaginative people to wonder what would happen if the show were real. On the other hand, there is more to link Ruskin and James's writing than their being involved with dreams of Punch and Judy. Both make mention of an Italian Punch (Ruskin in his dream and James when his narrator sees the Italian names on the real booth), and both envisage a Punch played seriously: for Ruskin it is "an Italian Punch, modernised" but one in which there is "no idea of humour," while James's narrator, writing to his brother with his nightmare fresh in his mind, recalls that "someone once tried to re-write Punch as a serious tragedy." The "seriousness" takes a particularly macabre form. From what I remember of Punch and Judy shows from my childhood, Punch delivers several short cracks to his opponents' heads, and they drop down dead, much to the relish of an audience enjoying the vigor of it all, and laughing and cheering at the spectacle of death dealt out without pain. By contrast, Ruskin and James portray the opposite——a series of ghastly murders distinguished by their slowness as the victims die by degrees, in a horribly lifelike real way. Ruskin's Judy is "beaten slowly, crying out, and with a stuffed body, which seemed to bruise under the blows"; while James's Punch's stick deals out blows which "had here a crushing sound as if the bone were giving way, and the victims quivered and kicked as they lay." Furthermore, there are only a few people present at each performance (six Germans in Ruskin and "only a few" in James); this makes both shows seem private and somehow sinister. The final similarity between the two accounts is that each involves payment in advance; the Germans want Ruskin out of the way so that he will not see any of the show without paying (they by implication having paid), while James's narrator, when he sees the real show, pays the performers to carry it out facing his hotel window.

If, as these many similarities suggest, M. R. James did know of Ruskin's dream, how could he have done so? Their two recorded meetings, if they can be called that, were when the schoolboy James heard Ruskin lecture at Eton: nothing is known of James's response to the first lecture, but Ruskin's second (on Amiens Cathedral, in 1880) had a decisive influence on the precocious eighteen-year-old. Over forty years later he distinctly recalled it: "For the first time I learned what might be read, and in what spirit, in the imagery of a great church: and what the thirteenth century had to say to the nineteenth. I say I then learned it first; yet I doubt if in so saying I do justice to my tutor, who, a faithful disciple of Ruskin (and long Master of his Guild), had at the very least prepared

my mind to absorb that lesson."[4] "My tutor" is Henry Luxmoore (1841-1926) who after Eton and Oxford returned to his old school and taught there until his death, while the "Guild" is the Guild of St. George, a society established in 1871 of men who pledged a tithe of their income to acquiring and developing land according to Ruskin's idea and ideals.[5] Of all the Eton College schoolmasters influenced by Ruskin in the 1850's and 1860's, Luxmoore seems to have been the most committed; in his letters he asks, "Am I not Ruskinese all through?"[6] and later acknowledges "some intercourse with John Ruskin."[7] The two must have known each other well, for Ruskin's short-lived Guild of St. George had only 32 members and it can be assumed that Ruskin knew all of them personally. Not only that, but Ruskin was a frequent visitor to Eton in the 1860's and early 1870's.[8]

In his turn, Luxmoore was deeply influential on M. R. James from the day the latter entered Eton in 1876 until his own death in 1926. From 1902 until 1917 he was present at the informal Christmas gatherings which James held in his rooms at King's College, Cambridge, and at which James would read aloud his latest ghost story: Luxmoore heard the first reading of "A Story of a Disappearance and an Appearance" there.[9] If James did indeed know of Ruskin's dream it was almost certainly from his Eton tutor, Henry E. Luxmoore, that he heard it.

NOTES

(1) Ruskin, John (ed. by Evans, Joan and Whitehouse, J. H.): *The Diaries of John Ruskin*, vol. 2 (1958), p. 684.
(2) James, M. R.: *The Complete Ghost Stories of M. R. James* (1931), pp. 449-450.
(3) *Ibid.*, p. 452.
(4) James, M. R.: *Eton and King's: Recollections, Mostly Trivial (1875-1925)* (1926), p. 55.
(5) Leon, Derrick: *Ruskin: The Great Victorian* (1949), p. 458.
(6) Luxmoore, H. E. (ed. by James, M. R.): *Letters of H. E. Luxmoore* (1929), p. 141.
(7) *Ibid.*, p. 262.
(8) Browning, Oscar: *Memories of Sixty Years at Eton, Cambridge and Elsewhere* (1910), p. 182.
(9) Cox, Michael: *M. R. James: An Informal Portrait* (1983), p. 143.

• • •

AFTER READING THE SCIENCE-FICTION OF CATHERINE L. MOORE

Never have I left
"the green hills of Earth,"
Only in poem or story
have I wandered far
From the place of my birth
to look beyond Terran glory.

Far too young to have read
"The Quest of the Starstone"
In November of 'thirty-seven,
the cozy skies of Earth were alone
My boyish view of heaven
and all I knew of distant realms.

Though I read many a daring tale
by Bradbury, Moore and Clarke
Of alien planet and shining starmist,
of Martian sand and Venusian vale,
I was always afraid of that barren dark
of wintry space and circling asteroid——

The eerie solitude of the void;
I preferred the gentle winds blowing
Over the evening hills of Earth
where I can see the holly tree growing
In the land of my birth
and hear her soft waters flowing.

Edward W. O'Brien, Jr.

HANNIBAL DEATHRIDGE, HIS JOURNEYS IN STRANGE SUBTERRANEAN LANDS TO THE PENDANT WORLD, AND BEYOND / THE CONQUEROR OF GRAVITATION REACHES ENCHANTING MOONS. . . . (after Edgar Rice Burroughs)

a perfect echo that
reeks of perfection
falls through my eye, the
body's only exact circles,
to ripple in heavy silences

after antipodean quakes
in polychromatic visions
of dust and volcanic storm
I discover gates polished
to luminous smoothness

sometimes the terrors
of the universe lurk a
million light-years distant,
then their spores rage
unexpectedly through
the bloodstream

down labyrinths of
cyclopean granite hewn by
unhuman hands eternities lost,
stepping through the quivering
of dark lenses, I stand beneath
the weight of alien skies
spreading my hands the
better to trap visions

looking across
exquisitely silken ocean,
shying stones and curses at
jewelled beasts and monstrous jungle
stretching years and physics like
a watchspring, it's now
that time comes to this
inner worlds, in the
perfect shadow of
a pendant moon

through echoes
reeking of recollection
in a dead city of terrible statues
I discover a machine for the
navigation of inner space
and sail enclosed ether
through ripples of
heavy silence

telling myself memories of
Hannibal Deathridge, explorer
of the great Australian interior,
born Bromley in 1866, so this place
must be Pellucidar . . . or visions
inflamed by spores raging
unexpectedly through my bloodstream

on an enchanted moon
deep within the world
I find cyclopean gates
polished luminously smooth
in a quake-dead city hewn
by unhuman hands a
million years lost

and through quivering
dark lenses I stand again
beneath the weight of new
skies in perfect circles
of recollection, in
the ghostlight of
a pendant moon
that falls into
the body's only
exact circles

and I look for the next machine

THE GREAT MOROCCAN WEED WAR/ AN ETIQUETTE OF CATASTROPHE

The debris glows as if impaled
by slender fragments of moonlight
through the stone opacity of night.
We wait beneath the fire-fleshed
murex-shell of motorway curve
for the caravan that's
dragged itself dusty and cursing
from the myth-riddled East into
this continent of strange hours,
monolithic concrete and vast decay.
We take them swiftly
as the sun hurls sharp-edged shadows
over ripples of broken asphalt
and weed that, as tall as a man,
bends and twists in hazy dawn wind.
we destroy their horse-drawn autos,
their trucks and caravans
and, finding nothing,
take only their lives.
Towards nightfall
as the debris again begins to glow
like muddy earth-bound phoenix,
we melt back into the trees
leaving only thick black
roils of smoke flowing
low over the ruins
of Naples

Andrew Darlington

Versatility Personified

AN INTERVIEW WITH STEVE ENG

S. F. Willems

Steve Eng's middle name could well be "Versatile." He's tried his hand at just about everything. His hundreds of poems of horror/fantasy/science-fiction have been widely published, as have numerous articles (including a recent comprehensive piece on science-fiction poetry in the latest edition of *Anatomy of Wonder*); he is compiling a bibliography of genre poetry; has published Gary William Crawford's chapbook, *Poems of the Divided Self*; is a regular book reviewer for *The Tennessee Historical Quarterly*, *The Nashville Banner* and *BookPage* (which reaches 600,000 readers); and is a musician and songwriter—his book, *A Satisfied Mind: the Country Music of Porter Wagoner*, now in its fourth printing, was nominated for the fourth annual Ralph J. Gleason Music Bood Awards. He's also now working on a narrative history, *The Tennessee Wild West*, and a new biography of singer Jimmy Buffett. Steve is listed in *Who's Who in the South and Southwest (1995-1996)*.

• • •

S. Willems: *How is your bibliography of genre poetry progressing? Is it a reference work that's destined, largely, for libraries?*

Steve Eng: It's moving slowly but surely. The title, first of all, will be *The Poetry of Fantasy*, and it will be published by Greenwood Press. So far, I've annotated over a thousand entries. Yes, it will be aimed largely at libraries, although the binding will be attractive and there'll be a thorough introduction.

Tell us something about your article in Anatomy of Wonder.

Anatomy of Wonder has been through several editions; this is the fourth, and the editor, Neil Barron, is one of the leading scholars in the field. My article, "The Speculative Muse," is an essay on science-fiction poetry, with a number of titles annotated. Poets like Bruce Boston, Steve Sneyd and the late Stanton A. Coblentz are featured. Editors like Marge B. Simon, Robert Frazier and Roger Dutcher helped me. I shared the manuscript with around ten people. I tried to span the centuries, covering Shelley and his scientific experiments (including new information of sources of his wife's *Frankenstein*), as well as the California Romantics like Sterling and Coblentz, down to the current days of *Star*Line*. To some extent, the essay complements Scott Green's 1989 book, *Contemporary Science Fiction, Fantasy, and Horror Poetry*.

How, originally, did you become interested in doing bibliographies and works that required considerable research?

I began by compiling a checklist of H. P. Lovecraft in 1956. I typed a three-by-five card for every item. I wrote to people who knew him, and found my share of obscure titles. At that time he wasn't taken seriously by any academic scholars. I lived near Washington, D. C., so I'd go to the Library of Congress. Once I was walking home with a bundle of cards under my arm when a guy came out of an alley and tried to assault me. I reached for my knife, and when he reached for his I started running. (That might illustrate the difference between horror and terror.)

I used to save my allowance money, and I purchased some Lovecraft typescripts for $25 apiece——the short stories "He," "The Festival" and "Beyond the Wall of Sleep." Clark Ashton Smith sold me Lovecraft postcards for fifty cents each. Ten years later, unwisely, I sold all I'd collected. I wrote about sixty pages of a Lovecraft biography around 1961, then dropped the project. Bibliography isn't very glamorous, but it does sharpen one's sense of precision.

What is your educational background?

In 1957-58 I was an army brat in London, where I became addicted to collecting first editions. Arthur Machen, M. P. Shiel and Lord Dunsany were among my quarries. I spent my freshman college year in Munich at the University of Maryland there, and edited a school magazine. One of the poems I included was by someone suspected of being what we now call "gay." The dean got angry. He also disliked my practical jokes and my leadership of a student strike. So I wasn't permitted to attend the next year. But it was worth it!

I was graduated——barely——from George Washington University with a degree in English literature. In my junior year, a counsellor asked me why I wasn't taking any education courses. I replied that I didn't want to teach, I wanted to write. Then he wondered why I wasn't taking any writing courses. I said I felt if you wanted to learn how to write you should copy great authors. He didn't like that answer very well.

Later I did get a master's degree in education, though again it included no teaching courses. I was administering social service programs, so it really was a degree in counselling.

When did you decide to get involved in the writing world?

I was around sixteen when that happened. My ininfluences were H. L. Mencken and then Lovecraft. I didn't want to write like Lovecraft (anyone who tries is a fool), but his total commitment in the face of poverty impressed me. In the 1950's I wrote articles for a national school magazine, *Student Life*, but didn't pursue journalism after that. Short stories came next, but I never got any published.

In 1964 I went to Australia on a freighter; then after four months back to San Francisco. Around 1966 I travelled through four states in the Northwest selling auto parts. I composed poems in my head as I drove. On the road, in motel rooms and cafés, I gradually became a dedicated writer.

Do research and any *type of writing go hand in hand?*

I suppose they do—— though what works for one writer doesn't for another. One *does* need what August Derleth once

called "a sharp sense of the particular." Many arty, literary types are vague and drifty——and research is one antidote to that. Journalism is another——knowing how to gather and report facts. I used to write applications for Federal grants, and my boss often made me rewrite them to be more specific.

Since you've been a publisher, let me ask what are some of the major and/or most interesting works you've published?

One was Bob Lind's *Elusive Butterfly and Other Lyrics*. That was in 1971. The title piece was a number five song in 1966, and has been recorded about 75 times. I located three unrecorded stanzas, and wanted to see it all in print. One thing led to another, and by 1975 I was managing Bob and got him an eighteen-city tour with Roy Orbison. Later, the greatest living female horror story story writer, Mary Elizabeth Counselman, visited me, and Neal R. Blaikie of Pensacola and I published her *Face of Fear and Other Poems* in 1984.

You're also an editor for The Romantist. *Would you describe this publication for us?*

The magazine was founded by John C. Moran, an expert on the author F. Marion Crawford. We've published articles about him, and on Robert W. Chambers, Raymond Chandler, Henry James, H. Warner Munn, Clark Ashton Smith and Lew Wallace among others. We believe that scholarly work should be written in an engaging style for the lay reader. A number of reference books cite the contents, and occasionally pieces have been reprinted elsewhere. The next issue of *The Romantist* will be out this year.*

You're a musician and song-writer as well! What's your history in the field of music?

I began playing in clubs in 1972. I put out a couple of records, one protesting the destruction of a building in Vancouver, Washington. I've had a few songs recorded, mostly from Rhinestone Rooster Records.† The producer is Ralph H. Compton, author of the "Trail Drive" series for St. Martin's Press. Last year I played some songs at the Southern Festival of Books. I'm regularly asked to perform at high schools, and in February 1996 I did my Jesse James song at Opryland when the forensic scientists had their convention. Jesse's body had been recently dug up, and a macabre time was had by all.

Are any new releases out or upcoming?

Ralph has cut a couple of Western songs of mine, which we may release soon. One is about the Alamo, the other about Sam Houston.

I understand one of your song lyrics co-won a Rhysling Award.

That was "Storybooks and Treasure Maps," which I wrote for a classical guitar around 1972 in Portland.

Your articles and poetry have been published widely. Would you name some of the publications where they've appeared?

I've written verse for many markets, from *Amazing Stories, The Arkham Collector* and *Twilight Zone* to *Eldritch Tales, Fantasy Commentator, Haunts, Star* Line, Whispers* and many, many others. My articles have appeared in books like Marshall Tymn's *Horror Literature* (1981), Frank Magill's *Survey of Modern Fantasy* (1983), Don Herron's *The Dark Barbarian* (1984), Jack Sullivan's *Penguin Encyclopedia of Horror and the Supernatural* (1986), Darrell Schweitzer's *Discovering Mod-*

*This and back issues are available from the F. Marion Crawford Memorial Society, 3610 Meadowbrook Ave., Nashville, Tenn. 37205.

†P. O. Box 160191, Nashville, Tenn. 37216

ern Horror Fiction (1988); in magazines like *True West* and *Night Cry*; and, most recently, in *Walt Disney's Comics and Stories* edited by Carl Barks.

Your working in so many different areas and genres makes mewonder where your personal special interest lies.

I'm very interested in the west, and certainly also in poetry. But to a great extent I try to become what I am writing about. Like a method actor. Writing should be adventurous and exploratory. I feel that if you know exactly what you are doing, it takes away half the fun——and without the fun, you can't keep going.

In the fields of the supernatural, what are your favorite authors?

I used to read Algernon Blackwood, M. R.James and Arthur Machen. I prefer a spooky, uncanny story to something obvious. "Horror" *per se* is available on the front page of every morning paper, with the latest bombing, shooting or car wreck. "Terror" is subtler, like finding out that the person you just finished interviewing died about three weeks ago——you were talking to a ghost and didn't know it. Back in 1826 Ann Radcliffe distinguished horror from terror inher essay "On the Supernatural in Poetry," which is still worth reading.

You're a book reviewer, too.

Yes, book reviewing is my form of practice or exercise for prose writing. I accept assignments, and also ask to review certain titles. It stretches you to learn more, which you can't help doing. Reviewing for a real publication is rather like performing music in public——you try harder since there's a real audience.

Now there's your first biography, A Satisfied Mind: the Country Music Life of Porter Wagoner. *How did you come to write this?*

I went to Porter's office tomeet his manager about a manuscript she had written. Unexpectedly, she asked me to consider writing Porter's story. I was quite shaken by the suggestion, but accepted.

Were there any problems getting it published?

I already was acquainted with the publisher, Rutledge Hill Press. We trusted each other, and worked on an informal agreement. Things worked out well. The book is a nicely designed hardcover, and meets my own 'nineties (1890's, that is!) standards perfectly. The size (464 pages) is about that of a $25 book, but it's priced at only $19.95.

It must have required lots of research and numerous interviews.

It did. I estimate I talked to over 150 people, including Minnie Pearl, Chet Atkins, Ralph Emery and Dolly Parton. I think Dolly's recorded more of her own songs than any other woman in country music. She works harder than most, and when Porter would ask her for three or four songs, she'd bring him ten or fifteen.

You devoted a chapter to "Nudie" Cohn. Who was he?

"Nudie" Cohn crafted the famous flashy costumes of Roy Rogers and Dale Evans, and also Hank Williams's dress suits. (Hank was even buried in one!) He designed Johnny Cash's "man in black" outfit, and of course all the flashy rhinestone costumes of many country acts. The origin of his nickname wasn't widely known among country fans; it arose because in his leaner years he used to design G-strings for New York strippers.

How has A Satisfied Mind *done in the marketplace? Was it ever nominated for any awards?*

It's now in its fourth printing. It was nominated for a Music Book of the Year award, though beaten out by a book on the Sex Pistols' punk rock. It did predict the impact of "I Will Always Love You," which won a Grammy for Whitney Houston. Dolly wrote that song for Porter; he said it would make her rich, and it has.

For several years you've been working on a history book, The Tennessee Wild West. *Describe it for us.*

It connects Tennessee with the Western Expansion, and about 400 pages of the final manuscript have been completed. There's a lot of work in this book too; I rewrote some of the chapters three times. It reveals some exciting discoveries, and has plenty of hot lead and bizarre humor. I think Ambrose Bierce would have liked it.

You said you're working on another book, too.

Yes, it's a new biography of the singer Jimmy Buffett, and I'm expecting out this year. Jimmy has a fine concert act; hisbetter songs——like "He Went to Paris"——have a poetic cast; they're of Joni Mitchell or John Prine quality. Jimmy wrote a best-selling novel also, *Where is Joe Merchant?*.

Are there any other projects currently in the works?

My collection *Yellow Rider and Other Poems* awaits publication. It has an introduction by Frank Belknap Long, a friend of Lovecraft.

Who are your favorite fantasy poets? And what is it about their work that particularly attracts you?

Thomas Lovell Beddoes enchants me with his ability to make morbiditv so musical, as in "Dream Pedlary" and of course his *Death's Jest-Book.* Christina Rossetti, a later nineteenth century poet, also uses lyrical sweetness to shroud the macabre. (I'm proud that her brother, Dante Gabriel, buried *his* poems with his wife, but had them dug up years later.) Thomas Hardy is another of my favorites, since he seems so much like an ancient English balladeer reincarnated. He was one of my beloved novelists, and his abandoning fiction for verse in his late years may be unique.

Much as I admire George Sterling and Clark Ashton Smith, I prefer understatement like that of Walter de la Mare and Joseph Payne Brennan, who wrote in both traditional style *and* free verse with equal emphasis. I am happy to have written about Brennan before he died in 1990 (in Darrell Schweitzer's 1988 *Discovering Modern Horror Fiction II*).

Is there any single poet who you feel rises above all others? And what, in your opinion, elevates his work?

Actually two tie for first place with me——Coleridge and Poe. "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" and "The Raven" are both song-writing *tours des force,* and have stories that move forward. Their precise craftsmanship reminds us that the more methodical the form, the more that art can bubble up from the subconscious. Coleridge's "Christabel" is again like a song——supposedly unfinished, though it ends well enough for me. Poe's "Ulalume" is unsurpassable, along with Coleridge's drug-dose fragment "Kubla Khan."

Which of your own poems do you consider your best?

Authors rarely are the best judges of their own work. We know only what we like. That said, I'll name a few favorites. "Yellow Rider" is a song inspired by my boyhood fascination with Albert Pinkham Rider's painting "Death on a Pale Horse." From the age of five I used to have oceanic fantasy dreams; "Sea Reverie" grew out of that. It's one of my positive, non-morbid poems. "Our Blessed Lady"

exposes my personal enemy——time. "Holocaust Foreseen" may be treasonous——I oppose all killing of civilians, from Hiroshima to Nicaragua (does that make me a threat to national security?). "Grey Skater" was written for unknown reasons——I've never ice-skated; it's a poem with a message: everything goes in circles. "The Price of Love" supports necroromanticism. "Reverence" extolls another of my favorite poets, Ernest Dowson. (Fewer than a thousand copies of his books sold in his lifetime, yet he's immortalized by such phrases as "gone with the wind" and "days of wine and roses.") "The Death of August Derleth" is a tribute to the man I first wrote to in 1956 about Lovecraft, who himself is honored in "The Festival" (pagan Christmastime). These are poems that are good for me and for my otherworldly values.

Do you have any final thoughts to add?

The editors and friends who have helped me over the years can never get enough credit. Jonathon Bacon (*Fantasy Crossroads*), Gordon Linzner (*Space and Time*), Stuart Schiff (*Whispers*), A. Langley Searles (*Fantasy Commentator*), Crispin Burnham (*Eldritch Tales*), Gary William Crawford (*Gothic*), and allies like John D. Squires, Donald Sidney-Fryer, Don Herron, John C. Moran, Joey Froelich, and many others. *Thanks, Steve!*

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A SHEAF OF LYRICS

Steve Eng

WILLIAM BLAKE

He saw too far, too deep
To linger long
Amid the zombie throng
Of those who are asleep.

He spied the angels near
Enough to hold——
They shimmered white and gold
And sang so he could hear.

THE DEATH OF AUGUST DERLETH

Wisconsin winds are chill:
Hawk and whippoorwill
Are mourning in the skies
When their poet dies.

And at the Lonesome Place
Spirits fill the space
With whispers on the breeze
Billowing in the trees.

Wisconsin winds will blow
Summers into snow,
But winds of Fame will sing
Evening in Spring.

THE FESTIVAL
(For H. P. Lovecraft)

Witches on the west-wind,
  Goblins on the east;
Everybody destined
  For the ancient feast.

Will-o'-wisp and ghoul ride
  With the poltergeist,
Toward the rite of Yuletide,
  Older than the Christ.

Spirits soon are dancing,
  See them weave and wind
Patterns in their prancing,
  Older than mankind.

ECHO

I hear a howling of infinity
(A million billionsworth of years),
My ears
Reverberating the immensity
Of spatial, blue-black void that spans
A multiverse that dwarfs this
  earthen-speck of Man's.

YELLOW RIDER
(for Bob Lind)

Now the villagers are waking from the dreams inside their heads,
And they're locking doors and windows, and they're hiding in their beds;
In the yellow of the morning, with a mist across the sun,
You can hear the hoofbeats coming, terrifying everyone.

It's a legend come to life and it's a horror-story true,
In the early morning silence, everybody hears it too,
And the sound is getting closer till it's beating in your brain,
And the hoofbeats, they are hammering——they're driving you insane.

Yellow Rider coming,
Coming 'round the bend;
Hear the hoofbeats drumming,
Scaring you, my friend.

And the Rider's coming closer, still you stay inside your room,
You're looking at his saddle, and his giant hat and plume,
You cannot see his face because it's hidden by the brim,
But you recognize his saddle, so you know it must be him.

For it's silver-mounted leather from a Gypsy caravan,
And his uniform is yellow silk, imported from Japan;
In his saddle-bags he's carrying a yellow-covered book——
And he's opening the pages as he takes a final look.

Yellow Rider coming,
Capturing the town——
Hear the hoofbeats drumming——
Feel your hopes fall down.

Now the Rider is departing just as quickly as he came,
And he's taking someone with him, and I will not tell the name,
But it's either you or me, or maybe someone else we know——
Now the Yellow Rider's leaving as the sun begins to show.

And the people are appearing at their windows and their doors,
And the merchants all are opening their markets and their stores,
And the villagers will make believe he never came at all——
But away out on the high-road, you can hear his mournful call . . .

Yellow Rider going,
Taking someone new;
Someone we're both knowing——
Is it me or you . . . ?
Is it me or you?

THE PRICE OF LOVE
(for Leilah Wendell)

She was fashioned out of nothing but eddying, sighing air,
Yet she floated visible and taunting there,
Faint phantom with ethereal, wispy hair.
And she said, "Come sleep with me"
In a voice that murmured, sombrous sea
On the shoreline of Eternity.

And I yearned with longing, thirsting for her liquid kiss,
In a night of drawn-out, clinging bliss . . . .
Still she hovered, teasing in the air, and whispered this:
"Beware! It's understood:
In a bed of carven ebon wood
On a black silk sheet we'll sleep for good."

OUR BLESSED LADY

Time is a virgin queen
When you're sixteen,
Later a scarlet whore
At thirty-four.

If you reach sixty-five
Time is a live
Vampire kissing you dry;
She'll never die.

Later she'll slip and squirm
Like a wet worm,
Twisting and feasting through
Flesh that was you.

SEA - REVERIE

Tropic Islands gleam
In a glowing dream
Glimmering pale white,
Where the mermaid school
In a rock-rimmed pool
Dives in mad delight.

There I long to play
At close of day,
Swimming in my sleep,
In an opaled sea
Green as gypsy tea,
Where the sea-elves leap.

GREY SKATER
(for Gordon Linzner)

Over the ageless ice
The Grey Skater glides
And spins as he slides,
Rounding the lake-side twice.

Notice his skull-grey face
Half masked by his coat
That collars his throat——
Ice-skates that leave no trace.

Grey as a graveyard stone,
He skates in your dreams
On frozen gray streams,
Circling you, stark and lone.

REVERENCE

I dreamed I saw the grave of Ernest Dowson
Sadly set
In some forgotten churchyard corner,
Lone and wet.

The rainy London fog descended cold on
High-grown grass,
Where seldom any visitors or pilgrims
Deign to pass.

But in my reverie I bravely scattered
roses there,
And heard a gentle, ghostly "Thank you"
On the air.

HOLOCAUST FORESEEN

Medieval alchemists divined
Atomic secrets of the cataclysmic kind,
But veiled them under symbols so
That only Adepts of the Quest would know.
Those alchemists were cautious men;
They sensed potential Armageddon——even then.

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"Comments on 'The Light-House'"
(concluded from page 33)

formation Service in Washington. Mr. Moursund pointed out that Poe's structure has several anachronisms. Its iron plating, for example, did not come into use until much later; and its hollow base has no counterpart in real lighthouses. He added that there is not, and never has been, any lighthouse off the Norland coast at the locale of the story.

After the United States, Norway has the largest lighthouse service in the world. It seems possible, therefore, that it may have been the subject of a book or article which, as Professor Mabbott suggested, Poe read. A related book that he certainly did read is Erik von Pontoppidan's *Natural History of Norway* (1755, two volumes), because *verbatim* passages from it are incorporated in "A Descent into the Maelström." Bishop Pontoppidan's history may, then, have also been a source for "The Light-House."

Poe's Influence on Science-Fiction

Sam Moskowitz

Author's note: In January 1971 I received an unexpected letter from Richard Hart, Chairman of the Humanities Department of the Baltimore Free Public Library, and then vice-president of the Edgar Allan Poe Society. He asked in this if I would be willing to deliver the Memorial Lecture at the society's 49th annual Commemoration. This was to be held on Sunday, October 10th, at the Baltimore Westminster Church, in whose graveyard Poe was buried. He offered me a $100 speaker's fee plus travel expenses. What had inspired the invitation, he said, were the genre reference books I had written, and in particular *The Man Who Called Himself Poe*, which I had edited two years earlier. (For those who may not be familiar with the latter, let me say that it is a collection of fiction and poetry in which Poe himself is the subject or a protagonist, and is prefaced by material about the man's life and works written by myself and Thomas O. Mabbott, one of the world's leading Poe scholars.) I was happy to accept this invitation.

Mr. Davis made several general and specific suggestions concerning a suitable topic for the lecture, and I chose one of them. About a hundred people were in the audience for the lecture, which was based on considerable research I had done over the intervening months. Before leaving I was asked for a copy of it, so that it might be published in the society's bulletin. But I had never prepared one, having spoken only from my extensive notes, so I had to ask for a postponement. As more important matters intervened, however, the task was put off several times and, eventually, forgotten.

Fortunately all of my notes had been preserved, and last year I ran across them again. To the best of my recollection no one else had addressed the topic in the interim, and since at that moment I had no other immediate task before me, I decided to work them into an article. What follows is not, of course, a *verbatim* rendering of my remarks a quarter century ago, but their substance is complete and updated to reflect new sources of information. I have also added throughout, moreover, the first publication dates of most of the works cited so that indebtedness of writers to each other may be clear.

Nowadays, when we hear someone speak of the "Father of Science-Fiction," we think of the man being referred to as Hugo Gernsback. He earned this title not from being the first to write a science-fiction story, of course, but because he showed the world how to identify it as a separate category of fiction, and how to package it in a format that could be successfully adopted by others.

But two generations earlier Gernsback himself had also used this phrase. In his editorial introducing the initial issue of the first all-science-fiction magazine (*Amazing Stories*, April 1926) he nominated an even more famous predecessor: "Edgar Allan Poe may well be called the father of 'scientifiction'," he said. "It was he who really originated the romance, cleverly weaving into and around the story a scientific thread. Jules Verne with his amazing romances, also cleverly interwoven with a scientific thread, came next. A little later came H. G. Wells, whose scientifiction stories, like those of his forerunners, have become famous and immortal." The implication is clear——had it not been for Poe, neither Verne nor Wells might have written science-fiction at all.

It is certainly true that from the beginning of his writing career to its end, Poe regularly produced works which, for their time, could be classified as science-fiction. These include "Ms. Found in a Bottle" (in existence in 1833 but not published until 1845), "The Unparalleled Adventure of One Hans Pfaall" (1835), "The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym" (1836), "The Conversation of Eiros and Charmion" (1839), "A Descent into the Maelström" (1941); "A Tale of the Ragged Mountains," "The Balloon Hoax," "Mesmeric Revelation," "Some Words with a Mummy," "The Thousand and Second Tale of Scheherazade" and "The Facts in the Case of M. Valdemar" (all 1845); "The Sphinx" (1846), "Von Kempelen and His Discovery" (1849) and "Mellonta Tauta" (1849). Finally, if the uncompleted novel-length fantasy *Atlantis*, by one Peter Prospero, is some day attributed to Poe (as Arthur Hobsen Quinn, one of his leading biographers, suggests) that would be an important addition to his *oeuvre* in the genre.

This portion of his writing cannot be discussed without noting the influence of several non-fiction pieces. Thus "Maelzel's Chess Player" (1836) introduces the basic concepts of robots, and "Eureka" (1849) is packed with cosmological ideas. We should probably also cite "The Colloquy of Monos and Une" (1841) and "The Power of Words" (1845), dialogues which take place in the future after the earth is destroyed, which with "Eiros and Carmion" comprise a sort of trilogy.

We are all aware of Poe's contribution to the detective story, whose form and identity owe more to him than to any other author, living or dead. And it is true that, with a very few exceptions, the tales I have listed are not the most distinguished of his production. But taken as a whole, it may be argued that they are second only to "The Murders in the Rue Morgue" (1840), "The Mystery of Marie Roget" (1842) and "The Purloined Letter" (1845) in their profound literary influence. When one considers the historic importance of so much of his work this may seem a strong statement; yet there is evidence to support it.

Like Gernsback, Poe was not the first to write science-fiction. What were his sources? What works in the genre had he read prior to or contemporaneously with penning similar tales himself? We have direct and indirect answers to these questions, primarily found in his own writings. One is *Symzonia* (1820), by the pseudonymous Adam Seaborn. It utilized the "hollow earth" theory formulated by John Cleves Symmes in 1818, and is possibly the finest American science-fiction novel up to its time. Echoes of Seaborn and Symmes are to be found in three of Poe's tales. The moon voyager in "Hans Pfaall" looks back at the earth and notes that it is concave at the poles, indicating an entrance to the interior; and in both "MS. Found in a Bottle" and "The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym" a ship is inexorably drawn towards some giant polar cataract.

Another American novel that Poe could well have read and certainly knew about is *A Voyage to the Moon* (1827) by Joseph Atterly, a pen name for George Tucker. (Prof. Tucker was chairman of the faculty at the University of Virginia, which Poe attended in 1826-27, and one of the nation's leading economists.) His book employs an anti-gravity device to reach the moon, and presents some Utopian ideas on economics. We know that Poe read *A Voyage to the Moon* because he specifically refers to a long review of it (published in the March 1828 *American Quarterly Review*) in a note he appended to "Hans Pfaall" when the latter was collected in *Tales of the Grotesque and Arabesque* (1839). Here Poe particularly denigrates the concept of Atterly's anti-gravity device as "more deplorably ill-conceived than are even the ganzas of our friend Signor Gonzales." This comparison shows that he had also read *The Man in the Moone* (1638) by Bishop Francis Godwin. Interestingly, Poe seems to have encountered the 1666 French translation, for he calls the volume a French work, not realizing it was first published in English.

In the same note he refers to several other moon voyages including, without naming it, that of Cyrano de Bergerac; this he characterizes as "utterly meaningless"——a strange comment, since most scholars view it as certainly one of the most important of early interplanetary stories. Poe also mentionss a work that I have been unable to locate in any science-fiction bibliography or volume of reference: "The 'Flight of Thomas O'Rourke' is a *jeu d'esprit* not altogether contemptible, and has been translated into German. Thomas, the hero, was, in fact, the game-keeper of an Irish peer, whose eccentricities gave rise to the tale. The 'flight' is made on an eagle's back, from Hungry Hill, a lofty mountain at the end of Bantry Bay."

Poe read, too——with envy and personal anguish——the fabrication by his friend Richard Adams Locke which became known as "The Moon Hoax" (*The New York Sun*, August 25-31, 1835). This recounted the wonders of the moon as allegedly seen through a new telescope in South Africa, and its publication gave the *Sun* the largest circulation of any newspaper in the world. Since his own "Hans Pfaall" had appeared just two months before, Poe felt Locke had borrowed from it; but

what rankled most was the realization that had he not begun and ended "Hans Pfaall" in a bantering fashion he might have achieved the notoriety and remuneration that had accrued to Locke.

Some years later Poe reviewed "The Moon Hoax," then in pamphlet form (*Columbia Spy*, June 8, 1844). In this review he stated that he had originally intended writing a sequel to "Hans Pfaall," describing the people and other life-forms on the moon, but was now unlikely to do so, since he doubted if he could outdo Locke. He also remarked (correctly) that "the description of the wings of the man-bat" in "The Moon Hoax" is but a literal copy of Peter Wilkins' account of the wings of his flying islanders. "This simple fact should at least have induced suspicions" about the work's authenticity. By that comparison Poe revealed that he was familiar with Robert Paltock's *The Life and Adventures of Peter Wilkins* (1751), another early work of science-fiction.

In citing genre works with which Poe was familiar I have concentrated on interplanetary stories. That he read other such works, apart from Gothics, seems unquestionable. In any event, these examples are sufficient to demonstrate that Poe knew exactly what he was doing when he wrote science-fiction, or when he incorporated scientific elements into his fiction. A significant group of authors who followed him were impressed not only by his imagination and style, but——and this is the nub of the matter——by the *manner* in which he explained unusual events.

None was more so than Jules Verne. In "Edgard Poë et ses Oeuvres" (*Musée des Familles*, April 1864) he discussed the American author, basing his analysis on a reading of *Tales of the Grotesque and Arabesque*, which he probably saw in the 1848 French translation by Charles Baudelaire. He noted that particular quality of Poe's work which he himself would later adopt, and which helped make him world famous: "What we most admire in the works of Poe," said Verne, "is the novelty of the situations, the discussion of out-of-the-way facts, the observation of man's unhealthy faculties, the choice of subjects, the strange personalities of his heroes. . . . And yet, in the midst of these impossibilities, there sometimes exists an appearance of reality which takes possession of the reader's belief. ... We never feel any providential intervention; Poe does not seem to admit it, and pretends to explain everything by physical laws which he invents at need."*

Verne not only recognized the essential principles that made Poe's science-fiction memorable, but he began adopting them for his own work; indeed, he even borrowed subjects and situations from Poe. The possibility of using a balloon with controlled flight in exploration and intercontinantal travel, for example, he picked up from "The Balloon hoax"; though wind does provide most of the motive power in Poe's account, his balloon is equipped with a propellor to drive it when the atmosphere is still, as well as vanes that permit it to change direction. In *Five Weeks in a Balloon* (1863) Verne likewise acknowledges the necessity of being able to direct the course of his vehicle. He accomplishes this in a less practical way, however. Water is heated to break it down into hydrogen and oxygen; these gases are led to the elastic receptacle which keeps the craft aloft, causing it to rise or fall in order to take advantage of desirable air-currents.

The Sphinx of the Ice Fields (1897) provides even stronger evidence. First of all, Verne actually dedicated the book to Poe. Second, its preface is ostensibly written by Arthur Gordon Pym, and intimates that what follows is fact disguised as fiction. Third, the novel is an admitted sequel to *Pym*. Characters from it reappear, and references to Poe himself abound throughout. Finally, Verne, speaking through his leading character, asserts that he has read and reread "all" of Poe's stories. This last is of great importance when looking for echoes of Poe in Verne's work, for it lends credence to similarities that might otherwise be thought merely coincidental or too general to be claimed as connected.

*translation by Kenneth Allott in his *Jules Verne* (1940), p. 83.

An example of one such subtle indebtedness has been given by Jean Jules Verne, Verne's grandson. In the 1973 biography of his grandfather he notes the ending of *Pym*, where Poe mentions the "many gigantic and pallidly white birds" that cry out repeatedly as the ship approaches the giant cataract, and compares it to a scene in *The Desert of Ice* (1866): "Innumerable flocks of birds were flying over the surface of this marvelous ocean, darkening the sky like thick, heavy storm clouds. . . . Their cries were absolutely deafening, and some of them had such immense, wide-spreading wings that they covered the sloop completely as they flew over."

One need not conjecture to establish a link between "Hans Pfaall" and Verne's *From the Earth to the Moon* (1865). Barbicane, the protagonist of the latter, concludes a harangue to the Baltimore Gun Club on the feasibility of a trip to the moon by saying: "'I will only add that a certain Hans Pfaall, of Rotterdam, launching himself in a balloon filled with a gas . . . thirty-seven times lighter than hydrogen, reached the moon after a passage of nineteen hours. This journey, like all previous ones, was purely imaginary; still it was the work of a popular American author——I mean, Edgar Poe!' 'Cheers for Edgar Poe!' roared the assembly, electrified by the president's words."

Verne's best known novel is *Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea* (1870), in which he creates the brilliant, tortured character of Captain Nemo. At its conclusion the Nautilis, his marvellous submarine, is apparently being carried to its doom by a huge whirlpool. This duplicates Poe's "A Descent into the Maelström," even to the point of specifying the location as being within sight of Lofodon, off the coast of Norway. The ending of *Around the World in Eighty Days* (1872) probably owes a debt to Poe also. Here the protagonist Phileas Fogg is about to lose a wager that he can circumnavigate the globe in eighty days, when he finds he has gained a day by travelling Eastward. That is the same point made in Poe's "Three Sundays in a Week" (*Broadway Journal*, November 27, 1841 as "A Succession of Sundays").

There is an interesting point involved in this last parallel. At the time *Around the World in Eighty Days* was written Poe's story had not yet been translated into French, and Verne claimed* to be unable to read English. This claim, however, is contradicted by his niece, Marguerite Allotte de la Fuye; in her biography *Jules Verne* (1954) she explicitly states that her uncle could indeed read English.

Both Poe and Verne utilize cryptograms as essential parts of their fiction. In "The Gold Bug" (1843) solving one leads to the discovery of a treasure, and in *A Voyage to the Center of the Earth* (1864) explorers obtain directions for their journey in another. There are broad similarities also between the situation in "Dr. Ox's Experiment" (1872) and Poe's "The Devil in the Belfry" (1839), which was included in the French edition of *Tales of the Grotesque and Arabesque*. In Poe's tale a visitor causes the orderly habits and social discipline of a Dutch village to be completely upset; in Verne's, a scientific experiment in a Flemish town accomplishes the same end. Both are caricatures of extreme stolidity, conservatism and rural resistance to change.

An exhaustive search would probably uncover other examples of Poe's influence on Jules Verne. One which has been claimed is that there is very little romance in the fiction of either author. This neglects the fact that most of Verne's was written on contract for Hetzel's *Magasin d'Education et de Recration*, whose readers were chiefly ten to fifteen years old; romance would be low on the list of juvenile preferences, and, particularly at that time, would have been considered out of place in juvenile reading material.

Let us pass on to another prominent writer, Arthur Conan Doyle. What did Doyle think of Poe? One of his biographers, John Dickson Carr, tells us that

*In an interview published in the English *Strand Magazine*, February 1894.

"One book he received not in the line of self-improvement might have upset the studies of anyone less dogged. The book not only impressed Arthur; it electrified him. He confessed in later years that no author, with the exception of Macauley and Scott, so much shaped his tastes or his literary bent. The author was Edgar Allan Poe, and the first story he encountered was 'The Gold Bug.'"* Doyle's fondness for him was lifelong; he even travelled to the United States to preside at the Centenary Dinner held for Poe in 1909. At that event he proclaimed the man the "supreme original short story writer of all time. . . . Not only is Poe the originator of the detective story [but] all pseudo-scientific Verne-and Wells stories have their prototypes in 'A Voyage to the Moon' and 'The Case of M. Valdemar.'"

It is well known that Doyle patterned his character Sherlock Holmes on that of Poe's French detective C. Augustine Dupin, but his influence on Doyle's science-fiction is not as self-evident. There are echoes of *Pym* in the atmosphere and plot of Doyle's "The Captain of the Pole Star" (1883), where the characters undergo similar physical ordeals, and a clearer connection between "The Conversation of Eiros and Charmion" and *The Poison Belt* (1913). In Poe's brief vignette the earth passes through the tail of a comet, wiping out all life; in Doyle's novel, which features his popular character Professor George Challenger, a similar cosmic catastrophe puts all living organisms in a temporary state of suspended animation. *The Purple Cloud* (1901) of M. P. Shiel is also a possible influence here.

H. G. Wells borrowed from many sources, and one of them was Edgar Allan Poe. His short stories, like Poe's, strive for a single effect, and in these he captures the method of his predecessor. There are also glimpses of Poe in several of Wells's novels. In *The Island of Dr. Moreau* (1896), for example, the experiences of the three men floating in their life-boat remind one of scenes in *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym.* We know that Wells read *Pym*, since he explicitly cites it in his *Experiment in Autobiography* (1934). And *The First Men on the Moon* (1901) doubtless owes some acknowledgement to "Hans Pfaall," as well as to Lucian and Camille Flammarion.

The little-known and extremely talented fantasiste Fitz-James O'Brien (1828-1862) was powerfully influenced by Poe. His plots and style were similar, but he incorporated added elements of realism atypical of Poe that gave his fiction a distinct and unique stamp of its own. This has been noted by the biographer Francis Wolle, who states that "O'Brien knew and appreciated the work of Edgar Allan Poe, and in trying to imitate Poe's technique of the short story he made his definite contribution to the development of American letters."†

His "The Man Without the Shadow" (1852) is a replay of Poe's "Shadow—a Parable" (1935). After "The Diamond Lens," O'Brien's best known tale is "What Was It?" (1859). This tells of an invisible, humanoid dwarf, whose appearance is revealed only after a plaster cast is made of it after death. The critic Charles Alphonso Smith, author of *Edgar Allan Poe: How to Know Him* (1927), called it "the best short story in Poe's manner," and one of which "the last half century may be proud" in his *American Literature* (1912).

Despite O'Brien's effectiveness, the author most often cited as heir to Poe between the time of his death and the present day is Ambrose Bierce (1842-1914). This attribution was primarily for his shocking tales of the supernatural, but Bierce also wrote a few tales that can be categorized as science-fiction. One of these, "Moxon's Master" (1899), has become a classic in the field. It deals very effectively with a robot which has been programmed to play chess, and which eventually destroys its creator. It was clearly inspired by "Maelzel's Chess Player."

Another author who should be mentioned in passing is Edward Lucas White (1866-1934). Poe's work made such a deep impression on him that he forced himself

**The Life of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle* (1944), p. 31.

†*Fitz-James O'Brien: A Literary Bohemian of the Eighteen Fifties* (1944).

to banish from his home "every scrap of his printed writings," else he would continue to reread them when he "should be doing other things." Before that, he said, he had often been "dead drunk on Poe twenty-four hours a day."* White was never able to shake off this influence, however; echoes of Poe are found in several of his short fantasies, and in the horror story "The Flambeau Bracket" (1910) the effect is unmistakable. He admitted that it was inspired by "The Cask of Amontillado."

Poe's influence on science-fiction writers was renewed during the present century in a unique and interesting manner. The field did not have a publication all its own until Hugo Gernsback founded the periodical *Amazing Stories* in April 1926. "The Facts in the Case of M. Valdemar" was reprinted in that very first issue, and "Mesmeric Revelation" followed it in the second. Even though many of Poe's ideas had been repeated many times since they first appeared, and even though some of the stories were dated, Gernsback continued presenting Poe's fiction to his readers. There was "The Balloon Hoax" (April 1927), "Von Kempelen and His Discovery" (July 1927) and "The Thousand and Second Tale of Scheherazade" (May 1928). All of these had an audience of about 100,000, among them science-fiction writers of the future. Later editors reprinted a few more, including "Mellonta Tauta" (November 1933), "Ms. Found in a Bottle" (March 1934) and "The Gold Bug" (April 1934). In this manner writers who might be unfamiliar with Poe were introduced to him under conditions that made succumbing to his influence natural and appropriate.

Indeed, genre periodicals continued these reprintings sporadically as late as 1965. Their perennial interest in the author was exemplified when *Fantastic* magazine commissioned Robert Bloch, author of the story on which the famous moving picture *Psycho* was based, to complete a story Poe had left unfinished. This collaboration, titled "The Lighthouse," was published in its January-February 1953 issue. Poe's segment comprises merely the opening: the protagonist is a nobleman who has accepted the job of tending a lighthouse located some two hundred miles off the coast of Norway; he plans to use the solitude in order to complete a book he is writing, and is alone except for his faithful dog. Here Bloch picks up the thread of the story. In a week's time the loneliness begins to prey on the nobleman's mind. He finds himself yearning for the sight——of all things——of a rose. Inexplicably, a rose is cast up to him by the waves. He begins to suspect that a strange power, up to now latent within himself but now augmented by solitude, is responsible. Thereafter he concentrates on the appearance of a beautiful woman. One day in the midst of a storm he senses something outside the lighthouse, descends, and opens the door; before him is a glorified vision of an approaching woman. Suddenly the dog leaps at the figure and it falls back; as it does so he has a momentary glimpse of a bloated monstrosity sinking into the sea. The story ends with the storm destroying the lighthouse, but not before the nobleman has attached a record of his experiences to the dog's collar, in the hope that they will somehow survive.

The prose poem "Eureka," which received a mixed reception from critics, contains concepts which not only could have influenced later writers, but some of which agree with proposals of modern scientists. Poe suggests here that there might have been a "big bang" to create the universe, or other "big bangs" which formed star clusters too distant for us to see even with our largest telescopes. He also mentions the continuous creation of matter theory proposed a century later by the astrophysicist Fred Hoyle.

"Eureka" likewise originated the concept of an immense central sun, possibly possessing intelligence. This idea was used by William Hope Hodgson (1877-

*George T. Wetzel, "Edward Lucas White: Notes for a Biography," part one, *Fantasy Commentator IV*, 98 (1979).

1918). In his much-praised science-fiction novel *The House on the Borderland* (1908) he envisions such a central sun which receives messages from other stars and sends messages to them. Hodgson was familiar with Poe——he even wrote a poem in the exact meter and style as "The Raven."

Perhaps the most far-reaching imagination of any science-fiction author in this century was that shown by William Olaf Stapledon (1886-1950). In *Last and First Men* (1930) this British writer and philosopher forecast a history of the human race for the next 200,000,000 years. His *Star Maker* (1937), which followed that, went on to imagine a history over cosmic time for the entire universe. Many ideas in "Eureka" are shadowed in these books, particularly in the latter. Poe envisions, for example, that there are many inhabited worlds in the universe, and that the intelligences of beings on these worlds constitute a communal mind which some people would term God; Stapledon uses the phrase "cosmic mind" to embrace the same concept and, further, repeats Poe's notion that energy constitutes a form of life, and that suns are instinct with life, sentience and intelligence.

Similar ideas are repeated in the fiction of more recent writers in the genre, but here one cannot attribute them to Poe——or at the very most only to Poe through the medium of Stapledon. Such works as *Time and Again* (1951) by Clifford D. Simak (1904-1988) and *Childhood's End* (1953) by Arthur C. Clarke (1917-) come to mind here.

Probably the modern fantasy author most often equated to Poe is Howard Phillips Lovecraft (1890-1937). His adherents constitute a group showing such devotion as to take on the aspects of a cult. All of his important work is in print, and most of his minor fiction, essays, verse and a great many of his letters have been collected. Under the heading of "Lovecraft Studies" a regular series of pamphlets is being issued by the Necronomicon Press. There is an amateur press association devoted to him, and Lovecraft conventions are held periodically. He has become a posthumous celebrity, and not undeservedly, though he himself held no exalted opinion of his own abilities.

Lovecraft openly admitted his indebtedness to Poe. In a letter to J. Vernon Shea dated June 19, 1931 he wrote: "Poe has influenced me more than any other one person. If I ever have been able to approximate his kind of thrill, it is only because he himself paved the way by creating a whole atmosphere & method which lesser man can follow with relative ease. . . . Others——including editor Wright [of *Weird Tales* magazine]——agree with you in liking *The Outsider*, but I can't say that I share this opinion. . . . It represents my literal though unconscious imitation of Poe at its very height. In those days I couldn't help aping the mannerisms as well as reflecting the spirit."

In most of Lovecraft's professionally published fiction one finds pronounced elements of Poe. For example, the opening paragraphs of "The Outsider" (1926) paraphrase those of "Berenice" (1835), though I am not aware of anyone's having ever pointed this out. Yet these elements are not always expressed with the economy and careful choice of words that were among Poe's strengths. Lovecraft himself acknowledged this. In a letter to Clark Ashton Smith dated November 18, 1930 he wrote of his early stories: "My principal fault with beginnings is to make them too Poesque & sententious. Since Poe affected me most of all horror writers, I can never feel that a tale starts out right unless it has something of his manner."

All devotees of Poe know that his *Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym* ends abruptly, crying out for a sequel which the author never provided. As I noted earlier, Jules Verne attempted one in *The Sphinx of the Ice Fields*. Lovecraft's short novel "At the Mountains of Madness" can likewise be put in this category. Here the artifacts of a great prehistoric civilization are discovered beneath the Antarctic glaciers. It is assumed that the bizarre race which created them has long been extinct, but the climax of the work reveals that at least one of these

horrifying entities still remains. Its cries are "Tekeli-li! Tekeli-li!"——the same sounds screeched by the white birds at the conclusion of *Pym*.

Several other writers, seeking to link their work with the Poe canon, have borrowed that phrase. Among them is Cyril Kornbluth (1923-1958), best known as co-author of *The Space Merchants* (1953). He incorporated it in his brief story "The Coming of a God" (*Different*, October 1958), where something dark and ominous pipes this cry before absorbing its worshippers.

Lovecraft has actually influenced an entire school of writers, thus transmitting by proxy some of the characteristics of Poe. It has been suggested that the mood and isolation described in "Mountains" may have determined the locale for John W. Campbell, Jr.'s outstanding novelette "Who Goes There?" (*Astounding Science-Fiction*, August 1938). Here an Antarctic expeditionary party fights an alien being which can assume control of their bodies and minds.

Another contemporary fantasy author directly influenced by Poe is Ray Bradbury. His "Pillar of Fire" (*Planet Stories*, Summer 1948) is laid in a country where all the deceased are incinerated, and all books with references to the dead or the supernatural are banned. There a dead man rises; he refers to himself as "all that is left of Poe," and mourns the oblivion to which all writers who followed the Poe tradion have been consigned. Eventually he is discovered and thrust into the incinerator while still conscious. In Bradbury's "Carnival of Madness" (*Thrilling Wonder Stories*, April 1950) a wealthy man builds a replica of the House of Usher in that same era. Poe's fictional characters are played here by robots, who wall up a government investigator in the manner described in "The Cask of Amontillado." "The Exiles" (*The Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction*, Winter-Spring 1950) has a similar premise, and is told from the viewpoints of the shades of the proscripted authors. One of these is Edgar Allan Poe, who exists in limbo with the spirits of Ambrose Bierce, Algernon Blackwood and Arthur Machen. As the last copy of each such writer's work is burned, their awareness vanishes.

The central theme of these three stories is epitomized by one of Bradbury's most successful works, "Fahrenheit 451"; this originally appeared as "The Fireman" (*Galaxy Science Fiction*, February 1951). In the world of the future all books are banned. Stations are maintained from which firemen are dispatched to burn any secreted books that have been discovered. The story is a strong attack on censorship and on modern man's neglect of his literary heritage.

Incorporating the actual character of Poe into the context of a story became a periodic indulgence of a number of authors who, like Bradbury, had been fascinated by his imagination and his methods. Robert Bloch, for example, deliberately composed "The Man Who Collected Poe" (*Famous Fantastic Mysteries*, October 1951) in the man's style. Here one of the greatest collectors of all time succeeds in obtaining the dust of Poe's remains, and through some form of occult chemistry reconstitutes the living man himself. He locks him in a vault, and forces him to write new stories. These prove too horrifying to be published, and the tale ends with both Poe and his reanimator perishing in a fire.

I was intrigued by this device, and in 1969 edited for Doubleday an anthology of such tales, *The Man Who Called Himself Poe*. This was moderately successful, and sparked the appearance of several new novels with a similar theme.

It would be a monumental task to ascertain the full scope of Poe's influence on the science-fiction field, to ferret out and cite each and every author who read his work and deliberately or unconsciously imitated him. Sometimes indebtedness is even revealed inadvertently. An example of this is found in Camille Flammarion's introduction to *The Russian Savant* (1888), the first in a trilogy of interplanetary novels by the French writers C. Le Faure and H. De Graffigny. Here Flammarion (1842-1925), himself the author of several popular science-fiction works, cites 'Hans Pfaall" as an ultimate source. We may, then, have been examining but a small part of a very large picture.

We have also been doing so in a different and broader sense. Since the publication of "Berenice" literally established the format of the short story, it follows inescapably that *all* fiction writers must be indebted to Edgar Allan Poe. His influence on them has necessarily been pervasive through all of literature, and there is no reason to believe that the portion of it which we call science-fiction should present an exception.

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Comments on "The Light-House"

GEORGE T. WETZEL

Editor's note: This article was written in early 1953. Possibly because there was no market for it at the time, it seems to have been set aside until the author submitted it to this magazine in 1978. Unfortunately the ms. was misfiled shortly thereafter, and not rediscovered until 1994, a decade after Mr. Wetzel's death. Like many of his writings, it was in longhand; and since he usually made no copies of holograph mss., I do not believe it could ever have been printed elsewhere. I am pleased that mention of its subject in the preceding article makes presentation here now appropriate. It has been edited only insofar as its tardy appearance made necessary.

Fantasy readers were surprised and pleased to read Robert Bloch's story "The Man Who Collected Poe" in the October 1951 issue of *Famous Fantastic Mysteries* magazine. Among those praising Bloch's ability to echo the style of Edgar Allan Poe was a literary expert on that author, Thomas O. Mabbott. We know this because Professor Mabbott wrote a letter to the magazine's editor which was published in the February 1952 issue. That letter is reproduced below:

> Congratulations on Bloch's Man Who Collected Poe." It is very cleverly done, and shows remarkable sensitivity to Poe's style; even the bad pun "Poe-etic" is to be paralled in his work; he said he was "a poet to a T." And although one may not think of it offhand, Poe did revive some plays in 1845. Poe specialists do worry about when he grew his moustache (after 1845, and by 1848) because there is no very clear evidence about the matter. The price named for "Prose Romances" seems a bit high, but I think it a harder book to get than "Tamerlane." I was highly complimented to see my own name coupled with that of Quinn, and rather hope Bloch will some day try his hand at finishing Poe's only incomplete story, "The Lighthouse."

Bloch promptly proceeded to do just that, though the story was printed in another magazine, *Fantastic* (January-February 1953).

This background is common knowledge in the field; but the history of the fragment Poe left behind uncompleted is known only in limited literary circles, and so seems worth describing. The best source of information is an article by Professor Mabbott himself, titled "Poe's Tale, 'The Light-House'" (*Notes and Queries 182*, 226ff., April 25, 1942). This not only reproduced all of the parts of Poe's fragmentary beginning of the story, but chronicled their wanderings.

"The original manuscript," he says, "consists of four leaves, and is written in the very neat hand characteristic of Poe's last years. On the first leaf the story begins well down on the page, space being left for a title and the name of the author, and on the last page the writing ceases a good way above the bottom of the page." The title, which Poe never supplied (either on the ms. or elsewhere), was later given to the fragment by George Woodberry. In volume II of his *Life of Poe* (1909) Professor Woodberry, who never saw the first page of the ms., describes the fragment as "very clearly written, without alteration or erasure, on three narrow strips of blue paper such as Poe used in other mss. of 1845."

The story is written in diary form, beginning "*Jan. 1——1796.*" Apparently Poe had the next entry for it already thought out, for after completing

three days in the story, he wrote "*Jan. 4*" under the end of that for January 3rd.

Originally, relates Mabbott, all the leaves were in the possession of Rufus Griswold, Poe's literary executor, who had obtained them from Poe's trunk in Baltimore, then in charge of Mrs. Clemm. But in some unknown fashion, he continues, "the four leaves became separated long ago." Leaves 2, 3 and 4 remained in the Griswold family, and ultimately were bequeathed to the Poe Foundation at Richmond, Virginia, where they have always been accessible to scholars. The first leaf, however, became unavailable when it went into the collection of Stephen Wakeman. In 1919 Wakeman's collection was put up for sale, and for the first time the text of leaf 1 was printed (although not entirely accurately) in the auction catalog. The leaf was bought by the famous collector Dr. A. S. W. Rosenbach, and eventually found its way to the New York Public Library, where it now reposes in the Berg Collection. The text of the last three leaves had been printed in the appendix to Woodberry's biography of Poe, so now the entire fragment was available. However, not until 1942, in the *Notes and Queries* article, did the text appear in one place in entirety, correctly transcribed. Mabbott later also included it in his *Selected Poetry and Prose of Poe* (1951), thus for the first time making it readily available to the general public. It is currently to be had in the Library of America edition of Poe's *Poetry and Tales* (1984).

How Poe might have finished his story had he lived is an interesting question. In his article Professor Mabbott makes some observations on this point. "Obviously the story is a typical one," he says, "finding a close parallel theme to 'A descent into the Maelström,' which also concerns an adventure with perils of the sea. . . . The theme of loneliness is one frequent in Poe's poems and tales." In the "Notes" section of his *Selected Poetry and Prose of Poe* he adds: "the story is obviously suggested by some encyclopedia account of lighthouses. This one is to fall. . . . In any case, it is obvious the dog will carry the diary to safety." I feel there are further clues which Professor Mabbott did not mention, however; these I shall deal with chronologically.

Jan.1. Poe strikes the story's keynote in the first sentence: the suspicion, in the narrator's mind, that he might not be able to make regular entries in his journal. Thus at the very outset we feel that *something* will happen; the narrator is a fearful man. The dog is obviously present for the reason suggested by Professor Mabbott. The *motif* of aloneness also appears in this entry. With it is the unease, the disorders of nerves often affecting all solitary lighthouse-keepers; De Gräf, an off-stage character, has prophesied this for the narrator. Mental anomaly, frequent in many other Poe tales, seems a factor here.

Jan. 2. There is a subtle suggestion of incipient bad weather, although the narrator is not aware of it; nor would the reader be, unless familiar with weather signs. The significant point is that only an occasional gull is seen. Sea birds flee landwards well before a storm——I have seen this myself.

Jan. 3. The sea is said to look "very much like glass." That again is an omen of oncoming bad weather. The narrator describes the lighthouse tower in detail, citing its hollow base and exact height. This is significant when one recalls that Poe never padded a story with excess verbiage; he believed that every word "should contribute to the effect."

Equally ominous is the revelation that the lighthouse is directly in the path of high, wind-driven waves like the monstrous ones at the Pacific opening of the Straits of Magellan. Here Poe shows his knowledge of the area, for it is from the southwest that the dirtiest weather comes; that direction——the seas near the Orkney Islands——is the breeding place of the worst coastal storms. Obviously the narrator is soon to be in terror of the elements; and this, I conclude, was to be the central idea in the finished work.

The lighthouse itself, however, had (and has) no Norwegian duplicate. For this information I am indebted to Albert Moursund, of the Royal Norwegian In-

(concluded on page 23)

L. Ron Hubbard Revisited

H. R. Felgenhauer

Los Angeles, Cal., Bridge Publications, Inc.: *Final Blackout*: 1990, 218 pp., 18 cm., $4.95 (paper); *Fear*: 1991, 188 pp., 24 cm., $16.95; *Ole Doc Methuselah*: 1992, 288 pp., 24 cm., $18.95.

Author's note: The recent reprinting of the three titles listed above suggest that their reassessment would be timely and appropriate. What is their reputation today? Are they still regarded as pulp classics? Do they affect newcomers as intensely as they did fans of their own time? My own reactions, I think, should answer some of these questions.

I

In the late 1930's L. Ron Hubbard was an early arrival amidst a new crop of boldly original writers appearing in *Astounding Science Fiction*, the leading genre magazine of its day. But unlike other legendary authors from s-f's Golden Age, he was already an established writer for the other pulps. *Final Blackout* appeared as a serial in *Astounding* during 1940, about a year before World War II had spread to the Western Hemisphere.

Like some of his other postwar writings, this novel created a commotion. In an epoch struggling to come to grips with what was to be a worldwide conflict, he boldly held up a mirror to the exploitations and excesses that promoted war as just one more route to political power, reflecting what one character in the book described as "the chicanery which goes by the name of diplomacy" and "the chaotic stupidity call[ed] 'culture.'" "Machines only make unemployment," he went on to say, "and, ultimately, politicians out of otherwise sensible men."

Another controversial aspect of the novel, especially in 1940, was the portrayal of U. S. Marines muscling patriots of less powerful nations into supporting American expediency. Of course after events like Viet Nam and Grenada we hear comparable criticisms regularly, and their expression still raises right-wing ire. We can only imagine what fury *Final Blackout* roused two generations ago—— I've been told that in Britain it was even banned.

This reprinting includes a wonderful preface Hubbard wrote for the first hardback small-press edition in 1948. It reveals the flavor of that grizzled controversy, and also the satiric voice we would hear later, following his return to fiction on his golden anniversary as a writer in 1980, after decades spent pursuing another career. With innately ironic wit he "apologizes" for his "youthful ignorance" at the tender age of twenty-eight: the book "supposed, for its author was very young, that politicians were entirely incompetent and would not prevent for one instant the bloodiest conflict the country had ever known."

The reprinting also carries an informative introduction by Algis Budrys, in which he points out that *Final Blackout* "was written from a level of political sophistication that was not hinted at again in speculative literature until George Orwell's postwar *Nineteen Eighty-Four* . . . a work which, of course, was too 'serious' to first appear as a 'mere' magazine serial. (Frankly, Hubbard's offering an optimistic solution seems preferable to Orwell's cumulatively hopeless list of reasons why no solution is really possible.)"

The work is also prophetic on a purely scientific basis. Hubbard speaks specifically of nuclear weapons as so disastrous and ghastly that they were withdrawn from warfare. It's startling to read this in a post-apocalypse novel writ-

ten five years before Hiroshima——indeed, before most of the climactic events of World war II.

Due to a battlefield epidemic known as "soldier's sickness" (a nod of homage to H. G. Wells's *Things to Come*?) the British Expeditionary Force in Europe has been forbidden to return home——and this despite the existence of an effective vaccine against it; that is because the latter is expensive, and its use has been restricted to the elite. "England's Socialist leader had led an abortive revolt, starting it with the assassination of many members of Parliament. The leader, on trial, had gone free by giving up his lists and was later shot as a traitor by his own people." You can see why I say it's hard to believe Hubbard wrote this over a decade before McCarthyism, at a time when it was commonly assumed that Socialists could *never* come to power in Britain.

But at this point I'm afraid all these hallowed images are obscuring the understanding of what enjoyable entertainment *Final Blackout* really is. The hero is one of Hubbard's unforgettable characters. He goes by the name of The Lieutenant——or, in British palaver, the Leftenant. "He had no respect for creeds or statesmen: between the two the continent and the British Isles had been destroyed. Thirty million fighting men and three hundred million civilians had paid with their lives for mistaken faith in creeds and statesmen." Yet this pragmatist leads to glory a ragtag group of troopers, somewhat reminiscent of Sergeant Rock and his Dirty Dozen. We are taken across the French battlefields and then up the Thames estuary for an appointment with destiny. Naturally it is upon leaving the field and entering the realm of politicians and so-called "superior officers" that the Lieutenant experiences the greatest difficulties in preserving his vision for the future of mankind.

The haunting conclusion of *Final Blackout* is as immediate and pertinent today as when it was written. My highest compliment is to say that if the work were to be made into a motion picture——a ridiculously simple thing to do——it would be appropriate to award the directing duties to another outstanding visionary, Sam Fuller. He's already living and working in Europe, after Hollywood butchered his last epic, *The Big Red One*. Anyone familiar with his work can discern the philosophic and culturally introspective insights he and Hubbard share.

For those of you unfamiliar with these two titans of creativity, you've got some homework to catch up on. It's nice to know you're going to find it a pleasure, not a chore. And once done, you'll understand why Heinlein called *Final Blackout* "as perfect a piece of science-fiction as has ever been written."

II

The second of these Bridge reprintings, *Fear*, is one of those there-but-for-the-grace-of-God-go-I, bump-in-the-night epitome of horror books that come so few and far between you may not believe they exist at all. It's a sublime, spook-the-bejeezus-out-of-you novel that grows in your memory banks to achieve mythic proportions. Like a fine Twilight Zone episode, it makes you recognize what truly effective writing is all about. As a matter of fact, no less an authority than Stephen King himself blurbs it as "one of the few books in the chiller genre which actually merits employment of the overworked adjective 'classic.'"

Not wanting to take anyone's word for it, I dove in and breezed through the work in a couple of hours, thoroughly thrilled each and every minute. What a delight! It was easy to read, too——the type is almost Dick and Jane-sized. The pages are of heavy paper, and are nicely bound. Its classic "feel" is enhanced with eight interior illustrations by Derek Hegsted done in just the graphic style you'd expect to see in the middle decades of this century. Finding such a volume in your very hands delivers its own kind of pleasure, conspiratorially heightening the enjoyment. Indeed, *Fear* reads like a pulp classic because that is exactly what it is.

It makes clear, too, why Hubbard was already known as a master of fantasy in 1940, when the story first appeared in *Unknown*, the companion magazine of *Astounding*, just a month after *Final Blackout*. Clarity is a key word here; the simple, unadorned prose in *Fear* is particularly memorable. Time has also bestowed academic credit on the author for "transforming and creating the foundations of the contemporary horror genre."

Well, what of the story itself? I don't want to spoil your fun, so I'll err on the side of being incomplete. As I've mentioned, think of a really good Twilight Zone episode. Perhaps you can visualize Rod Serling himself approaching the camera—— "Submitted for your approval... a well-travelled college ethnology professor, only recently returned from his latest expedition to study godless heathens in numerous God-forsaken locales; suffering perhaps with a touch of the old malaria; his latest scholarly article scientifically scorning even the merest belief in such hobgoblins as demons and devils; suffering under the all too modern delusion that science can and will explain everything to humankind's satisfaction. But now, at the signpost up ahead, he staggers, he touches his brow. He's lost his hat. He's lost four hours as well! His great scientific brain cannot recall, but somewhere back in the rear of his puny little mortal mind he knows that if he can but find the one, the other will be sitting snugly nearby. Casually he enters dark mental regions, willingly, searching through that province popularly regarded to be...." You get the idea. This passage near the end of the book could have come straight from a Serling script——or does Serling come to us, ultimately, from a Hubbard script?

As I read *Fear* my telephone rang several times, but I never got up to answer it. Promises, prior commitments, even Fame and Fortune pounding at the door couldn't have dislodged me from my chair. I would not, could not, dared not tear myself away from the book until I had reached the last page and gone past the last cellar door. The story careers at a relentless pace, and you can understand the legend that Hubbard wrote it in one sitting on a train ride from New York City to Seattle.

Now you too can experience abject infatuation. If you haven't yet been lured into the Mission Earth dekalogy, or the bestseller *Battlefield Earth*, this is a logical starting point to learn why L. Ron Hubbard's fiction is available in a dozen languages, and by the end of the 1980's——the latest figures I've seen—— had sold forty-four million copies in sixty-six countries. So dig in. Experience *Fear*. It just won't let go of you.

III

When Hubbard resumed writing after returning from World War II his name was still well known. As we have seen, he had produced a broad catalog of entertaining fiction in a variety of genres, and attracted a loyal readership. He also had experience in Hollywood from the late 1930's, having scripted over a dozen episodes for Columbia Pictures' serial *The Secret of Treasure Island*, plus other productions. He continued this career only briefly, however, before taking leave of fiction in 1950 to pursue his destiny in Dianetics and Scientology.

Yet in those three short years he produced several benchmark stories, including "The End Is Not Yet" and "To the Stars." It was during this time also that he created the pen-name Rene Lafayette. (Lafayette, incidentally, is what Hubbard's first initial "L." stands for.) This particular byline, one of the six pseudonyms he used during his career, was employed to describe the exploits of a captivating science-fiction character called Ole Doc Methuselah. Several of these are now collected in this recent Bridge reprint.

Ole Doc Methuselah is a cross between a space age Ben Casey or Dr. Kildare and Captain Kirk or Hans Solo, resulting in a Bones McCoy, Space Ranger type of personality. I almost expected Ole Doc to say "Dammit! I'm a doctor, not a..."

at any time. Together with his multi-armed slave/companion Hippocrates, he roams the known universe as a member of the most elite organization in the cosmos, confronting the most dangerous and baffling medical problems of the ages.

The good doctor was graduated from medical school in 1946. Thanks to secret longevity treatments, however, his adventures here begin when he is 700 years old and continue for 300 more until he celebrates his thousandth birthday. Sometime during his first 700 years he has become the most famous of a God-like group known as Soldiers of the Light, a gunslinging association that polices known civilization much like the Federation's space fleet does the Star Trek universe.

Membership is limited, and all Soldiers of the Light act individually. "For centuries, as the Universal Medical Society, these men maintained a center and by casual patrol of the Systems kept medicine as well as disease within rational bounds. The impetus for establishing this supreme council of physicians was a Twenty-third Century revolt which claimed the lives of two billion humanoids through the villainous use of new biological discoveries to wage war. It operates without leave or charter to safeguard "the secrets of medicine against destruction or abuse."

These adventures are somewhat episodic, as would be expected of a collection of individual tales. They skim above pure escapism into a rarified realm of fable, full of the-moral-of-the-story-is resolutions. Addressing issues of dignity and basic human rights, as well as governmental and corporate mistreatment of peoples, they still speak to our own time. In one story, for instance, Doc liberates a populace which has been physically repossessed for failing to pay a bill for the very air people breathed. Often, too, Ole Doc's chief enemy is nothing more than simple ignorance.

These stories were composed long before the days of modern political correctness. Hence slavery is merely "frowned upon," and a UMS bylaw reads that "whosoever shall kill large numbers for experimentation shall be given a hearing and shall be fined a week's pay." Ole Doc has no compunction against denying to the casual practitioner all specialized medical information, or using his talents to drive a villain insane, or following policies of pest extinction. He will even drink himself into "a comfortable frame of mind" with a jug of rumade. The tone of the text is at times naively ethnocentric, colonial and jingoistic, although Hubbard often ameliorates these qualities with satirical bite. Unless you have a penchant for crusading, however, I don't think these anachronistic attitudes (which simply reflect the time of writing) will offend you.

There is plenty of action; this is two-fisted, hard-nosed and bloody pulp fare, full of distressed damsels in shredded clothing and hair-breadth rescues. Doc's sidekick Hippocrates is a constant source of fun. This 500-pound midget has a computer memory, and is capable of jumping to a ship's control panel and four-handedly throwing switches, firing blasters and turning "down the oven so his cake won't burn." He *likes* being a slave, responding to a promise of emancipation by exclaiming, "You can't free me! I won't have it!"

My advice, then, is for you to go ahead and cruise the spaceways with Ole Doc. Enjoy his medical adventures, or land with him at a flying field near a ballpark, and stroll to a nearby alien stream where he's just hooked a bug-eyed struggling monster.

IV

Overall, my impression of these three books is overwhelmingly positive. Despite their age, they can still nip the mind with almost as sharp an edge as they did when first published. Sales figures show that today's fans share my opinions——each is still a doggoned good read. They show, too, that at his best L. Ron Hubbard was clearly a master in three different areas of the field: science-fiction, horror and pure fantasy.

Voyagers through Eternity

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

Sam Moskowitz

PART XVI

XXVII
EDWARD BELLAMY'S IMPACT ON UTOPIAN FICTION

Utopias have a long and honorable history. Frequently they can be classified as science-fiction, or contain elements which relate directly or indirectly to science-fiction. Some merely describe the author's concept of a superior form of government, and a number have no relationship to the genre at all (for example, James Harrington's *Oceana* [1660]). The nineteenth century was especially rich in such works. Among those which are science-fictional are *The Empire of the Naers* (1811) by James Lawrence, *New Britain* (1820) by G. A. Ellis, *New Holland* (1837) by Mary Fox, *The Anazonian Republic* (1842) by Timothy Savage, *The Crater* (1847) by James Fenimore Cooper, *The Happy Colony* (1854) by Robert Pemberton, *Anno 2065* (1865) by D. Deoscorides and *My Visit to Sybaris* (1869) by Edward Everett Hale. There are many others. They presented overwhelmingly positive viewpoints, describing widspread improvements in the lot of the common man.

Along with them, as early as the seventeenth century, there had been occasional portrayals of societies worse rather than better than our own. These have come to be known as anti-Utopias, or dystopias, and they appeared with increasing frequency in the late 1800's. As the present century progressed, they largely predominated. One of the most imaginative and influential of them is *The Coming Race* (1871) by George Edward Bulwer-Lytton.

Lord Bulwer-Lytton (1803-1873) was a member of Parliament and Secretary of State for the British Colonies. He was a prolific dramatist and novelist (his collected works run to 110 volumes), and is probably best remembered today for his historical epic *The Last Days of Pompeii* (1834) and the often-anthologized story "The House and the Brain" (which originally appeared anonymously in *Blackwood's Magazine* in 1859 as "The Haunters and the Haunted"). He also wrote *Zanoni* (1842) and *A Strange Story* (*All the Year Round*, August 10, 1861 - March 8, 1862), deal- with immortality and rejuvenation, which echo his lifelong interest in occult and paranormal themes.

The Coming Race was intended to examine many of the precepts of previous Utopias and render them unpalatable. Its action takes place in underground caverns of immense extent that are inhabited by highly intelligent advanced races and giant prehistoric reptiles. The elements of this underground world are reminiscent of Verne's *Journey to the Center of the Earth*; both have vestiges of prehistoric life, giant humans and are lighted. The people in *The Coming Race* had fled to the caverns in Biblical times to escape the Great Flood. There they evolved to their present size, sometimes attaining seven feet in height. Both physically and intellectually the women are the dominant sex, but they treat the men with discretion. These people call themselves Vril-ya after vril, an energy source

which they have discovered; this can be as destructive as atomic fission, but in milder form is controllable. It has remarkable curative powers, and even facilitates thought-transmission. The Vril-ya civilization is completely machine-run, and employs robots. Given their unlimited energy source, they could easily leave their caverns and conquer the whole planet. They choose to remain where they are, and the threa of mutual annihilation has eliminated war among them. But because there is no war, no disease, no struggle to live comfortably, life has become bland and incredibly boring.

There is a minor story line. Late in the work a Vril-ya woman falls in love with the narrator. Because their mating would degrade the nation's gene pool, he is condemned to death. But she helps him escape back to the surface, where he tells the story of his adventures.

The novel was widely read, and the word vril became so well known that it was even incorporated into brand-names——one company, for example, christened its beef buillon cubes Bovril. It was read by, and influenced, a number of science-fiction writers, the most popular of which was George Griffith, whose *Olga Romanoff* describes a similar civilization run by superwomen that has also discovered an untapped unlimited energy source. This was first serialized as "The Syren of the Skies" in *Pearson's Magazine* (December 30, 1893 - August 4, 1894); in the latter year it was published (somewhat shortened) as a bestselling book that went through many editions. During that period, which immediately preceded the work of H. G. Wells, Griffith was the most popular and lauded science-fiction writer in Britain and her colonies. His popularity did not extend to the United States, where a fertile market for his work existed, because he was so chauvenistic and unbusinesslike as to include in it uncomplimentary references to this country.

In 1884 Scribner's issued a ten-volume set of *Stories by American Authors*. This highlighted a number of emerging writers, and included two entries by Edward Page Mitchell ("The Tachypomp" and "The Ablest Man in the World"). To promote the set, the company held a dinner at the Union League Club in New York City on March 2, 1885, inviting to it all contributing authors who were still living. There Mitchell and most of the others for the first time met Edward Bellamy. Present, besides Mitchell and Bellamy, were a number of other genre writers, including Noah Brooks, Leonard Kip, George Parsons Lathrop, Brander Matthews, Thomas Nelson Page, Frederick Jesup Stimson and Frank R. Stockton. Indeed, the event came close to being a minor science-fiction convention! Mitchell is known to have kept a menu autographed on the back by the attendees as a souvenir of the occasion. He later also noted their reactions in his autobiography:

> All who sat at the dinner interested me keenly, but none more than Edward Bellamy. His *Dr. Heidenhoff's Process* and *Miss Ludington's Sister* had been published, though *Looking Backward*, by which he is best remembered, was not to come for two or three years. When the party broke up into groups and the conversation became animated, Bellamy was the centre of the largest special audience. He was developing, with the eloquence of sincerity, his philisophy of the insignificance of the individual and the greatness of the commonweal. "When I die," he was saying to Charles Scribner and Stockton and Stimson and Page and the rest, "I wish no burial location, no tombstone, no record of identity. I would have my friends carry my ashes to the top of Mount Tom on a bright, windy day and scatter them by the handful wherever they might be blown farthest."*

Bellamy had contributed numerous short stories and articles to periodicals as distinguished as *Scribner's, Harper's, Century* and *Lippincott's*, but he did not achieve a literary reputation until the appearance of *Dr. Heidenhoff's Process* (1880), which tiptoes into the realm of fantasy. Here a woman succumbs to seduction and is so overcome with remorse that she disengages herself from her past life. Her former suitor, who loves her enough to forgive her, discovers a scientist who can erase specific memories and allow a person to pursue life unen-

**Memoirs of an Editor* (1924), pp. 436.

cumbered by them. But everything turns out to be a dream, and the suitor wakes to discover that the woman has just committed suicide.

Upon reading *Dr. Heidenhoff's Process*, William Dean Howells declared Bellamy to be the successor to Nathaniel Hawthorne, and later made suggestions for the improvement of his next novel, *Miss Ludington's Sister* (1884). In this work Bellamy suggests that at different stages of life we actually have different souls. Through a medium, an attempt is made to recreate Miss Ludington in her youth when presumably her soul was different. Another girl is substituted for the supposedly "younger" woman, and Miss Ludington is duped into taking her in to live with her.

The theme of unwanted memory and its negative effect on our lives is repeated in a number of Bellamy's stories, most forcefully in "The Blindman's World" (*Atlantic Monthly*, November 1886). Here an astronomer, seizing an opportunity to observe the planet Mars particularly clearly, passes out at his telescope. When he recovers, he finds that he has taken notes of happenings while he was "unconscious." In this state his spirit had travelled to Mars and seen its inhabitants. They are humanoid, intelligent, and knowledgable about conditions on the Earth. They possess the aptitude of remembering the future but can only dimly recall the past. On meeting someone, they can "remember" what their future will be like with that person. If they are fated to become friends, for example, they are able to enjoy such friendship from the moment of meeting. Their dim visualization of the past prevents conscience and grief from blighting their future. The "Martials" (as Bellamy terms them) then explain how the perceived disadvantages of knowing the future are not valid. Nothing else happens in the story, which is written in a Victorian manner and a pedestrian style.

Who was Edward Bellamy, and what were the formative influences in his background? He was born in Chicopee Falls, Massachusetts on March 28, 1850. His parents, Rufus King and Louise (Putnam) Bellamy, had three other sons, Frederick Putnam, William Packer and Charles Joseph. Charles was also to become a writer. Frederick Bellamy was a Baptist minister, a rotund, affable man well liked by his parishioners. Although fair in practical matters, Louise Bellamy practised her religion strictly. All her sons, as a result, were driven away from it.

Edward entered Union College in Schenectady, New York in 1868, but dropped out after a year. To a great extent he was self-taught, and mastered a number of languages on his own. As a youth he had been quite frail and sensitive. On this account, his mother insisted that he spend a relaxed year touring Europe during 1868. There he saw poverty on a scale that beggared the state of the working class at home. He felt that the slaves in America had lived better than the workers in Europe, particularly in England.

Upon returning to the United States in 1869 he entered the law offices of Leonard and Wills in Springfield, and was admitted to the bar in 1871. But he quit the profession after his first case, in which he had to evict a penniless widow from her home.

In the Fall of 1871 he took a job on the staff of the *New York Evening Post*, then left to join the *Springfield Daily Union* the next June. He remained with the *Union* for five years. During that time he had his first acceptance by a prestigious national magazine when *Scribner's* published his short story "Cold Snap" (September 1875). This introduced a theme that always stayed with him, the necessity for the impersonal solidarity of human beings.

In September 1874 his parents adopted a poor thirteen-year-old girl named Emma Augusta Sanderson. Eight years later Bellamy would marry her.

His first book was *Six to One*, a light summer romance that was moderately well received, followed by *The Duke of Stockbridge* (both 1878). In March 1879 *Dr. Heidenhoff's Process* began serial appearance in the *Springfield Union*, and in that same year his brother Charles's book on industrial exploitation, *The Breton Mills*, was also published.

Since both brothers had a literary bent, they decided to pool their resources and found a newspaper. This began publication in Springfield, Massachusetts in February 1880, and was called *The Penny News*. After a fire burned them out, however, Edward became discouraged and turned the paper over to Charles. At that point he commenced the serious writing for which he is now remembered.

It was the inclusion of his short story "Lost" (*Scribner's*, December 1877) in *Stories by American Authors* that resulted in the 1885 invitation to the dinner where he met Mitchell and other fellow writers. "Lost" is an atypically fast-moving account of a young man who, after an interval of seven years, returns to Germany to seek out a lovely girl he had left behind. He finds her a matronly woman with a husband and two children. Here we have an early version of the theme in *Miss Ludington's Sister:* at different periods of our lives we have different souls. The woman he discovers is no longer the one he loved, but an entirely different person——nor is he the same young man who intensely, for a brief time, loved her. Of the assembly of American authors represented in Scribner's anthology he was to emerge, within a few years, as the most famous, internationally as well as nationally.

In 1885 Charles Bellamy's *The Way Out* was published. This was a Utopia whose principles were diametrically opposite the communistic theory later presented by his brother's *Looking Backward*, namely that each citizen should receive the same quantity of goods and services, no matter how inequitable that distribution might be in relation to his individual effort or contribution to society. It has been surmised, because the brothers' views were so opposed, and since they lived and worked in the same place, that they had discussed their views, and that such discussions initiated the writing of *Looking Backward*.

But that is not the genesis Edward Bellamy later described. In his essay "How I Wrote 'Looking Backward'" (*Ladies' Home Journal*, April 1894) he wrote:

> According to my best recollection it was the winter of 1886 that I sat down at my desk with the definite purpose of trying to reason out a method of economic organization by which the public might guarantee the livelihood and material welfare of its citizens on a basis of equality corresponding to and supplementing political equality. There was no doubt in my mind that the proposed study should be in the form of a story. In venturing in any new and difficult field of speculation I believe that the student often cannot do better than to use the literary form of fiction.

The essay revealed a major reason for insisting on equality of payment regardless of the value of the work rendered:

> How could women be assured an indefeasible equality with men, and their yoke of economic dependence upon the other sex, with all its related and implied subserviences, be finally broken? Surely no social solution not securely guaranteeing that result could claim to be adequate.

The book went to the publishers Houghton Mifflin, said Bellamy,

> in August or September, 1887, and although promptly accepted did not appear till January, 1888. Although it made a stir with the critics, up to the close of 1888 the sales had not exceeded ten thousand, after which they leaped into the hundred thousands.

The protagonist of *Looking Backward* is Julian West, a young man of independent means. Because he has great difficulty in sleeping, he has had constructed beneath his house an air-conditioned bedroom vault which blocks out all outside noise. He also employs a mesmerist to induce sleep at night and waken him in the morning. He is looking forward to marriage with a wealthy young girl named Edith Bartlett. One night in 1887 he is mesmerized into sleep and awakens to find himself in the year 2000. (Only much later is it suggested that West's house had burned down; his servant, the only one who knew he was in the vault——other than the mesmerist, who has disappeared——perished in the fire.) He is discovered by a Dr. Leete, who with his daughter Edith is excavating in the area. Leete revives

West, and invites him to live at his home, where he gradually recovers from the emotional and physical trauma brought about by his experience.

West sees relatively few technical advances in civilized living. Music and wake-up calls are transmitted by telephpne, and all heating is done by electricity. There are roll-out covers for sidewalks so that people may walk comfortably outdoors in inclement weather, and bridges to cross streets away from the danger of moving vehicular traffic.

He discovers that social changes, however, are widespread. The most profound is that governments have taken over all industry. There is a loose federation among countries, headed by an international council, and people are looking forward to unifying the world into a single nation soon. Our government has no armed forces, no taxes, no lawyers and as a consequence little legislation.

All citizens receive education until they are twenty-one, and must work up to the age of forty-five. Thereafter the country of origin supports them, so all have cradle-to-grave security. Everyone begins by serving three years of manual labor, and then individuals may volunteer for specific jobs if they wish; if there are not enough volunteers, others are drafted to fill them. Women without children are expected to work full-time. A merit system ranks employees' contributions to society; achievements are acknowledged, and those deliberately performing below their native abilities are punished. Crime is regarded as an ancestral trait and is rarely encountered.

There are no banks or stores. All citizens are paid by credits, and to use these they are issued credit cards. Samples of the goods available are shown in great display centers; people order what they want from strategically located government warehouses, which then ship them out via pneumatic tubes. There is no promotion or advertising. Personal selling is considered anti-social. All books are vanity-printed, since there are no commercial publishing bussinesses. Cooking of foods is done in public kitchens, and clothes are washed in public laundries. Various religious sects are still active, and smoking is still prevalent.

At this point West appears towake in the chamber where he fell asleep in 1887. His manservant is bringing him breakfast. May the entire world of 2000 A. D. have after all been a dream? He leaves his home and joins the throngs in the streets, observing idle men seeking work and noting the gross inequities among the various classes of society. Now, to launch into a fantastic tale and announce just at its point of resolution that everything was just a dream is certainly a let-down. In fact, this literary device has been so commonly used by writers that some critics feel the result is "dream fiction,"which should not be classified as fantasy at all.

But here Bellamy produces a surprising and refreshing switch. West's awakening back in 1887 was itself but a dream. He is indeed telling his story in the year 2000, and the purpose of the dream is to contrast his picture of the future with the hopeless past.

Looking Backward is well written in clear prose, but by most standards cannot be truly considered a novel at all. The story-line is so thin it is almost non-existent. West falls in love with Edith Leete, who turns out to be the great grand-daughter of the woman he was engaged to marry before he went into suspended animation. That's about all. The rest is a social treatise, a Utopia described in conversation.

But of the innumerable Utopias and dystopias that have appeared before and since, Bellamy's stands out as the most influential and popular. It generated, as one critic has noted, "more than one hundred continuations, refutations, reaffirmations, and parodies." Glen Nagley and J. Max Patrick, editors of *The Quest for Utopia* (1952), have assembled a list of the most significant of these. They include William Morris's *News from Nowhere*, Edward C. Michaels's *Looking Further Forward*, Arthur D. Vinton's *Looking Further Backward* (all 1890); Ludwig A. Geiss-

ler's *Looking Beyond*, Wilbrandt Conrad's *Mr. East's Experience in Mr. Bellamy's World*, Ernst Müller's *Ein Rückblick aus dem Jahr 2037 auf das Jahr 2000* (all 1891); J. W. Roberts's *Looking Within* (1893), Fayette Giles's *Shadows Before* (1894), August Cirkel's *Looking Forward* (1906) and of course Bellamy's own sequel to his book, *Equality* (1897). This last work is devoted wholly to extended explanations and historical development of the principles described in *Looking Backward*; it is longer and less interesting than its predecessor.

Looking Backward also prompted claims of plaigarism. Two of the most vociferous were put forward by authors John Macnie and Laurence Gronlund, both of whose books were published afterwards (although Bellamy and Macnie did correspond earlier). Macnie's *The Diothas* appeared under the pen-name of Imar Thiusen in 1893. There are a few minor similarities in plot, chiefly that the protagonist is sent into the future by hypnotism, but the authors' social visions are entirely different. Gronlund's *The Cooperative Commonwealth* (1884) seems even less reminiscent of Bellamy's theories; and Gronlund's later promotion of these (see his article "Nationalism" in the January 1890 *Arena*) suggests he did not take his own claims seriously.

The many diatribes against *Looking Backward* seemed only to whet public interest in the book. Groups for discussing and spreading its precepts sprang up everywhere. Their efforts culminated in a political movement called Nationalism, which was launched in 1888. The first Nationalist club was formed in Boston; among its members were Edward Everett Hale and William Dean Howells, both of whom had written Utopias themselves. Nationalist clubs to promote Bellamy's ideas spread across the United States by the hundreds, and even emerged in foreign countries. There were as many as thirty in California alone. Initially the movement was endorsed by Madam Helen Blavatsky, founder of the occultist doctrine of Theosophy, and many of her own groups became at the same time Nationalist clubs.

The party's official organ was *The Nationalist*, whose first number was dated May 1888. Bellamy himself was a frequent contributor to it. Eventually, however, he decided that the paper was not effectively presenting his ideas. He then founded and edited his own weekly, *The New Nation*, starting January 31, 1881. This effectively ended *The Nationalist* and the interest of Theosophists. Nationalists' groups also dwindled. *The New Nation* had as many as sixteen pages, a sewn binding, and sold for five cents a copy. Except for its logo heading, the pages were solid text. This was very well written and covered a variety of subjects; in addition to politics, these included the state of hospitals, relations between capital and labor, farming, prohibition, railroads, Theosophy, the press and club news. Such topics continued to fascinate the public for many years after *The Nation's* demise——the Edward Bellamy Club of New York, for example, was still active as late as 1933.

How many editions of *Looking Backward* have been published has never been researched, but they must approach or exceed a thousand. Many later ones carry useful critical commentary. The Tower Books printing of 1945 is especially interesting for its introduction by the author's son Paul, who had become editor of the well known Cleveland *Plain Dealer*. A book of essays, *Edward Bellamy Speaks Again*, was published in 1937, and a critical biography by Sylvia E. Bowman appeared in 1958. Bellamy himself died at the relatively early age of forty-eight of tuberculosis, exacerbated by throat cancer, on May 22, 1898.

One science-fictional sidelight to all this seems important enough to mention here. *The Overland Monthly*, a San Francisco magazine, devoted its entire June 1890 issue to Utopian subjects, including fiction. One short piece was by the famous German writer Kurd Lasswitz, famous for his long novel *Auf Zwei Planeten* (1897). It was an excerpt from his collection *Bilder auf der Zukunft* (*Pictures of the Future*, 1871), and describes civilization in the year 2371. In this he forecasts an international language, widespread air travel, a population large

enough to necessitate skyscrapers for housing to preserve enough land for raising food, and weather-forecasting accurate six months in advance. There are only two political parties, the Sober Thinkers and the Fervent Dreamers. Homes have "odor pianos" on which melodies of smells can be played, and there are great composers in odors just as there are great masters of musical sounds. This satiric segment was translated by Emil Pohli, who acknowledged *Looking Backward* as his inspiration, and may well have been the first appearance of Lasswitz's work in America.

Bellamy's continuous activities with *The Nationalist*, Nationalist clubs and *The New Nation* left him little time to write further fiction. But one of his last stories was *bona fide* science-fiction. It is "To Whom This May Come" (*Harper's Monthly*, February 1889).

A traveller is cast up on an island where people can read thoughts and communicate by telepathy. Because their vocal organs have atrophied only very few of them can still communicate orally.

It turns out that two thousand years ago a Persian monarch expelled from his kingdom all soothsayers and others with special powers. They fled by sea and were shipwrecked on this island, which has waters so treacherous that it is almost impossible to leave. Here they have lived and interbred over the centuries, the population being occasionally augmented by survivors of local shipwrecks. Only descendants of the latter can still speak, and it is from them that the inhabitants have learned English, which they use as the language of record.

Since they cannot speak, none of the individuals have names, but use symbols for identification. Physical beauty is no longer important, since people can divine one another's thoughts. Those who cannot fit into the community are banished to a smaller islet off the coast, reachable only by cable. On a visit to the outcasts the cable breaks and the protagonist of the story falls into the sea. He is fortunately rescued by a passing ship and taken back to the mainland. There he finds himself unable to adjust to a civilization where telepathy is unknown.

A "converted" returnee's finding it difficult or impossible to readjust to his former life is of course not a novel concept in the genre. It appears in *Gulliver's Travels* (1726), and may well predate Swift. One still occasionally encounters it, as in Clark Ashton Smith's "Visitors to Mlok" (*Wonder Stories*, May 1933); here an Earthman carried to an alien world has his senses so drastically altered to accomodate his new surroundings that he responds with horror and disgust on return to his normal environment.

"To Whom This May Come" is, however, one of the earliest studies of a society in which people cannot hide their thoughts from each other. Variations on this theme have been exploited in modern times; a particularly successful example is Alfred Bestor's novel "The Demolished Man" (*Galaxy Science Fiction*, January-March 1952).

Edward Bellamy pointed out clearly in a number of articles that *Looking Backward* championed a system which embodied a feminist manifesto. His "Woman in the Year 2000" (*Ladies' Home Journal*, February 1891) epitomizes this view. Here he forecasts that the profits of Nationalism, once it became established, would be distributed equitably between women and men. No longer would a woman have to depend upon marriage to escape poverty, for an income would come to her directly from the government, rather than optionally through a husband, father or brother. Marriage would then become truly a choice, and the derogatory onus of "old maid" soon disappear. Bellamy concluded by stating: "Want on the one hand will then no longer drive the virtuous woman to dishonor, nor on the other will wealth, in the hands of unscrupulous men, tempt her frivolous sister."

(to be continued in the next issue)

GEORGES GALLET: an obituary

Jean-Luc Buard

Georges Hilaire Gallet died at the age of 93 on March 29, 1995 at Aubagne, near Cassis, a small seaside town close of Marseilles, where he had retired some time ago. He lived alone there, for he had been widowed for several years and had no children. He was known in France as one of *les trois Vieux* (the three Old Ones) of science-fiction, the others being Jacques Bergier (1912 - 1978) and Régis Messac (1893-1945), both of whom he knew well.

Gallet was born in Bressuire, in the Vendée province of the country, on July 20, 1902, the son of a manager in the Paris bank Le Credit Industriel et Commercial. He was educated in Paris. He was a brilliant student and obtained his *Baccalauréat* (school graduation certificate) at the age of sixteen. At this time he was fluent in English and German, and could read Spanish and Italian. He at once began what promised to be an outstanding career in banking. But at 25 he seized what he felt was a more inviting opportunity when asked by a patron to become trade director for a large Parisian printing plant which put out more than forty popular magazines. Here he was highly successful and travelled widely (including to England and the United States) to keep up to date on modern printing technology. He left the position after nine years to become a European agent for Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer during 1936-1937. He was proud of this job, and cherished his MGM badge for the rest of his life.

At that period he was already well known in publishing circles, and in particular was personally acquainted with the editors of *Le Petit Parisien*, one of the most important Paris newspapers. This was owned by the Dupuy family, and from its presses came also illustrated magazines devoted to sports, fashion, the cinema, children's topics, general entertainment (*Dimanche-illustré*) and science (a popular monthly similar to *Popular Mechanics* named *La Science et la Vie*). Gallet, who occasionally sold copy to *Le Petit Parisien*, joined the Dupuy staff. Soon afterwards he proposed a new illustrated weekly magazine of fiction and science facts to be titled *Conquêtes*, a project which was approved for trial.

Some historians have claimed *Conquêtes* was the first French science-fiction magazine. In actual fact it was never intended to be an all-fiction magazine, let alone one devoted wholly to science-fiction, nor was it the first of its kind in France. When he planned it, Gallet had in mind the famous earlier *Journal des Voyages*, a favorite of his maternal grandfather since the 1870's. This popular fiction and travel weekly lasted until the First World War in 1915, and was reissued with lesser success between 1924 and 1930. During its golden era, 1900-1914, it had featured such well known fiction writers as Louis Boussenard, Paul d'Ivoi and Capitaine Danrit.

Conquêtes featured articles about general and applied science, along with serialized novels. A launching issue dated August 24 and numbered "00" was printed in August 1939. (It seems to have been preceded by an earlier one, numbered "0", on which I have no information.) We find in it an article about Jules Verne, another about Louis Pasteur, the first installmentof a genre novel by Festus Pragnell, and the beginning of another by Jean de La Hire under his pseudonym of Edmond Cazal. De La Hire was a popular and important early science-fiction

writer whose first novel appeared in 1906. The centerfold of *Conquêtes* (in color) pictured the internal frame of a new ocean liner which was described in a two-paged article. Nowhere in the magazine do we find the name of its editor or any member of the staff, according to the custom of the time.

Gallet was an avid reader of science-fiction, which he discovered during his travels in England and the United States through pulp magazines. These also introduced him to emerging fandom. He became personally acquainted with fans such as Walter Gillings, and was an early acquaintance of Forrest Ackerman. In founding *Conquêtes* his purpose was certainly to popularize science-fiction in France, but with the onset of World War II further work on the magazine was discontinued, and no issue labelled #1 ever appeared.

When he was in England in 1938 Gallet visited Walter Gillings and, according to Mike Ashley,[1]* arranged through him as agent to buy French rights to the work of several British writers. Among these was John Russell Fearn, two of whose stories were translated for inclusion in *Conquêtes*, probably by Gallet himself. Gallet eventually sold them to Fayard Publishers, for whom he was to write a sporadic column on science topics during the war years; they appeared in the December 1939 issue of Fayard's weekly *Ric et Rac*.[2]

Meanwhile mobilization had brought Gallet into the French army, but his career as a soldier ended at the Battle of Dunkirk in June 1940. He was able to escape to occupied Paris, but not wanting to seek work at the pro-German press there he made his way to the unoccupied zone in the south. There he found employment with various newspapers. The first of these was the new *Dimanche-Illustré* (soon to be named *D.I.*), which was still owned by the Dupuy family and published in Marseilles. There he worked as general editor.

He also wrote numerous articles and stories for weeklies published in Clermont-Ferrand by Fayard: *Ric et Rac* (devoted to entertainment), *Candide* (a literary journal) and *Sirocco* (a magazine for children). Before the war ended he was called back to the army and assigned duties at the Marseilles Censorship Center. Circumstances during this period are not clear, and after the war Gallet was accused of having been a Vichyist, which he denied. Sufficient evidence to support the change was not established, however, and prosecution failed. But Gallet did help the popular writer Jean de La Hire, a close friend, escape jail and judgment he received after the war for publishing activities under the German occupation. (Le Hire was amnestied in 1951.)

In August 1944 *D.I.* ceased appearance. On the following September 23rd a new weekly titled *V* (for Victory) was launched by friends of Gallet, among them Jean Bazal.[3] During 1944-1945 it was devoted to the ending of the war, but thereafter, under the title *V Magazine*, it became a general and entertainment publication, with pin-up front covers and humorous sketches by Jean David on the back. Fiction was used regulatly, including detective stories, and after 1950 science-fiction as well.

Among the material of genre interest there were two articles (with photographs) in 1946 and 1948 about Tod Robbins, who was then living on the Côte d'Azur near Monaco, and an interview with the writer Jacques Spitz. Of the eight science-fiction novels by Spitz, only one was ever translated into English (*Sever the Earth*, 1936).[4] Gallet wrote a long article in 1951 to introduce science-fiction to "mainstream" French readers, and in 1952 the magazine printed a science-fiction novel by La Hire under his Edmond Cazal pseudonym (as well as mundane fiction by that author). The reader will also find articles about Hollywood cinema and Far West life by Forrest Ackerman, who was the weekly's California correspondent from April 1946 through July 1948.

In 1948 Gallet edited a summer supplement for *V Magazine*. This, in contrast to the latter's large newspaper format, was smaller and thicker. It turned

*Notes for this article appear on page 48.

out to be the first of a continuing series, appearing at first semi-annually and then quarterly. It lasted until the early 1970's. Many science-fiction stories by French authors appeared in it, and also some translations of American authors (for example, C. L. Moore's "Shambleau," which was attractively illustrated by Jean-Claude Forest).

At this juncture it should be pointed out that the term "science-fiction" was used in the French language for the first time in 1950. It came about in this way: A friend of Georges Gallet, the Belgian journalist Gaston Derycke (who wrote under the pseudonym of Claude Elsen), visited Gallet at his flat. This was full of genre works from all over the world, though predominately from America. (Gallet had lost all of his original collection during the war, but had been able to replace most of it through the help of his American friends Ackerman and Mary Gnaedinger.) Derycke was amazed by what he saw and wrote a column about it for *Le Figaro Littéraire*, the most important literary weekly of the time. Here he complained that science-fiction as such was unknown in France in spite of its many French contributors. He called attention of publishers and editors to it as an important separate category which had earned a place alongside the hard-boiled detective story (*la Série noire*), both having enjoyed particular success since 1945.

Later that year Gallet was approached by the publisher Hachette, which wanted to launch a series of science-fiction books. But at the same time another fan, Michel Pilotin (who used the pseudonym Stephen Spriel), had independently persuaded Gallimard (then associated with Hachette) to do the same thing. The upshot was that the two publishers decided to undertake the project jointly, and began a series called *Le Rayon fantastique* in January 1951. This continued successfully for thirteen years, during which time there were issued 119 volumes, five of which comprised two titles. Most were by American authors, but French and Eastern European science-fiction novels (especially by Russian and Polish writers) were included also. Gallet has already described elsewhere his involvement in this project and its detailed history.[5]

Gallet was involved in many other publishing activities. He was editor of *Super Policier Magazine* and *Super Western Magazine*, two short-lived titles containing material translated from American pulps, as well as science-fiction from *Super Science Stories*. Their publisher, André Jaeger, was married to the daughter of Jean de La Hire. With the advice of Gallet, he reissued twenty La Hire books, including all of his science-fiction. These had covers illustrated by René Brantonne, the most renowned popular artist of the 1950-1975 period. (Brantonne illustrated hundreds of science-fiction paperbacks for the *Anticipation* series put out by the Belgian firm a Le Fleuve Noir.)

Gallet also translated more than forty genre books. These included work by Arthur C. Clarke, Michael Coney, Ray Cummings, Philip José Farmer, M. A. Foster, Robert Heinlein, Colin Kapp, Keith Laumer, A. Merritt, C. L. Moore, Larry Niven, Festus Pargnell, Francis G. Rayer, Nat Schachner, Clifford Simak, Kurt Siodmak, Theodore Sturgeon, A. E. Van Vogt, Stanley G. Weinbaum, Jack Williamson and Colin Wilson. He edited two science-fiction anthologies, and wrote two books on topics of popular science. For Hachette he edited numerous works, including *The Universe of Knowledge*, a series published simultaneously in most European countries in their own languages.

In 1970 Gallet became editor for the publishing house of Albin Michel. There, with Jacques Bergier, he oversaw six different series of books: three of science-fiction (one trade-sized and two paperback, 110 titles in all); two of occult interest (one technical and short-lived of three or four volumes plus one with a popular slant of some 70 titles); and a short-lived one on scientific matter (ten titles). In all he edited about 200 volumes for Michel.[6]

In 1971 Gallet gave a substantial part of his collection (books, pulps, journals and fan magazines) to Jacques Sadoul, a close friend and an editor of a

series of genre paperbacks. This was done on condition that Sadoul would write a history of science-fiction, using them as source-material. The book was to be one of a series on the history of literature that Michel had begun issuing. It was duly written, and published in 1974.

Gallet retired in the early 1980's. He had resumed his fannish interests after the war, renewing acquaintances and attending occasional conventions, and he continued these activities until his death. He received the E. E. Evans Big Heart Award at the 37th World Science-Fiction Convention (Brighton, 1979) in recognition of his launching the genre in France and over forty years of supportive work in the field. Despite over half a century of productive proselyting, however, he has been recognized by only one major science-fiction reference book[7] and few descriptive articles on the man exist.[8]

Georges Gallet was a member of the Society for the Preservation of Prehistoric Life[9] and an honorary member of the Ancient Astronaut Society. He had a brilliant and successful career as an editor, and enjoyed a wide circle of friends. He was light-hearted, full of humor, always ready for conversation and recollection, and liked to say that he truly enjoyed working to entertain people through magazines and books.

NOTES

(1) *The History of the Science Fiction Magazine*, volume 2 (1975), pp. 74-75.

(2) They were "The Misty Wilderness" (originally published in *Modern Wonder* #77 [1938]) and "The Weather Machine" (*ibid.* #78 [1938]).

(3) See Bazal's *Le Milieu et Company: Confidences d'un Journaliste* (1990). In these recollections of *V Magazine* Gallet is referred to as "Llegat."

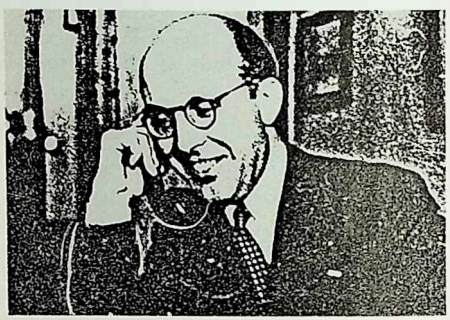
(4) Two recent encyclopedias of science-fiction mistakenly quote this title as "*Save the Earth.*"

(5) In "Vie et mort du Rayon fantastique," *Univers* #03 (December 1975), pp. 152-163.

(6) See Jacques Sadoul's *Histoire de la Science-fiction moderne, 1911-1971* (1974).

(7) *The Encyclopedia of Science Fiction and Fantasy* (1974), compiled by Donald H. Tuck.

(8) Notably, in addition to Sadoul and Tuck, Harry Warner's *All Our Yesterdays* (1969), pp. 161-162. Photographs of Gallet appeared in Warner's volume and in *Fanews* #202 (Sept. 1, 1945). The latter is reproduced below:



(9) During my 1987-1989 visits to Gallet I noted hanging on the wall of his flat an official-looking plaque bearing this name. I assumed the organization was some fannish or scientific joke.

AN ALTERNATIVE CATACLYSM

Two yaks, two zebras and——two zoophytes?
Noah checked again his list. The motley rout
Was vast. Should zoophytes be in or out,
Dry through an age of pluvial days and nights,
Or wet like fish, which did not share the plights
Of badger, vole and worm——creatures about
Which Noah was not uncertain? Quenching doubt,
He banished polyps to the deepening bights.

Then when the endless spouted waters stayed,
And after the palm-leaf-bringing dove had soared,
The Ark, subsiding through a waste of mud,
Proved what a blissful judgement Noah had made:
Those coral-builders exiled from on board
Had raised an Ararat to breast the flood.

——*K. V. Bailey*

Songs of the Stars

THE POETRY OF BRUCE BOSTON

Gary William Crawford

Since the 1970's, Bruce Boston has established himself as the premier of the the science-fiction movement. With eleven collections of poetry and a recent retrospective volume, *Sensuous Debris*, he has done more than any other contributor to solidify the the movement, showing that modern techniques can be used successfully in speculative verse. As poet and critic Michael Michael R. Collings has written, "His work is consistently well-drafted, imaginative, innovative in language and line, tough and consistent."[1]*

Boston and the other poets of his generation, whose leading organ is *Star*Line*, published since 1978 by the Science Fiction Poetry Association, grow out of a long tradition of science in poetry. In the twentiety century, George Sterling, Clark Ashton Smith and finally Stanton A. Coblentz (publisher of the little magazine *Wings* [1933-1961]) solidified the "stellar" poetry movement, which was further enhanced by Lilith Lorraine (Mary M. Wright).[2] However, Boston has almost single-handedly revolutionized the form.

He was born in Chicago on July 16, 1943 of Catholic and Jewish heritage. He grew up in California and was graduated from Monrovia High School there in 1961. In 1965 he received a B. A. degree and in 1967 an M.A. in economics from the University of California at Berkeley. He describes himself as "a true participant and survivor of the psychedelic sixties" and took part in the anti-Vietnam war protest.

Boston has hitch-hiked across the United States and has lived for short periods in New York, Oregon and Mexico. He is now a long-time resident of the San Francisco Bay area. Since 1968 he has freelanced, working as a book designer and a technical writer. Among his works are manuals on computerized electronic security systems. He has been Associate Professor of Creative Writing at John F. Kennedy University, and an editor for the Berkeley Poets Workshop and Press and for *City Miner Magazine* in Berkeley. Betweentimes he has been a movie projectionist, a retail clerk, a furniture mover, a gardener and a book buyer.

His literary background is equally eclectic. His earliest memories are of the Golden Books and poems of Robert Louis Stevenson read to him by his parents. At seven he began reading science books for children and the comics, especially the "Classics Illustrated" series. At nine he discovered science-fiction when he encountered *The Red Planet* by Robert Heinlein. He devoured science-fiction, and regards Alfred Bester's *The Stars My Destination* and *The Demolished Man* as the works that influenced him most. In school he attended advanced courses which led him to literature——"the kind with a capital 'L'," as he once put it. He believes the major influences there to be Dostoevsky, Hesse, Melville, Henry Miller, Lawrence Durrel, Jack Kerouac and Vladimir Nabokov. Mainstream poets he feels have influenced him include Poe, Pound, Eliot, Dylan Thomas and Allan Ginsberg. Boston has received numerous honors, such as the Rhysling Award for science-fiction poetry and the Pushcart Prize for fiction.

As he himself has remarked, he did not originally intend to establish a reputation as a poet. But his fiction deals in many ways with themes found in his

*Notes for this article will be found on page 56.

poetry. His first book publications were collections of short stories, *Jackbird* (1976) and *She Comes When You're Leaving* (1982). To date his most ambitious work of fiction is the novel *Stained Glass Rain* (1993).

This falls into the category of "sixties counterculture." It is more than merely that, however, because in its lyricism it is both speculative and realistic, stylistically many-faceted, and in some ways a fantasy. The central character, a young college student named David Jacobi, leaves Berkeley and hitchhikes to New York, in essence to "drop out" and make a living selling drugs. He meets a divorced older woman, Christine Leslie, has an affair with her, and in a few weeks of psychedelic exploration comes to find something of himself. So do the other characters; Jacobi's friend Mulligan and a closeted young homosexual Michael Shawtry explore similarly and create bonds that mark coming to terms with themselves. Jacobi is a failure as a drug dealer and returns to school, Shawtry disappears into the netherworld of schizophrenia, Christine returns to her children, and Mulligan settles into domesticity.

All of these people share a common creative impulse for poetry. *Stained Glass Rain* is thus a text about the nature of poetry and its relationship to man. As Boston says at one point in the novel, "Poetry is the ultimate realization of internal language in its communicative form, the recognition of the word as symbol."[3] In exploring themselves the four young people learn something about creativity and its implications for human life. In essence, they extrapolate their lives creatively.

In this respect, the novel offers the author's view of poetry itself; and his poetry, which has often been described as narrative in movement, explores the future and the present by means of extrapolation. This basic premise of science-fiction is commonly known. As Thomas Clareson writes, "...SF has never been concerned with scientific discovery . . .but has tried to examine the effects of these developments on the individual person and on society as a whole."[4]

Boston's first collection of science-fiction poetry, *All the Clocks Are Melting* (1984), immediately established his reputation. As Suzette Haden Elgin wrote shortly after it appeared, "His particular strengths are the short poem and the striking image, with a clear influence from the French Symbolists and Surrealists."[5] While the influence of Surrealism is actually minimal, the volume does serve to crystallize the kind of poetry Boston was working towards in the 1970's. As Andrew Joron wrote in reviewing the issue of *The Magazine of Speculative Poetry* in which an essay on Boston's poetry by Mark Rich appeared, "What is notable in Boston's case is the poems' pure syntactic density, which often cracks the facade of conventional sense-making: each main clause branches into a multitude of subordinate clauses; each noun is encrusted with adjectives, each verb inlaid with adverbs——nor is this a static structure, for here is a syntax falling in upon itself: nouns are made to do the work of verbs, verbs are gerundized into nouns; space becomes a *plenum* of linguistic possibility."[6]

The first poem in *All the Clocks Are Melting* serves as a prologue for the volume, and for the author's entire body of speculative poetry. "For Spacers Snarled in the Hair of Comets" is at once light and serious, as if Boston had just walked onto the stage to introduce us, with a sly sense of humor, to the stars: If you've heard the stellar *vox humana* / the untuned ear takes for static" or "kissed the burning eyelids / of god," finally "you know how sleek and fleshy, / how treacherous, the stars can become." And with the psychedelic metaphor "the spiced ale is cool and hallucinogenic," he invites us on the journey.

"In Days of Cataclysm" is written after some of the works of science-fiction author J. G. Ballard, who in such novels as *The Wind from Nowhere* (1966), *The Drowned World* (1962) and *The Crystal World* (1966) presents an earth mutated by cataclysmic change into a vastly new world. It is a world often depicted in Boston's poetry (especially in such later collaborations with Robert Frazier as

Chronicles of the Mutant Rain Forest). Here "Trees sprouted feathers / and birds were swathed in leaves." In these new days the speaker of the poem mentions his people's "failed vocabularies" and "how the two halves split, / how we laughed ourselves to sleep . . . ."

Boston has remarked that in such poems as this an often horrifying new world order begins, and some of them thus have political implications. Nevertheless, he has told this writer that while his political views "are and always have been pretty radical," he feels a new world order wouldn't be "very appealing." His imaginative depiction of future nightmares that could ensue after the cataclysm confirms this. In "The Faithless" "A great grey beast / of incertitude" arises from the ancient past, and even though "We have seen / the Word go down to the butcher's block," it returns "tracking up the pages, / corpses and mud, / blood and incertitude, / all those fine sentences / stubbing into the future."

"Human Remains" is a three-part poem about mechanistic and political Fascism. In the first part, "The Androids," man is at one with the machine, and as the old gods have given way to technology, "man remains our metaphor." In "The Mutant Lovers," a woman becomes a machine to a man who says to her, "Come my beauty, my horror / for us the night will hold." Finally, in the Fascist world of "The Cyborg Speaks," the speaker reaches beyond the machine into his heart "to feel the reflection / of something human."

Alchemical Texts (1985) is a thematically unified series of poems that uses an alchemist as its central figure. They move through the ages from present to past, showing this figure as a visionary and wanderer, both shunned and exalted. In "The Alchemist Among Us" the figure has left "the northern hills" and moves about in present-day civilization. He is regarded as "an incendiary" with "a quicksilver tongue." Ultimately he leaves "us oblivious to his passage ... And now the world as we know it / grows thin all around us." Moving backward in time, the alchemist's birth is shown as he awakens and feels "the pulsing throat / of a bird he could not name."

These are among the most mystical of Boston's poems. The central figure takes on many incarnations and finally, in "Tongues," we see the alchemist as poet:

> Like wax or fire
> such words unleash
> only in flowing,
> the hand ignites each letter.

In the last two stanzas the scribes (the poets) are likened to "quail in a blind thicket, / like birds who have yet / to know the sky." And finally:

> Give us the cup of speech,
> they whisper,
> their inkpots open,
> feathers poised for flight.

Nuclear Futures (1987) explores a holocaust aftermath. Its poems are written in Boston's usual clean style, with subtleties woven in by means of vocabulary. In the first poem, "The Berserker Enters a Plea on the Death of Greater Los Angeles: Not Guilty by Reason of Insanity," the speaker is "like any other plebe, / living from drug to drug," a potential visionary of forthcoming disaster: "imaging random slaughter: / flash frames of red devastation / on the flesh-crowded streets."

After this foretelling, Boston moves into other poems which show the results of nuclear war. In "No Longer the Stars" human history is examined. In the past, man's "accident of birth" was regarded as a religious phenomenon: "as if history's abattoir / defined a godscape descended." But later, as science developed, "we projected our maps at a cosmological pace" and "wired the falling sky / with instruments of terror." In the last two stanzas there is a movement toward unity, but then a sense of loss after the holocaust:

> beyond the furious clouds
> there is no longer
> a curious ear pressed
> upon the stars' pure static.

In "The Evolution of Death Murals," the images of victims imprinted on walls by a nuclear blast have been "fleshed / and suited . . .with paint, / with scraps of cloth and papier-maché" by children. To them, "the dismembered city/ is a labyrinth they roam at will: / the artifacts are incomprehensible."

A religious image conveys the new order in "Faith of the Progeny." As three are chosen "to make the climb beyond our hemisphere," "one steps forth / into that hellish draft our fathers brewed" to "appease the gods unseen." But finnally, in "Forecast for a Burning Planet at the End of History," vegetation will "recover this world":

arrayed across the continents
in dark and serried rows,
needles tremblin· in the wind,
mammoth tap roots feeding
on the charred and petrified
bones of civilization.

In *Time* (1988) Boston offers a series of meditations on a single theme. The speaker in the introductory poem, "Of Time and the Sideral Shore," stands on a beach of "onrushing change" where the moment itself is trembling

in the swerve and bend
of gravity's calling,
how the star-streaked waves
contain the night
and all of space beyond.

In "Those Who Eat the Past, Those Who Eat the Future" time is first compared to those who sit at a table and dine on eternity: "Of diners like ourselves, / with courses on collision," and then to a "world winding snake, / where the dishes are arrayed, / a feast of living tales." In "The Runner" the image of historic time is compared to a runner; even though the earth is very old, "Still the blood springs anew. / With all its feint and passion / the shadow play continues."

"Erom *Cantos for a Common Tongue*" is a mock translation of a work supposedly written by an alien poet, Alanthe Vasti. In this world of flux, "we discover nothing has changed: / still we play and learn our way," and the poem concludes with the ecstatic image "we have seen our doubles dancing/in the nascent star stuff of our graves."

Musings (1988) is a broadside of four poems, two of which are science-fiction. The first two are about artistic creation. In "The Naming of Sharp Instruments" the writer's pen is one of these, and "Somewhere between/the point and the paper" it "takes your name / for its own." In "The Muse as Lover Gone on Vacation" creativity is likened to the love of a woman. In the science-fiction poem "Poet After the Holocaust" the subject is in a world of pure imagination where "he will race converging / parallel lines to the angles of infinity." And lastly, "Five Principles of the Star Poem" compares the creation of a poem to a starship leaving its pad.

Bruce Boston's first collection of horror poetry, *The Nightmare Collector* (1988), is a superb volume which ranges from the Gothic to science-fiction horror; it has been one of his best selling works. The title poem introduces the book, moving from the past horrors of "the Pleistocene to the red primeval" and thence to a Victorian image of the nightmare collector in his "voluminous great-coat":

From the hollow blackness
of his flapping sleeves
you can hear the pulse
and thump of unb·rn shadows,
a dense hysteric fugue
winding up and down
the bones of your sleep

Some entries are futuristic, as "A Word Before the Ice Wars." This describes ice storms which engulf the earth and in "their implacable growth" ultimately destroy it; "Some say we should not have / left the gods of our fathers." One of the best poems is "The Walnut Dark Sea Is Blooming Swiftly," where the image of the sea as a blooming flower takes on an incantatory quality. Thus "the words / of flesh are written in the leaves / of the books we cannot read." "Soul of a Victorian" gives a new life to Gothic props, here a woman in her cellar who "tells of the graves in the yard: / one cat, three dogs, a fetus." The speaker warns the reader:

And while you are listening
you taste the dead hours and grasp
the worms' artless consummation:
you feel time between your fingers.

"The Contemporary Witch" is a humorous poem about a witch of the present day, who "sniffs coke" and "wants to sing,/ to dance, to sit naked / in the library stacks, / eating oranges."

The chilling lyric "In the Darkened Hours" is probably the best poem in the volume. Here the protagonist returns to the old house of his youth. The suggestion is that he is there for a funeral:

So you are lost again and you call it a dream
where the night prevails in the oldest city of all

He travels alone, "without weapons or maps," to the house of his father, which is "drawn from" his own "flesh and blood." The final stanza concludes:

So you call it a dream: . . . . . .
this house you inhabit these visions you conjure
this city you traverse in the darkened hours
with blind expectancy, with haunting replication.
these faces you fashion

This may well stand as Boston's horror masterpiece, a deeply felt song for the speaker's true self.

"Mean Time 2000" achieves futuristic horror through time itself. "As the styles run from ostrich to beaver" and "as the names upon the marquees ripple" "we hammer out totalities / to celebrate the changing race" "in an all-night factory of mutation."

His second collection of horror poetry, *Faces of the Beast*, appeared in 1990. Here entries present the many faces of the avatar of darkness but ultimately the beast is shown to be man himself. The first section of the book presents what may be called the "faces" poems, because they show various incarnations, some drawn from legend and myth, of the dark side of man. In "A Curse for My Demon Father" and "Born of a Royal Beast" the horrible children of chaos are imaged. In the latter the striking figure of the berserker proclaims his isolation from the world, from "the throngs within the street." And as "the pale priests intone their cant, / I curse their mumbling litanies / and dream of angels while I sleep."

In one of the best poems in the book, "The Tiger Does Not Know," the image is of a poet who seeks "the god whose words / are weaved in wood." Several of Boston's poems, both science-fiction and horror, include poets, and one senses that here he is speaking for himself.

The last few entries in the collection deal with social issues, especially the more horrifying elements of this century and the future. "In the Wake of of Sensuous Debris" likens the aftermath of holocaust in America to "the blood of light." And

once the mitred beams you can rush to touch
of the domed Capitol the unfurled wingspread
have been removed of bed warm violence.

In "Beyond Procreation" the children of the future wait for "the ultimate flash/ dance of some genocidal pulse."

Short Circuits (1991) is a group of prose poems ranging from fantasy to humor——mostly the latter. As the author has remarked, humor is "one of the experiences/emotions that keeps darkness at bay." In "Separate Vacations" he writes of a couple who part for vacations; the husband returns but the wife does not—— except in pieces in mailed packages. "When the Wordmonger Screams (for James Joyce)," a homage to *Finnegan's Wake*, spells out the problems that arise in trying to market Joyce's work. As a whole, *Short Circuits* is something of a diversionary excursion for the author, and is one his most entertaining books.

Boston has long worked with computers, and *Cybertexts* (1992) reflects his fascination with them. Its entries surely stand as some of the author's best speculative verse. In the opening poem, the pilot of "the template of the stars" is a woman "alone in the dark." As her thoughts become "one with the universal

birth of stellar Excitation" through her computer, her experience becomes mystical and "she unclips the sensors to breathe again." Finally, her "thought

once more is only thought fixed in transient space,
her eyes, blue cognizance reflect her destination.

In "When the Silver Plums Fall" the starship of the computer is shifted into living vegetation. For

When silver plums fall of an eastering sun
in anachronous time our envelope of air
and noon is noon again stutters with leaves.
in the nocturnal remission

"Polar Chronologies" is divided into two sections, "Down Flashing" and "Up Flashing." In the first the images are of death and putrefaction. As "ghostly dirt-limned apparations / . . .rehearse their passage endlessly / with no passion of a human kind." . . . these "drowned shadows we invest with life, / these fabled constructs of our minds." In the second section, the cyberpunk enters the future that he cannot fully know:

I'm only a needle wide projection the bell shaped curve of future lines
quivering back and forth across where fractals propagate and splay,

In the final stanza, the cyberpunk comes to realize the endless anticipation of future worlds:

In microcosms and in worlds on high anticipate the flight to next,
it's graven soon as soon can be, and scope the growth within the seed
hardwired in our histories, to feed my time bound curiosities
and still I scan unwritten texts,

"Psychopathis Cybersexualis" presents a fascistic world in which sexuality *via* a computer is implemented after planetary-wide annihilation. It is a world

more breathless-*cum*-beautiful
than the smoke-churned aerial debris
of carcinogenic dawn.

A similar theme is presented in "Against the Rush of Ebon Night," but here man is cloned into the computer itself and loses something of himself in the process.

The narrative poems in *Chronicles of the Mutant Rain Forest* (1992) describe changes in the South American jungle after a nuclear holocaust. In essence, the plants and animals have mutated into sometimes enormous and often terrifying entities. This book was written in collaboration with the Nantucket poet Robert Frazier, who also drew the illustrations for it. Some of the poems are wholly by Boston, some wholly by Frazier, and some are collaborations. In a letter to this writer Boston describes their genesis:

> Bob wrote the first *MRF* poem. I read it in *Asimov's* right after I'd read B. Travern's "The Night Visitor," and the combination prompted a reply-poem which I sent to Bob. At his invitation, we began doing the solo and collab. poems in the *MRF*, and the book that eventually came about has been called the first shared-world poetry collection. . . .
>
> The collabs. came about when one of us had a partial poem that we became hung up on. The unfinished product would then be passed back and forth, by mail, with each of us adding and changing lines, until we were both satisfied with the result. . . . In some case, one of us would begin a poem and the other would finish it. We both shared the world we created, in terms of its conceptions and its particulars, though both of these evolved as a product of the poems we were writing rather than in any planning sessions. I think that the series of poems we created is something that neither of us could have accomplished solo.

The result of this collaboration is a volume of striking, evocative and sometimes beautifully horrifying poems. In "Three Evocations of the Mutant Rain Forest" the forest is shown developing and finally, in the last stanza of the "Elan Vital" section, its mutant birth is depicted:

a retreating tribe has suffered for now they divinate its growth
an enchantment and possession and foretell our changeling future
in the shadow of the forest wall, as they read the clouds' collisions.

Certain characters, such as Gaea and Genna, recur throughout the book; in one example, Boston's "Genna Takes a Lover," a mutant becomes Genna's lover, and she knows she can never want a human man again. One of the most horrifying of these narratives is "A Missionary of the Mutant Rain Forest." Here a priest is the victim of mutated cats who not only convert him to their religion but turn him into a fanatic who returns to civilization to preach their beliefs. In the collaboration "Holos at an Exhibition of the Mutant Rain Forest,"a series of word pictures describes the terrifyingly beautiful horrors of the transformed area, as akin to a gallery of bizarre sculptures.

This volume contains some of the most lapidary poems Boston has produced, and the illustrations, superb printing and fine binding combine with them to make *Chronicles of the Mutant Rain Forest* one of the author's most impressive books.

Accursed Wives (1993) describes various mistreatments of women, which range from the darkly humorous to the truly disturbing. The wives in these poems ——of the shapeshifter, mad scientist, werewolf, devil, demon, angel, etc.——all illustrate unique ways of husbandly abuse. Perhaps the most vivid is "Curse of the Telepath's Wife," whose husband does not harm her physically, but manipulates her mentally until she feels she has lost her emotional sanity. This, in a truly horrifying twist, she regains when she knifes him to death. The book is generally remarkable for its sensitivity about man/woman relationships, and it shows that marriage, that fragile institution of our civilization, can often be unhealthy. *Accursed Wives* has been one of Boston's best-selling books, and he has donated part of its proceeds to a woman's shelter.

Specula (1993) is a sheaf of uncollected verse. It shows Boston in many different moods and modes, and some of the entries are frankly experimental. Not all of them are speculative; for instance, "To Dine with Poetry and Mathematics" looks at the marriage of two realms he feels are interrelated:

> The mathematics of poetry approaching absolutes
> is irregular in the extreme, the way parallel lines
> an unbounded system converge at infinity.

Readers will recall that we have already encountered this metaphor in "Poet after the Holocaust" (page 52). "Speculative Poetry Is the Song" is a prose poem with words divided by slashes rather than broken into lines. It concludes that speculative poetry is "a rocket beneath your belly," and that you are stretching language through the limits of space with stars for stanchions.

Three particularly unusual poems are "Song and Descant for a Broken Lady," "Rebel Triptych" and "Vagina Detenta," all of which are written in columns and read coherently both horizontally and vertically. Under the title "The Last Existentialist" the volume presents a series of poems showing twentieth century existential man faced by the changed world of the next century.

In addition to these, *Specula* includes titles written in collaboration with t. winter-damon, Scott Green and David Hunter Sutherland; its wide variety augurs well for more of the author's unusual poetry in the future.

As the examples quoted throughout this article show, Bruce Boston utilizes chiefly the techniques of mainstream moderns. In this he is unlike fantasy versifiers from earlier in this century——H. P. Lovecraft, Stanton A. Coblentz and Lilith Lorraine, for example——who usually adhered to traditional forms. But although he and other poets of his generation prefer a less confining approach, they have successfully drawn on traditional science-fiction themes to show liberal humanist values. Many critics feel that in this fashion they have liberated and transformed the genre.

In all of Boston's work the focus is on man himself in relation to the universe, whether the theme is extrapolating into the future, nuclear holocaust, time travel, distortions of time and space or, even, the creation of poetry itself. He is undoubtedly speculative poetry's master, and while it appears he aspires to

a novelist's career, one hopes that he will never abandon poetry or forget the genuine contribution he has made through it to literature.

NOTES

(1) Review of *Specula: Selected Uncollected Poems*, *SFRA Review* #215 (January/February 1995), p. 44.

(2) For a reassessment of Lilith Lorraine's career see Steve Sneyd's "Empress of the Stars," *Fantasy Commentator VII*, 206-229 (1992).

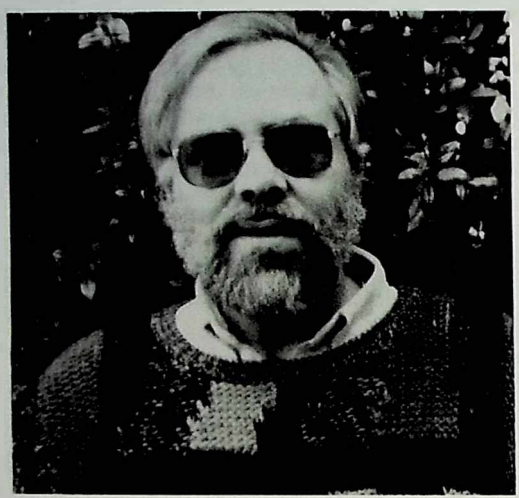
For a short history of science-fiction poetry see Steve Eng's "The Speculative Muse," *Anatomy of Wonder* (4th edn., 1995) edited by Neil Barron, pp. 378-392. A longer work by Eng, which includes fantasy and horror poetry, is now in progress.

(3) *Stained Glass Rain*, p. 236.

(4) *Anatomy of Wonder*, p. 4.

(5) *Star*Line 8*, 12-14 (January/February 1985).

(6) *Ibid.10*, 15-18 (March/April 1987). Rich's essay "Throwing off the Prison Stoop" (*The Magazine of Speculative Poetry 1*, #4 [January/March 1987]) is one of the few written on Boston's work.



AFTER A STATUE OF PAN

He danced in fabled joy
as the moons passed
and the stars aged
and the lands changed
beneath his cloven hooves
from turf to cobbled stone,

from porous concrete slabs
to plates of seamless steel.
He danced in frenzied joy
until the slow waning
of his earthly days
fixed him in marble,

fixed him in legend
cold as the ages,
froze him in one last
fey ecstatic moment
for the porous future
to mortalize and neglect.

A SPACER'S LIFE IS ICE AND FIRE

Inward along the speckled arm
of our turning spiral nebula
I FTL-ed it in whatever ship
would gain me ready passage,

so raw and green at first
until the burning darkness
laced my spacer's boots.
Inward through parsecs

of always changing light
and chill blue slumber,
awakening on worlds
where sense or passion

claimed my heady flight,
yet only in the passing.
So very green at first
until the rush of night

paced my spacer's soul.
Inward to the epicenter
of the churning starswarm
where thoughts ineffable

could flourish and bloom,
where the universal light
at the galactic core
could fuse my sight

with visions quintessential,
with rich illuminations
beyond "the understood."
Burning green to metagreen,

a rush of colors in between.
Mandalic moons, sidereal seas.
A spacer's life is ice and fire,
graced by iridescent dreams.

—*Bruce Boston*

Whitehead in Florida

Sean Donnelly

Recent publication of two articles on Henry S. Whitehead[1,2]* prompts me to set forth some of my own research on that much neglected scrivener of exceptional weird fiction. This deals with the last three years of his life, which were spent in Florida. The chief source of my information is the weekly newspaper of the town where he lived, the *Dunedin Times*. Its file copies for the crucial time, October 1929 through November 1932, are fortunately still in existence, although, as might be anticipated, sixty years have taken their toll; the pages are brown and fragile, and may not last much longer. Whitehead is mentioned in no fewer than twenty-one items published there during that period. These give us a a picture of his public activities, cast further light on his personality, and also reveal several new facts about him and his writing career that have never before been noted. This is particularly gratifying, for all his personal papers were apparently destroyed shortly after his death,[3] and discovery of fresh material at this late date is surely unexpected.

All these newspaper stories were printed anonymously. The writers would certainly, however, have obtained their information first-hand, often from Henry Whitehead himself. As has been pointed out, information from the latter source "must always be screened for accuracy";[1] but that does not mean it would be uninteresting or useless. That said, I found much of the data given in the *Dunedin Times* either reiterated or was consistent with what we know and have accepted as factual.

Dunedin is a small town (population then about 2500) on the Gulf Coast, west of Tampa and just a few miles north of Clearwater. During his residence there Whitehead actively participated in the activities of boys' and youth clubs. Both before and after ordination as an Episcopal minister, he had headed or belonged to organizations which promoted community service and athletics. It was in part this interest in the welfare of young people which brought him to Florida.

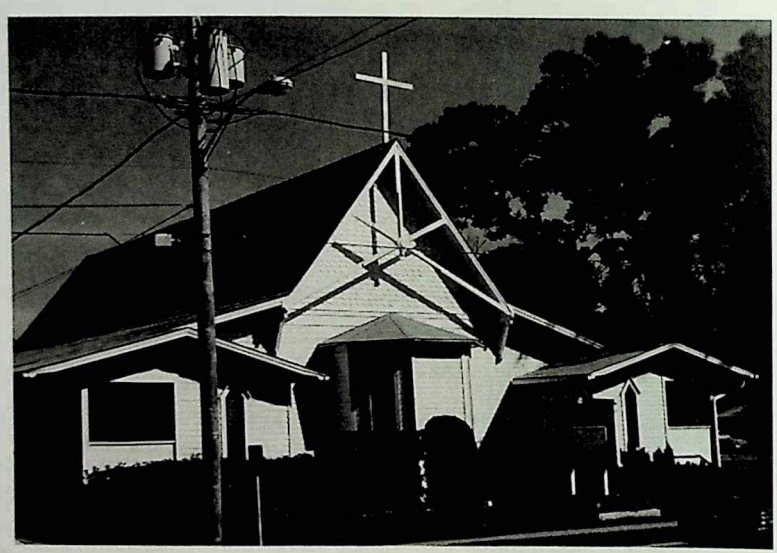
After the United States purchased the Virgin Islands in 1917, Reverend Whitehead spent nine winters there as acting Archdeacon in St. Croix. In the process he acquired the local knowledge that lends unquestionable authenticity to his fiction sited in that region. In addition, he was reportedly elected a Fellow of the National Geographic Society in recognition of his erudite studies of the native West Indian people and their culture. After holding the position of Rector of Trinity Church in Bridgeport, Connecticut from 1923 to 1925, he abruptly resigned his position. Putting his ministerial career on hold, he tutored younger boys and escorted them on ocean trips to the West Indies.

During this time he also began inspecting boys' camps in order to make efficiency surveys. While conducting one of these, his travels brought him to Pinellas County, Florida. Although his father had been living there in St. Petersburg (at 526 27th Avenue North) for some time, Whitehead had apparently never had prior occasion to visit the place. What he found and what he learned through inquiry apparently convinced him it was an ideal area in which to settle. He would be near his ageing parent, and the mild climate would suit his own (lately less robust) health, thus facilitating both clerical duties and writing. He immediately sought a pastorate there from the local Episcopal diocese, and was granted that of the Church of the Good Shepherd in Dunedin.

On November 5, 1929, members of his new congregation and prominent townspeople organized a reception to welcome Reverend Whitehead to his new home.

*Notes for this article will be found on page 62.

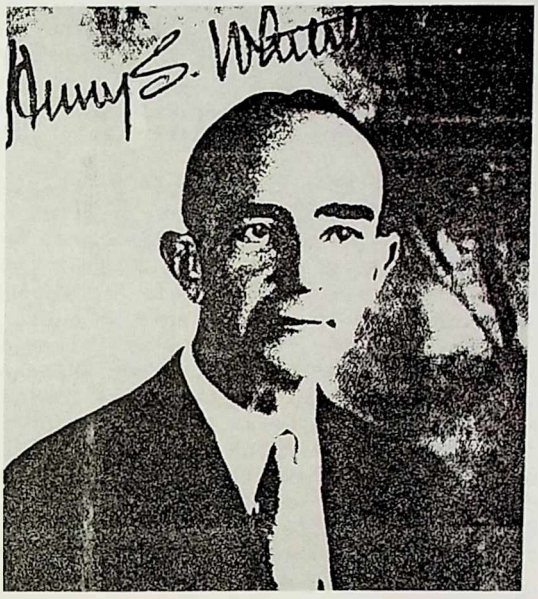
Whitehead's Last Home, 1871 Pasadena Ave.



The Church of the Good Shepherd

He soon settled into his new routine. The *Dunedin Times* listed a new schedule for Sunday morning services——Holy Communion with instruction at nine-thirty, and morning prayer with sermon at eleven. Aside from his spiritual devotion to the Church of the Good Shepherd, Whitehead attended as well to accessory material matters. In January 1930 he supervised the installation of its new heating unit. He also brought the church out of debt, paying the assessment and apportionment in full on April 10, 1931. In his Sunday sermon he remarked that "to the spiritual joy of Easter, the congregation could today be a subject for congratulation on the material side."

Whitehead's clerical duties extended beyond the church itself. On weekends, and throughout the summer, he served at St. Peter's Cathedral in downtown St. Petersburg. On at least one occasion, his duties took him far from his new home. In December 1930 he spent nine days in Avon Park, where he preached at a parish mission in the Church of the Redeemer.



Whitehead as a Young Man

As a minister, Reverend Whitehead most certainly possessed exceptional oratorical skills, and he seemed to practice them as much outside the church as he did in the pulpit. The *Dunedin Times* recounts a number of occasions when he addressed civic and religious groups. As the principal speaker at the January 30, 1931 meeting of the Dunedin Tourists' Club, he delivered a lecture on the West Indies. Later the same year he spoke to the Methodist Epworth League (April 12th) and the Woman's Club (December 8th). He even addressed the graduating class of Dunedin Junior High School in June 1932. Earlier that year he gave the school's library several sets of books, including volumes of Lincoln's collected papers and speeches, a Modern Eloquence reference set, and the complete works of E. P. Roe.[4] One rumor has it that Whitehead also taught part-time at Clearwater High School; particulars and verification, however, are at present lacking.

As Whitehead's local reputation grew, so did his schedule of speaking engagements. On February 2, 1932 he delivered two speeches. The first, given before the Clearwater Lions' Club, detailed the development and position of the black population of the West Indies. Many of them, he explained, entered the professions and were among the best educated people in the region. Later on the same day he described missionary work to St. Margaret's Guild of the Episcopal Church of the Ascension in Clearwater. Such activities were apparently very important to the Reverend. In January 1932 he helped the local Women's Auxiliary organize a children's clothing drive. The donations collected were sent to Whitehead's former part-time diocese in the Virgin Islands.

His efforts to organize the drive characterize Whitehead's selfless devotion to programs that benefited young people. He participated actively in their circles while in Dunedin, supervising camps and holding leadership positions in a county scout-masters' school and the local Boy Scouts troop. On a more personal basis, he hosted boys at his home. One such guest was actu-

ally staying with Whitehead when the latter fell ill in 1932.

The 1932 presidential election campaign brought Whitehead to the podium again. On November 7th he was the principal speaker at a Democratic rally. Sincere though his political commentary may have been, one source states that he was a close friend of Franklin Delano Roosevelt. Both men had attended Harvard at the same time, and Whitehead's obituary notice claims that hewas the President-elect's probable choice for the post of Governor General of the Virgin Islands. (Verification or refutation of this may lie in Roosevelt's papers from that period, which one hopes some future researcher will examine.) However that may be, Whitehead once more voiced his support for F. D.R. in a speech given November 25th.

The *Dunedin Times* frequently featured notices about Whitehead's new stories. Thus readers in the area all knew in advance when the Reverend's latest work was due to appear in *Weird Tales*, *Strange Tales* or *Adventure*. Whitehead had obviously been adopted as a local celebrity. Aside from his oratorical talents, he was a successful writer and reputedly a seasoned foreign traveller. He had lived in the West Indies and Central America, and claimed to have visited every European country except Russia. If this last is true——and we have no reason to disbelieve it——he may also have written the "Trip-a-Day Tales" column for the *Dunedin Times*. These anonymous short pieces, colorfully describing tourist attractions throughout Europe, appeared sporadically only during Whitehead's residency in Dunedin.

He seems surely to have been the source for the accounts of his life and work that the *Times* published, and may even have written some of them, for they carry information that would not be available elsewhere. One striking example is the long front-page article featured in the May 22, 1931 issue of the paper, which announced the publication of his new book. (This is reproduced on the opposite page.) A few points may be added to amplify this account. The book was indeed published later that year by Putnam's, but under the altered title *Pinkie at Camp Cherokee*. Clayton Holt Ernst (1886-1945), who urged Whitehead to write it, was a Boston publisher. He had been assistant editor of *The Youth's Companion* from 1911 to 1919, at which time he founded and began editing *The Open Road for Boys*; this was the unnamed magazine which bought Whitehead's first juvenile story, "Baseball and Pelicans." Ernst himself wrote short stories and novels for boys, and eventually succeeded to the presidencies of Open Road Publishing Co. (in 1928), Outdoor Publications (1939) and Child Life, Inc. (1941). He was active in the Boy Scouts organization and, being a Harvard graduate (A.B., 1910) probably found the Reverend Whitehead a congenial business associate.

During his first year or so in Dunedin, Henry Whitehead rented a house at 1159 Broadway; this still exists, but is in a deplorable state of disrepair. He then moved to 1871 Pasadena Drive, which was to be his last home. In mid-August of 1932 he bought the property from the Title & Trust Co. of Detroit through the law firm of Kerr and Peebles. This is surely the residence Robert Barlow described as a "perfect thing in its appointments, with furniture built to his own design."[5] Almost certainly Whitehead was living there when he hosted his most famous house-guest, Howard Phillips Lovecraft. It is disappointing that the *Dunedin Times* makes no mention of this visit, but several letters Lovecraft wrote from there to his correspondents survive. In one of these, dated June 5, 1931, he says:

> ...I am, most certainly, having the veritable time of my life; for Whitehead is one of the most fascinating personalities I have ever encountered. He is generosity & good-fellowship personified, & has a searching erudition that makes conversation an endless pleasure. Though rector of the local Church of the Good Shepherd, he has nothing of the musty cleric about him; but dresses in sports clothes, swears like a he-man on occasion, & is an utter stranger to bigotry and priggishness of any sort.[6]

A flattering portrait, indeed! It makes our discouragement over the general lack of biographical information on the man even more acute. What we do know, however, suggests a full life, highlighted by world travels, public service and true religious devotion.

Dr. Whitehead To Have New Book Published

Publishing House To Publish Latest Writing Of Dunedin Man

About five months ago Dr. Henry Whitehead submitted his latest writing to G. P. Putnam's Sons publishing company and this week received word that it had been accepted for publication.

The name of the book is "Pinkie-Superguy." It is a boys' story with a setting laid in a boys' camp.

Dr. Whitehead began writing as a profession twenty-six years ago. He came to Dunedin a little less than two years ago, and since that time has been pastor of the Church of the Good Shepherd. He has published many stories, among them one released in 1923 by "Adventure" magazine entitled "The Intarsia Box," the plot of which had to do with the psychology of pride. This story, a fifteen thousand word novelette, was chosen as one of the best American short stories of 1923 on the first list by The O. Henry Memorial Committee. The setting was on the island of Andros in the Bahamas, with some scenes laid in Boston.

A well-known book published in 1922, entitled "The Garden of the Lord," an ecclesiastical work, was also written by Dr. Whitehead.

Dr. Whitehead's full name is Henry St. Clair Whitehead and he was born at Elizabeth, New Jersey. Most of his works are published under his own name. He is of a Virginia family of settlers.

In 1920 Dr. Whitehead went into a contest given by a New England magazine for the purpose of estimating the best definition for an amateur athlete. As he happened to have been in the administration-end of athletics in and about the state of New York for some time and had a good idea of what a real amateur athlete was, he felt that he had the required knowledge for estimating the definition. Dr. Whitehead was the winner out of 35000 contestants.

Clayton H. Ernst, editor of the magazine, interested by this, purchased Dr. Whitehead's first "Boy's Story," "Baseball and Pelicans," and this story made the first hit of any of his stories in the juvenile field.

At this time the editor told Dr. Whitehead that he should at some future time write a book around the idea of this prize-winning story. Keeping this idea in mind, winter before last, when ill for some time, Dr. Whitehead put in quite a lot of time writing the book.

The underlying idea of the story is to take a fifteen year old foreign boy who has every imaginabe handicap except character and put him in an American setting. By means of his character he is to overcome these handicaps and come to the top. To get this setting he put the boy in a boys' camp as one of the bigger fellows among a group of typical American fellows.

When he arrives in camp he is placed in a cabin with several other fellows and a very sensible counselor. The story is told by one of his cabinmates by the name of Bill Spofford. Bill is another fifteen year old boy, who comes from Ohio. Another character talks all the New York slang and is both typically American and typically New York.

The nickname of "Pinkie" is given to the foreign fellow because of the shade of his skin which does not tan when exposed to the sun but becomes a bright shade of pink which shows up white spots when his back is slapped! Pinkie is painfully near sighted, tall, awkwardly thin and has carrot-red hair. He is from the West Indies from the island of Barbados but has been to one of the greater English public schools and speaks a language which none of the other boys in the camp can understand!

Upon arriving in camp he is equipped with the English school boys' supply of clothing consisting of the usual shorts, cricket sash, diagonally striped blazer and all of the layout of a boy of a well-to-do British family. He brings this complete wardrobe in what he calls "boxes," i. e., trunks.

As the story goes on Pinkie gradually comes to the top by sheer character and what the other boys call being a regular fellow, or as the New Yorker was the first to call him a "superguy."

All through the story Pinkie does innumerable unusual things, and then toward the end climaxes them all by getting the Director to ask him to give a talk on the birds of the West Indies. Pinkie gives this talk and tells the boys a lot of facts about the birds and finally settles down to telling them about one particular bird. He keeps enlarging upon this bird and has a fine cock-and-bull story which the other boys are listening to with opened mouths and really believing every word—Pinkie finally ends the story by telling how this bird fell thousands of feet in the air with three milk bottles in him, hits a man on the head and drives him several feet into the ground. After this last bit of narration he looks around at the astonished but still believing boys and tells them that they are a gullible lot of guys and then sits down.

At the end of the book Pinkie does two things of vast importance, one being to master a complete sentence of "American," including the well known New York slang, and the other is to tell them all that during the past nine weeks he has come to the conclusion that they are the finest gang in the world and that American fellows are the best he has ever known. He also says at this time that no matter if he has to swim through sharks the 2000 miles he will be back for camp the next year and all to follow and that when he gets his expected inheritance he will start a camp exactly like the one they are now in.

Dr. Whitehead has another story scheduled to come out in the Adventure Magazine some time this summer under the name of "The Black Beast."

This is a fifteen thousand word novelette, and was sold to the publishers of Adventure about three weeks ago. This story deals with the psychology of fear. This is the first story the publishers of Adventure have ever bought dealing with the supernatural. The story gives in detail a description of the Vodu baptism. The setting is the old Christianstead which is a north coast town on the island of Santa Cruz in the old Danish West Indies.

On Saturday, November 23, 1932 Whitehead suffered a fainting spell and fell. The injuries he sustained in the fall brought about a cerebral hemorrhage which proved fatal. He died shortly after six o'clock on the morning of November 23rd. He was only fifty years old. Funeral services were held at St. Peter's Episcopal Church in St. Petersburg on the 26th, and were conducted by the Right Reverend John J. Wing, D.D., Bishop of South Florida.

A life-long bachelor, Henry Whitehead was survived by his father, who was then 86. Henry Haddon Whitehead was laid to rest beside his son five years later in Royal Palm Cemetery, 101 55th Street South, St. Petersburg.[7]

NOTES

(1) Searles, A. Langley: "Henry S. Whitehead: a Retrospection," *Fantasy Commentator VIII,* 186-195 (1995).

(2) ——: "Fantasy and Outré Themes in the Short Fiction of Edward Lucas White and Henry S. Whitehead," in *American Supernatural Fiction* (1996), edited by Douglas Robillard, 59-73.

(3) Barlow, Robert: "Henry S. Whitehead" in *Jumbee and Other Uncanny Tales* (1944) by Henry S. Whitehead, ix.

(4) Edward Payson Roe (1838-1888), a graduate of Williams College and Auburn Theological Seminary, was a chaplain and reporter during the American Civil War. From 1874 until his death he devoted himself to writing books about horticulture and novels with strong moral and religious themes. These were very popular, and were translated into several European languages.

(5) Barlow, *op. cit.*, viii.

(6) Derleth, August and Wandrei, Donald, eds.: *Selected Letters of H. P. Lovecraft,* vol. 3, 374-375.

(7) I gratefully acknowledge indebtedness to the following people for help given me in preparing this article: Harry Nash, friend and book-dealer *extraordinaire* for selling me the copy of *West India Lights,* which started me on my Whitehead research; everyone at the Dunedin Historical Society for their assistance, and above all for their foresight in preserving the only existing file of the *Dunedin Times*; John L. Coker III for furnishing the photograph reproduced on page 59; and the editor of this magazine for his generous assistance and encouragement.

A CHECKLIST OF ARTICLES ON WHITEHEAD IN THE *DUNEDIN TIMES*

November 5, 1929: A reception is given to welcome HSW to Dunedin.

February 14, 1930: Announces forthcoming publication of "The Shut Room" in the April 1930 issue of *Weird Tales* magazine.

December 12, 1930: HSW returned from a nine-day visit to Avon Park December 8th.

January 16, 1931: Notes the first anniversary of new heating unit's installation in the Church of the Good Shepherd.

January 30, 1931: HSW to be the principal speaker at a meeting of the Dunedin Tourists' Club, and to deliver a lecture on the Virgin Islands.

April 10, 1931: The Church of the Good Shepherd's assessment and apportionment has been paid in full, eliminating an outstanding debt. HSW to speak to the Methodist Epworth League on April 12th.

May 22, 1931: [Reproduced on page 61 of this article.]

July 10, 1931: Announces publication of "The Black Beast" in the next [July 15] issue of *Adventure* magazine.

July 17, 1931: Dunedin residents reading "The Black Beast" with great interest. Lovecraft quoted as remarking about it, "This is the outstanding weird tale since Poe." *Pinkie* being proof-read by HSW. Biographical information provided on the years of HSW's life before he moved to Dunedin.

October 2, 1931: The London firm of Selwyn and Bourne, Inc. has purchased book rights to "The Lips" for the British Empire. The story is to be published in December in [the] *Not at Night* [series of anthologies]. [This forecast was incorrect; "The Lips" never appeared in that series. The only Whitehead story ever to be anthologized there was "Passing of a God," included in *At Dead of Night,* which was published in November 1931.]

November 20, 1931: The short story "Passing of a God" cited by the O. Henry Memorial Committee.

December 4, 1931: HSW to speak before the Woman's Club on December 8th.

January 2, 1932: HSW helping the Women's Auxiliary of Dunedin organize a drive to send children's clothing to the Virgin Islands.
February 19,1932: HSW spoke at a meeting of the Clearwater Lions Club Feb. 15th.
February 26, 1932: Several new publications by HSW were announced: "Michiavelli ——Salesman" in the March issue of *Popular Fiction Magazine*; "The Trap" in the March *Strange Tales*; "Negro Dialects of the American Virgin Islands" in the February *American Speech*; and "Mrs. Lorriquer" in the April *Weird Tales*.
March 11, 1932: HSW donated several sets of books to Dunedin Junior High School.
June 3, 1932: HSW addressed Dunedin Junior High School graduates.
July 27, 1932: HSW and friends celebrate his father's 85th birthday.
August 28, 1932: HSW bought for a permanent home the house at 1871 Pasadene Drive which he had been renting for more than a year.
November 7, 1932: HSW to be the principal speaker at a Democratic Party rally, promoting Roosevelt's election as president.
November 25, 1932: HSW's illness and death announced, followed by an obituary.
N. b.: On the same date an obituary also appeared in the *St. Petersburg Times*.

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THE IMMORTAL STORM II

A History of Science-Fiction Fandom

PART THREE

Sam Moskowitz

IV

THE AMERICAN SCENE, 1939 - 1941

In late 1939 fandom in the United States could be compared to bears lapping honey from an overturned beehive. From mid-1938 on an increasing number of fantasy magazines, the extent of which the most avaricious fans had never envisioned, began appearing on the newsstands. Regularly published or soon to be issued were *Amazing Stories* and *Fantastic Adventures* from the Ziff-Davis Publishing Co.; *Thrilling Wonder Stories, Startling Stories, Captain Future* and *Strange Stories* from Standard Magazines; *Astounding Science - Fiction* and *Unknown* from Street and Smith; *Science Fiction, Science Fiction Quarterly* and *Future Fiction* from Blue Ribbon Publications; *Marvel Science Stories* from Postal Publications and *Dynamic Science Stories* from Western Fiction Publishing Co. (both Red Circle Magazines); *Famous Fantastic Mysteries* and *Fantastic Novels* from The Frank A. Munsey Co.; *Planet Stories* from Love Romances; and *Weird Tales* from Weird Tales, Inc. (a subsidiary of Short Stories, Inc.). Even more titles were in the planning stage.

What had initiated this sudden flood? We can trace its genesis to the rising circulation of *Astounding Science-Fiction*, which early in 1938 nudged over 80,000. (The reasons for *that* would require over a page to set forth, and are pretty well known to most readers anyway, so will be omitted here.) Once the news got around, other publishers naturally wanted to share the profits. The first to do so was Postal Publications, which brought out *Marvel Science Stories* in the summer of 1938; to everyone's surprise, it sold 65,000 copies. From then on, new titles proliferated, helped along by an increased reader-base that national press coverage of Orson Welles's "Martian invasion" radio program in October intitated.

Fan magazines were plenteous then, too. They included *Fantasy News* (issued by William S. Sykora), *New Fandom* (Sam Moskowitz), *Fantascience Digest* (Robert A. Madle), *The Science Fiction Collector* (John V. Baltadonis), *Cosmic Tales* (Gertrude and Louis Kuslan), *Scienti-Snaps* (Walter E. Marconette), *Fantasy Digest* (Thaddeus Dikty), *Spaceways* (Harry Warner, Jr.), *Le Zombie* (Bob Tucker), *Ad Astra* (Mark Reinsberg and Erle Korshak), *Voice of the Imagination* (Forrest J. Ackerman), *Polaris* (Paul Freehafer), *Golden Atom* (Litterio B. Farsaci), *Stardust* (William L. Hamling), *Futuria Fantasia* (Ray Bradbury), *Sciential* (Robert Studley and Thomas Hoguet), *Stunning Scientifan* (Joseph Fortier), *Fanfare* (Francis Paro) and *Fantaseer* (William H. Groveman). Dozens more were being distributed by the Fantasy Amateur Press Association. Of these, *Fan Facts* (Daniel McPhail), *Reader and Collector* (H. C. Koenig) and *Sweetness and Light* (Russell Hodgkins) were widely known outside the organization. Additionally, more deeply committed American fans imported professional and amateur magazines from England and Australia.

All of these publications were so reasonably priced that most readers could afford to buy everything that was to their taste. For the more affluent, August Derleth and Donald Wandrei had recently organized Arkham House and brought out its initial offering, the omnibus volume *The Outsider and Others* by H. P. Lovecraft. This and its early successors popularized and widened the scope of specialty publishing in the field.

On the west coast, the Los Angeles Science Fantasy Society was holding weekly meetings whose attendees frequently included national fantasy celebrities. The Queens Science Fiction League Chapter in Astoria, New York held monthly meetings so well attended by members, guests and celebrities that they resembled small conventions. The Philadelphia Science Fiction Society not only met monthly, but organized an annual conference and published leading fan magazines. In the midwest the Illini Fantasy Fictioneers gained sponsorship of the upcoming 1940 World Science Fiction Convention, established continuity for these annual events, and distributed a quarterly bulletin *Fantasy Fictioneer* (edited by Sully Roberds). The SFL's Baltimore chapter was active, having been organized under the directorship of Frederic Arnold Kummer, Jr., then a regularly appearing science-fiction author. The Maine Scientifiction Association was functioning under the guidance of Gerald Meader and James S. Avery. In Westwood, New Jersey the Solaroid Club was formed on July 25, 1939, and began holding meetings twice a week. Members of the New York City Futurian Society, a controversial leftist group, were pushing towards professional positions in the field. Less active groups, such as the Denver Science Fictioneers (under Olon F. Wiggins) and the Tri-Cities Science Fiction League (Dale Hart) were also being heard from periodically.

The feuding that had split fandom in 1938 did not subside all at once, but in hindsight we can see that the beginning of its decline took place in the Greater New York area. It came about not only because many fans were tiring of its excesses, but from the desire of a number of them to become professional writers and editors. Indeed, the most coveted position of personal attainment was that of editor. The Cinderella story of fandom was the epic of 17-year-old Charles D. Hornig, who so impressed Hugo Gernsback in 1933 with his *Fantasy Fan* that he was offered the editorship of *Wonder Stories*. Small wonder that aspiring fans produced innumerable amateur journals in wistful, self-imposed apprenticeships!

In late 1939 word circulated that Frederik Pohl, a Futurian stalwart, had obtained an editorship at Popular Publications, one of the leading pulp chains in the nation. The rumor proved true, and Pohl confirmed it in an interview which was published in the December 10, 1939 issue of *Fantasy News*. This named the magazines he was in charge of as *Astonishing Stories* and *Super Science Stories*, and predicted (correctly) that they would have a "precarious future."

Although it had not been officially announced, James Taurasi had turned over the editorial reins of *Fantasy News* to William Sykora, who had been handling

the production. This occurred with the November 26, 1939 number, although the change was not revealed until that of December 17th. Taurasi and Moskowitz were designated as reporters, and contributed news every week. The cardinal reason for the change was that Taurasi was now engaged to Rose Alberti (the sister of Frances Alberti, who was herself engaged to Sykora). He was at the time working at a relatively low-paying job as a draftsman's assistant, and needed more money and time to prepare for marriage. All these things resulted in a diminution of coverage for *Fantasy News*, particularly of events in the fan field.

As part of the format for *Super Science Stories*, Pohl included in the very first (March 1940) issue a department called "The Science Fictioneer," which was to be "the Official Organ of the Science Fictioneers." This potential organization seemed patterned after the Science Fiction League (then still being run by *Thrilling Wonder Stories*), which issued membership cards, chartered chapters, and printed news about them. Officially, the SFL was headed by a board of Executive Directors. These were Forrest J. Ackerman, Eando Binder, Arthur J. Burks, Ray Cummings, Jack Darrow, Ralph Milne Farley and Edmond Hamilton. Except for Ackerman and Darrow, all were prominent authors. Pohl established a similar Advisory Board, predominately made up of a cross-section of prominent fans. He invited Moskowitz, the most active member of the New Fandom group, to lunch in order to explain what he was trying to do, and offered him a position on this board. Moskowitz took this as a gesture of good will from the Futurian camp and tentatively accepted. But that evening he visited Taurasi and Sykora and learned an exciting fact. *Thrilling Wonder Stories* was about to revamp its group of SFL Executive Directors, which many felt was no longer up to date, and he would be eligible for appointment to the new roster. He therefore telephoned Pohl the next day and withdrew his acceptance, saying he preferred affiliation with the established, more prestigious SFL.

Pohl's final selection for his board consisted of Forrest J. Ackerman, Frederick Arnold Kummer, Jr., Robert W. Lowndes, Robert A. Madle, Milton A. Rothman, Bob Tucker, Olon F. Wiggins, Donald A. Wollheim and Harry Warner, Jr. On January 12, 1940 Ackerman resigned his SFL directorship post, giving as his reason: "One sf fan may not serve two masters! to alter an old saying slightly. I'm switching to a livewire organization, The Science Fictioneers——where they'll kick me out at the end of the year if I haven't merited my name on the board. Of course this is not to imply I have not served the SFL well——but has the SFL served its members? Ha!" He then suggested Moskowitz be given his vacated slot.

Pohl was unhappy over this event. While he was imitating the SFL, he by no means wanted the publishers of *Thrilling Wonder* to think he was setting up spiteful competition. He might, some day, want to sell them a story or even apply for a better editorial job. (His new position paid the princely sum of ten dollars a week.) Ackerman's announcement had appeared in the initial (February 18, 1940) issue of *Science Fiction Weekly*, a new publication started by Lowndes as a competitor to *Fantasy News*. Its March 3rd issue featured a mollifying interview with Pohl headed "No Rivalry with S. F. L." Here he said in part:

> There is no reason . . . why prominent fans should not simultaneously hold positions on the advisory boards of several national organizations, so far as the Science Fictioneers are concerned.
>
> Today personal enmity seems to be on the agenda as an important order of business. Intellectual differences, which were at the root of the feuds seem to have been discarded for spiked clubs and mud.
>
> The Science Fictioneers will not tolerate this sort of thing. We are here for a constructive purpose; we are here to build up rather than tear down . . . I hope it is clear to all that the Science Fictioneers consider it beneath their dignity to regard *any* other organization as a "rival club" and to wage competitive feuds accordingly.

Whether Pohl had conferred with the editor of *Thrilling Wonder Stories* or whether the publisher had anticipated rivalry and sought to prevent it is not

known, but plans to appoint a new executive board were promptly aborted. In fact, those in power went one step further: they abolished the board entirely. There is no question that by doing so they sidestepped much potential trouble.

Previous to securing an editorial position at Popular Publications, Pohl had set himself up as a literary agent specializing in science-fiction. His success had been modest, but he kept the business alive by handing the reins over to Lowndes, who struggled with it until he too secured an editorial appointment. When *Super Science Stories* was revived after a hiatus during World War II it still carried a column titled "The Scienceer," but by then it was devoted predominately to book reviews.

Lowndes's *Science Fiction Weekly* lasted fifteen issues, ending with the one dated May, 26, 1940. Subscribers also received with it eight issues of a supplement titled *Looking Ahead*, which was edited by Jack Rubinson. (Rubinson later shortened his last name to Robins.) Both publications had in common what is sometimes called "the mad dog syndrome." The editors devoted space in every number to an unrelenting campaign against the leaders of New Fandom, the Queens SFL chapter and *Fantasy News*. This included direct attacks, insults, deliberate misrepresentations and provocations, innuendo, skewed interpretations and all sorts of other contrived mischief. In these efforts the editor was anonymously aided and abetted by the rest of his staff. Lowndes even managed to place broadsides in articles and letters in British publications.

Among the Futurians, only Pohl at that time seemed trying for objectivity. His altered stand was probably pragmatic; he doubtless realized that in their publications and visits to editors of other professional magazines the New Fandom group could threaten his own newly gained position should they practice the same type of harrassment. In this view he was unknowingly aided by Moskowitz, who in that depression era was loath to endanger anyone's job, and encouraged his compatriots to behave similarly. And since Moskowitz was the leading writer of the opposition, his declining to disparage Pohl's professional activities, and after the other Futurians became similarly involved, theirs as well, prevented this fan feud from reaching a professional level.

Meanwhile Moskowitz was having his own problems. Sykora's penchant for procrastination and his preoccupation with bringing out *Fantasy News* caused six months to slip by with no new issue of *New Fandom*. Without its regular appearance the group would have few membership renewals and no new recruits. For awhile Raymond Van Houten felt he could get the magazine professionally printed for an acceptably low price. Had this been possible it would have given the organization added prestige, but the deal never materialized. Publication of this sixth number was particularly important in order to showcase the success of the First World Science Fiction Convention. When it finally appeared——discreetly undated——in December 1939, the convention was stale news. The issue did, however, set an example for future convention reports, reprinting speeches, listing registrants, offering a catalog of items auctioned, accounting for income and expenditures, reviewing special convention publications and, of course, presenting a complete and detailed account of the proceedings.

But one expected item was *not* included: anything about the constitution for New Fandom which had been approved the previous October at the Second Philadelphia Conference, and which was supposed to be presented for approval. It was likewise missing from the next *New Fandom*, which did not appear for four months. This slim issue, dated April 1940, had only sixteen pages, although it carried interesting material by Thomas S. Gardner and Charles Hornig. It also announced that Jack Speer had prepared a constitution of his own, and that both it and Sykora's would be presented as separate supplements to be voted on. They never were. No amount of urging or cajoling could induce Sykora to print their texts. He now

had an additional motive to procrastinate: not risking that his own version might lose. Here he parted company with the other leaders of the organization, for Moskowitz, Taurasi, Van Houten and Mario Racic were all ready and willing to accept the result of a membership vote.

Taurasi stencilled and mimeographed the next (May 1940) *New Fandom.* It was slim (twelve pages), but again the material was good. It announced that at a recent meeting the club had been reorganized. Moskowitz was now president (he had formerly been secretary), Van Houten had become secretary, Sykora treasurer, and Taurasi manager of publications, with Baltadonis, Madle, Racic and Norman Holtaway (a new fan from Union, New Jersey) heading other operations. In an editorial Moskowitz stated that henceforth the magazine would appear monthly, and pledged the group's support to the 1940 World Convention in Chicago. The issue also carried an article by Richard I. Meyer, one of the committee planning that gathering.

While these reshufflings did put the most active member in the leadership position, they could not overcome a depleted treasury. Moskowitz was unemployed, and lacked both funds and duplicating equipment to produce further issues. Sykora continued to resist reproducing texts of the proposed constitutions. Finally, the goal which had kept all New Fandomites actively working together as a unit——the 1939 World Convention——had now been attained. The fact that this was the greatest feat ever accomplished up to then by any fan organization only made the letdown which inevitably followed the more severe. And it was accompanied by something equally serious. Fans had reached the age when planning their own futures had to take first priority in their lives, and they were addressing this in a period of economic recession while facing a national draft by the armed forces, as shadows of the European war darkened the American scene.

As an interim measure, the magazine was integrated into the August 1940 issue of *Cosmic Tales,* which was retitled *Cosmic Tales and New Fandom.* But this stopgap came too late. Too late, too, was the final issue of *New Fandom* (dated Fall 1941). This, turned out by Taurasi, had only four pages. The officeholders were pared down to two, Moskowitz and Van Houten. They owned up to the organization's desperate financial circumstances, and made a last (unanswered) plea to attract members. Time ground on until April 1944, when the unexpired membership subscriptions were belatedly taken over by *Fantasy Times.* This was the official end of New Fandom, which perished so quietly few even noted its passing.

With the issue dated March 1939 Blue Ribbon Publications started a new magazine titled *Science Fiction*, with Charles D. Hornig, formerly of *Wonder Stories,* as editor. It was controlled by Louis Silberkleit, a lawyer who in 1929 had worked in the accounting department of Hugo Gernsback's Experimenter Publications. Hornig still remembered his days in amateur journalism, and with the third issue he came up with a new concept: a real fan magazine as a regular column within a professional publication. In homage to his own 1933-35 journal he titled it "The Fantasy Fan." Its first appearance featured "Are Fans a Menace to Science Fiction?", an article by Thomas S. Gardner, which concluded with the sentence: "He [the editor] should always remember that fans give fairly expert opinions that fail when applied to all readers." There were also plugs for the First World Science Fiction Convention, Taurasi's *Fantasy News* and Tucker's *D'Journal.* The column in the fourth (October 1939) issue was dedicated to Julius Schwartz, then a literary agent specializing in science-fiction. It also continued fan magazine reviews, which were now a regular ongoing feature. The December column was dedicated to Forrest Ackerman, and printed a lengthy and excellent account of the World Convention. The March 1940 column was dedicated to Jack Darrow, and ran accounts of the convention by Ackerman and Ray Bradbury. "The Fantasy Fan" was well edited, contained good material, and was understandably quite popular.

Hornig was also editor of *Future Fiction,* a companion title which had

which had begun publication with its November 1939 issue, and thought it would be a good idea to include a similar column there. Instead of writing it himself, he commissioned Taurasi to do so. It was titled "Fantasy Times," set up in newspaper style, and began in the second (March 1940) number. There were three "stories": a plug for Harry Warner's fan magazine *Spaceways*, a resumé of all past science-fiction conventions and conferences, and a feature titled "Scientiradio" written by Taurasi's sister Millie; this summarized a talk by Edgar Rice Burroughs on the "We the People" program broadcast on station WABC. The second "Fantasy News" profiled Walter E. Marconette's fan magazine *Scienti-Snaps*, and featured material by Racic on "scientifilms." The third column appeared in the November 1940 issue and described the science-fiction activities of Sam Moskowitz.

Taurasi's bid to fame proved short-lived. With the April 1941 number Lowndes succeeded Hornig as editor, and "Fantasy Times" became "Futurian Times," a column Lowndes wrote himself. The initial column plugged the upcoming Third World Science Fiction Convention in Denver, gave a brief report on the recently concluded Philadelphia Conference, and used a great deal of its limited space telling about the Los Angeles Science Fantasy Society. The next one (July 1941) was devoted to Julius Unger's *Fantasy Fiction Field*, the Boston Stranger Club, the Fantasy Amateur Press Association and *The Science Fiction Fan*, a long-running (July 1936 - February 1941) fan magazine published by Olon F. Wiggins. "Futurian Times" continued in this vein until the June 1942 issue of *Future Fiction*, when it was dropped.

Meanwhile the Queens SFL monthly meetings were continuing. At that of January 7, 1940, attended by over two dozen people, there were two unusual occurrences. In the first Scott Feldman (who under the name of Scott Meredith would later gain renown as one of the nation's leading literary agents) introduced a young lady of about his own age (sixteen) as his wife. The two had been married, he said, in Delaware——a state notorious for its liberal marriage laws. The couple's own families did not know of it, and they continued to live in their parent's homes. When Feldman died in 1993, however, his *New York Times* obituary reported the year of his marriage as 1944. The reason for this discrepancy never has been made clear.

The second unusual occurrence was initiated by Julius Schwartz. He introduced to those present a middle-aged woman he called Miss Canfield, who identified herself as a reporter. She understood, she said, that the Queens SFL had been one of the powers behind presentation of the First World Science Fiction Convention, and she wanted to obtain information on that affair and the field in general for an article she was writing for *The New Yorker* magazine. She then proceeded to ask comprehensive questions of members and visitors, all of which were willingly answered. As months turned to years and no article appeared, the incident was forgotten. Then unexpectedly the February 13, 1943 issue of the magazine, under its "Onward and Upward with the Arts" column, printed an entry titled "Intertrum, Neutronium, Chromalloy, P-P-P-Proot!" This described fantasy fandom in a rather tongue-in-cheek and sarcastic fashion, but the picture it portrayed was by no means inaccurate. The puzzle was that the author of the piece was given as Angelica Gibbs. Was Miss Canfield merely a researcher? Was her assignment taken over by another? Or was she Ms. Gibbs working incognito?

Among the many noteworthy Queens SFL meetings, that of February 4, 1940 was particularly outstanding. Some three dozen people showed up, including three professional science-fiction magazine editors: John W. Campbell, Jr., Mary Gnaedinger and Charles Hornig. Additionally, the authors L. Sprague de Camp, Malcolm Jameson and Willy Ley were on hand, along with artist Frank R. Paul. One of the features of the gathering was the presentation of an initialed tie clasp and belt buckle to Hornig, who was shortly to depart for Los Angeles, where he was thenceforth planning to live. He intended to edit his magazines by mail. Once there, he was to find that the Los Angeles Science Fantasy Society (formerly the Los An-

geles chapter of the SFL) compared favorably in size and activity with the Queens SFL which he was leaving.

He was no stranger to most West Coast fans, having participated in their activities in 1938. The LASFS was now meeting in the Tamorock Room of Clifton's Cafeteria (and would later take over its Brown Room). Clifton's was an immense eatery, three stories high, whose top floor was given over to meeting rooms. These were for the free use of patrons whom the management felt might reciprocate at the cash register. Free lemonade and ices were dispensed to all as well. In such depression times these fringe benefits probably contributed as much as the membership to the organization's success, for the cost of renting a hall or meeting room would have been a severe financial burden. (A few comparisons here might be interesting: The Queens SFL paid a dollar a meeting for rental of Bohemian Hall, which could accomodate some thirty people, and when larger meetings were held could obtain more expansive quarters for twice that. The First National Science Fiction Convention, held in Newark in 1938, paid three dollars for the Slovak Sokol Hall which accomodated 125. None of these places offered free refreshments, of course.)

By 1940 the LASFS included Ackerman (who had moved from San Francisco), Myrtle R. Douglas (known as "Morojo"), Ray Bradbury, Walter Daugherty, Paul Freehafer, T. Bruce Yerke (the group's historian) and Mary Corrine (Patti) Gray (later Mrs. Russell M. Wood), who used the Esperantist nickname of Pogo. Pogo soon inflamed Hornig's susceptible heart sufficiently for him to publish a fan magazine titled *Hornig's Bulletin,* in which he expressed his unrequited passion for her and her ambivilant reaction to it. (He recorded the date of his declaration in this as September 13, 1941.)

The club maintained a library and a mimeograph, and had produced—or would produce—such distinguished fan magazines as *Imagination!* (edited by Ackerman and Morojo), *Futuria Fantasia* (Bradbury), *Polaris* (Freehafer), *Sweetness and Light* (Russell Hodgkins), *Voice of the Imagi-nation* (Ackerman and Morojo), *The Rocket* (Daugherty), *Specula* (Arthur Joquel) and *The Damn Thing!* (Yerke).

Imagination! has already been described (*The Immortal Storm,* chapter 26), but comments on the others are appropriate here since each has its own unusual qualities. One has elicited considerable attention In recent years, *Futuria Fantasia.* It commenced with the issue dated Summer 1939, and was mimeographed in green ink (a trademark of this West Coast group). It had a cover, like all succeeding ones, by Hannes Bok. It was termed a "Science Circle Pub," possibly because Bradbury was then an advocate of of technocracy; the circular Technocracy, Inc. emblem was affixed next to the return address on the back cover.

The featured article in this first issue was Yerke's "Revolt of the Scientists," and was devoted to expounding the principles of technocracy; It concluded with the declamation, "Take Technocracy, or take—chaos!" Under the pen name of Ron Reynolds Bradbury had a tale laid in 1975 entitled "Don't Get Technatal." Technocracy has been in effect for twenty years; most crime, poverty and injustice has been wiped out, reducing a writer to plotlessness. To create a situation for a story he seizes an atomic gun and sets out to commit a crime, most probably murdering his wife. Bradbury explained the inclusion of these two pieces in a note following them: "...it's because I think technocracy combines all of the hopes and dreams of science-fiction. We've been dreaming about it for years—now in a short time it may become reality." Included also was a story by Ackerman said to have been written by him at the age of thirteen and rewritten three years later. It tells of a war in the far future that has been started through boredom, and of the last few human beings about to wipe each other out, when one of them discovers record player and winds it up. The melody so affects them that they abandom fighting and start to rebuild civilization. Especially interesting is a poem by Bradbury, "Thought and Space." It was not until he had reached his fifties that he began to publish such collections of verse as *When Elephants Last*

in the Dooryard Bloomed (1973) and *Where Robot Mice and Robot Men Run Round in Robot Towns* (1977). Here we see a penchant for poesy as early as 1939.

The second issue, dated Fall 1939, commented editorially that material on technocracy would thereafter be reduced, if not eliminated entirely. That implied readers' criticism of the space devoted to it, and also that *Futuria Fantasia* may well have purposefully been founded to deal with the subject. The feature of the issue was "The Pendulum," an anonymously written story which became, after revision, the first one Bradbury ever sold. (It appeared in the November 1941 *Super Science Stories*, co-authored by Henry Hasse.) It deals with an inventor of what he thought would be a time-travel machine who inadvertently kills a group of scientists observing its initial test, and the horrific punishment he received as a result. (The original version was printed in Moskowitz's 1971 anthology, *Horrors Unknown*.)

Another contributor to the second issue was Henry Kuttner, whose "The Truth about Goldfish" was a weak attempt at humor on the subject of fan feuds. More interesting was "Is It True What They Say about Kuttner?", an interview attributed to one Guy Amory (who Bradbury identified as a fan visiting from Phoenix, but who probably was either Bradbury or Kuttner himself). Bradbury also confirmed that he had agented Hannes Bok's work to *Weird Tales*, and called attention to Bok's first cover for that magazine (December 1939). The issue closed with a poem by Henry Hasse titled "Lost Soul."

The third *Futuria Fantasia* (Winter 1940) noted that Hornig had arrived in Los Angeles on February 20th. It included material by Hasse, Ross Rocklynne and Emil Petaja plus unsigned and pseudonymous items probably written by the editor.

The fourth and final number was undated (it appeared in the summer of 1940), and in many ways the best. It had a fine Bok cover and featured "Heil!", a clever tale about gland-transplantation by Robert A. Heinlein under the pseudonym of Lyle Monroe, and "The Piper," by Bradbury under the pseudonym of Ron Reynolds. (Both were included in Moskowitz's 1970 anthology, *Futures to Infinity*.) "The Piper" was later rewritten for publication in the February 1943 issue of *Thrilling Wonder Stories*. In addition, this number contained material by Kuttner, J. Harvey Haggard, Damon Knight and Joseph E. Kelleam. Thus *Futuria Fantasia*, which began as a propaganda sheet, ended as a fan magazine of superior quality.

Yet it was not Bradbury who was responsible for the most literary of the LASFS productions. That distinction goes to Paul Freehafer. Freehafer was a reserved and quiet person, some five years older than Bradbury. He aspired to be a chemical engineer, and was then an undergraduate at the California Institute of Technology. He owned an almost complete collection of the science-fiction pulps, and had subscribed to fan magazines as early as 1933. He had never participated in any of the fads, feuds and -isms that had periodically swept fandom.

The club mimeograph proved an irresistable lure for him, and with it in late 1939 he launched a new magazine, *Polaris*. *Polaris* was letter-sized, had from sixteen to twenty pages in each issue, and sported attractive covers, including one by Bok. Beginning with its third issue, it increased its circulation by distributing copies in mailings of the Fantasy Amateur Press Association. As might be expected from his background, Freehafer took the duties of editor seriously. He set a quarterly schedule of publication and adhered to it closely. His policy, in contrast to that of most fan journals of the time, emphasized the supernatural and weird in preference to science-fiction. He especially favored Lovecraft-oriented material, and carried fiction and poetry in this area by such devotees as Duane W. Rimel and Robert Barlow. Robert W. Lowndes contributed some of the best short stories he ever wrote. There was also material by Harry Warner, Jr., Bob Tucker and Bradbury, including the latter's story "Luana the Living!" (which was used by Moskowitz and Alden H. Norton in their 1973 anthology *Horrors in Hiding*). *Polaris* lasted for six issues; Freehafer died of a heart attack three years later.

(continued on page 77)

Book Reviews

AMERICAN SUPERNATURAL FICTION FROM EDITH WHARTON TO THE *WEIRD TALES* WRITERS edited by Douglas Robillard. New York and London: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1996. xi-263 pp. 22.3 cm. $40.00.

We have assembled here seven essays describing work by writers of the supernatural who flourished at various times between the 1880's and the beginning of World War II. There are only nine of them, which underscores at the outset how few first class authors in this country were exploring the genre; we have no counterparts to such British names as E. F. Benson, Algernon Blackwood, A. M. Burrage, Walter de la Mare, M. R. James, Vernon Lee and Arthur Machen, who practiced in it extensively. Indeed, only three of the nine——H. P. Lovecraft, Clark Ashton Smith and Henry S. Whitehead——wrote in almost no other vein; even David Keller's work covered a broader area of the fantasy field. Benjamin Fisher, who oversees Garland's Studies in Nineteenth-Century Literature series (to which this volume is the latest addition) mentions this, but also emphasizes how often American writers of mundane fiction produced occasional and highly effective weird tales. (I was pleased to read in his preface that he recognizes, for example, the talent of Ralph Adams Cram, whose *Black Spirits and White* has long been underrated.)

Fisher's essay, "Transitions from Victorian to Modern: the Supernatural Stories of Mary Wilkins Freeman and Edith Wharton," leads off the volume. Freeman, as much a local colorist as a realist, bridges the gap between the modern tale and the bedsheet-and-clanking-chains examples of the previous century. He carefully summarizes her efforts, including two ("The School Story" and "The White Shawl") which were omitted from the supposedly complete 1974 Arkham House edition of her *Collected Ghost Stories,* and describes as well four of her Christmas tales, which skirt the supernatural. The treatment of Wharton's genre contributions is similar, and literary aspects of both writers' work are amply referenced. Especially interesting is Fisher's linking the novel *Ethan Frome* to Wharton's short stories, and his appreciation of "A Bottle of Perrier," "Mr. Jones" and "Pomegranate Seed," which most critics rate below her perennially popular "Afterward." (Here he follows, though he does not cite, the revisionist view first expressed in Magill's 1983 *Survey of Modern Fantasy Literature.*) Of these two writers, he understandably prefers Wharton.

I have only two disagreements with Fisher. The first is his tendancy to overreach in applying onomastics. Most attentive authors certainly do try to christen their characters and places with appropriate names, but some of the specific meanings he casually assigns reflect his own contrivance more than authorial intent. I cannot imagine, for example, anyone of Wharton's subtlety choosing the word "Rutledge" for the reason he suggests. My second point is the total omission of Walter de la Mare from among those influencing Wharton. She considered him the best of all writers of the supernatural (and that includes Henry James), and actually dedicated her book *Ghosts* to him. Surely this dependence should have been somewhere disclosed. That aside, Fisher's study rates high.

The editor himself gives us the next entry in *American Supernatural Fiction,* "The Wandering Ghosts of F. Marion Crawford," an excellent overview of five of Crawford's seven excursions into the area. They appeared between 1886 and 1908, and were collected posthumously. Their backgrounds are detailed, including the relationship between "The Upper Berth" and Fitz-James O'Brien's "What Was It?". Robillard concludes that their effectiveness "comes from what seems to be an intensity of personal feeling, as though the author is making every effort to man-

age his fears by distancing them. He . . . imagines narrators who deny repeatedly that there is cause for fear of supernatural assaults even while they are forced to witness vile and unspeakable occurrences." The interesting backgrounds detailed in this essay make me wish that Robillard had also chosen to deal with the other two stories in *Wandering Ghosts*, "The Doll's Ghost" and "The Dead Smile." It is true that sentimentality tinges the former, but the latter——whose first publication (*Ainslee's Magazine*, December 1899) has only recently been established——is an effective piece worthy of review.

H. P. Lovecraft is represented here in complementary entries by S. T. Joshi and James Campbell. Joshi analyzes the fiction in terms of Lovecraft's materialistic beliefs, and Campbell shows how the philosophy of "cosmic indifference" developed and ulitimately infused his later work. Together the two give us what is very probably the most detailed analysis so far published of "At the Mountains of Madness"; this short novel, at first neglected, has over the years come justly to be regarded as one of the man's outstanding works. Both critics succeed in making technical details not only clear but interesting, and an affection for their subject adds a gratifying dimension to the whole.

For his "Struggle to Create Beauty from the Horrors of Reality" Sam Moskowitz links much hitherto unrevealed personal history of David H. Keller with his writings. Keller's unpublished fiction and works available only in obscure limited editions are described here in more detail than in any other source I have seen. His work is escapist, misogynous and deeply autobiographical. It varies widely in quality——E. F. Bleiler once called him "a good bad writer"——but at his best he can be startlingly effective. Keller was one of the earliest to introduce socially significant themes into his science-fiction——in the 1920's, well before it became popular to do so——and his horror tales of the 1930's were routinely molded over psychiatric matrices. His prolific writing career spanned some sixty years, and Moskowitz does it full justice here.

Part of A. Langley Searles's entry also deals with unpublished and obscure work, first of Edward Lucas White, whose life and writings are almost forgotten today, and secondly of Henry S. Whitehead, remembered for his literate contributions to *Weird Tales* magazine. The description of Whitehead here, together with two recent articles in this journal (*Fantasy Commentator VIII*, 186 [1995]; *IX*, 57 [1996]) constitute a close to definitive treatment of the man and his works. Scholars should also find them useful because they correct a number of errors that have become widely accepted. As would behoove articles with such a cast, the one in this book is referenced in painstaking detail.

It would be a close call, for all the essays in *American Supernatural Fiction* are of estimable quality, but if I had to choose a favorite it would be "Outside the Human Aquarium," Brian Stableford's account on Clark Ashton Smith. Smith was one of the "Three Musketeers of *Weird Tales*," contributors who transcended the pulp medium.* His penchant for the fantastic began in his teens, and was initially expressed as poems strongly influenced by George Sterling and his California coterie; these appeared in three collections during the period 1912-1922. Thereafter Smith devoted himself to fiction, which he produced most prolifically from 1929 through 1934. But then, despite diminishing personal responsibilities, he actually wrote little. Thus, although he lived until 1961, he, Lovecraft and Whitehead were active at almost exactly the same time. Of these three, Smith will probably always be the least accessible to readers. His prose is not only decorated with stylistic ornaments and sesquipedalian words, but posits an alien universe totally lacking in comfort or pleasure. And because it so eschews human

* The writers grouped in this phrase have changed over the years. Originally they comprised Lovecraft, Smith and Robert E. Howard; Stableford describes their work as having "extraordinary originality." Nowadays Searles and others put Lovecraft, Smith and Whitehead in this trio on the basis of literary quality, which Howard notably lacks. (In the field of music a similar evolution altered the "Three B's": Bach, Berlioz and Beethoven became Bach, Beethoven and Brahms.)

values, his fiction can be even more bleak and misanthropic than Lovecraft's. Stableford provides a sympathetic analysis of it, which should encourage, in particular, those unfamiliar with Smith or who have been put off by his prose to appreciate its unique qualities.

The volume ends with Joseph Payne Brennan's essay "Can the Supernatural Story Survive?". This is in fact devoted far less to its title (a query the author addresses only in his last paragraph) than to a brief history of the supernatural tale's evolution. Knowing this in advance should deflect readers' disappointment and permit them to enjoy Brennan's lively account, which includes a description of his own involvement in the genre.

In summary, I can recommend Robillard's efforts highly. *American Super-Natural Fiction* is academically sound, easy to peruse, and should stand as an excellent source of information for years to come. My only complaint is the type-size, which is smaller than I, at least, find comfortable to read.

Lee Becker

HAUNTED MESA by Louis L'Amour. New York and Toronto: Bantam Books, 1987. 357 pp. 23.3 cm. $18.95.

Here's a novel that Bob Davis would have loved for *All-Story* magazine. Patently a western, this pure fantastic adventure is bound to satisfy those who sigh for the old pulps——imagine a collaboration of, say, Max Brand and A. Merritt! The locale is the Four Corners where the states of Arizona, Utah, Colorado and New Mexico meet, a region dear to L'Amour; the time is the present———at least in part. We deal here with the Other Side, a possible concatenation of parallel worlds, so there are vagaries of time and space. Not all frontiers are geographical.

When Erik Hokart, a wealthy electronics engineer, builds a home on an empty mesa in the Four Corners area, he forsees neither weird nightly visitants nor his eventual forced passing through to the Other Side. There he learns the fate of the Anasazi, the Cliff-Dwellers who disappeared so mysteriously centuries ago when their lands were invaded by militant tribes. Fortunately he had sent for long-time friend Mike Raglan, former magician, writer, adventurer and explorer of the occult. From a journal article, he learns that the nightly visitors had revised Hokart's floor-plans. Undaunted by Fortean concepts, he plunges into the problem, finally reaching the parallel plane that is the Third World of the Hopi Cliff-Dwellers.

Hokart had restored a *kiva*——an Anasazi praying room——which has ancient paintings on its walls and a strange niche in one of them. When Chief, his huge Tibetan mastiff (present from Raglan) leaps into the niche, he disappears——although his barking can still be heard. (Some readers may recall Hobart Fenton's dog in "The Blind Spot.") Hokart's sweater is stolen, then replaced with a better one that bears a sunflower design in gold thread; still later, he finds a fresh sunflower on his desk. And when Chief reappears, there is a sunflower worked into his collar. Later Raglan will meet Kawasi, the sunflower girl. All in all, there's plenty to challenge him.

Through successive climaxes L'Amour blends these elements, and others, with orthodox western adventure. Raglan and Hokart find that the Anasazi had differentiated, as any sociologist might predict, into two distinct societies, one beneficent, the other sanguinary. Further, the Anasazi Other Side is not unique; there is a whole succession of Sides, each with its own inhabitants. Two tantalizing women are encountered, one of darkness, the other of the light (another distant echo of "The Blind Spot"?). There is no dearth of fast=paced action, suspense, mystery and adventure in *Haunted Mesa*.

Pulpish? Of course, and why not? L'Amour was first published in the

twilight of the pulps, mostly in the hosts of western magazines. He is remembered for his Hopalong Cassidy pastiches printed under the pseudonym of Tex Burns. His subsequent output would have bracketed him with such colleagues as Max Brand and H. Bedford-Jones had he flourished a few years earlier. His background suited pulp writing. By the age of twenty he had skinned cattle in Texas, lived with bandits in Sinkiang and Tibet, and shipped on an African schooner; later, there was some professional boxing, logging, dock work, gold prospecting and handling elephants. In World War II he commanded a tank.

And how he loved the Old West! He maintained an extensive private library of some seven thousand books, maps, diaries and associated artifacts. This included data on two thousand old-time gunfighters. Little wonder that his hundred-plus novels were never faulted on the grounds of authenticity. Yet he did not, incidentally, ever call himself a western writer, always claiming he wrote historical novels about the Frontier. It's a break for readers of fantastic adventure that he chose to write about that Frontier the Anasazi crossed.

Alvin H. Lybeck

LORD OF SERPENT LAND by Alan Connell. Published 1991 by Graham Stone, GPO Box 4440, Sydney 2001, Australia. 188 pp. 23.5cm. Austr.$30.00 + postage.

There was a period, back in 1935-36, when the writer Alan Connell shone briefly as a rising star. But time did not realize readers' expectations. They were based on two short stories, "The Reign of the Reptiles" and "Dream's End" (*Wonder Stories*, August and November 1935). In the first, a present-day man travels back millions of years into the past and discovers, to his amazement, that a species of reptiles related to dinosaurs has built an advanced civilization, and by altering their own cells created the human race——to act as their slaves. The second raised even more of a stir. It hypothesizes that the world and everything in it are no more than parts of a dream of some cosmic intelligence; and that a series of inexplicable and seemingly irrational events that are occurring everywhere show that the being is in the process of waking. To teenage fans of the period this was a radical idea; none seemed aware that Mark Twain had based his short novel *The Mysterious Stranger* (1916) on that same theme.

Connell sold a few other stories to the science-fiction market here. "The Duplicate" (*Wonder Stories*, April 1936) is a complicated tale of two men who hate one another. Number one, who has a scientific bent, creates a precise duplicate of number two, and then sends it out to commit a variety of crimes, always under circumstances that ensure identification. When the police are led to the home of number two, the duplicate apparently emerges to attack his creator, killing him. The expected exoneration follows——but it develops that the attack was actually committed by number two, not the duplicate. In the same issue of the magazine, under the name Alan Conn, Connell had a tale titled "Fate." Here a wealthy man is determined to lengthen his life. He engages doctors to implant monkey glands and hires artisans to design and construct a bacteria-free underground habitation. As he starts down to his completed home on an elevator the cable snaps, and he is killed.

Another story written in that period, "Espionage in Space," was not published until much later (*Planet Stories*, Winter 1941-42). In this, inhabitants of the planet Pluto, who have previously attacked the Earth and been defeated, are discovered by Earth's master spy, Ransome, to be planning another such attempt. He is almost stymied by Pluto's female counterspy, who has replaced one from Earth. Despite the fact that Connell describes what might be computers and utilizes matter-transmission, this is simply meretricious espionage dressed up as science-fiction.

According to the publisher, whose source of information was the author himself, Connell had some eighty stories published in Australia before he stopped writing in 1941 and became a merchant seaman. He did not keep careful records of his sales, or even copies of his work, so tracing them has proved difficult. Connell did recall that some had appeared in such popular Australian weeklies as *The Bulletin* and *The World's News*; unfortunately no major library retains a file of those magazines. Stone has succeeded in locating some of these missing pieces, but only a few have turned out to be science-fiction. Research is further complicated by Connell's reluctance to talk about his life or discuss his writing experiences. An unverified report claims he has suffered from a nervous breakdown.

This brings us, finally, to the work under review. *Lords of Serpent Land* was written around 1932, when Connell was only seventeen. Apparently it never appeared in magazine form. But in 1945 it was split into three parts and issued as a trio of paperbacks by the Currawa Publishing Co. of Sydney, the city where Connell lived. These were slim, 64-paged booklets titled *Lords of Serpent Land, Warriors of Serpent Land* and *Prisoners of Serpent land.* Now, nearly half a century later, it appears complete in one place for the first time.

The work is largely derivative. Connell, like many readers and writers of fantasy in the 1930's, was impressed by A. Merritt and Edgar Rice Burroughs, and here he borrows lavishly from both of them. (In fact, when the publisher interviewed him, the only bit of science-fiction still in his possession was an old 1930 *Argosy* magazine containing an installment of Merritt's novel "The Snake Mother.") From this work Connell appropriated not only the idea of intelligent, domesticated reptiles, but the very name of his protagonist, Graydon. From Burroughs he adopted the concept of a civilized boy who is reared by beasts and one prominent facet of the man's style——using alternate chapters to deal with the separate actions of two sets of characters. An area of South America called Tapajos appears in the story, and coincidentally there are borrowings from S. P. Meek's novels "Drums of Tapajos" and "Troyana." This shows that Connell read the American magazine *Amazing Stories,* where they were serialized in 1930-32, and also helps to date the time of the work's composition. Despite this melange (or possibly because of it) *Lords of Serpent Land* moves pleasantly and episodically along, and is actually quite readable even today. It is an interesting historical document, though it will add nothing to this elusive author's reputation.

A few words should be added here about the publisher. Graham Stone is is the leading historian of Australian fantasy, and has been compiling information on local writers there, even those of modest achievement. He has put out three other reprints of Australian authors previously. Two are booklets (selling at Austr. $12): a burlesque of *Frankenstein* written in 1863 by George Isaacs for the Adelaide stage, and "The Inner Domaine" by Philip Collas, which first appeared in *Amazing Stories* for October 1935. The latter tells of an ancient race that had established a civilization thirty miles underground, and the adventures there of a contemporary man brought into it accidentally by a matter-transmitter. The third is a hard-covered book, *The Temple of Saehr,* also a lost race novel (Austr. $40). All of these, and also Connell's novel, have been printed in extremely limited editions, and will probably become collectors' items.

Stone is presently working on a book by Desmond Hall. Hall was born in Australia, but emigrated here in 1911. He is best known for the "Hawk Carse" tales he and Harry Bates wrote pseudonymously and as the associate editor of *Astounding Stories* from 1930 to 1935. He also wrote novels and acted as a literary agent. I have recently determined that the item which the Clute-Nicholls *Encyclopedia of Science Fiction* states he wrote "under an unidentified pseudonym for *Weird Tales*" is a robot story titled "Men of Steel"; it appeared in the December 1930 issue as by "Ainslee Jenkins."

Sam Moskowitz

Recent Publications

I often see, am sent for review, or buy for my own enjoyment, various items in the fantasy field. Space in this magazine is limited, and not all of them can be reviewed in detail, or even briefly in "Tips on Tales." But many are distinctly worth mentioning, so this column is being initiated to cite their existence. They are not described in any particular order of merit or receipt, and I believe that all of them are still in print. —*Editor.*

One of the all-time classics in the field is William Timlin's *The Ship that Sailed to Mars,* printed in a limited edition in 1923. This oversized (9 x12) book was profusely illustrated in color by the author, who also hand-lettered the text. This rarity has now been reprinted, and is available from Stonewall Publications, 5804 N. E. Hassalo St., Portland, Oregon 97213 - 3644 ($25 plus $3.67 for postage and handling). This is surely the bargain of the year, if not the decade, and I urge you to order this gorgeously beautiful volume without delay. Another reprint of note is L. Sprague de Camp's biography of H. P. Lovecraft; this has been brought out by Barnes and Noble Books at $9.95, and should be available at your local bookstore. The text incorporates all corrections made by the author for the (abridged) 1976 Ballantine paperback, plus some additional new ones. Lastly, the Eaton Press is issuing a series of genre classics in de luxe, leather-bound editions. These include Lewis's *Chronicles of Narnia*, Bradley's *The Mists of Avalon*, Clarke's *2001*, van Vogt's *Slan!* and others. Write the company at P. O. Box 5706, Norwalk, Conn. 06860-0218, or telephone 1-800-211-1308 for details and prices.

The Greenwood Publishing Group continues to print valuable reference texts. Three I have examined are in its "Study of Science Fiction and Fantasy" series: *Visions of the Fantastic*, edited by Alienne R. Becker ($55); *The Dark Fantastic*, edited by C. W. Sullivan III ($65); and *Philip K. Dick*, edited by Samuel J. Umland ($55). They comprise thoughtful, searching essays which range over the entire field. Three other Greenwood titles deal with popular contemporary writers: Paul Bail's *John Saul*, Sharon A. Russell's *Stephen King* and Lorena L. Stookey's *Robin Cook* ($29.95 each). All cover their subjects comprehensively, and in prose fully accessible to those who enjoy these writers' work. You can request more information or order by credit card by calling 1-800-225-5800.

In the realm of fantasy verse, Steve Sneyd's *Flights from the Iron Moon* has just been published. This is an overview of genre poetry in U. K. fanzines and little magazines during the 1980-89 decade. It's not just a checklist, but comments extensively on authors, sources and trends, and quotes generously from the titles themselves. This indispensable 128-paged paperback is available from Hilltop Press, 4 Nowell Place, Almondbury, Huddersfield, West Yorkshire HD5 8PB, England (£2.50/$6). From the same source you can order (£1.50/$4) Andrew Darlington's booklet *The Lobster Quadrille*; it contains a brief biography of this versatile author and a selection of his poems, none of which duplicate any by him that you have read in *Fantasy Commentator*. Those who have enjoyed the work of John Haines will want to obtain his chapbook *Orders from the Bridge*, which contains a baker's dozen titles, most of which will probably be new to readers of this magazine. It's available from the Pentagraph Press, P. O. Box 2757, Brighton, East Susses BX12 1NT, England. (£2 / $5). Finally, *The Others Amongst Us* is an excellent anthology of science-fiction verse, obtainable (£1 / $2½) at Pegasus Press, 13 Hazely Combe, Arreton, Isle of Wight PO30 3AJ, England. I recommend all these four items highly.

—*A. Langley Searles*

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DARKNESS

Iced air——No bird sings.
Sun——Blotted from the black sky.
Earth——Home——Dark in Death.

—*Eric Leif Davin*

"The Immortal Storm"——continued from page 70

Russ Hodgkins, one of the older Los Angeles fans at this time——he was thirty——is remembered for an iconoclastic magazine leavened with wit and humor, *Sweetness and Light*. This quarterly was distributed through the Fantasy Amateur Press Association, and was actually the joint effort of a talented group comprising Henry Kuttner, Arthur K. Barnes (another science-fiction author), James Mooney (an artist) and Frederick Shroyer (later to become a mainstream novelist and literary critic). The first issue was dated Spring 1939, and the magazine lasted five issues to Spring 1940. The one who gave it its tone was Mooney. He was a close friend of Kuttner, and even illustrated the latter's story "I, the Vampire" for the February 1937 *Weird Tales*. He had a real flare for the humorous cartoon, and his drawings decorated the complete run of *Sweetness and Light*. Particularly amusing was his series of five covers depicting a bibulous cherub who gets a female angel into trouble and then is rocketed off to Hell.

Not all of the materal printed was frivolous. Kuttner wrote serious articles on the state of science-fiction, and there were also trenchant diatribes against Esperanto, the alleged science in science-fiction, and publishing columns of letters from readers. Professional authors and editors were delighted with the magazine, and contributions came in from the writers E. Hoffman Price and Otto Binder. Ray Bradbury was represented in the final number by "Are You Ad-Conditioned?", a humorous piece on the impact of advertisements on the syntax of stories in the professional science-fiction magazines.

Clearly *Sweetness and Light* had distribution beyond the FAPA, for letters of appreciation poured in from such non-members as Price, Farnsworth Wright, Robert Heinlein, Eric Frank Russell and Robert Barlow. It was appearing at the right time, for most fans were still in their teens, and they and the field could appreciate a little cynical criticism.

When *Imagination!* folded in October 1938, its readers' department was inviting a wide range of comment, and took up more space than any other feature. Ackerman and Morojo, who had been doing the lion's share of work on the magazine, found themselves with a large group of unpublished letters remaining on hand. They elected to print them as a separate fan magazine titled *Voice of the Imagi-Nation*. The first number was dated January 1939. It was scheduled to appear quarterly, but as the number of incoming letters continued to increase they upped the schedule to bimonthly in June 1940, and six months later to every six weeks. Before Pearl Harber *VOM* (as it became nicknamed) was well liked, though it was never particularly significant in the history of the field. It was to gain in importance during World War II for its regular appearance, its innovative photo-offset covers and inserts, and for its then-unique habit of reproducing the writer's actual signature with each letter. *VOM* was long-lived, lasting fifty issues and finally ceasing publication with the July 1947 number. During its career the magazine was criticized for "not printing more serious stuff," to which Ackerman replied in the November 1941 issue, "We don't get it!"

One of the prominent members of the LASFS at this time was Walter Daugherty. He had served as club president, and was known for his intense but transient enthusiasms and for proposing numerous projects that seldom came to fruition. One which actually did——albeit evanescently——was publishing a fanzine. After talking about it for years, Daugherty finally managed in March 1940 to bring out *The Rocket*. This had thirty letter-sized pages, and like most others from the club was mimeographed in green ink. Its title was scarcely original, having been used in 1937-38 for his journal by Daniel McPhail, and for a fan magazine its policy seemed a bit strained. Each issue was to feature a factual article, and around it there would be written a work of fiction. For his first subject Daugherty chose Egypt, and assumed the duty of writing both the article and the story. The latter was titled "Death from the Past." It dealt with a scientist who dis-

covers that the deaths of explorers of ancient Egyptian tombs are not due to any supernatural cause, such as a curse, but to germs which require two years after contact to exert a lethal effect. He is working on an antidote so that tombs can be entered safely, but succumbs himself before succeeding. Probably the most useful item in the issue was an article by Ackerman titled "The Rocketeer." In this he enumerated all the science-fiction authors who were actively connected with the American Rocket Association, and the list was impressive. Daugherty planned the subject of prehistory for the next issue of *The Rocket,* but this never appeared.

The most ambitious project completed by the Los Angeles group in the 1940's was a reference volume titled *Imag-Index.* This was a chronological listing of all the fantasy magazines that had ever been published through December 1939. It was mimeographed in the usual green ink, and was the work of two little-known local fans, Franklyn H. Brady and A. Ross Kuntz. *Imag-Index* listed the fiction content of the various magazines, but did not include articles or departments. It named the cover artist for each issue, and the story the cover illustrated. One unique feature of the index was coding the subject-type of each story. The volume had 72 pages, a very large number for a fan publication in that period. It was bound with large metal fasteners put through holes punched in the pages, and had a heavy wraparound cover. Longhand script on the latter gave its title and date of publication (November 1940), but there was no internal listing of publishers, address or price. (It actually sold for 50¢ a copy.) Neither is there any record of how many copies were printed. *Imag-Index* sold out quickly, and soon became a difficult item to procure. It was particularly in demand by fantasy collectors and dealers.

Brady and Kuntz were not the first to bring out a checklist. Two years earlier Bob Tucker had published a work of lesser scope, his *Yearbook of Science, Weird, and Fantasy Fiction.* This confined itself to listing everything that had appeared during a single year, 1938. It had been inspired by the impressive burgeoning of books and periodicals in the field that year on both sides of the Atlantic. Tucker included contents-listings of magazines by issue (including illustrators of each entry), story listings alphabetically by title, and named all the departments in the magazines. He even furnished a checklist of all the fantasy that *Argosy,* a nominally mundane publication, had printed during that year. (He had planned to include as well a compilation of all fan magazines printed in 1938, but this laudable scheme did not materialize until 1941, when such lists began to appear separately as supplements to *Le Zombie.*) This first yearbook had twenty letter-sized mimeographed pages and sold for 15¢. It proved so popular that over the next few months Tucker reprinted it twice.

This reception encouraged him to plan and publish a yearbook for 1939. So greatly had the field expanded that the volume needed 36 pages to list everything, and Tucker took on three associates to help him compile it, Jane Tucker, Damon Knight and Harry Warner, Jr. It was labelled "A Vulcan Publication," and the contents followed the categories of its predecessor. So did those of the 1941 volume, with the added attraction of coding the type of each story. This third yearbook was not put out by Tucker, however, but by Brady and Kuntz (who acknowledged the help of Ackerman and Melvin Dolmatz), and was designated "An Imag-Index Publication." It was six pages thinner than the previous volume, and not as neatly done. It carried an interesting notice that an *Imag-Index* supplement was being prepared and would be available for 10¢ "next summer"——that is, the summer of 1941. (Actually it did not appear for another two years.) The final yearbook in the series was published by Julius Unger, and called "A Fantasy Fiction Field Production." It had 44 pages, and was edited by Larry T. Shaw; he was aided by William H. Evans and the Canadian fan Fred Hurter, Jr. This was the first appearance in print for Evans, who was to become one of the most outstanding bibliographers in fantasy fandom.

(to be continued in the next issue)

BACK NUMBERS

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

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

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

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

#34 Mike Ashley researches Algernon Blackwood's early history and Blackwood himself describes how he got story ideas. More about "Plus Ultra" and a continuation of "Voyagers Through Eternity." Letters about Lovecraft.

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

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

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

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

#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.

#42 The Weinbaum Memorial Issue, featuring an interview with his widow, articles on his college years and correspondence, and early photographs.

#43 Moskowitz begins a serial article of Nat Schachner and concludes his account of Bernarr Macfadden; Andrew Darlington describes Conan Doyle's fantasy and s-f; and Steve Sneyd tells of the s-f poet, Lilith Lorraine.

#44 The Isaac Asimov Memorial Issue. Four articles on Asimov; also an article on Lovecraft and continuation of Moskowitz's serial on Schachner.

#45 & 46 are combined into a gala 50th anniversary double issue: interviews with Frederik Pohl and Lloyd Eshbach; articles on Taine's unpublished novels and on s-f pulps during the Great Depression; fantasy verse by Robert E. Howard and others; and the beginning of Sam Moskowitz's sequel to "The Immortal Storm." (Count this issue as two numbers when ordering.)

#47 & 48 comprise another double issue: articles on Ray Bradbury, H. S. Whitehead and Homer Eon Flint; interviews with E. F. Bleiler and A. C. Evans, and about R. F. Starzl; a review of a newly published novel by Jules Verne; an index to readers' letters in *Weird Tales*; continuation of Moskowitz's histories; and much, much more. (Count as two issues when ordering.)

In addition to these features, *Fantasy Commentator* prints reviews of old and new books, a column of readers' letters and outstanding s-f and fantasy verse. If your local dealer cannot supply you, back numbers can be obtained from the publisher at the address below. Price, postpaid in the U. S.: $5 each; any eight, $35; any twelve or more, $4 each. Foreign postage is 75¢ per copy extra. Remit to:

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