



~~August~~ 1978

November 1978, if I'm lucky!

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This is Andy Porter's fault, and was written on January 3, 1975.

REMEMBRANCE OF THINGS PAST

The name of an object rarely gives information about the object itself: though this is rather obvious, the confusion of name with object is one of humankind's developed skills. However, when humans give names to objects which they have created the name often gives some information about the object. Perhaps this is why some people prefer to leave their works untitled. What's even more exciting is when a particular object is given a couple of names - perhaps for different audiences. One interesting example is Alfred Bester's second novel - 'Tiger! Tiger!' in one half of the world and 'The Stars My Destination' in the other. (I prefer the second.)

"When to the sessions of sweet silent thought

I summon up remembrance of things past"

That old Elizabethan playwright could occasionally sling words together. My younger brother's and a cousin's recent investigations of family history tracked down the old family mansion (maternal grandfather) (Bitham House) not much more than 10 miles from Stratford-on-Avon, so there's a feeling of affinity there, of a kind. I gather that the o.f.m. is about to be taken over by the National Trust, and perhaps that too has some significance, a reflection of one of greatgrandfather's descendant's political tendencies (or rather a distortion of them, distorted no doubt by the inclination of time to get out of joint), or merely a consequence of inflation, of which a very real manifestation is rapidly overwhelming that same descendant.

C. K. Scott-Moncrieff, author of the well-known headline SMALL EARTHQUAKE IN CHILE: NOT MANY DEAD, decided that part of Willy Waggener's sonnet would do nicely for his translation of A La Recherche du Temps Perdu and nowadays that is pretty much how one comes across Proust's novel. This depends a little upon the company one keeps, but Roger Shattuck will insist quite vainly, I think, on I_n Search of Lost Time, at least for many years to come.

Somehow, by good fortune or bad, I've managed to reach that age at which some kinds of remembrance of past things actually begin to intrude into my present life. As anyone who has worked with me or known me will know, I do not drink tea (or coffee), and my hatred for that former haunt of Melbourne fandom, the Madeleine, is so well known that any detailed reporting would be boring to my Australian readers - North American readers, unable to resist making acquaintance with the Madeleine, may care to visit in August of 1975, and failing that may consult Lesleigh Luttrell, who ate there once, though with any luck Lesleigh will have forgotten that meal entirely - and so I am unable to imitate even closely the stimulus to the memory of he (if that is the word I am groping for) whose work I am in other respects so cavalierly appropriating for my own purposes: but this can hardly matter, for just as science fiction is false literature, and Remembrance of Things Past a false title for A La Recherche du Temps Perdu, so this is to be a summoning up of false memories.

In 1956 I discover science fiction: quite literally - it was around all the time, at least since Hugo Gernsback invented it in, er, that is to say, invented it before 1923 (I really don't know just when it was that the sort of fiction of which Gernsback's own Ralph might be taken as a model, was perceived by Gernsback as forming a class of literature, and I suspect that Sam Moskowitz doesn't know either). In those days (and younger readers may find this difficult to believe) science fiction wasn't terribly Significant, not too many people wrote master's theses about it, and those who took it seriously were regarded as nuts. Nowadays SF is Significant, and those who took science fiction seriously twenty years ago are now perceived as far-sighted and forward-looking (by their fellow nuts - the population explosion does make minority groups less lonely). But more importantly than this, the science fiction magazines, then the main purveyors of Speculative Fiction to the gentry, smelt. (Some writers put it more strongly than this.) Smell is the sense which, for me (and I think most other people), is the most time-binding, and perhaps this is why I cannot bring myself to be terribly excited about today's SF. I feel about SF magazines in 1975 about the same way that Henry Miller felt about white bread.

Not all science fiction magazines smelled strongly in 1956: but certainly the second-hand magazines which were for quite some time my main source of reading matter had that odour of pulp which even now brings back (false) memories of the past, memories which last until the fits of sneezing drive me to return the battered pages to their plastic bags. Yes, the memories are false, these memories I shall write about now and later, for although they are genuine memories and recollections of works of fiction written long in the past, it isn't necessarily the case that my first impressions followed soon on the initial publication of the work. But it is true that the British edition of the May 1944 ASTOUNDING SCIENCE FICTION was one of the first SF magazines I bought, and here is the subject of my essay.

(to be continued)

AMAZING

The little altercation in Amazing between Sam Moskowitz and Tom Perry over the bankruptcy of the Experimenter Publishing Company caused me to buy my first copies of Amazing for quite some time. The dispute itself is interesting, not because of the facts of the matter, which are boringly pedestrian, but because it illustrates the major fault not only of SF historians but of much fannish writing itself - the notion that in deciding matters of fact, near enough is good enough. Sam is a Fair Average Quality example of the sloppy historian of science fiction - I found myself confronted with overwhelming evidence of this just under a year ago when looking at last year's Different - but it remains the case that he has put together books which give what is probably a reasonable overall description of one aspect or another of science fiction. On matters of fact - and not necessarily minor ones - he may be wrong, but the impression is about right. Because he doesn't really look closely he will be wrong - often. Most of the time it won't matter, because the errors are trivial. Occasionally the errors will be major. And unfortunately the reader cannot tell which is which. Tracking down the truth is time-consuming but, as Tom Perry shows, it can be rewarding.

A CUT STENCIL IS NEVER SACRED

Bob Pavlat's August contribution covered shadowFAPA. The next page is one I prepared for the 18th mailing.

THE HORRIBLE VOYAGES is published by John Foyster, PO Box 57, Drouin, Victoria, Australia, for the 18th SHAPA mailing. This will be the last issue published in Australia.

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PROGRESS REPORT:

When last observed the patient seemed to be suffering a surfeit of GALAXY. I am pleased to report that he has recovered, and is now suffering from an entirely new kind of surfeit.

At this writing my SF collection has swollen to a moderately respectable 310 items - which means a collection rate of something like 25 magazines a week. Not very expensive, though - I got a stack of ASTOUNDINGS at about 7 ¢ each and am trying to get a fair price (about a nickel) for some F&SFs. But I am not exactly obsessed with the idea, though it is interesting to see all this tremendously bad stuff that I missed by not reading SF in the last five years.

THE AUSTRALIAN SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW (Plug)

That title might suggest just why I read science fiction again. Someone has seen fit to publish a monthly of that title, and the result is that I now read far more science fiction than anyone could reasonably wish, simply to prepare reviews: unlike most reviewers I believe in reading the books. Sometimes I get breaks though, like this month when I just had to write a summary of John Campbell's editorials of the last year.

Oh hell, the pain of it! But I did get it finished, and am now able to pursue the heady joys of reading the latest Fred Hoyle. The review has lasted three issues now, and may even struggle on for a year or two. As the editor is selling some 300 copies in Australia he isn't really looking for overseas subscribers in the sense that he gives away samples, but 30 ¢ to John Bangsund, 19 Gladstone Ave, Northcote, Melbourne, Victoria, Australia should get you a copy. 36 quarto pages, offset, is not too bad for the money. If you are a nut about science fiction, anyway. I mean, I don't have a sub.....

AND WHAT DID HE MEAN BY THAT?

Well, what I meant when I said this issue was to be the last published in Australia was just that. Next year Elizabeth and I are going to Europe, and this will rather slow down my SHAPAc, if it does not cause cessation. However, attempts will be made, even though I might not have an address. Yes, that's rather important, I suppose. In fact, since we leave on January 7 any mail sent to me here in Australia would have to be forwarded to wherever we are at the time. Fortunately, persons other than the Shadow know.

At the moment I'm trying to arrange accommodation for our first few days in Athens. I am not making much of a fist of it. First I was offered rooms at the Athens-Hilton, which was just a trifle expensive. Next we were strongly recommended by a travel agency to the Omonia Hotel. John Wilcock, in GREECE ON \$5 A DAY says it has the worst hotel meals he has ever tasted. And there the matter rests at the moment. Just now we therefore have no idea of an address for any part of next year.

SOME IDLE REMARKS ABOUT THE 164TH MAILING

FA: There are a lot of Australians in FAPA. At the moment, all of them are also in ANZAPA, and all will be here next weekend for the ANZAPACON, which is celebrating 10 years of ANZAPA. I expect that QUANT SUFF will be run off during ANZAPACON as part of the program is a demonstration of fanzine production. I guess I had better leave a wee hole for an exemplary illustration (from an old electro-stencil). // I didn't vote on the amendment because I wasn't too sure that it was workable, and because I don't think I like the idea of joint membership anyway.



SYNAPSE: Well, of course there are those arguments against the amendment, but I would have thought that maybe it would be better to move for dropping 2.5. // With respect to 'centibucks' it wasn't my classical education which failed, but my efforts to get any reasonable money at all: I did mean cents. I am better off now. And, metritriciously, we use hecto-. // I didn't omit 'not' before

'surprise-free', which is a jargon term in cintext meaning 'this is what we reckon will happen if there are no surprises': did you read it as having the meaning 'surprise-proof'? // Increased employment in manufacturing gives a greater multiplier than increased employment in services provided there are lots of people around to buy the manufactured goods. When unemployment reaches a sufficiently high level, that strategy doesn't look so good. // The statistics were quoted not because they mean much, but so that they could be quoted by the politician who used the piece.

The trouble with your recommendation about solving the problem of machine-tightened nuts on carwheels is that since I am never in my own car (I dislike cars, and travel in them as little as possible) the wrench is that which the car-owner has. I suppose I could always take one along when I am travelling by car. // John Bangsund and I both go by Fowler: him all the time, and me when I remember.

ORNITHOPTER FLYER TWOPOINTFIVE: Trust you to screw up the spelling in 'Captain Paul of the 12th Severely Wounded'. You don't mention Pallarat's fantastic art gallery - has Chris Johnston managed to entice you there yet?

THE TIGER IS LOOSE: 'Society as a whole is sexist, but the subsociety of SF readers is hopefully more enlightened', you write. No one of us lives and moves in society as a whole, I think, so what society is like isn't terribly relevant. Amongst the people with whom I mix, sf fandom is the most sexist, but that's probably only be chance. The gripe I have is with your 'hopefully'. Quite apart from the word being horrible, I suspect that you're using it in the 'fans are slans' connotation, something which I don't have much time for at all. // I don't know why you are so pissed off at Terry Hughes - your stuff back in '73 and thereabouts was pretty repulsive: if the SS cannot escape their past, why should you?

TEMERITY: In the March '51 GALAXY Gold said that there would be no letter column, but in June '51, for example, his editorial began by quoting a lengthy extract from a letter from Harold W. Cheney, and then replyinh to it, just like in a genuine lettercol. // With respect to non-sexist language, I use alphabetical

order (her/him, he/she etc), but otherwise use neutral words (and they are available most of the time). //In Australia we can book specific seats for evening movies, and sometimes for day sessions also.

LE MOINDRE: Tough luck on your timing of the announcement of the demise of smallpox!

HORIZONS: I strongly agree with you about the Unsung Fapan category. // Most states in Australia are abandoning the bondage system for trainee teachers - since we are now thoroughly oversupplied (in terms of budgetary possibilities) teachers are staying put anyway! //Some of my microfiche are badly photographed, but most are quite high quality. The microfilm I've seen of newspapers isn't too good, but the original article sometimes creates problems there. // My croglement (should that be becroglement?) about your lightning action with respect to garage sales was not based upon the belief that you were involved in auctions, but rather that I assumed it would take you a substantial time to go through the books: if there are at most 100 books, say, then your getting through each sale in a few minutes.

BOBOLINGS: You and Speer both with fiction in this mailing? Something's going on.

NOTES FROM ARINAM: I also feel there's no value in trying to 'teach' science fiction in schools. It certainly doesn't do SF much good, and probably doesn't help the kids either. // Some Galaxy Novels were in magazine size - but not all. But the early Avon paperbacks (SF fans come across editions of Merritt in this form quite often) had a very magaziny (my apologies) appearance, if you use those rules.

BLEEN: The August mailing arrived in Australia while I was up in Cairns again - this time on holiday. The restaurants - overall - seem better on close examination. Cairns is pretty much on a swamp - the plain extends back a few miles and then rises a couple of thousand feet to a plateau of sorts - the Atherton Tableland. But as you go north from Cairns the mountains close right in on the coast - usually leaving no more than a mile: this applies at least for the first hundred or so miles north of Cairns. // Yeah, of course it's 'sheila'.

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THE THIN MAN

I used to chuckleover the weighty tales in FAPA, especially those from Gregg Calkins. Not any more. The last doctor I visited became distinctly nasty about my weight, suggesting that I ought to walk around the block. 'What about the tennis, then?' I asked. He humphed, and told me to eat less. So for three weeks I've been a decidedly genteel eater, and have lost about 12 pounds (or 5 kilos, as we in the advanced part of the world say). Who knows, by Christmas I might be only 14 pounds more than I weighed when I was 21. John Bangsund tells me that he started on a diet yesterday, too. He doesn't like diet ale, but there's no diet rough red, so he is stuck with it. See yerz all in '79.

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