

INSIDE



October 1962

INSIDE

Issue Number One
October, 1962

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THINK

THE ETERNAL FANZINE

And so we come full cycle once more and Inside Science Fiction, alias Science Fiction Advertiser, alias Fantasy Advertiser, passes on once again to a younger and more enterprising enthusiasm. Jon White, I am confident, will do as good a job as you could desire putting out a fanzine about science fiction for those of you on Inside's list who are still interested and those undoubtedly countless thousands of fans who have joined up since I last published an issue four years ago, and he'll have a hell of a good time while he's doing it. I hope all of the good and faithful readers of Inside will give him the assistance he needs (after all, we all need money).

For all those same good and faithful readers who have, I have no doubt whatsoever, been sitting disconsolately by your mailboxes these past four years waiting, waiting -- here at last is your reward. I didn't forget you. I contemplated many times, seriously I thought, bringing out an issue of Inside. Three years ago I did make one last, valiant effort. I contracted an Australian college lad who was editing the Sydney University literary magazine and was publishing it on his own letterpress. He agreed to publish Inside. Part of that proposed issue sits now mouldering in his garage. The rest has never been printed. (Not, I hasten to interject, due to ought but my own acts of omission.)

Coming to Australia myself, I hoped to work with him on the printing of the issue, and complete it. Alas, I have been far too busy since arriving manufacturing jewelry with Cindy, and caring for our new young Australian. And the University student turned graduate is now in Canada. And so you see, fate conspires with inertia to produce only good intentions.

But those of you who are still within reach of your addresses of four years ago can now carry on with Mr. White in the best tradition of serious fan publishing. I remain, with my memories of vanished glory and dreams of a triumphant come-back, an old man at the age of twenty-six, a derelict on the shores of fandom.

Ron Smith

This, then, is the new Inside.

As a new editor, it is hard to write to an audience that has already accustomed itself to the magazine. Should I offer you a new magazine, you would consider it by itself, for you have nothing else. But instead I give you Inside, which in different forms has seen no less than 53 previous numbers, under several editors.

So you, the reader, have a pre-conceived notion of what you expect from this magazine. You will judge this not by itself but in comparison with its previous issues. You expect a certain quality of this magazine.

And you are right.

I will give you as good a magazine as I possibly can. I will try, try my damndest to meet the level Ron attained. Nevertheless, I am a new editor, and this magazine will change in accordance with my taste and judgement.

So I am asking you to approach this Inside with both an open and a critical, eye.

Jon White

Inside has a rather interesting history.

It was started as Fantasy Advertiser by Norman E. (Gus) Willmorth, back in the spring of 1946. Originally mimeographed, it metamorphosised to photo-offset format with the June, 1947 issue. Willmorth continued publishing till late 1949, at which point he handed it over to Roy Squires. With the twenty-ninth number, January, 1952, Squires changed the name to Science-Fiction Advertiser.

Meanwhile, another Californian, Ron Smith, began Inside. He had published five numbers when the two magazines were combined: under Ron's editorship, and appeared regularly to mid-1956, thereafter irregularly to September 1958. Those of you interested in Roy's magazine (FA/SFA 1950-54) should write to him at 1745 Kenneth Road, Glendale, Cal. Those of you interested in Ron's may obtain them from me at 35¢ each, 3/4¢, or all 9/5¢:

- #6, November 1954-- Alan Hunter, Doyle Lewis, Chad Oliver, Poul Anderson, Robert Gilbert, David Bunch, Don Howard Donnell.
- #8, March 1955-- Joe Gibson, William L. Freeman, Bill Hamling, William F. Nolan and Charles E. Fritch, Joe Slotkin, Bob Tucker.
- #9, May 1955-- Art Feature: Neil Austin, Morris Scott Dollens, Jon Arfstrom, Naaman Peterson, Jack Gaughan; Jon Harit, Harlan Ellison; William L. Freeman, Mark Clifton (the latter two are re-buttals to Hamling's article in #8).
- #10, July 1955-- Art Feature: Ralph Rayburn Phillips; Howard Browne, Joe Gibson, Martin Jukovsky, George H. Smith, Algia Budrys, Ron Smith.
- #11, September 1955-- Symposium: Sam Moskowitz, Robert Lowndes, Larry Shaw, H.L. Gold; Robert Bloch, Lin Carter, Dave Foley, Randall Garrett. Cover by Freas.
- #12, November 1955-- Symposium (continuation): William L. Freeman, Dave Mason, James Blish; George W. Price, Carl Larsen, S. Ostlund, Bob Tucker. Cover by Patterson.
- #13, January 1956-- Manunkind: David R. Bunch; Randall Garrett and Lin Carter, Kenneth Ford, Ken Beale, Bob Tucker.
- #14, March 1956-- H.P. Lovecraft, Lin Carter (on Lovecraft), John Brunner (on Lovecraft), Robert Bloch, Bob Tucker, Randall Garrett. Cover by Patterson.
- #15, May 1956-- Bob Silverberg, Lin Carter, Robert Bloch. Cover by Dollens. (SFA's tenth annish, with index.)

Coming up in the near future are George O. Smith, Margaret St. Clair, Marion Zimmer Bradley, Ron Smith, S. Fowler Wright, Leland Sapiro, William Blackbeard and others. If it is possible to clear everything, and if I can obtain copies, I will reprint Walt Willis' The Enchanted Duplicator, and F. Towner Laney's Ah! Sweet Idiocy. All this is to get you (don't look behind you, fella, I mean you) to subscribe. I need subscriptions. Many of you are receiving this by virtue of having your name in the Fan Directory. Who's Who, etc. If you are not a former subscriber, you will receive no more issues. So get with it and sub.

Lastly, my want list. I would appreciate any help with the following:
Proz: Astounding: 1933: Oct, Nov; 1934: Mar, May, July, Sept; 1935: Jan, Feb, Mar, April; 1936: Feb, Apr, June, July, Nov; 1938: Feb; 1940: Jan, Feb, Mar, Apr, May, Jul; 1942: all; 1943: Jan, Feb, Mar, Apr, Nov; 1944: Jan, Mar, Apr, Sept, Oct, Dec; 1945: Jan to Apr.
Unknown (Worlds): 1939: Apr to Nov; 1940: Feb to Jun, Aug to Nov; 1941: Feb to Aug; 1942: Feb, Jun; 1943: Feb, Apr, Aug, Oct.

Fanzines: Time Traveller, Science Fiction Digest, Fantasy Magazine, Fantasy Fan, Fantasy Commentator, Fantasy Review, The Gorgon (except #1-4), Rhodomagnetic Digest, The Journal of Science Fiction, Fantastic Worlds, Inside #1-5, Science-Fantasy Bulletin and Dimensions, Fanscient, Acolyte.

This issue is dedicated to Ted White, and to Harlan Ellison, but mainly to Ron Smith and Leland Sapiro without whom, as they say, this would have been impossible. JW

The Sci-Fi Guy: FORREST J ACKERMAN • 915 South Sherbourne Drive • Los Angeles 35, California

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1916: BORN (24 NOV)

1926: DISCOVERED SF

1929: PRES. BOYS STP CLUB
FIRST FAN LETTER
PUBLISHED IN PROZINE

1932: ASSOC ED FIRST FANZINE
(THE TIME TRAVELLER)

1933: SCIENTIFILM ED SFDIGEST
(LATER FANTASY MAGAZINE)

1934: HON MEM NO. 1 SFLIAGUE
CHARTER MEM LASFS

1935: ESPERANTIST

1939: STARTED VOICE OF THE
IMAGINATION (50 ISSUES)
ATTENDED NYCON

1940: MET HOWELLS

1941: POLLED NO. 1 FAN

1942: PVT US ARMY

1944: PUBLISHED
FANCYCLOPEDIA NO. 1

1945: S-1ST US ARMY

1946: FOUNDED FANTASY FOUNDATION
LAUNCHED BIG POND FUND
(GENESIS OF TAFF)

1951: GUEST OF HONOR 1ST
INTERNATIONAL STP CON (LONDON)

1952: VOTED "HUGO" AS
FAN PERSONALITY OF THE YEAR

1953: GUEST OF HONOR 1ST
PAN-GERMANIC CON

1959: FAMOUS MONSTER

1960s: MR SCIENCE FICTION

1984: BIG BOTHER

2000: SECOND CHILDHOOD'S END

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(Fanzines) FANTASTIC WORLDS Fall-Winter '52
INSIDE Sep '53 & Jan '54
STUNNING SCIENTIFAN Fall '39

(Prozines) AMAZING STORIES ANNUAL
BEST STORIES OF ALL TIME Aug '26 thru Apr '27
10-STORY BOOK (any)
THRILL BOOK (any)
RED BOOK Mar thru Aug '19
BLUEBOOK Jan '42
ALL-STORY Feb & Oct '12
ALL-AROUND Feb '16
MECHANICS & INVENTION Nov & Dec '28, Jan thru July '29
THRILLING ADVENTURES Mar thru June '40
TRIPLE X Nov & Dec '28, Jan & Feb '29
AFTER HOURS Vol 1 #4
CANDID #7
CAFER Dec '56
KING #5
SABLE #1
SPREE Vol 1 #11
SHEER Vol 1 #4

(Books): BRIDE OF FRANKENSTEIN, KING KONG, DR CYCLOPS,
METROPOLIS, OCTAVE OF CLAUDIUS, LONDON AFTER
MIDNIGHT, THE GHOUL, THE GOLEM, CREATURE FROM
THE BLACK LAGOON.

STILLS, PRESSBOOKS, CLIPPINGS, SCRIPTS, FIC-
TIONIZATIONS from IMAGINATIVE MOVIES (in the category
of Monsters, Horror, Sci-Fi, etc, a la Frankenstein,
Dracula, Mummy, Jekyll-Hyde, Poe, Chaney, Karloff,
Luposi, inventions, space, etc).

technique as creation

LELAND SAPIRO

#1 Introduction

Science-fiction is often regarded by its enthusiasts as a literature of "ideas," which are conceived as its main asset and on occasion as its only asset. "I read /science-fiction/," asserts one critic, "for the clever, often...brilliant ideas that the author develops;"^a Ideas, states another, are the "chief attraction of science-fiction,"^b which (according to a third) "would be worthless trash most people still think it is" were it not for its "saving factor--ideas."^c

Such views were opposed implicitly by A.J. Cox's essay, "Fantastic Fiction" (Science-Fiction Advertiser, Fall 1953), which classifies fiction works according to their source of motivation: the ordinary variety of story, it was argued, originates in a conflict between the characters themselves; whereas the prime mover in a "fantastic"--in particular, a science-fiction story--is something external, like a catastrophe, natural or artificial ("When Worlds Collide," "The Puppet Masters"); or a marvelous invention ("Skylark of Space," "The Time Machine").

Thus it is the source of motivation which distinguishes a science-fiction story, and not--the article implies-- ideas.^d

This paper, in one sense, is an extension of Cox's argument--but instead of arguing that ideas are not unique to one particular variety of literature, we shall contend that the notion of "idea" is not applicable to any variety. Ideas, we shall argue, are not inserted into a story like raisins into a pie, but are created by the writer's er's technique--so that in the absence of literary craftsmanship, to speak of "ideas" is to speak of nothing.

#2 Inference from Sense-Data

The starting point for our investigation is a letter by Jack Williamson:

It isn't...the first purpose of science-fiction merely to present scientific fact...

...Its purpose ...like that of any art--is to create a unified emotional response to its material. It deals, in other words, not so much with science itself, as with the human reaction to science,

The science-fiction story would bring its reader a vicarious emotional experience, a vital illusion of reality. To cause such a response, it must present various stimuli.

...The business of science-fiction, I fully believe, is to help our modern age make its complete imaginative and aesthetic response to science.

(Astounding Stories, "Science Discussions," June 1937, p.157)

The object of literature, then, is to create a "unified emotional response" and to this end it must bring the reader a "vital illusion of reality." But what are the "various stimuli" that will create such an illusion?

In order to state the argument in less abstract terminology, we invoke Astounding's discussion column once again, this time quoting a letter by Kenneth Lynch:

...I wish you would try to get your writers to put more realism in their stories. You know what I mean. When an author says, "The man was mentally deficient," you don't particularly believe him. But when he says, "William had never been able to learn to lace his shoes, or to use a fork without hurting himself," you know full well that

William is mentally deficient, without the author telling you so.

("Brass Tacks," January 1936, p. 156)

The inferior writer tells us that the man is feeble-minded, thus giving us, as it were, a second-hand report; the literary writer allows us to discover this relationship ourselves as we watch the man trying to eat or trying to tie his shoes.

This difference between relationships conveyed indirectly and those conveyed by explicit statement can be illustrated by a comparison of two stories: "The Other," by Howard Wandrei (December, 1934), and "Murray's Light," by his brother, Donald (June, 1935).

Both writers depict a reporter knocking at the door of a scientist, and in both instances the scientist turns out to be an angry, pugnacious individual who does not wish to be disturbed.

In Howard's story:

The door opened like a shutter.

A shutter is an hinged window-covering that can be snapped open with one hand, or a device which exposes for just an instant the lens of a camera--and thus illustrates the use of comparison and connotation to express relationships. (Note the loss in vividness if the author had merely said, "The door opened quickly.") Shortly after, the scientist shuts the door.

The architect had used up 450 pounds of logwood when it was hung, but it clapped very briskly indeed.

We do not need to be told of the strength of the door-slammer, since this relationship can be inferred from the weight and observed speed of the door.

Donald's story, however, tries to convey this relationship via direct statement:

Great strength and determination were stamped on his rugged features. His gnarled hands...hung from...powerful shoulders.

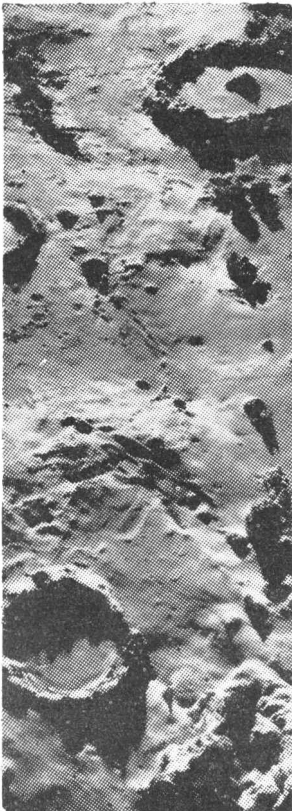
In this second instance, the reader perceives nothing for himself (except a sequence of clichés) and therefore must rely on the assurance of the author.

To summarize: People are not labeled with attributes like idiocy or bodily strength: these qualities must be inferred from the results of particular actions. For believable characterization, therefore, the author must convey his information indirectly in terms of sense-data. Only by this "stimuli," to use Williamson's termology, can a story "bring its reader...a vital illusion of reality." More generally, we shall find that indirect conveyance is what distinguishes a literary work from mere journalism.

#3 Inference from Linguistic Structure

But the superior writer can also express a more abstract type of relationship by purely linguistic methods which make only incidental use of sense-data. An example is Don A. Stuart's "Atomic Power," (December, 1934) which, from a structural (though not a scientific) viewpoint, is perhaps his best story.

The atoms in question are the old-fashioned variety of Rutherford and not the type conceived by Schrodinger or Heisenberg. The reader will recall that Rutherford's model of the atom, proposed near the start of this century, comprised



a central nucleus with electrons revolving around it like planets around the sun--and in the next few decades the atom was regarded by various imaginative writers as actually being a miniature solar system, with planetary electrons inhabited by creatures similar to men.

By analogy, our own solar system can be imagined as only an atom in a still greater universe, and this notion was lent credence by observations of modern astronomers:

Their picture is the picture of an expanding universe. The supersystem of the galaxies is dispersing as a puff of smoke disperses. Sometimes I wonder whether there may not be a greater scale of existence...in which it is no more than a puff of smoke.

Sir Arthur Eddington, The Expanding Universe

With these remarks in mind, we proceed to Mr. Stuart's story. The initial scene is a location unspecified.

The mass of the machine crouched in hulked, latent energy, the massive conductors leading off in gleaming ruddy columns, like the pillars of some mighty temple...Around it huge tubes glowed with a dull bluish light, so that the face faces of the...students looked distorted and ghastly.

A boredly smiling engineer watched them, and the patient professor instructed them...not overhopeful himself that he could make these students understand...the process going on within the great machine.

"The power," he said..."comes, of course, from the... energy of atoms...The fuel is water..." (P. 88)

But just as the students are preparing to leave, the machine stops. Amidst the oaths and scurrings of the engineers, the instructor explains that this is an extremely rare occurrence, which his students are lucky to witness. Once in a great while, he continues, "the generator strikes a bit of fuel which simply doesn't break down...Perhaps some single drop of water is the cause of the trouble." Then,

His voice was drowned by the sudden explosion of titanic discharges rushing into the generator. For scarcely a thousandth of a second it continued, before the process, restarted, backed up and stopped the discharge into it. The generator functioned perfectly. (P. 90)

The next scene is another laboratory, that of Ban Torrence, physicist. Torrence is explaining to Tad Albrite, engineer, that there is a universal attenuation of all inter-molecular forces, including gravity. Until now, the diminution has been measured only by refined laboratory experiments--which have shown inaccurate deflections of voltmeters or minute differences in the compressibility of fluids. But Torrence predicts that in succeeding months, as gravity and tensile strengths of metals continue to weaken, the effects will be more noticable.

The author then sketches a few of the terrestrial disasters which result, later, from the weakening of gravity and the "strength of materials"--the frigid temperature enveloping the Earth as it recedes from the sun and the collapse of man-made structures like buildings and bridges.

Meanwhile, Torrence, constructing his own apparatus, summarizes, briefly, the theory about the Earth and solar system being "just an atom in a greater universe."

"But they're releasing atomic energy in that greater universe--and we're the atom." If my theory's right, then I can release atomic energy myself and stop their release of our energy by just slightly upsetting their field, so that it passes by, harmless. Not a terrific amount of energy needed...I really...invert their energy, so that it destroys itself." (P. 96)

On the first trial, the machine stops after functioning "perhaps a hundredth of a second;" then a second attempt:

"If this works we shall be most fortunate--"

His voice was drowned by the sudden titanic discharges rushing into the generator. For scarcely a thousandth of a

second it continued before the process, restarted, backed up, and stopped the discharge into it. The generator functioned perfectly.

"...it works!" said Torrence softly. For a moment his eyes looked toward the mass of the machine, crouched in hulked latent power, the massive conductors leading off in gleaming, ruddy columns. "I wonder," he went on..."if, in some vaster world, they even knew of this particular atom of fuel simply refused to disintegrate."

Then abruptly..."But why in blazes didn't it work before? I didn't change the thing in the slightest...Just took it apart and put it back together again..I can't see why."

"Was the water pure?" asked Albrite. "Maybe it wasn't--and when you took it apart the drop which caused the trouble was ejected, the generator cleared and now it will function for another period, until another drop which can't be disintegrated hits it."

"Maybe so...That particular drop simply wouldn't break down, I can't understand why."

Torrence looked.. and though he might have told those scientists of a greater world why their machines failed occasionally, since he knew much that they did not, he did not understand all that went on within an atomic generator. (P. 97)

Before discussing this story, we comment briefly on F. Orlin Tremaine, the editor responsible for its publication. During Tremaine's last two years with Astounding the quality of the magazine declined steadily; and frequently the blame was directed toward Tremaine himself, who was derided by one critic as being incapable of independent thought⁹ and by another (an amateur poet) as simply being incapable:

Hey diddle diddle! No more to this riddle:

Tremaine has jumped over the moon!

The happy fans laugh to see him go:

Now Astounding's improvement comes soon. h

Nevertheless, Tremaine was the only editor in this field to be sensitive to literary merit and to be capable of discerning what an author was trying to do. Thus he introduced "Atomic Power" as "a story of profound implications--of the depthless mystery of worlds within worlds."

Note the word implications: the author has stated only a part of his theme--that our world is an atom: its literary corollary--that our atoms are worlds--must be inferred by the reader.

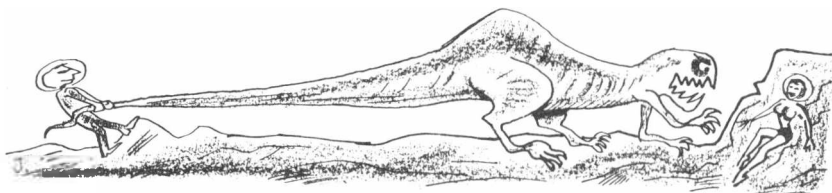
Mr. Stuart elicits this inference by the device of what we shall call strategic repetition. i.e., by the duplication of key phrases which re-echo at crucial points in the story.

At the start,

The mass of the machine crouched in hulked, latent energy, the massive conductors leading off in gleaming ruddy columns, Later, after the experiment of Ban Torrence,

...his eyes looked toward the mass of the machine, crouched in hulked, latent power, the massive conductors leading off in gleaming, ruddy columns.

(Notice also the duplication of the paragraph beginning "His voice



was drowned.")

Thus a description of a malfunctioning generator is followed by a similar transition from a greater universe to our own, so that a description relative to the stoppage of a terrestrial machine implies a second transition from Earth to its atomic constituents. But this second reduction is merely implied, and never stated explicitly.

But now we must qualify Williamson's "vicarious emotional experience" by noting that the emotions felt by the fictional characters are not necessarily those experienced by the reader. Ban Torrence, as the author says, "does not understand all that went on within an atomic generator"--but the reader does, and therefore derives that particular ironic enjoyment which arises from the spectator knowing something the players cannot know.

Not only this: the reader also derives what W.B. Yeats calls the emotion of "multitude": for, if our atoms are worlds and if these atomic worlds, in turn, are composed of atoms, then the sequence can be repeated indefinitely. The mystery, in Tremaine's words, is "depthless," i.e., without end.

#4 Suggestion vs. Explicit Statement

Notice that in both examples considered thus far the information has been given indirectly in terms of sense-data or verbal structure: i.e., the desired relationships were suggested rather than being directly stated.

People prefer suggestion to explicit statement in these matters--if for no other reason than that the person who feels the suggestion participates fully and immediately--he feels that he has made a discovery for himself, which is quite another thing than having someone tell him what he ought to feel.

Cleanth Brooke and Robert Penn Warren, Understanding Poetry. (New York, 1952, p. 18)

An instance of the reader's being told what he ought to experience is furnished by Donald Wandrei's "Colossus" (January, 1934). This story exemplifies what may be called the gosh-wow-boy-o-boy school of science-fiction writing, in which the fictitious character exclaims repeatedly about the marvels he is witnessing.

Duane pondered. "It's a staggering conception...that giant atom might be only one of billions of other atom-worlds...and all that super-universe forming--what?"

"A molecule! And there might be on that still vaster universe still more tremendous beings. And that molecule might be the only one of billions of other molecules...and forming even--"

"Don't," Duane said. "It's too big! I can hardly grasp it!" (P. 43)

In this story the protagonist not only theorizes about the super universe but contemplates an expansion into it:

"What!" shrielled Dowell, his face shining with excitement.

"Do you realize what that means?...You might become huger than Earth, or the solar system, or even our galaxy!..."

Duane, if you do it, you may burst through to that giant atom, and...be visible to...whatever was on it!"

Duane, overwhelmed, looked dreamy-eyed. "Vast concepts!" he murmured. "They're too much for my brain." (P. 44)

The reader witnesses the emotions of the characters, but he cannot share them. Donald Wandrei's theme, we shall say, is identical with Don A. Stuart's, but of idea in the literary sense his story contains nothing at all. Only when the theme is conveyed indirectly, i.e., by literary methods, are we entitled to speak of "idea."

It is due to Mr. Stuart's literary skill that his story is important, since it furnishes the simplest possible example of information express by purely verbal methods. The situation conveyed by this story is essentially metric in character: If A, B, and C designate the universes in the order described them one could ever be

pedantic enough to write down a formula, A is to B as B is to C. There exists, one might say, a duplication of ratios or relative magnitudes which is expressed by Mr. Stuart's duplication of phrases.

But in most literary works (especially those which are not science-fiction) the information to be conveyed is non-metric and therefore must be expressed by more complicated verbal methods--connotation, sentence structure, and all the other things classified under "literary" style."

Mr. Stuart's story is relevant, then, because it enables us to study in isolation an elementary stylistic device, and so prepare us for the more complex example to be discussed in the next section.



#5 Technique as Discovery

This time, the general theme is "mind-transference;" and our first example, although without intrinsic merit, is useful as a gauge by which we can judge later, a more successful story.

The title is "Warriors of Eternity" by Carl Buchanan and Arch Carr (August, 1934); the scientist is Daniel Futrell, who invents an anesthetic which can "divorce the intelligence from the body." Futrell administers the first dose to himself--and then is obliged to watch his body destroyed by the jealous Wilks Hurd, the laboratory assistant and one-time friend.

Eventually, Futrell is rescued by "Mola, maid of Phenos"--a planet "billions of light years from Earth"--who in some fashion has "watched" his experiments. It transpires that on Mola's world, the minds of would-be criminals are released from their bodies (like the earthman's are released from his), so after being transported to this planet, Futrell is allowed to choose such a vacated body as his future habitation.

In what follows, the Earthman directs a battle against the "Warriors of Eternity," an army of these homeless criminal intelligences, who become indignant at being left adrift in the infinite.

Futrell heard the murmurous whine of dynamos. The room was deluged with brilliant colors, pouring up the scale, dimming into a yellow phosphorescence as the waves changed from color to the infinitely small waves which control the liberation of thought.

Would the device he had brought...from Earth be sufficient to shield him from the...Warriors' thought-destruction machines? Would he be able to report the arrangement of the spaceships...so that central control room...would be able to deploy...forces in the most efficient manner?

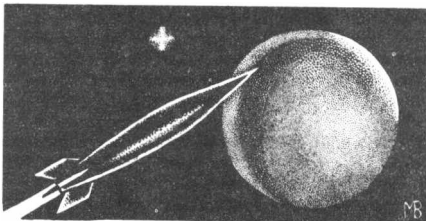
Everything depended upon his success, Futrell decided.

He could not, must not, fail. (P. 88)

Even without its central figure (on whose every gesture depends the fate of a world) Warriors epitomizes the early science fiction

story by its indefinite representation of physical apparatus (characterized here only by spectacular sounds and colors) and its meaningless rationale of the experiment itself.

Similar naiveté is associated with another type of "fantastic" story, namely, the fairy tale, where there exists no clear distinction between what can happen and what can only be imagined.



Relevant here is the causal naiveté exhibited by various writers of Astounding, which seemed to impose a like simplicity in narrative style and characterization--thus resulting in an even closer resemblance to the fairy story.^m

We do not think that a literate but scientifically ignorant writer will venture into science-fiction--since he knows that his hazy visualization of things scientific would be incongruous with the sharpness of perception and complexity of motivation expected in an adult story. For this reason we should expect that a science-fiction story exhibiting only a nursery-school acquaintance with science will also display a similar limitation of literary technique.

Thus John Russel Fearn's "Blue Infinity" (September, 1935)ⁿ describes the removal of the Earth from the Solar System, this being accomplished by: 1) a "gravitational annihilator," which is to "stop all gravity...between Sun and Earth," 2) a "Gravity-Tripler," which magnifies the pull exerted on earth by the stars, and 3) an "Ether-destroyer," which creates a tunnel through which the Earth, "unhindered by the retarding force of...ether," travels to Alpha Centuri in seven terrestrial days.

Not only does the author tell the reader the astonishment he ought to feel--by the repetition of phrases like "mighty and colossal," "incredible and astounding," "terrific and awe inspiring"--but he will write passages like this:

"Come on, what's in your mind?"

"Oh, nothing, except--except that I want you to know I love you."

"Well, that's very touching, Jerry, but I'm afraid I've no time for love. My work is carved amongst the stars and untouchable things..." (P. 93)

Now, one of Astounding's more sensitive readers became disturbed by this fairy tale^o tendency in the magazine, and he wanted to convey his attitude to the other readers. This he tried to do, not by explicit comment (i.e., a letter of complaint) but by writing a parody of the science-fiction fairy story.

His name was David Daniels and his story, "The Way of the Earth," (October, 1935).

Here we witness two experiments in mind disassociation, the first being conducted by the Terrestrial scientist Noklid (perhaps a synthesis of "Newton" and "Euclid"). Assisting in the experiment is Lee Navarre, a captured rebel leader, who had been requested from the great Dictatahr by Noklid himself.

That the scientist had asked for Lee caused the dictatahr quite a lot of thought. Had anyone besides Noklid asked for him, the request would never have been granted; it is possible that the asker might not have lived to make another request. However, Noklid was Noklid, and greater in his way than any dictatahr. (PP. 137-8)

Near the start, in discussing Lee's capture, Daniels imitates not the children's story in particular, but the "romantic" pulp adventure story. A recurring situation in such works is the capture and escape^o--but of course the hero is never captured through the greater skill of his adversary, but by their "sheer weight of numbers." Here, Daniels carries such reasoning to its absolute limit by depicting one bare-fisted man resisting an entire army:

After his weapons were empty he clenched his great fists and called to the ships to come and take him. He stood alone on the tower, his head bare, and laughed...

He knew there was no escape now, for already a ground force was coming up inside of the tower. Very likely he gloried in the fact that it needed an army to take him...

They could only approach him from one direction because of his position...The first he felled with a blow to the jaw, and they approached more warily. Finally they had rushed, hurtling themselves upon him so quickly that his driving fist fists were clogged, till they bore him down by sheer weight. (PP. 138-9)

Concerning the experiment: Noklid wishes to investigate the behavior of matter under high compression, and to this end guides the consciousness of the subject into the Earth's interior. Here, Navarre recalls a theory, overheard in his college days, that space itself is warped by the compression in the earth's center, so that any chunk of matter placed there would be distorted into a higher dimension. Thus to "an imaginary voyageur...it would suddenly seem...that he had been transposed to some remote part of the universe..."

And this is precisely what happens:

Now the whole of space was visible to him...

He saw Earth as it had existed in preglacial ages...he saw Noklid in his laboratory bending over his own corpse...;and he saw the planet grown cold with ages...

Nevertheless, something on another planet in a remote galaxy caught...his attention. It was a planet much like Earth, though it revolved around a double sun. And its inhabitants were men!

...Lee saw a man working on apparatus beneath which an unconscious body was lying...an experiment was taking place... similar to the one he had undertone. He realized that the subject's mind was somewhere out in free space searching for knowledge to enable him to perform a certain task. (P. 142)

The task in question is performed by Hatzho, scientist of the planet Radrok, who is seeking a way to defeat the Nark-nur, or space-reptile, which visits his planet each year.

It had all begun ten years before...No one knew just where they came from, though...it was finally decided that they lived in free space...that they followed the two suns, soaking in energy from them and waiting for Radrok's orbital movement to bring around to them. They they calmly floated down for their meals.

They were metallic looking creatures ten times the length of a tall man and thick in proportion...Yet what they were composed of...the Radrokians could not answer.

...To the majority of the Radrokians it would have made little difference what they were composed of...had they not shown so great an appetite for the buildings of man.

Ten years before it had been a very great surprise to the Radrokians to be waked one morning to find that their buildings were being eaten away over their heads. They had come rushing out in all states of disapparel to flee.

Above them, hovering...in mid-air...were the space-reptiles--calmly munching away on the buildings. It appeared that they enjoyed solid food of a mineral type. The stone and metal structures of Radrok just suited them...

Since all men, whether...from Radrok...or Earth, are...egotistical, it struck the populace as strange that the reptiles showed no appetite for them. It would have paralyzed them with fear...if the monsters had been tearing down the buildings to get at them, but it would not have surprised them half so much. (P. 143)

Although the reptiles are impervious to solid projectiles, Warlahk, the planet's ruler, is told they can be destroyed by "infra-atomic energy"--which, unfortunately, nobody on Radrok knows how to generate. But Hatzho has invented a new machine which can "divorce a person's mind from his body"--and proposes to steal the required knowledge from some more advanced race which already possesses it. The subject of Hatzho's experiment is Aranar, his laboratory assistant. Aranar's welfare has been the prime concern of Na-ani, the scientist's daughter; but so far, her attention has not been reciprocated. Later, however, when the body is revived, his attitude is markedly changed--since Aranar's body now is occupied by another personality.

Time passes--and Warlahk learns from his spies that Hatzho's assistant--now called Lih of Navahr--possesses the mind of a human

from another planet and that with his help Hatzho is constructing an atomic cannon to destroy the space-reptiles. Warlahk also suspects that Hatzho is planning to use his new weapon for a rebellion. But the ruler also wishes the nark-nur to be destroyed, and so decides to arrest the scientist after the task is completed.

And so--immediately following the public Annihilation Hatzho is surrounded by secret operatives, dressed on civilian clothes, who were scattered among the crowd.

They were starting to lead Hatzho away when an interruption came...from the top of the building which the last space reptile had been ready to eat when it was destroyed...

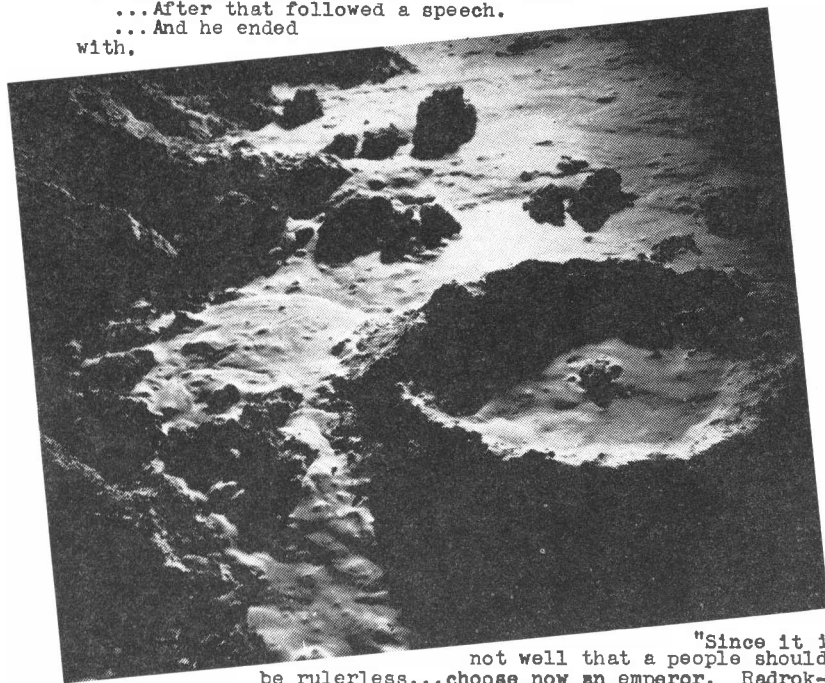
A figure stepped forward to the edge of the building.

...As Lee appeared one of those who had surrounded Hatzho leaped toward the atomic machine. Lee pressed the button a black hand weapon he carried, and the man vanished.

..."People," he said, "this morning you have seen a menace to your planet destroyed by a new weapon."

...After that followed a speech.

...And he ended with,



"Since it is not well that a people should be rulerless...choose now an emperor. Radrok-ians, whom will you have?"

They shouted, "Lih, Lih of Navahr!" and Lee smiled, for that was what he had intended...they should say.

...That was all. After that there was no trouble, for it had been Warlahk who leaped toward the atomic machine and vanished. He was as dead as the space-reptiles. (PP.151-2)

As we have said, Way of the Earth is a fairy tale written in the guise of a science-fiction story. (Merely substitute "wizard" for the term "scientist" and replace "space-reptiles" by "dragons," etc.) But instead of composing accidentally in this genre through literary and scientific naiveté, Daniels conveys the desired information by a conscious application of literary technique.

That the author is not trying to depict a physically plausible sequence of events is manifested not only by his choice of names and

titles--"Warlshk," "dictatahr"--but by the texture^P of his style--i.e., by the fairy tale construction of his sentences.

For example, the conclusion is:

Thus Lee Navarre lost an empire on Earth and won another on a planet so distant that the galaxy of which it is a part cannot be seen by our telescopes; but that did not make it any the less real and dear to its new ruler.

Also indicative of the author's purpose is his method of rationale. Thus Daniels does not explain the space reptiles; he explains them away: "No one knew just where they came from." "As to where they had been before their first visit...no one knew." "...what they were composed of...the Radrokians could not answer."

Were the story trying to imply a naturalistic explanation the reader might object to the improbability of Noklid's and Hatzho's experiments being performed at the same time--so Daniels overcomes this difficulty by denying that time is relevant:

Hatzho had not sent the mind of his subject into the void at the same time Noklid sent Lee into the earth, but the two happenings took place together in absolute time. That is just another way of saying that time played no part in the incident; for when Lee broke through space he was above all time. Hatzho of Radrok may have lived a billion years before or a billion years after Lee was born, but the two of them existed together in the same scheme of things, and that was all that was necessary. (P. 147)

Clearly, we are seeing things not from the casual viewpoint, but "under the aspect of eternity."

It was due to their attempt at literal rendition that the readers of Astounding found this story incomprehensible; thus one complainer, after noting its thematic identity with "Warriors of Eternity," asks the question: "If the space-reptiles get their energy from solar radiation, why would they have to eat at all?"⁹

Why indeed? One may as well ask of Frank Baum's well-known story, "How could the scarecrow talk to Dorothy if he had no brains?"--moreover, "Without brains, how could the scarecrow be intelligent enough even to wish for a brain?" Such are the paradoxes which arise when scientific causality is applied to a situation where it is not applicable.

Daniels' story, then, is a fairy tale by design, in contrast to "Warriors," which is a fairy tale by accident--and thus illustrates the difference between a writer who controls his material and one who is controlled by it,

#6 Concluding Remarks

What we originally desired to refute was the notion that "ideas" were somehow important in the sense that they could be discussed in independently of literary technique. However, in Daniels' story the author is not trying express an idea; he is trying to evoke an attitude or frame of mind.

Therefore we must generalize the argument--which is done most easily by noting that "ideas," ordinarily are thought to be a part of a story's "content," which in turn is distinguished from the author's "communication" of this content. This view, which we denote as the "Communication" theory of literature, has been promulgated recently by John Brunner and his associates. "The whole idea of fiction," states a correspondent, "is to tell a story"¹⁰--and in words of Brunner himself:

There is probably only one work in English which can afford to stand up and just be beautiful--Kubla Khan--because its function disappeared with the remainder of it on the arrival of the Person from Porlock.¹¹

(The reader will recall that Coleridge, while transcribing an opium dream, was interrupted by a caller from Porlock, and after the departure could not remember the rest of the dream.) Notice Mr. Brunner's implicit division of a literary work into "subject" and "form," with the "function" of one assumed to be the communication

of the other. Technique, in this view, is something external imposed on the subject and therefore is superfluous.

"Only one work," says Brunner, "can afford to...just be beautiful"--because the "subject of Coleridge's poem presumably disappeared with the unremembered portion and hence the function of the poem to "communicate" this subject.

But as Daniels' story illustrates, without technique there is no subject matter--for in a literary work these two are so well-mixed as to be inseparable. Thus in the panorama witnessed by Lee Navarre, "...the whole of space was visible to him...He saw Earth as it had existed in preglacial ages...and he saw the planet grown cold with ages..." Navarre stands outside time--this being how the author first expresses the irrelevancy of time for his particular purpose.

The transcendence of time is emphasized once again in the author's reference to the exchange of mentalities: "...time played no part in the incident; for when Lee broke through space he was above all time." These two passages combine to express the author's lack of concern with the usual cause and effect relationships. Thus Lee's vision of eternity is not merely an incident "communicated" by the author; it is part of the technique by which he creates the desired attitude in the reader.

In a literary work, then, the distinction between "form" and "content" does not exist--therefore "idea" cannot be regarded as a self-subsistent entity. Only by the application of technique can an author create a literary work and whatever ideas and attitudes it will imply. Thus we finally learn, in the words of Mark Schorer, "not only that technique contains intellectual and moral implications, but that it discovers them."

THE END

Appendix:

Mr. August Derleth objects that the statement on page 5 --"The inferior writer tells us..."--is a non sequitur. Although I do not regard such avoidance of "fast" characterization as being an invariable rule, I do think it is valid as a general procedure, for reasons given by Brooks and Warren (page 8).

Also, Dr. Kenneth Sterling remarks that the word "parody" (page 10) is not perfectly accurate: a non-literal interpretation of Daniels' story does not make it an outright parody in the sense that Dr. Sterling's own Brain Eaters of Pluto (Wonder Stories, March 1934), for example, was a parody.

FOOTNOTES

- a. Donn Brazier, "Hang Out the Black," Skyhook. I (May 1948), 7.
- b. Larry Farsace, "My Attraction to Science Fiction, Fantasy--and Why," Golden Atom. 8th issue (1955) 10.
- c. William L. Freeman, "Fire the Critic... Ready?" Inside and Science Fiction Advertiser. 12th issue, (November 1955), 3.
- d. Thus Frederick Morgan (Hudson Review. I (1949), 547) denotes one writer as the "outstanding practitioner of the 'dialectical' novel," which this critic defines as a "work of fiction based upon an underlying complex of ideas, the ideas themselves ...providing the work with its structure



- and dramatic tension." The author being discussed is Thomas Mann, and the work his Joseph trilogy.
- e. We use the word "relationships" in preference to "fact" because it is impossible to convey a fact about a fictitious person.
- f. Compare, for example, with Warner Van Lorne's "White Adventure" (April 1936), which, after describing an unseasonal snowfall presents an eight-page catalogue of distressing things: the difficulty of ocean travel, the shortage of drinking water, the increasing death rate, the abandoning of "law and order," etc. etc.
- g. See Eddie Clinton, "Ten Years," Diablerie, fifth issue (undated), 48: "Above all Campbell impresses us as being...a believer in experimentation, for unlike his predecessor (Tremaine), he thinks for himself..."
- h. Willis Conover, Jr. "Mother Goose Crime," The Science Fiction Critic. II (January 1938) 12.
- i. Cr. pages 47, 51, 58, 64, and 70.
- j. Such "isolation" marks an interesting difference between ordinary and science fiction. Ordinarily, for example, it is impossible to distinguish "realistic" from "naturalistic" writing, because they occur together--as in the works of Zola, which are "realistic" in their depiction of the sordid and bestial aspects of life and "naturalistic" in their exhibition of actions as determined by external circumstances.
- But science fiction concerns differences which, insignificant now, are magnified by their projection into the future. The Realist, of course, is Robert Heinlein and the Naturalist (with some qualifications), A. E. van Vogt.
- k. This story resulted in a curious oversight. In its sequel, "Discus Men of Etna," Futrell, returning to Earth, tells how, in his former terrestrial life, "Wilks Hurd released my intelligence...30 odd Earth years ago." But this statement is hardly consistent with "Warriors," where (in the concluding sentence) Futrell learns that such a return trip is impractical because "Upon Earth, 10,000 years of Earth-time have passed since...your friend destroyed you body."
- l. Examples of the omnipotent hero are cited in this writer's "The Cliché in the Clayton Astounding Story." Other instances of scientific double-talk are given in "The Faustus Tradition in the Early Science-Fiction Story" (both Inside, 1962).
- m. A typical instance of fairy tale writing is Donald Wandrei's description, in "Colossus Eternal" (December 1934) of the space fleet summoned by Nrm, mad emperor of Valdom (pp. 62-63).
- n. Cf. Walter Gillings' reference (in Fantasy Review, I, October-November 1947, 9) to John Russell Fearn's "Blue Infinity" as one of Astounding's "fairy tales of astronomy."
- o. Our usage of the term "Fairy tale" is not that of Hugo Gernsback, who seems to place in this category anything not conforming to his notion of the didactic science-story. A science-fiction story is one in which a naturalistic explanation is stated or implied, and such plausability can be induced by pure literary methods without a specific explanation. See "The Cliché in the Clayton Astounding Story" for a discussion of how such plausability is elicited by a story of Don A. Stuart.
- p. See Mark Schorer's reference (The Hudson Review, I, 78) to Joyce A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man, which "analyzes its material rigorously, and...defines the value and the quality of its experience not by appended comment...but by the texture of the style."
- q. Milton Rothman, letter in "Brass Tacks," December 1935, page 157.
- r. Quoted by Joh Brunner in "Rusty Chains," Inside and Science Fiction Advertiser, 14th issue (1956), 20.
- s. Letter in Inside and Science Fiction Advertiser, 16th issue, (1956), 35, 37.



how to be a sf critic

Robert Bloch

In the interests of American Literature, I have recently waded through approximately 100 pages of current science fiction and fantasy magazine letter columns, and an equal number of pages of review columns in the fan magazines.

This, I submit, is a lot of wading.

But the results were worth it. They bear fruit.

Mainly razzberries.

I was interested, primarily, in studying just how the average reader approaches the problem of criticizing professional science fiction.

Did I find out? Well...

If any of you readers are interested in becoming critics in your own right, if you want to get your name printed as an authority in fanzines and prozines, I've got good news for you. Apparently, this business of literary criticism is a simple one. A child can do it.

A lot of them, believe me, do!

To begin with, a critic needs to develop a specialized vocabulary in order to evaluate professional writing. This may sound difficult to you, but in reality it's no trick at all.

You need only about four words. Watch them, now, and memorize them carefully. The words are:

TERRIFIC.

AVERAGE.

SCIENTIFIC.

STINKS.

The whole technique of s.f. criticism springs from the frequent, invariable, undeviating repetition of the above four words.

You don't believe it?

All right, let's try the system. Take a story. Any story. Skim through it. Don't bother to read it closely; I said "skim through it," and I mean just that. If you read it closely you might get your mind cluttered up with little irrelevant details concerning style, technique, sociological implication and such cornball stuff.

You don't need such material. After all, as I understand it from reading the reviews, the first duty of a self-appointed "critic" is to make an impression on the readers as a personality in his own right. And you never make such an impression unless you're DYNAMIC, POSITIVE and AGGRESSIVE. You can't afford to hedge or be wishy-washy. What you want is to register a SOCKO VERDICT, and condense that verdict into as few words as possible.

Let's say, for the sake of argument (that's the objective critical attitude, after all, isn't it--argument?) that the story you've just skimmed through is entitled THE FARMERS, by Philip José Love.

Let's say you liked it. The method is then obvious. You write a one-line postcard which says, "Just read THE FARMERS and it's terrific!"

Then stop and sign your name. That's all. Don't be tempted to go on and explain why you liked the story, or what it meant to you.

This article, originally intended for publication in DIMENSIONS,
courtesy of Harlan Ellison.

Just deliver your verdict, forcefully, and shut up.

Let's suppose, however, that you were puzzled by the story--didn't quite understand it. But that you heard or read comments by others praising it. So in order not to tip your hand and display your confusion, you can adopt the bored, or superior gambit. Make comments on the other stories in the issue, then slip in, very casually, this statement: "THE FARMERS is above average." Or, "THE FARMERS is below average." Never just say "average," and never, under any circumstances, attempt to explain just what "average" consists of, or the standards one uses to arrive at the concept.

Now for point three, and it's an important one. If you really want to be in the swing of things and establish yourself as an AUTHORITY ON SCIENCE FICTION, be sure to judge everything on the basis of a thorough knowledge of nuclear physics and learn how to make a hydrogen bomb in your home in your spare time, simply by reading two or three editorials in your favorite s.f. magazines. Once equipped with this unimpeachable background, you then hurl thunderbolts at stories as follows:

"THE FARMERS, while adequate, is not scientific."

Again, I caution you not to define "scientific." The word has nothing to do with the soundness of psychological motivations, or the proper evaluation of the social background in the story. It has only to do with the use of presently accepted equations, such as $1/S_e X = 2$.

If the story does not contain similar equations, or the plot is not hinged on the use of such equations, you are perfectly safe in saying "not scientific."

Finally, let us say you didn't understand the story, or you didn't care for the subject matter, or you feel that the author is either too obscure or too popular (it doesn't matter which) and is fair game.

Then you write what I've read hundreds of times again:

"THE FARMERS stinks!" Or better still, "STINKS!!!"

See? It's really simple, isn't it?

A few minor pointers and you're on your own.. (Your own what is for you to decide.)

Never, never. NEVER attempt to qualify your statements with such weakening phrases as "in my opinion," or "I think," or "I believe." Remember that you're an AUTHORITY. You don't have opinions, you don't think or believe. You KNOW, and you are right. That's the attitude that builds confidence in your criticism.

Don't succumb to the temptation to add "because." Never explain or give reasons why you formed these opinions. That may open you up to criticism, because people can dispute your findings. Avoid such traps.

And finally, if you're reviewing stories or books for a fan magazine, by all means do not waste a line of precious space on the plot or the story theme or the background. These are just minor frills put in by the authors to confuse the poor critics and make their jobs harder.

Admitted, there are exceptions to these rules: lots of them. In both the letter columns and the fan magazines I have read thoughtful, mature, adult judgements on stories by reviewers who tried to understand what the writers were attempting to say and do, and who evaluated the results by literary standards and by a seasoned knowledge of the entire genre. And, in such cases, the critics qualified their opinions as being purely personal.

But you must avoid this. Nobody wants to read such wishy-washy stuff.

If you want to make a real dent in the s.f. circles, keep pegging everything that comes along as TERRIFIC, AVERAGE, NOT SCIENTIFIC, or IT STINKS.

This type of criticism has been going on since 1926, without noticeable change--and as you know it is largely responsible for the great progress made in the field by writers who have benefited and profited by such verdicts.

Particularly if they never bother to read them.

circulation

Joseph Farrell

On the office door it said in big letters: TED BARLOW, EDITOR, and in small letters in a lower corner: Stellar Science Fiction Magazine.

Ted Barlow sat at his desk whistling the melody from the second movement of Franck's Third Symphony. He was lean and saturnine and a little short of middle age, hollow eyed and sallow of complexion, and the somber theme suited his present mood.

"Damn it," he growled at the charwoman. "I need some new writers. The same old stuff every issue--space opera, robots rebelling, time travel! What's the matter with my writers? Don't I do enough to stimulate their imaginations?"

Mrs. Albright nodded and pushed her broom faster. She was new on the job and a little afraid of this probably violent man who printed strange stories about monsters from space. She approached a corner desk on which thick manila envelopes were stacked unopened and brushed away cobwebs with her feather duster. Barlow grunted a little more pleasantly. This was an improvement over Mrs. Scapini with her yakking all morning and never touching a brush to the dirt.

He scraped his teeth with a thumbnail and scowled again at the proof sheets. This issue really needed some corners rounded off. Too much soggy, overcooked maize. The publishers were weeping noisily now about the sales chart, and another issue such as the last could mean a reorganization. Something must be done.

He unlocked a drawer and took out a bulging valise. He stood up and started for the door to the backroom.

"No!" he shouted.

Mrs. Albright snatched her hand from the doorknob and cringed fearfully. Barlow relaxed, realizing that she hadn't meant any harm.

"This is your first day, Mrs. Albright," he said. "I forgot to tell you that nobody is allowed through that door. Nobody! Except, of course, with my permission."

"Yes, sir." She reached for her broom and brush. "I-- I believe I'm finished here. They'll be looking for me in the office across the hall."

Barlow watched her leave. No doubt she was convinced that the back room was full of little green men from Mars. Barlow chuckled and went into the room. She wasn't too far from the truth at that.

There were three men seated at typewriters. The three varied in size and shape and such details, but all had a certain look in common. All had unhealthily pasty faces and hungry eyes and all were jumpy in their movements. They twitched uneasily as Barlow entered.

"Is it time, boss?" asked the first man.

"Yes, Hannegan, it's time," said Barlow, and he drew a long stemmed pipe and a leather pouch from the valise. "Although you don't deserve it with the stuff you've been turning out. At that, you did the best of the three this time."

He stoked the pipe with grey powder from the pouch, handed it to Hannegan. The writer struck a match, steadied his hand against the bowl with the other hand, and sucked greedily at the stem. When he had it going, he leaned back, his eyes closed and a happy expression on his vacant face. Barlow turned to the second man, drew a long needle from the valise.

"As for you, Spiros Kohalakos, you should have nothing after what you gave me. Robots rebelling! You're nothing but a would-be Asimov! Have you no imagination at all?"

Spiros rolled back a sleeve and held out a bare arm hopefully.

Barlow grumbled a little longer, then pushed in the needle. . .

The third writer was a wisp, an abbreviated bag of bones with the many twitches of an advanced compulsion neurosis. He held out his

hand, palm down, and turned pleading eyes to the editor.

Barlow had the bag closed and hadn't intended to open it. But the big begging brown eyes touched a soft spot he had thought was buried beyond finding at the time he became an editor. The writer looked like a starving dog, a faithful dog gazing devotedly at his master. And he had done some good work in the past. Well--for old time's sake, then. He opened the bag, found a package of white powder and dropped some on the back of the outstretched hand. The writer held it under his nose and inhaled greedily.

"You don't deserve that, Gordon," Barlow told him. "What did you give me this month? A story about a man selling his soul to the devil! A pact with the devil--why nobody uses that any more. Nobody!"

"I'll do better," Gordon promised. "I'm working on a good one now, boss. Look, this first space ship to Venus finds the planet populated with beautiful red headed women with--get this, boss--no arms! Do you get it, boss--"

"Shaddup!" Barlow roared. "Gordon, you're getting worse all the time. What you need is a change of pace. And I know just what to do about it."

Gordon looked up fearfully. "Boss--you're not going to make me write the editorial again? Not that, boss--"

"Better than that!" Barlow pronounced sentence with sadistic pleasure. "For you--it's the manuscript pile!"

"No, boss! No! Please!"

Barlow pointed meaningfully to the outer office. Gordon sobbed and held his hand out again.

"At least let me have another snifter first, boss."

Gordon dutifully went to work on the manuscripts which had been piling up for three months. His work became a routine. He would slit open the envelope, glance at the first page of the manuscript, shudder, clip a rejection slip to it, push the manuscript into the return envelope and toss it into the outgoing mail basket.

Barlow lounged with his feet on the desk, filing his nails.

"Might turn up something good at that," he observed. "That's how I got in touch with Spiros. Anything good yet, Gordon?"

His answer was a disgusted head shake. Gordon continued through the pile. Once in a while he read hopefully past the first page, but always ended up shaking his head and reaching for the dwindling stock of rejection slips.

The fact that we are returning your material does not mean that it is without merit. Please read Stellar Science Fiction to discover our needs. We give prompt and careful attention to all manuscripts submitted...

There were only a dozen envelopes left on the table when Gordon slit open a thick one and pulled out what was evidently a novelet. He read the first page, began to look interested, then the second. Then he settled back and read the entire story.

"This is it, boss," he said, turning down the last page. Trouble Planet, by B.E. Muenster. This is what you're after."

Barlow grasped the manuscript eagerly and settled down to read. He squeaked happily as he went swiftly through the short novel. When he was finished he took his feet from the desk and let them fall decisively to the floor.



"Why this is wonderful, Gordon. Get off a telegram to this B.E. Muenster--I want him down here as fast as he can come. What a style--he writes about other worlds as if he'd been there. I'll have Mrs. Albright clean off that extra desk. And--ah--you and the other two better take a few days off. It's a new day that's dawning, Gordon. A bright brave new day..."

Mr. B. E. Muenster appeared the next morning. He stood before Barlow's desk and stared out of sunken eyes at the editor. His skin was pasty and his flesh puffy.

"It's about time," he told Barlow.

"Why, ah--" Barlow revised his plans. He had expected a grateful individual, awed by his editorial importance. "We had to talk your story over you know. Don't just buy these things like that." He snapped his fingers. "And I've been laid up with lumbago, or you would have heard from me sooner, believe me."

"I don't," said Muenster.

Barlow grunted. Artistic temperament. They all had it at first.

"Rather nice tale," he said, making it sound casual. "I'd like to buy it for Stellar, and we'd like to get more of the same. We have a standard contract here and I'm happy to say the publisher has authorized me to sign you up."

He watched hopefully. Muenster's sallow skin and fixed stare gave him encouragement. This was going to go off easily after all. He took the valise from the drawer.

"You'll have your own office," he said, and started laying the contents of the valise on the desk. "And a good salary...and whatever you need..."

He looked slyly up at the writer. "Which one do you use?"

Muenster glanced contemptuously at the pipe, the needle and the white powder and shook his head. He reached into a pocket and took out a many colored cylinder an inch thick and a foot long. It looked like a child's kaleidoscope.

He grasped the ends and pulled. The cylinder came apart with a sharp pop and a small cloud of white vapor appeared. Muenster poked his nose into the cloud and inhaled deeply.

"That's mine," he said, and put the cylinder together. It was actually two tubes, one fitting closely over the other. Barlow eyed it, surprised.

"What is that stuff?" he demanded. "Whatever it is, I'll supply it. I have connections."

Muenster's fishy eyes met Barlow's with what might have been scorn. "Connections with Aldebaran VI?" he asked. He held out the cylinder. "Try it."

Barlow held the cylinder before his face as he had seen Muenster do. Aldebaran VI? This guy really lived science fiction. All the better of course. And it would pay well to humor him. He pulled hard on the cylinder, pushed his nose into the vapor and filled his lungs.

He was in a spaceship. A tremendous spaceship with a crew of thousands, and he was the captain, and his huge space going vessel was a small world in itself. They were living the life glamorous, exploring the galaxy to find the suitable planets for the people back on earth to colonize. It was the year 4,236 and they had mapped a hundred star systems. He looked back at the planet they had just left. Why, their adventures were like fiction! Material for a dozen novels on that world. Telepathic natives who wanted to steal their ship, and the female members of the crew always getting into trouble and having to be rescued. And the other planets they had visited--every one of them different and every one filled with drama and fascination...

And he was sitting in his office, stupidly holding a colored cylinder, and not a thousandth of a second had passed. He was living on two time scales. He was slowly exhaling the vapor and his mind

on the other time scale could almost count the molecules that left his nostrils.

He pointed to a distant star and said to Ferro, "Try that one next."

The metallic creature acknowledged the order with a salute and pushed a button. A blur of grayness, and the distant star became a nearby blue white sun. There were planets nearby, and Barlow looked them over.

"That one," he told Ferro, pointing. "Looks like a good oxygen and water world. And Ferro, be sure to grease yourself well before we land. Remember the trouble we had scraping the rust off last time."

"Yes, master," said the iron man. Barlow had found him on one of the planets he had explored. Was Ferro a robot built by some long forgotten race, or was he a natural life form? Of course, one couldn't come right out and ask such a personal question. But there was more immediate work.

A tenth of a second passed. Barlow lived through a year of exciting adventures on the new planet. Finally all obstacles were overcome and Captain Barlow stood in the entrance of his space ship and lectured the pacified natives.



He lived through years of thrilling adventures with the faithful metal creature and the beautiful Dolora Duren, the ship's nurse. The rest of the crew remained vague. He never quite saw their faces, somehow.

Finally the thrilling life of space began to dim, and suddenly it snapped and he was in his chair holding the cylinder. He knew that only a few seconds had passed.

"Muenster! What is this stuff? Where on Earth did you pick it up?"

Muenster took the tube from his hands and shoved it into a pocket. "Where on Earth? Can't your primitive little mind understand that it actually came from Aldebaran VI? It's habit forming, of course. One shot and you're an addict. So from now on you need me, Barlow. You'll always need me."

"But why--?" Barlow slumped in his chair, beaten, knowing that the other was telling the truth. "Why are you doing this to me?" His hand went to his cheek in sudden horror as he realized something. "That B. E.--? Does that mean...?"

"Exactly." B. E. Muenster started peeling the flesh from his face. The putty fell away, leaving a chitinous growth from which folded antennae straightened out. His eyes bulged out from short wavering stalks. "I left my home planet in a hurry and my people are looking for me--to terminate my existence. A fate which I certainly have coming to me, but which I intent to dodge. From now on I'll live in that back room of yours and write stories of space travel for you. And once a day you can have a whiff of the slojr-tube. In return you will conceal me. Call it a symbiosis--you need my slojr vapor, and I need you for the safest possible hideout--a science fiction editor's office. Any report of an extraterrestrial creature hiding here would be laughed off as a crude publicity gimmick--"

A terrified female scream lifted Barlow a foot from the seat of his chair. Mrs. Albright had walked in with her mop and pail. Her eyes bulged out almost as much as the alien's when she saw the creature in the room. With the adrenalin strength of a high order panic, she lifted the heavy mop and crashed it down on Muenster's head. The force of the blow cracked the mop handle. More of the Aldebaran's makeup putty showered to the floor and Muenster himself fell heavily. Mrs. Albright ran screaming from the office.

"My eyes!" Muenster moaned. "I'm blinded!"

"It's only temporary," said Barlow cheerfully, bending over the alien. "She uses a strong detergent. Damn good charwoman. I'll have to get a new one, I'm afraid. She won't be back."

First he made sure the tube was unharmed. He tossed it into a pocket, then hauled B. E. Muenster into the back room and tied him to the chair with venetian blind cords. Thin, but good enough to encircle the tiny thorax. Muenster couldn't struggle without cutting himself in half.

"I'll send out for chains and padlocks," said Barlow. "And I'll buy your deal--with the what do you call it tube in my pocket. You figured it right. Nobody will pay any attention to what Mrs. Albright might say about a creature from outer space being in this place."

He fingered the tube happily. The Aldebaranian, subdued, blinked his aching eyes and moaned some more. Barlow grinned at him.

"This is the beginning of a beautiful symbiosis, B. E., old partner. Hands across the void. And maybe someday, when whatever it is you did blows over and the heat's off--"

He shoved the tube into his pocket.

"Maybe then, B. E., you and I can go out and live some space opera together..."

pipsqueak prometheus:

Some Remarks on "the Writings of L. Ron Hubbard

william black beard

AUTHOR'S NOTE: The following article originally appeared in the Los Angeles' Science-Fantasy Society journal, Shangri-La, for May, 1950. It was composed on stencil at the time of publication and deliberately padded to flesh out the issue. The editors of Inside have offered me this opportunity to revise the article much as I would have done in 1950 had I had the time. I have therefore cut much verbiage from the original and added a number of observations, including a few based on events which took place after the time of writing, but I have tried in no way to alter the basic content and tone of the original, or its reflection of the excited, electric atmosphere which prevailed in 1950 during the whelping of Dianetics. This is, then, essentially a reprint, not a new article, and should be read as such.

In Writer's Yearbook for 1941, Steve Fischer recalls as outstanding among the fixtures of a New York editor's office a picture of Lafayette Ronald Hubbard in a pith helmet. Then one of the most prolific producers of pulp fiction alive, and a quondam member of the Explorers' Club, Hubbard must have seen to it that his picture was as basic a furnishing in many an editorial sanctum as the reject box--and that the pith helmet was as integral a part of each picture as the hearty dedication and flowing signature.

Nothing we are likely to read in any extensive survey of Hubbard's science fiction and fantasy writing is apt to cause us to discard the pith helmet as a vital part of our mental image of the author. As a matter of fact, as the material read approaches the close of Hubbard's career as a pulpateer, we seem to see only a grotesquely swollen pith helmet, a pith helmet which has swallowed up the man.

Ordinarily, an author deserving of no more than casual attention in the popular fiction field, aside from one or two wroks to be specified later, Hubbard has taken on a notoriety and eminence in the thinking world at large with the publication of his universal panacea, Dianetics. It is not the purpose of this article to comment directly on that volume. Hubbard has guarded too well against frontal assaults on the text of Dianetics: he postulates the existence in everyone of "engrams," unconscious memory retentions from painful occurrences in the pre-natal, which restrain and hamper the fulfillment of the individual, then ingeniously points out that anyone criticizing or attacking the conclusions reached in the book must have been led to do so by malignant engrams--so closing, on the level of his theory, all refutation and most

creative debate. Characteristically, however, Hubbard's ego has led him to overlook his most obviously exposed flank: that of his standing as a creative artist and thinker. He has failed to consider that his work in Dianetics might be challenged by an examination of his work in the fields outside the book, and, by analysis, extended through that work, of the nature of his qualifications for serious effort on any high creative or scientific level. Conclusions derived from such an undertaking, and backed by sufficient evidence and example, can hardly be termed engrammatic in origin, inasmuch as nothing but accepted literary values, a little insight, and some known facts need be used as the basis for the analysis.

This study has been limited to Hubbard's science fiction and fantasy, for his writing in these allied fields are sufficiently serious in part to qualify as vehicles of genuine analytical value. Nothing else he has written, outside of Dianetics itself, presents as relatively naked and accessible a pattern of his thinking, beliefs, and conscious or subconscious attitudes, if only because of the unique distinction held by science fiction and fantasy in the challenge they pose to the writer, forcing innate social ideas and philosophic concepts to the forefront of the mind and laying them bare in even the most hackneyed resultant work.

Hubbard-Englehardt-von Rachen-Lafayette's first science fiction story, "The Dangerous Dimension," was a short and appeared in Astounding Science Fiction for July, 1938. Editor Campbell's blurb for the story stated that "a name well known to adventure readers makes its first appearance in Astounding," and it was plain that Campbell, casting about for the sort of writer who could "trim" stories to the "smoothness" he desired, thought he had garnered one such in Hubbard. This initial work, brief though it is, contains in seedling form nearly every point which needs to be made about Hubbard's writing, elements which grew to be inordinately evident in his major science fiction and fantasy, as well as Dianetics itself.

These points are of prime import in evaluating Hubbard as a thinker, a creator, and a scientist. It is clear, for example that a man who regularly depicts ideas in terms of stereotyped images is not likely to be effectual as any of these. Hubbard, sadly, cannot free his mind from such images; they are clearly evidenced in his first science fiction story; they are almost never absent from a chapter, a page, a paragraph of his writing. The pith helmet's literary talent consists largely of a facile ability to revamp infinitely a small number of standardized characters, plots, and settings which are basic to his creative processes; he has only rarely and usually clumsily attempted to rise above this level of narrative carpentry.*

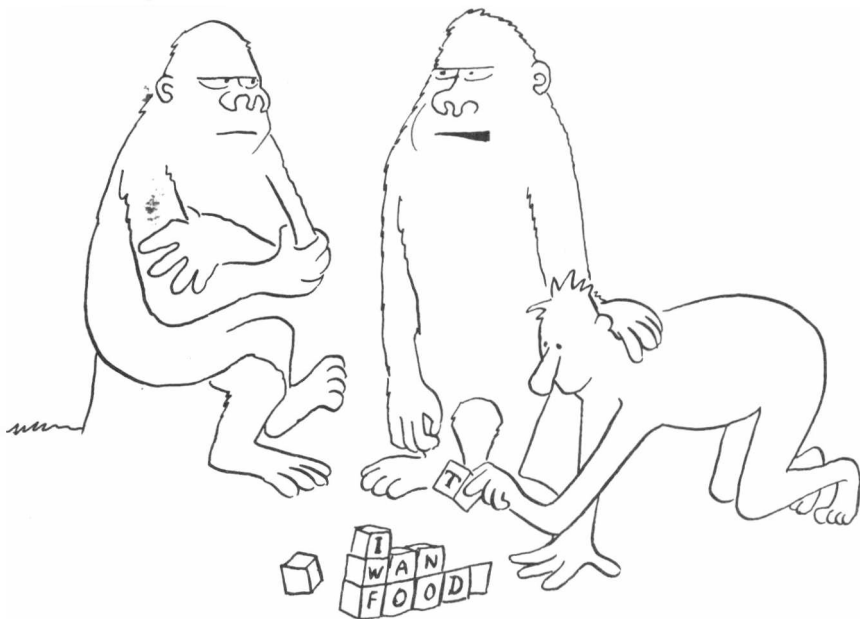
In "The Dangerous Dimension," we find a brilliant, absent-minded, shy, and unwordly scientist, Dr. Henry Mudge. With slight variations, this is the character of one of the two hero-stereotypes to be found throughout Hubbard's subsequent science fantasy. The meek

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*It can be argued, of course, that stereotypes are endemic to most pulp writing, even of top-flight writers in the science fantasy fields, but this is not relevant to our point: no other author in popular fiction has tried to launch a new science of the mind, or assert himself as a prometheus of enlightenment to the multitudes--with the possible exceptions of John W. Campbell, Jr., and Richard S. Shaver, to whom many of the points made in this article about Hubbard can be made to apply, and about whom much the same conclusions may be reached. There are also, it may be said, stereotyped characters in the science fiction writings of actual scientists, as Bertrand Russell, Fred Hoyle, and J.B.S. Haldane, but these are used deliberately as devices to activate social, scientific and philosophic concepts into narrative delineation--and the concepts in the fiction of these individuals are anything but stereotyped, nor are their plots, settings, or narrative gimmicks repetitive or obsessive. WB

doctor, of course, is endowed by Hubbard with a miraculous power, the exercise of which wisks him from place to place, a device which becomes one of the basic theme-stereotypes in Hubbard's work. Mudge is taken care of by a housekeeper, Mrs. Doolin, who mothers him through the institution of a rigid regimen which he effects to dislike, but upon which he is really dependant; this woman, the mother image, is one of Hubbard's two fundamental heroine stereotypes. The other, the sympathetic prostitute, is also to be found in this story, though more briefly: she is the woman on the houseboat in the Martian canal. At the conclusion of the narrative, a metamorphosis of the housekeeper-mother stereotype into that of the adoring prostitute is implied in the sudden fawning of Mrs. Doolin (now referred to by the author, without reference to any intervening marriage, as Mrs. Mudge!) in the presence of an altered, authoritative Mudge. The change in Mudge, of course, is complete: he evolves in a twinkling in the standard fairy tale manner from the decent but helpless prince kept by enchantment in a lowly state, where he must endure lashings every day, to a position of proud and respected authority. The latter figure, the masterful and and intelligent ruler of men, is the second of Hubbard's two hero-stereotypes. It is Mudge and the fulfilled prince, the two antipodes of stock pulp fiction characterization, which dominate Hubbard's science-fantasy writing. It is only the transition of the meek, humbled, brow-beaten character into the strong, dominating, self-sufficient individual, or his rescue by such an individual, which can save him from himself and his self-created crippling environment. Hubbard's commiseration is reserved for the former figure; his respect and admiration for the latter.

Delving further into Hubbard's work, we find any number of stereotyped means of developing and delineating narrative devices. An outstanding and highly significant example is to be found in "The Dangerous Dimension." This is the stock comic strip "socker" with which Hubbard verbally depicts the transition of Mudge from one locale to



"See, I told you they could reason"

the other, in this case, the single word, "whup!". Mudge's own term for this speedy switching of backgrounds, repeated only slightly less often than "whup!" is "zip!". The use of similar sockers for like purposes occurs noticeably in "The Professor Is a Thief," (in the term, "WHOOOSH!" and, conversely, "whooOOSH!") and in "The Obsolete Weapon," (in the word, "BOWIE!"). These sockers are indicative of Hubbard's apparent conviction that all transitions or accomplishments of an essentially miraculous or wish-fulfilling nature are, or should be, abrupt, swiftly executed, and absolute. The procedures by which Hubbard has his characters achieve a supernormal goal or transition is almost always swift and sudden; the achieved position is always irrevocable, unchangeable. It does become revocable only when, as in the case of Mike de Wolf's physical immersion in Horace Hackett's novel in "Typewriter in the Sky," it is absolutely necessary to give the story a conventionally happy ending. Thus the initial impression we gain of a mind possessing an almost rabid partiality for the fixed and definitely-limited conception is strengthened by the nature of certain of these conceptions themselves.

To digress briefly at this point, some considerations might be given to Hubbard's own avowed opinion of his work. He has frequently and publicly derided his science fiction and fantasy, stating that he cares little or nothing for anything he writes for money and that the bulk of it is deliberately formula. That this is primarily a pose designed to escape criticism for failings Hubbard must know exist even in those works to the preparation and composition of which he has probably directed the most conscientious and careful effort is readily demonstrable. Certainly the average reader is capable of divining in a story that excitement and pleasure communicated by the author when he has been absorbed by a theme and its delineation, just as he is able to sense the purely mechanical process which produces the hackwork written to make a buck. That much of Hubbard's fiction bears the watermark of buck-making is obvious: this work includes the Unknown novels, "Slaves of Sleep," "The Ghoul," "Death's Deputy," "The Ultimate Adventure," and "The Indigestible Triton," as well as the Astounding serials, "The Tramp," "General Swamp, C.I.C.," and "To The Stars," together with many short stories, notably the "Doc Methusaleh" series in Astounding. That certain other stories by this writer present every sign of an attempt to produce an outstanding and impressive work, is equally evident. This is the case in the Unknown novels, "Fear," and "Typewriter in the Sky," and in the Astounding op, "Final Blackout," and "The End is Not Yet." Yet the fact that the latter stories are constructed with much the same stereotyped characters and plot devices as the obviously hack material underlines the basic contention of this article: that Hubbard's thinking is inescapably bound to pre-conceived, unquestioned, and iron-cold patterns, images, and attitudes of thought, whether he is consciously aware of all of them or not. Thus the chief objection Hubbard might make to a serious study of his science-fantasy is not only invalid in itself, but clearly indicative of a basic aspect of the author's character: inability to accept responsibility for any action or postulated thought in which he foresees the possibility of critical reaction. Rather than face a debate in which something he has produced may be attacked or analyzed disparagingly, Hubbard prefers to sidestep the entire issue either by dismissing it as a thing beneath discussion or, as the case of Dianetics, diagnosing the critic in advance as demonstrably sick with the very psychoses his science of the mind has been calculated to cure.

To return to the body of the discussion, it must be stated, to further develop our analysis, that Hubbard is not a good writer. This is not a case of mere carelessness (although it is amusing to note, in this context, that the very first sentence of Hubbard's first science fantasy story, "The Dangerous Dimension," contains a startling grammatical error), nor is it a result of his deliberate pulp orientation, for there is a highly distinctive style of writing which has been evolved by a number of the major pulp writers in the past thirty years: Dashiell Hammett, Raymond Chandler, Norvell W. Page, Lester Dent, Frederick Faust, Cornell Woolrich, and John D. MacDonald, to name only

a few. The work of all these writers is slick, swift, and packs a punch. It is first-rate pulp. The pith helmet's, by contrast, is slovenly ill-paced, confused, and possesses a tendency to telegraph what little punch it is able to develop. This is possibly due in part to Hubbard's self-admittedly breakneck method of composition (although one must compare Faust and Page, both high-speed writers); possibly it is also partly the result of an undue influence on his work of well-known non-pulp writers, notably Dickens, which brings about, particularly in his more serious science fantasy, the introduction of a frequent uncertain style in his work, not quite "literary," not quite pulp. The following passage selected from a magazine at hand is typical; it is a paragraph from the third installment of "The End is Not Yet," page 108. Try to grasp the meaning expressed in an initial reading:

A few days later Martel was seated in the laboratory behind some large converted transformers doing some basic calculations for additional uses of the magnificent jinni he had discovered and, to some degree, bound to him with mathematical oaths. The small desk was rickety and high, its top sloping toward him. The light over it was dim and an old quill pen scratched, in ancient style over problems well in advance of modern. So deep was he in his calculations that he did not immediately recognize the bustle and wrangle which was coming to him through his abstractions and then at last he looked up, peered through two enormous transformers and stared.

This first-draft gibberish is par for much of that which passes for writing in the pith helmet's fiction. There are worse passages (particularly in the book we are not discussing here), but this was selected for its compact illustration of Hubbard's faults. It demonstrates particularly well the introduction of images and mannerisms apparently derived from extraneous reading into his standard narrative prose. Here, as in much of "The End is Not Yet," the external influence seems to be Dickens: note the rickety desk and quill pen, which have no logical place in the story; Martel, in the highly modern laboratory and factory where he is at work, would not use a quill or a rickety desk, any more than he would work under a "dim" light. It seems a reasonable assumption that Hubbard's style is clumsy, makeshift and erratic because it simply reflects the author's thought processes. Uncertain of an idea, uncertain of a conception, sure only that if he pounds long and hard enough at it on his typewriter*, it must, as it always has, emerge in some sort of saleable form; he has rarely seemed able to follow a thought to its ultimate and logical conclusion, to pick and worry an idea until it yields up its richest and most useful treasures, to discard the obvious and stereotyped aspect of a conception at once and delves beneath the surface of the apparent. Perhaps--to use the Dianetics jabberwocky for a person purged of his engrams--it will be different with a "cleared" Hubbard; this remains to be seen. But this article is about the still uncleared pith helmet, the pith helmet who wrote Dianetics.

A few words now about those works of science fantasy in which Hubbard clearly felt an interest and creative excitement of a high order. First, the really quite good "Fear," the almost inexplicably, unbelievably effective and well-written "Fear." It is possible that "Fear" is not really as good as it seems to the writer of this article; perhaps the novels is only better than average weird fiction, complete with standard ghoules and ghosties but even on careful rereading this seems a story that not only preceded the flurry of novels dealing with madness and psychotic obsession, such

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*Hubbard's machine is electric, with a continuous roll of paper, and special keys for common words like "and," "the," and "or." The pith helmet is a great believer in mechanical (and psychological) short-cuts. WB

as Charles Jackson's The Lost Weekend. Carleton Brown's Brainstorm, and Mary Jane Webb's The Snake Pit, but one that is rather better than any of them. It presents a picture of the insane mind that is genuinely chilling and completely convincing. It abounds in imaginative images of the most compelling and hallucinatory kind -- no stereotypes here -- and builds to a well-realized climax of harrowing impact. The theme of mental derangement seems to strike a very sympathetic chord in Hubbard, and one regrets he didn't see fit to pursue its orthodox clinical exposition in his fiction, rather than succumb to a megalomaniac Messiahism in the founding of a new science of the mind.

"Typewriter in the Sky" takes up the old and amusing theme of a man trapped in another man's story, and works some really original variations on it. The writing is mediocre but the exceptional verve of the comic invention survives it. The characters are stereotypes, but Hubbard has invented a story which makes its major point of this very fact. The occasional satire on writers is, for the most part, banal and heavy-handed, but the briefly-seen character of Winchester Remington-Colt is almost worthy of Waugh. In the balance, this is a rather high-caliber work if the imagination; there is an irrepressible feeling of good fun and high comic spirits in the novel which works like yeast on the unleavened dough of Hubbard's wit, and one even, though infrequently, senses a mind aroused to curiosity about the nature of the creative process, and stung to an unexpected poetry of concept--as in the novel's superb conclusion:

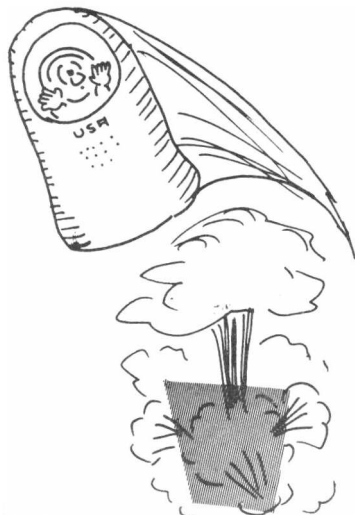
"Up there--

"God?

"In a dirty bathrobe?"

Hubbard did well here, as in "Fear." He was never to do so well again.

"Final Blackout" begins as a sketch, a vivid depiction of military life on the blackened battlefields of a world-wide war, rising in its early scenes to a graphic presentation of this kind of experience that has seldom been equalled in popular fiction, yet it bloats and fades in the middle into a pointless rambling Odyssey in which a single man, named simply the Lieutenant, plays God, and, wholly invincible, carves for himself out of the hulk of war-devastated England a throne upon which he can receive from the entire populace the same homage and worship he received from his men on the battlefield. This is not, of course, the avowed purpose of the Lieutenant, but it is subconsciously Hubbard's, and its obsessive emergence ruins the body of the novel, logically and artistically. We can accept the invincibility -- within limits -- of the Lieutenant on the battlefield, where his survival after years of combat has proven him a capable soldier, but that this invincibility can be turned to the solution of any social problem, or the downing of any moral or economic obstacle, is, as presented, beyond the reader's ability to swallow. It is Doc Savage; it is Superman; it is the pith helmet triumphant; but it is not effective fiction. This is a case where the development of a truly believable character of superior mental and moral endowment,



WILLIAM BLACKBEARD

rather than a soldier-savior-stereotype, would have made a fundamental difference and saved a potentially powerful novel, but such a character is beyond Hubbard's ability to create--or understand. "Final Blackout" is a wish-fulfillment fantasy for Hubbard, nothing more.

In "The End is Not Yet," a sloppy, incoherent novel even for Hubbard, we find the French city of Biarritz, a major locale in the story, moved by the pith helmet's inventive genius several hundred miles from its proper location on the Bay of Biscay and authoritatively plopped down on the Mediterranean. We meet Frenchmen, Irishmen, Russians, sired by the vaudeville of Bible Belt tent shows. We again encounter the invincible man, as we have done in "Final Blackout;" we again find him shaping the world he wants to save from chaos, and saving it. We feel tired. But not the pith helmet. He has come back from a real war, and in this last long novel, he has obviously belabored all his stereotypes with redoubled fury, determined to weld them into something kolossal. to create a science fiction epic to surpass, in his conception, even "Final Blackout." But he has learned nothing from World War II. His hero, Charles Martel--the significance of the name would hardly be lost on a first semester student of European history-- is, like the Lieutenant, a man who dominates situations and men, who destroys Evil and all he deems unworthy of survival, who solves all problems, heals all wounds, bestows justice in judgement and gives noble quarter, who is loved by a single good woman and is attractive to all bad ones, and who ultimately receives the honor and respect and admiration which the people about him-- his people, whom he has protected and saved-- come rightfully to realize is his. Martel is once again the dream-Hubbard in action, an ego-maniacal vision idealized in fiction. The need for an actualization of the vision has become almost overpowering. "The End is Not Yet" is the pith helmet's last inept grand geste of fiction; now, except for a few routine bits of hack work, he will turn such powers as he has to the creation of his magnum opus, the whup-zip-whooOOSH--BOWIE that will transform himself into a savior and the rest of the world into the saved. In "The End is Not Yet" -- prophetic title -- it is apparent that the fun-loving man who wrote "Typewriter in the Sky," the sensitive, competent writer who wrote "Fear," is gone. The engorged pith helmet alone remains. And the pith helmet's self-ordained goal is to impose a final, ultimate stereotype upon all humanity--the stereotype of the clear.

The clear, it is at once apparent, is foreshadowed in Hubbard's fiction by the Lieutenant.

The authoritarian basis of Dianetic theory may not be immediately evident: if all men are to be cleared, to become wholly in command of themselves and their abilities, to lose their irrational fear and hatred of their fellows, surely a kind of cooperative anarchy would prevail, and all men, seeing cleanly and wisely, would agree within reasonable limits on social action without partisan turmoil. The Millenium would have come.

Perhaps. But Hubbard is not interested in the Millenium--except as a remote, glittering bauble of the future he could promise the multitudes who must owe him allegiance now. In his time, the processing of clears is the most important thing, and only Hubbard can be the absolute, final authority on total clarity in anyone. (He must possess a certain competence in this: shortly after he announced his wife to the world as the first complete clear, she divorced him.) This places him automatically in a Dianetic hierarchy of non-clears, pre-clears, and clears as unassailable Pope. To quote from a letter of Hubbard's in Astounding for August, 1950: "One sees with some sadness that more than three-quarters of the world's population will become subject to the remaining quarter as a natural consequence (of the early stages of Dianetic auditing and clearing), about which we can do exactly nothing." Curiously, but typically, he has become a Pope in hiding. He has proclaimed a number of people as complete clears--after they spent enough money on being processed and, possibly, began to complain--but he has never, even out of

sight as he is now in the depths of the southwest, from whence he dispatches on mail order immense volumes of printed claptrap and gadgetted jukeboxes called electropsychometers at \$98.50 each, suggested that he himself has made it as a clear. It seems he is too busy getting his message to the world to take time out for the luxury of auditing. This is still the Hubbard that must protect himself from all the damaging challenges to his ego, who will make the gestures of deriding-do and don the panoply of the hero, but accept no responsibility for his acts or roles. Here is the man who got his feet wet in the Amazon and lay down with mystics in India so that he could belong to the Explorers' Club and enthrall wide-eyed wenches with fabulous accounts of jungle hardships (including wrestling matches with pythons) and tales of supernatural exploits beyond the pale of the West, who mastered hypnosis so that he could savor in this cheap and illusory way the impression that others were doing his bidding, who lost no opportunity to make Major Hoople references to past technical achievements of a largely fictitious nature (see Hubbard's pseudonymous article in Campbell's Air Trails for April, 1949, in which he names himself in order to make praising reference to his "considerable" research work in the aeronautical field, work of which there is no record or knowledge by any competent authority), who tailored certain aspects of Dianetic theory to fit the delusions and fantasies of men prominent in the medical and science fiction field in order to shock and excite them into introducing his science of the mind with editorial fanfare and gusty furbeloughs of professional endorsement. Here, in sum, is a man who has an overwhelming desire to create a work of genuine and lasting value in the world, of which he is aware he is basically incapable. If he cannot have the substance, he will have the shadow; if he cannot impress with works, he will impress with mystery;*

*Hubbard has written a book called "Excalibur," which contains the secrets of the universe, but only very select persons can read it--at a fee of \$1500 per select person--since he has discovered it drives ordinary men mad. Dianetics, of course, is described by Hubbard as the merest forepaw of this submerged beast of a manuscript. WB

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if he cannot be an accepted and revered Messiah, he will be a misunderstood and martyred savior. Like Walter Gibson's Shadow, a rescuer of humanity always secure in the folds of night, Hubbard must wrap himself in concealing cloaks--a cloak within, to obscure the knowledge of his own mediocrity from himself, and a cloak without, to ward off and confound all critics and dissenters. The Jack Ketch of "Fear" is self-knowledge, and Hubbard sees self-knowledge as a stalking horror with a hangman's noose in its hand.

Thus, Dianetics does not, cannot, offer effective therapy to anyone, least of all its author. It proffers illusions. And the greatest illusion implied in this book's psychotic shadow-show, as we have found through an attentive reading of Hubbard's science fiction and fantasy, is that its author has a sustained objectivity of outlook, an elasticity of intellect and a disinterested clinical detachment from his own obsessions sufficient to conceive of any genuinely effective universal mental therapy, let alone research, analyze, and evaluate its psychodynamic ramifications. Alchemy is a failed science. You cannot get gold from dross. And you are simply not going to get a new science of the mind from Lafayette Ronald Hubbard.

There ain't no rabbit in that pith helmet.

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| Sep,Oct,Nov "The Tramp" novel | Oct "Ole Doc Methusaleh" DM |
| 1939:Aug,Sep "General Swamp, C.I.C." novel FE | Nov "The Expensive Slaves" DM |
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| Nov "One was Stubborn" RL | Oct "The Automatic Horse" |
| 1941:Jan "The Traitor" KvR | Dec "A Can of Vacuum" |
| Apr "The Mutineers" KvR | 1950:Jan "Ole Mother Methusaleh" DM |
| 1942:Jan "The Invaders" | Feb,Mar "To the Stars" novel |
| Feb "The Rebels" KvR | Apr "Greed" |
| Apr "Strain" | May "Dianetics: The Evolution of a Science" article |
| Jun "The Slave" | |
| Jul "Space Can" | |
| Oct "The Beast" | |

Unknown Worlds

- 1939:Apr "The Ultimate Adventure" novel
- May "Danger in the Dark"
- Jul "Slaves of Sleep" novel
- Aug "The Ghoul" novel
- Dec "Vanderdecken" FE
- 1940:Feb "Death's Deputy" novel
- Apr "The Indigestible Triton" novel RL
- Jun "The Kraken" FE
- Jul "Fear" novel
- Oct "The Devil's Rescue"
- Nov, Dec "Typewriter in the Sky" novel
- 1941:Jan "The Crossroads"
- Aug "The Case of the Friendly Corpse" novel
- Oct "Borrowed Glory"
- 1942:Feb "He Didn't Like Cats"
- Apr "The Room"

- FE- as by "Frederick Englehardt"
- KvR- as by Kurt von Rachen (Kilkenny Cats series)
- RL- as by "Rene Lafayette"
- DM- Ole Doc Methusaleh series (as by "Rene Lafayette")



a tale of woe

(To be sung by a George O. named Smith)

My boy, you may take it from me
That, of all the ambitions accursed,
To write science fiction,
The prose of prediction,
Is certainly one of the worst
For you'll find that you need an M.D.,
An M.S., a B.S. or two,
For if you should break
Down and make a mistake,
It is sad what the readers will do!

CHORUS: If, in writing you make a mistake,
(Just a small one is all it will take)
You will find you are loaded
With letters, and goaded
By readers who think you're a fake.

Now take, for example, my case:
In a tale, I invented a ray.
Its speed was terrific,
And I was specific—
I've regretted that slip to this day.
For, frankly, I fell on my face.
Since then I've been tearing my hair
And here's where I fumbled,
And slipped up and stumbled:
I said that its speed was C square!

CHORUS: If, in writing you make a mistake,
(Just a small one is all it will take)
You will find you are loaded
With letters, and goaded
By readers who think you're a fake.

I wrote in, and I tried to explain,
But the readers repeated to me:
"It can not be reckoned
That C to the second
Is speed, as you claim it to be!"
I quarreled and quibbled—in vain,
For the readers heard nary a word—
Till at last, with a scowl,
I threw in the towel;
I wrote in and confessed I had erred!

CHORUS: If, in writing you make a mistake,
(Just a small one is all it will take)
You will find you are loaded
With letters, and goaded
By readers who think you're a fake.

Will Big Brother Be Watching You In 1984?

He certainly will unless thinking Americans become acquainted with the democratic alternative to Marxist insanity. All our technological advances may be wasted unless we apply scientific thinking to the great economic problems of depression, inflation, and unemployment. To eliminate the threat of Big Brother we must discover a method by which free enterprise can eliminate economic unrest and poverty throughout the world.

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ALDOUS HUXLEY: If I were now to rewrite the book *"Brave New World"*, it would offer a third alternative, the possibility of sanity... Economics would be decentralist and Henry Georgian.

ALBERT EINSTEIN: Men like Henry George are rare, unfortunately. One cannot imagine a more beautiful combination of intellectual keenness, artistic form, and fervent love of justice.

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