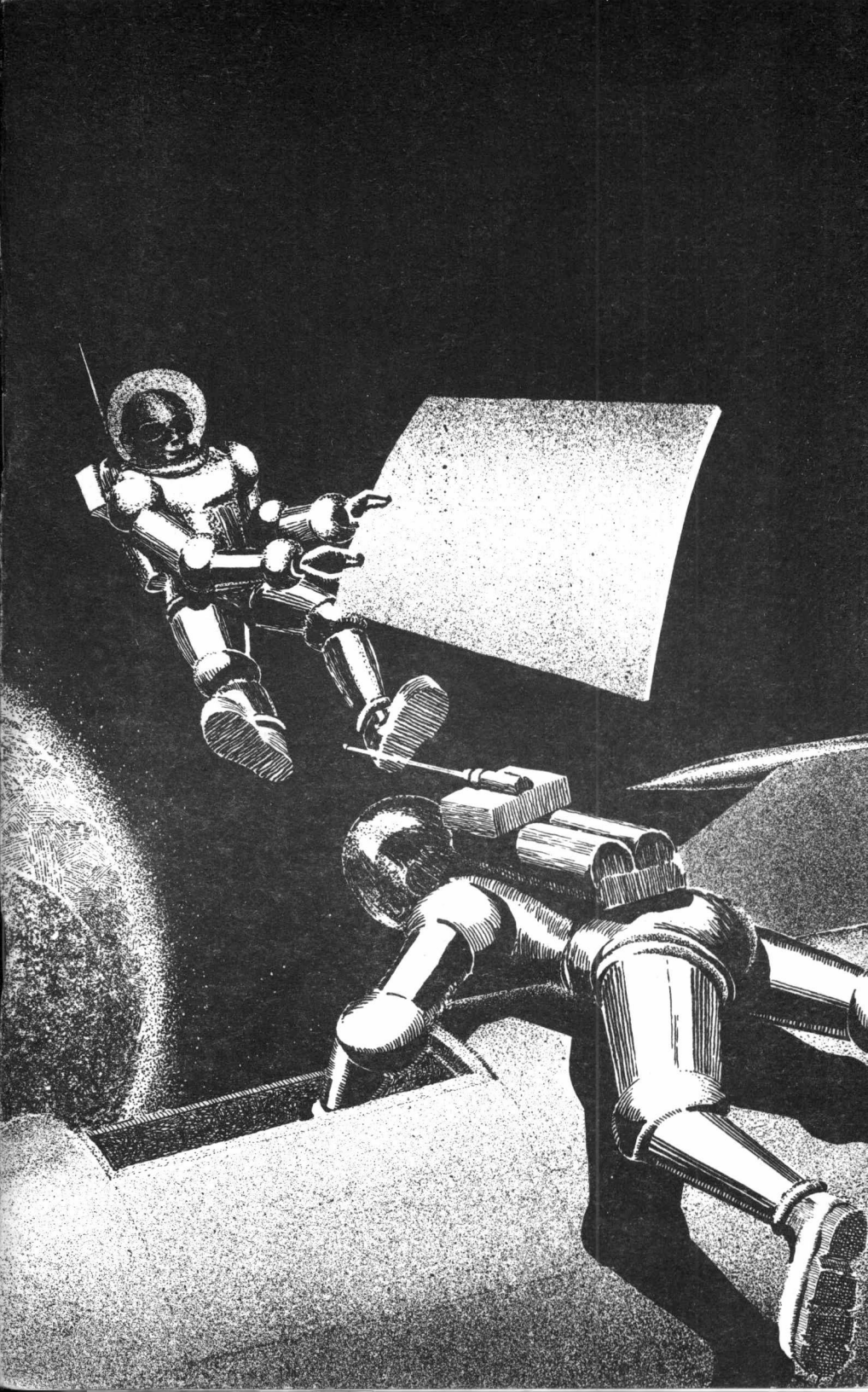

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INSIDE

Two June, 1963

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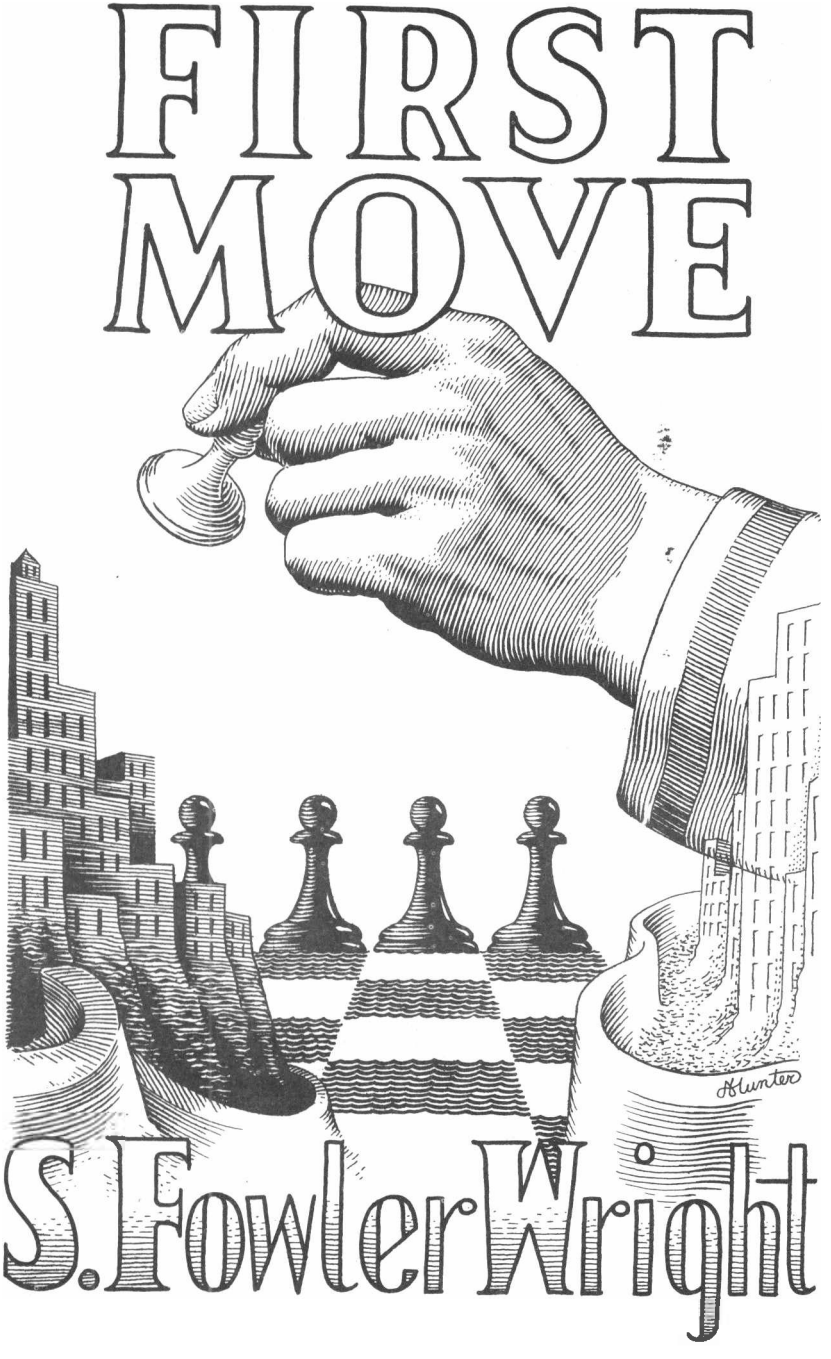
FIRST MOVE



S. Fowler Wright

THE PRESIDENT laid a fat forefinger on the map. It covered Lichtenburg, and about ten miles of surrounding country.

"We will use," he said, "one of the smallest bombs, both because we are of merciful minds, and because it is a frugal wisdom. We must not forget that what we spare will become ours. This is the area which we shall destroy."

His finger rose as he spoke, and his pencil circled a space of about three hundred square miles, containing a population of about two million people.

The Chancellor asked: "You think this war really necessary?"

"I should hardly call it a war. There will be the one bomb, and surrender in the next hour. Can you think that they would prefer two?"

"It would be irrational."

"And after that, there will be a great spoil. They will not be an exhausted nation, as were those who suffered defeat under the older methods of conflict--slow,cruel and stupid. They will not be like -- shall we say-- the Germany of 1945, unfit to export anything but their own diseases. They will pay a rich tribute in corn and cattle, and the manufactures in which they excel, and our people will thrive. We may even be able to give permission for selected women to have four children instead of three."

The chancellor said nothing to that, for, though he did not like the idea of the destruction of the people and property of a friendly nation, it was an argument of great force. With the standard of living, and the shortened hours of industry which now prevailed, it had become absolutely necessary to penalize those who had unlicensed children, and yet, with the popular perversity which all statesmen have cause to dread, many resented a compulsory restriction, even though the previous fertility of the nation had been little more than was now the result of an admirable control... And, as they both knew, there were the elections in May, and the party of reaction had been gaining in popularity to an alarming degree.

The President was not content to observe that he had silenced his colleague. He wished to be sure that he had his active support, for he had learnt how valuable it could be. He went on: "If you see any objection I may have overlooked, I rely on you to tell me without reserve. There is none whose opinion I esteem more."

That might be true. But the Chancellor did not think his reason for hesitation to be such as the President would approve, or would cause him to alter his decision. Still, it should not be withheld.

"If I seem to hesitate," he said, "it is only because we have had such cordial relations with Polasia during recent years. It will be an attack with no pretext at all."

The President laughed his relief: "It is not more than that? Then you can put it out of your mind. When it is done, we can find pretexts enough, which their Government will not be alive to deny... And you must not forget that it is only under such circumstances that an attack can be safely made. If they had suspicion, or we had raised cause of complaint, they might be as quick, or quicker, than we."

"That is true, though Polasia is supposed to have given up the manufacture of bombs two years ago, as a gesture to lead the world."

"Which they still may not have done, though I think they did... Perhaps you fear that Alicia may be there? You must call her home. You could find a reason for that?"

"Oh, no! She is at Eastburg, where her husband is ill. She will be safe enough... I can see no flaw in your plan at all."

The last words were said in a tone which cleared the President's mind of the disquieting doubt which had intruded a moment before. He felt that he would have the Chancellor's co-operation, as had been the case in the political plots and trickeries of the previous twenty years. It was a support that he would have been sorry to lose,though at any sign of disloyalty, he would have been ruthless to clear his path. But, in fact, he had gone too far. He had found something (it might have been thought difficult) at which his colleague's conscience rebelled.

The two men parted with no diminution of cordiality, but, as the Chancellor entered his waiting car, he thought: "It is a monstrous

project--monstrous almost beyond belief. But can I stop it?"

It was difficult to see any way which might not ruin himself, which he was unwilling to do,

. .

II

IT WAS at an early hour of the following morning that the Chancellor rang up the President. He said: "I have been considering the subject of our conversation yesterday--the last one before we parted. The idea seems thoroughly sound; but there is a minor detail which should not be overlooked."

The President thanked him, and suggested that they should meet at once to discuss it.

This they did, and he had an additional reason to appreciate the ability and thoroughness with which his colleague seconded the subtleties of his own mind.

"You remarked yesterday," the Chancellor said, "in reply to my objection that we should have no pretext for the contemplated attack, such as would appear reasonable to our countrymen and other nations, that we could invent what we would, which the Polasian Government would not be alive to deny. It was sound reasoning. But did you not overlook the fact that Baron Linvi might have much to say which would be widely believed, and which would become a weapon to vex our peace?"

"It is a good thought. He must be promptly removed."

"But would there not be cause for suspicion in that? It would be a coincidence of a remarkable kind."

The President could not dispute that. Baron Linvi was Polasia's ambassador. He had held that office for several years, during which he had done much to increase the popularity of the country he represented, and establish that of his own. They could not doubt that his words would gain more credence than their united assertions would ever have. The President asked: "Can you tell me a better way?"

"I think I can. Suppose the catastrophe were to occur at a time when Linvi were back in his own country?"

"It is a good idea, but it would involve too great a delay. It is less than two months since he was there, and we know that his habit is to-"

"But if he should go at once, by his own desire?"

"If you know how that could be arranged..."

"It might be no trouble at all. Suppose that we should propose conditions on which we would rectify the north-eastern frontier of their African territory as they have always desired? Could we not suggest such as he would wish to consult his Government upon orally, or on which they would summon him for that purpose?"

"It is cleverly thought. You are a good comrade to have, as I have had occasion to say before. But it is not an idea which must get abroad. You had better see him yourself, and stress the secrecy with which negotiations must be conducted till agreement will have been finally reached... When he is there, we cannot be too speedy in what we do."

The Chancellor went away in a well satisfied mood. He knew the subtlety of the President's mind, and that to outwit him was as dangerous to attempt as it was difficult to achieve. But he thought he had done it now. To have sought a private interview with Baron Linvi without the President's knowledge at such a moment would have been almost certainly futile in its attempt at concealment, and dangerous in its implications. To have informed him of such an intention without a fully satisfactory reason would have been almost equally likely to arouse suspicion. But he would not be able to do it with the President's knowledge, and with the approval of the particular privacy he desired. He had gained much, for he had decided that it was an interview which it was essential to have.

. . .

III

THE ROOM where the Chancellor waited was large and lofty. It had windows, high, wide, and richly curtained, at either end. At one,

they looked own on the quiet dignity of the tree-lined street; at the other, upon the spacious garden at the rear of the embassy.

The Chancellor was looking down from the rear window as Baron Linvi entered the room. He was slow to move, though his words of polite greeting were not delayed, so that he had only half turned as they shook hands.

Then his eyes went back to the window. He said: "You have a beautiful garden."

Baron Linvi answered: "Yes. It is very pleasant." His voice was casual. They looked down on a lawn that was wide and green. But he did not suppose his visitor had called to approve ot the view.

"It is a fine lawn."

"Yes. It is often admired."

"There is a peculiar privacy about a garden... Especially for those who do not mind being seen, but who do not wish to be overhead."

The Baron looked at his visitor more alertly. He said: "We should not be overheard here."

"No," the Chancellor answered, "I suppose not." But he continued to gaze at the garden.

The ambassador understood that a conversation of extreme privacy was desired. He said: "The garden is particularly attractive on such a morning as this. Shall we go there?"

The Chancellor said: "As you wish."

IV

THE PRESIDENT received a police report next morning of the Chancellor's movements during the previous day, which was no more than routine. He read that he had been overlooked in Baron Linvi's garden. For twenty-three minutes they had paced the length of the lawn. The Chancellor had done most of the talking. The Baron, especially during the latter part of the conversation, had appeared pleased.

He destroyed this report, as was his custom, and resumed the work on which he had been engaged. It was what he had expected to read.

Half an hour later, the Chancellor was announced. He said that he had promised much, alleging that they sought Polasia's friendship, and the healing of an old sore. Why should he have been a niggard of a price which would not be paid?

The President assented to that, and resumed his work. For, as with the report, it was only what he had expected.

V

THE MINISTRY of the Interior received a note from the Polasian Embassy. It enquired concerning the address of a man, Belf Roder, otherwise known as Slita Rix, a citizen of Polasia, who had been employed at the Embassy for a short time two years before, and had then disappeared. The finding of him had become urgent, and the Embassy would be most grateful of any assistance which could be given.

The Minister of the Interior replied, through one of his secretaries that he should be pleased to do what he could, but that nothing was known of the missing man. Was a description available? Within two hours, a very full description arrived.

The Minister of the Interior was not indisposed to oblige the ambassador over so slight a matter. He circulated the description to police stations throughout the country, with a request that search should be made diligently. But there was no immediate result and two days later the enquiry was repeated. In the course of a telephone conversation, it was represented to be a matter of great urgency, as the ambassador was delaying a visit to his own country until this man should be found. Was there any connection between the two matters? The enquiry was made with diplomatic obliquity. How could there be? His Excellency merely wished to see the missing man before he left.

VI

THE PRESIDENT said: "It appeared that you had done well. That may still be so. It was a good trap, and he professed willingness to be caught. But this is an annoying delay. Have you any idea why he should require to trace this man with such urgency?

"Not the least," the Chancellor answered, with an apparent frankness which the President had no reason to doubt.

"Might he not be asked? It might be a matter on which we could render whatever service might be required. The man may not be found in a week-- or at all."

"I have tried that. He replied that it is domestic to the Embassy. He added that, if the man could be produced, he could dispose of the matter in a few hours, and he would be ready to leave. It would be difficult to do more. We cannot insist that he should go."

"Is everything possible to find the man being done?"

"It is not my department, as you know. The Minister of the Interior has issued instructions to the police of particular urgency."

"Yes... so I have been told. But time is too important to allow further delay. If the police do not find the man in the next twenty-four hours, they must find the nearest they can."

"But what use would that be?"

"He could impersonate this Roder or Rix."

"Do you think that could be done successfully?"

"Why not? The Embassy has supplied a most detailed description. It is not one to which it should be found difficult to find someone who would conform... It might dispose instantly of this provoking delay. At the least, we might learn its cause."

"Yes. It is a good idea." The Chancellor's face, as he gave this assent, expressed admiration for the President's sagacity and resource. The President felt he was receiving no more than his due.

VII

A TOTALITARIAN state may have its defects, but it is certain to have an efficient police. It was reported promptly that there were eleven men among its hundred and thirty millions who were extremely similar in appearance to the once who could not be found. Two of these were reticent regarding their past lives, or made statements not easy to verify. It was even possible that one of them might be the required man, nefariously denying his identity.

Two days later, one of these men, calling himself Belf Roder, called at the Polasian Embassy, and, after some preliminary questions, was interveiwed by the ambassador.

He had been warned that he ran a risk, even if his duplicity should not be discovered. It had been explained that the Embassy was extra-territorial, and that, should he be liquidated there, no protest could be made, especially as he must profess to be one over whom Polasia had a national claim. But he had been promised a large reward should he be successful in his deception, and discover the purpose for which he was required.

He came back triumphant.

The ambassador had looked at him as though surprised at his appearance, for which there may have been occasion enough.

"You are Belf Roder?"

"Yes, your Excellency."

"I should not have known you."

There was a discomfiting silence. Then Baron Linvi said: "Well, here you are... I will not ask you where you have it now. I want you to bring it back to me. How soon can you do that?"

"I can assure your Excellency that no time will be lost."

"I should suppose not. But I must have a more explicit reply. It is a small bomb, which can be carried without remark. Shall we say within two days?"

"Yes, your Excellency."

With no more words, he was shown out, being unaware of the puzzled amusement in the Baron's eyes as he left the room.

He had been accepted for what he was not. He had learned--or so appeared-- that Roder had been entrusted with some kind of bomb, presumably not less than two years before, which he was now required to return. It was difficult to see how he could have learned more without exposing his own ignorance. Indeed, from Baron Linvi, was there more to be learned, beyond the reason for what he did, which would have been impudent to enquire?

The President approved what he had done. He should have his reward. But his services would be required further. He must remain within call.

He was shown out, and the Chancellor summoned. The President repeated what he had heard. He asked: "What does it mean?"

The Chancellor understood that, knowing several things of which the President was not aware. But as he did not intend to mention them, they did not make reply easier. The production of a pseudo Roder had been outside the anticipations of either Baron Linvi or himself when their plans had been made. He saw that the Baron, with great adroitness, had taken advantage of a development which they could not have foreseen. But how could he follow it up in the right way?

The President observed his hesitation without guessing its causes. He asked: "Why should he talk of a bomb now? Do you think he can have guessed our intentions? You would not have said anything indiscreet?"

"Is is likely?... And may we not take it in the opposite way?-- That he was planting a bomb which he is now alert to withdraw?"

"Would he carry one about in his luggage. Or have entrusted it to one with whom he has not been in touch for two years? And of whom he had no address? We must think of something better than that."

"Which, for the moment, I am unable to do... I think it would be well to call on the Baron, for which I can find pretexts enough. I may learn something from his attitude. Even from what is unsaid."

"So you may. And it is most urgent that you should. What shall we do in two days? We have found a man. Are we also to provide a bomb, and of what sort is it to be?"

"Yes, I must see Linvi at once."

"So you shall... Yet it may not be much help to us... It may be that Roder should be destroyed by an accident we should greatly regret. We would deliver his dead body, after which they could not expect him to find a bomb."

"So we might. But it would be wise to defer that course to the last. We could not bring him to life again, if it should become a preferable condition for him to be in."

The President agreed that nothing should be done without careful consideration. But he reminded the Chancellor again that time was a restricting factor in their plans. He was not disposed to delay the attack on Polasia for more than a further week, even to secure the desirable detail that Baron Linvi should be there at the time.

The Chancellor said that he would endeavor to arrange an interveiw with the Baron that afternoon.

...

VIII

"YOUR PRESIDENT," Baron Linvi said, "is a man of recourse."

"Yes. It is a development we did not foresee."

"Tet it may be simple for us."

"What do you propose we do now?"

"You can return to the President, and tell him that I have exposed the truth to you without reserve, now that friendship between our countries is to be permanently secured."

"The truth?"

"So, of course, you will say. You will be unable to tell him where the bomb is, but he will not expect that. You will tell him that I say that he should watch Roder, so that he may secure it himself, which you will find that he will be anxious to do, though he will be puzzled as to what further use his Roder can be. You will

tell him that he is a man whose conduct has roused distrust--but, all the same, he will see that there is now no cause for alarm."

"Yes. It is difficult to see what he can do now. But you are right. I will go to him at once."

IX

"BARON LINVI says that he has been in communication with his own government and-"

"So he has. He has been using a new code, which we have not yet been able to read."

"He says that he has their permission to be absolutely frank with us, if he should feel that course to be best, and he has been so to a surprising degree."

"I suppose they have learnt our plans and are threatening us! Are we to conclude that they have such weapons themselves, which they are manufacturing still, despite the protestations which they have made? We must act instantly. if there be the least suspicion of that."

"No. It is a different tale, and has an aspect of truth. It appears that when they gave up the manufacture of bombs they took a precaution which, they would say, was no more than a negative kind.

"They manufactured one of enormous power, on a principle of which, so far as I know, our own scientists are not aware, and they planted it in this country. It is so designed that it can explode only in conjunction with another at a specific distance. He did not tell me what that distance may be. He professed that he did not know. But suppose it to be two thousand miles, and suppose it to be secreted in a central position here --which would be an obvious choice-- then it would not be stimulated to dangerous reaction by any bomb within our own boundaries, and any manufactured elsewhere would be much too far away. But if we should send a bomb to attack Polasia, for instance, they would both explode at a time when ours would be over the ocean, a thousand miles, more or less, from their coast. Its explosion would do little damage, unless to a few ships, while theirs would produce wide devastation here."

"So that, if tale be true, he is giving warning to us."

"It is certainly a warning which it would be reckless to disregard, but I do not think it is meant at all in that way. If it were so, would he not have told us before, instead of waiting until I went to enquire?"

"Yes. There is reason in that. But do you see what it has become vital for us to do? We must find the man --the real Roder-- and he must return the bomb, so that it may be rendered harmless to us."

"But how can we, now that the Baron has accepted another as he?"

"It is a difficulty, but it may be less serious than you supposw. The Baron has evidently failed to observe the difference once. He may fail to do so again when the real man is found."

"Yes. But he would not be aware of the interview with his substitute, or of the instructions which have been given to him. How should we get over that?

The Chancellor checked himself to add lamely: "Well, it is useless to attempt to cross a bridge to which you have not come. Let us find the man."

He had reminded himself of that which was equally well-known to the Baron and himself, that there was no Roder, and no bomb; and that the faked Roder had not deceived the Baron, but he him; and that they must find some way to maintain there deceptions, or Polasia and himself (about which he cared more) were likely to suffer much in the next month. But the fact was that, in the process of misleading the President, and arguing with sufficient realism on premises which did not exist, he had caused such confusion in his own mind that it had become difficult to distinguish clearly where truth or deception lay.

It was on the following day that the ambassador of the South American Union sent a very secret message to his President. It said:

> "I have received reports of some activity at the A.V.B. Station here. Any communications of urgency should reach me by Wednesday, when I am planning to up into the mountains to recuperate

from the heat of the city."

However secret it might be, he supposed that it would be decoded and read before it had gone a mile from his own door, for which there could be no remedy where it was routine to betray for gain. (But what harm could there be in it?)

His expectation was right, for within an hour President and Chancellor sat considering it together.

"He misses little," the Chancellor said."He is a good man."

The President pondered its implications before he replied: "Yes, so he is... It is a message of several possible implications. It is the reply which will be important to us. I must see it the instant that it arrives."

But no reply came.

X

IT WAS a week later that the Chancellor's daughter, Alicia, notified him that she was about to return home from Eastburg. He knew that the air-liner which she would use would touch down at Lichtenburg, but he did nothing to cause her to change her route, or delay her journey, from which it may be assumed, with good reason, that the plan for destroying the Polasian capital had been deferred, if not entirely abandoned.

Yet, as the liner was still some hundreds of miles distant from that unfortunate city, the sky before them was lit with blinding light, and there came a horror of distant sound. In a few moments the blinding intensity of the light was gone, and was succeeded by a great wind, and a faint, calamitous, sound, at which the air-liner swung round, and returned at its utmost speed to the place from which it had come.

The capital city of Polasia had become a lifeless waste, from which it may be too readily assumed that the President had overruled the scruples or discovered the deceptions of his less logical colleagues. But this would be wrong. Neither President, nor Chancellor, nor ambassador, would be further troubled by the somewhat complicated problem they had built, for they had ceased to exist. The fact was that the President of the South American Union had decided, since he had received the suggestion from his own ambassador, in a previously agreed and arbitrary form, which it had been impossible for others to understand, that the elimination of his two major rivals would be no more than the act of a prudent man.

MAYA

Fools of the world, who dream that dreams are true,
Believing still that life is what it seems,
And trustful that the world is more than dreams,
Free for a little, I have laughed at you:
Knowing all this a ghostly gossamer
In some eternal room in darkness spun,
A laughter of forgotten gods that were,
Echoing still in waste oblivion.

But once again, as others, I have lent
Myself to earthly ways and earthly walls:
Illusion of illusion, fantasy
Of doubtful phantoms, nevermore to be
When slumber on the last delirium falls
And lulls the tossing shadows turbulent.

Clark Ashton Smith

The Seven Stages of Authordom

or,

in one door and out the other

GEORGE O. SMITH

Some years ago, in an inaccessible place named Toronto, an impossible character named Robert Bloch delivered a tirade entitled THE SEVEN STAGES OF FANDOM.

Bit by bit, this rash resident from an improbable town named Milwaukee, sometimes known as North Chicago. laid open to the public gaze his own personal definition of the seven stage metamorphosis of the science fiction fan from the first blush of childlike innocence to full-fledged predator, genus slannus homely. He missed not one of the intermediary stages, but waded through them inch by inch, tearing at the edges and battering down wall after wall.

For some unknown reason, this diatribe was received with countless cheers and huzzas, one offer of mayhem from Forry Ackerman and a loud "Hear! Hear!" from Will Sykora.

Even more difficult to explain is the fact that this not too well veiled insult to the flower of fandom is still being quoted, just as though no one had uttered a word since.

Fact of the matter is that millions of words have been uttered since, most of them coming from a couple of major political parties and a few emerging from smoke filled rooms at the conventions. Not a few of them have come from Robert Bloch himself. He has spent years trying to beat his own record. But to no avail, for his own major triumph has yet to be bested-- at least by Robert Bloch.

So while I grieve to hear of a once great man on the downgrade, I prefer to forget his sad end; I choose to remember Robert as he was at the pinnacle of his success. Let us all remember the accolades and kudoes he received upon his return to his native town. Forget the sad picture and listen in memory to the cheers that rang out along the main drag of Milwaukee as he was ridden in state.

He never forgot that day of happiness; I recall that he said in a letter not long afterwards that he would have gotten off the rail and walked if it had not been for the importance of the occasion.

So today I offer this discussion in honor of Robert Bloch.

Be it remembered that in enumerating the seven stages of fandom, Robert could hardly include a separate section of the whole science fiction tribe. Perhaps he did not omit it deliberately, it may have been left for me by Robert's great and generous nature.

So I will now dwell at length on the Seven Stages of Professionalism.

At this point I wish to pause long enough to issue a warning. I shall deliver this warning by way of an anecdote, an occurence of many years ago, just a few months after I had moved to Philadelphia,

I attended a meeting of the Philadelphia Science Fiction Society, at which place the speaker of the evening was one David H. Keller, M.D. I had been asked by Milt Rothman to come prepared with a few words in case the good doctor finished ahead of time.

Doctor Keller's opening words were-- quote--

"I recognize fourteen distinct and separate forms of the literary art."

Having a vague uneasiness, the late James A. Williams and I removed ourselves to the nearest Republican Club and took on a few beers beers.

Several hours later we returned to the club house just in time to hear Doctor Keller wind up his talk by saying something to the effect that Grand Opera was the fourteenth form of the literary art, but since he had never written any Grand Opera, he was not going to waste more than an hour or so on it.

So I hereby warn you that if any of you care to take a turn in the bar while I go through the seven stages of authordom, please do so at once. I hope a lot of you do; and if you do, please take me with you. I'd rather be there than standing here talking my throat dry.

I have named

Stage Number One

The Un-Formed Stage

At this early state of development, the writer-to-be has yet to see his name in print, has yet to go through the pangs of either composition or decomposition. He has only a writhing of the intellect and an itch in his forefinger.

Just where this burning urge to spoil a ream of paper comes from, has not yet been established. I call it so because that is what it is; I am sure at this stage the embryonic writer does not consider putting ideas on paper spoiling a ream. Perhaps he does not have enough ideas to spoil a whole ream, and even if he did, he would still lack the comprehension of his own drive that would enable him to admit that he was spoiling paper.

In fact, this Un-Formed Stage is usually a bit before the paper-spoiling era.

Our budding writer--yearning to find a hole in his cocoon--is still spinning yarns.

For the first premise of any writer is that he must be able to spin a tall yarn with a face so straight that even those who know he is lying become somewhat convinced that he is telling the truth.

This takes great practise One must be caught in the cider at the age of four and get off with less than a horsewhipping. At six, one must be able to come into the house after a session behind the barn with pappy's cigarettes, blow his hundred horse-power breath in his loving mother's face and swear that he has never touched tobacco. Furthermore, he must convince her that he got his breath from having passed too close to the cigar store on his way home.

He eventually arrives at a point where he can be surprised in the middle of some mischief, and at a drop of a stern word he can concoct a convincing explanation of his nefarious activities, taking into account all of the evidence that is at that instant visible to the eyes of his accuser. It is considered unworthy of the budding writer to hide visible evidence: he must face it and blandly explain it aside.

As our friend grows older, he discovers that he has developed a talent for such chicancery. It has gotten him into trouble, of course, but it gets him right out of trouble again. This makes for fun and games, all of which help to round off a formerly square character.

Eventually, he has been forced to concoct a note of explanation to Teacher; this he grows out of as he leaves school, but it takes other forms, such as explaining to the Folks at Home why he needs more moola to buy a new dangframmis for the Chemistry Course he is taking. Eventually, some professor of physics or one of the other physical sciences calls him into a closed session and indicates that his theses make interesting reading but they do not always adhere to fact.

And at that moment he discovers the first truism:

"Never, never, permit a few sordid facts to interfere with the telling of an interesting story!"

One important symptom must be emphasized here:

Up to, including, and much beyond this first stage, no one has ever told him, either in jest or in misled honesty, or even in scorn or flattery-- that he ought to be a writer.

No, this statement is reserved for the bright scholar with a good memory for clichés and funny stories.

Instead, our hero is a blight upon the body literary.

His grammar is seldom perfect, although he is invariably and shockingly succinct. He is disarmingly, if not frighteningly, candid. He is frequently damned embarrassing to his friends and neighbors. His spelling is often the reason why, in his later years, there is a union among typesetters, proofreaders and compositors. Dammitall, someone's got to standardize the English Language!

So while our hero is the despair of his language teachers, he is developing what is commonly referred to as a "Style."

In a mild footnote here, I've added that the word "Style" means the engaging misuse of the rules of grammar to emphasize a thought that cannot be expressed properly otherwise.

And yet, while he hears his friends being told that they should try being a writer because they speak so nicely, there at that time the embryonic writer may be conceived.

He burns to rival his better-spoken companions.

But since he has no means of writing, yet, or not much to write about , he sublimates this basic urge in cigarettes, liquor, and shooting craps. It must be remembered that before once can be a success at writing, one must be a success at a lot of things that have nothing to do with writing, like drinking, smoking and hell-raising.

Without a doubt, there are many of the first words ever written by our leading writers still deeply graven in the soft plaster on washroom walls.

This first stage can go on and on indefinitely, in which case the writer never becomes a writer. But eventually something happens. For instance,

By a fluke, or a mis-addressed shipment supposed to be delivered to the Monumental Concrete Works, our hero becomes the possessor of a typewriter. Or he may walk of his place of business with the thing under his coat. I know of one writer whose first typewriter was dismantled at the office, nut by bolt and key by lever, and reassembled at home. It took him eight months because a typewriter contains a good many parts, and after he had got it done it could never spell worth a damn, but he learned to run it by misspelling the word on the keyboard in such a way as to have the erring typewriter deliver the right sequence on the paper.

Typewriters have been found in abandoned coal mines. L. Ron Hubbard once found one that had been swallowed by an electric eel; naturally, this was an I.B.M. Electric, and between the eel's elec-

"Go to Hell."

trical writings and the shock of being hooked by Ron's line, the typewriter emerged with the first four lines of Dianetics on the paper. Ron ate the eel and carried on with the started manuscript.

So at some point in the Un-Formed Stage, the yearning young writer becomes involved with a typewriter.

This leads him to

Stage Number Two

The Dreaming Genius

The passage of the embryonic writer through this stage can be likened to the Tasks of Hercules, especially the one where he cleans out the Aegean Stables.

The Dreaming Genius first approaches his typewriter with a prayer, an awe almost holy. His attitude is one of an acolyte who hopes, someday, to produce Great Prose. He is Devoted To His Art.

I have a footnote here that says that I shouldn't attempt to put large black capital letters on these titles because this is a talk and not a Work of Art.

With a great reverence, our dreaming genius i n s t a l l s his first typewriter ribbon. This takes him a couple of hours because the directions he got with the machine were for an L.C. Smith Super Silent, and the machine he liberated by means not here mentioned turns out to be an Oliver or a Woodstock. After hammering the spools in tight, our dreaming genius then takes a shower, complete with turpentine and a cake of sandstone to remove the good they put on typer ribbons.

Them with another ritual sign and a few genuflections, he opens his first package of white, pristine, rag-content paper.

This is a pre-requisite. It must be rag-content paper, watermarked. He prefers a deckle edge, but he is slightly frightened by the inferences. After all, hand-made, deckle edges paper is for the finished, polished writer-- nay, the Author.

He might even have considered the quill pen, hand cut. But he knows that his handwriting is not as smooth and flowing as the penmanship of, for instance, Willy Ley or Henry Kuttner.

He also considered shooting the works by hocking the family silver to buy a typewriter with italic type, like the dingus Theodore Sturgeon used to type Bianca's Hands on, but again his immaturity weighs him down heavily and he hates to presume that he is a Big Name.

However, he can and has purchased, swiped, or otherwise acquired a ream of good rag content paper.

The first sheet of which he thrusts into the typewriter, rolls it down to the middle of the first page, and---

Pause

Spends the next four hours trying to make a neat pattern out of his name and address. Unfortunately, his name has an even amount of letters and his address had an odd number. They do not center. He considers moving to an even letter address. He considers changing his name because he finds it too expensive to move. He considers the latter favorably because he knows that it is fashionable to use a pen name, or what he prefers to call a nom de plume.

At the end of four hours he suddenly remembers that it is good practise to make a carbon copy, and he exults that he has not started something serious on a single copy only.

Eventually he tires of this foolishness and gets around to putting down the title he has selected.

I must note at this point that our hero has not yet considered the idea of writing science fiction. No, times ten to the third power, no. For science fiction is pulp, cheap adventure escape trash with shoddy plots and cardboard characters and nonsensical mumbo-jumbo masquerading in the name of science.

Science fiction is a thing that we read for complete relaxation once we have polished off our ten pages per day of weighty literature. This is both sensible and sound. For relaxation one does something completely opposite to his daily tasks.

Science fiction, being cheap pulp, is not worthy of our efforts,

is not worthy of the high-rag content paper we have bought.

Our first effort must be aimed at a lofty target, a work comparable to The Razor's Edge or Arrowsmith.

Of course, our hero realizes that the guys who wrote such books of merit were craftsmen worthy of the name Author in italics, and whose work is also worthy of the hand-made deckle edged paper. But on the other hand there were great books written by beginners, who on their first shot became best sellers, Book of the Month Club selections, with a lot of subsidiary rights all of which added up to a cold quarter of a million bucks.

Here the writing ambition slows as our would-be dreams of the day his book is announced.

The big cocktail party, he seated at a large desk placed in a prom prominent position, autographing his book for Eisenhower, Mickey Mantle ,and Pablo Picasso. Maybe Ike might not make it, but Mamie certainly would. He'd be happy to autograph one for her, too.

He toys with the thought of growing a beard.

From here he goes on. His first yacht, his estate in South Carolina. Première Day at Grauman's Chinese with the cameras watching him alight from the limousine with Elizabetn Taylor on his arm.

Eventually, of course, he would have to hire a secretary and probably an accountant or lawyer to keep his income tax straight.

We pause, now, to let six months pass.

In the meantime our hero has run through the first eight-dollar ream of rag content paper without having gotten past page 6 of any attempt. He has come to one conclusion by this time: That if he intends to write the Great American Novel, he had better do it on cheap paper first and then rewrite it for sale on better stuff.

He is also sick and tired of his characters, his plot, and the

opening paragraphs he was once so fond of.

But he keeps plugging, because he knows how great are the rewards.

His relaxation has not changed, he continues to read the current issues of several science fiction magazines because they are relaxing and because he can wade through the cheap pulpy writing and realize how superior he is with his more lofty ideals of doing serious writing-- literature no less. Writing with a purpose, an aim, a message fraught with significances of social, economic, and behaviouristic importance.

Sooner or later, however, he runs afoul of a particularly lousy issue of his favorite magazine. This causes a trauma.

Now, before I go on, I note that there are a couple of editors in the audience, each one carrying a smug look on his or her face. Each without the shadow of a doubt, is congratulating himself on the known fact that our hero could not possibly been reading any issue of his. This is a fallacy. Clinker issues have come out again and again from any and all magazines, and by every editor. So, dear editor, it might have been that lousy issue of yours that turned our hero's tummy, made him hurl the magazine across the room with a violent reaction, saying-

"Hell. Even I could do that good."

Unfortunately, he is overheard, his bet is called, his statement is repeated to him and he is told to put the hell up or shut the hell up. At this point our hero disposes of his notion of writing the Great American Novel, or even getting on the Best Seller list. Gone is the Book of the Month Club, and although he feels regretful, he is still assured that now and then Hollywood picks up a science fiction tale and pays good, solid coin of the realm.

Ergo, he stops thinking about the deckle edged paper and the pale purple typer ribbon and starts to write a science fiction yarn.

We will assume, at this point, that our writer-to-be is not the kind of Joe that turns up in the slushpile with a five page novel, where the opening lines have the three main characters tied hand and foot in the catacombs under the Great Pyramid of Cheops, and which in the next three pages sees them escape their bonds, steal a rocket-plane, and are then indulging in a love scene as their robot-driven plane passes across the state of Iowa on their way to the hideout of the North American Underground in the far Rockies.

Instead, he is the kind of guy who actually has something to say, or will, eventually.

His trouble now is that he approaches science fiction with a curl of the lip. Being far above this crap, he certainly should be able to turn off such a potboiler in a couple of hours. It takes him about six weeks to turn off this opus, which he does with a curl of his lip and a sly sneer.

He ships it off and six weeks later it returns with a little square of printed matter on one corner, phrased in generously gentle terms, the implication of which is that this story stinks.

Having a bit of contempt for that editor's taste anyway, our hero sends it to the next magazine, and with some amazement after a couple of months, he is forced to admit that the literary taste of Number Two is absolutely congruent with Number One.

But with sly self-evaluation our young friend is forced to face one very satisfying fact. Knowing that he is a beginner he has sent his opus to two of the second-rate mags. It is entirely possible that his effort is of too high a caliber for low grade outlet and that his stuff might appeal to one of the better outfits.

He ships it off to one of the top grade houses and then sits to wait it out.

During this period of waiting, he has occasion to buy more paper. The storekeeper, having watched his best customer run down the scale from the high-grade parchment to the stuff that is slightly better than kleenex, engages him in conversation.

"Lotta paper, you buy."

Proudly, our hero nods. He draws himself up to his full five feet three or four and tries to look down his nose. This requires him to tilt his head back because he is shorter than the merchant, but he

does so anyway, and he states, with a lofty air, "I, sir, am a fiction writer."

This is supposed to put the simple merchant in his place. After all, what should a purveyor of office supplies know about aesthetics?

With some calmness the merchant says, "Oh? Glad to know you. Used to take a swing at it myself,"

"Is that so?" our hero replies, unimpressed.

"Yeah. Was one of the old Argosy boys when it was Munsey. Got away from it when Argosy began to come unglued. Tell me, where are you being published. Have to get me a copy and take a look."

This is a stopper. At some date later in his career, it will be possible to say that he hasn't anything on the stands right now, but he'll bring one in one day. Having had nothing on the stands and having had no experience, our hero is forced to admit that he is an unpublished author.

He slinks out of the stationary store and vows that he will buy his supplies in Woolworth's, where the clerks are not inclined to get embarrassingly chummy with the customers.

Time-- as they say--passes.

His mailbox is one day loaded with a thick document, which turns out to be his manuscript. He opens the thing and finds to his surprise that instead of the simple rejection slip, a letter in enclosed. It reads--

"Dear Mr. Zilch:

I have read your story with some interest. I am sorry to say that the general theme does not fit our demands but I am interested in the style. I suggest that you read several issues of Beat Up Science Fiction, and try to slant a theme in our general pattern. Try to maintain the same style.

Sincerely,

August Lemuel Stoopnagel,(Third)
Editor"

Having been a constant reader of Beat Up Science Fiction since it first hit the stands, our hero is a bit puzzled by the admonition to slant the next one that way. But he goes out and buys the latest. He reads.

And then he gets a brilliant idea.

Once more he takes off on his pet tangent, and six weeks later he comes to the end, slips it in the mail, and goes home to sit it out.

During this wait, our hero may get involved with any number of projects. He writes. He plays games. He reads.

And eventually he finds in his mailbox, some six weeks later, a slim envelope with a cellophane window. In a frenzy of effort he manages to tear the thing open without destroying the contents and he finds that for his efforts he has received a check.

It isn't much, but godammit, it is a check.

With much enthusiasm he shows this evidence of his proficiency to his friends and neighbors. They nod politely but all they can see is the name of the bank. Unfortunately, the publisher banks at some joint called the Corn Exchange.

We will mercifully draw the curtain on the scene of ribald ribbing, the only shield against which is the fact that our hero was paid.

For, no matter what they say, he is now a writer.

He has been paid.

This, naturally, leads us to

Stage Number Three

The First Story

Many months after the first check has been spent, a one-line note is made in the Things to Come column that the editor uses to fill in a couple of inches of blank magazine. It mentions that a job entitled such-and-so will be published in the next issue by a new writer named Zilch.

For the next thirty days, he haunts the newsstand, the drug store, and the bookshop. It becomes known that he has a story in the forthcoming issue of Beat Up Science Fiction.

Our hero's friends inform him with a baleful eye that they are

prepared to read this opus magnus and deliver their comments. People who have never heard even heard of science fiction seem to be sitting there with their tongues hanging out to read this thing. Once more, and even before it was printed, our hero takes refuge in the statement that he got paid for it. Obviously, getting paid for writing excuses anything.

At parties he is introduced as "The Writer." whereupon the sweet young thing looks vaguely startled and coos, "What have you written, Mr. Zilch?"

Now at this point I digress. Quoting Bob Heinlein, there seems to be something just a little bit s n i d e and dirty about writing, in the mind of the average citizen. The writer, somehow, is an underhanded character who does not have to hit the eight fifteen every morning, can run around in a tee shirt, and of course whenever anyone calls on him, he is sitting around relaxing and is always handy with the whiskey bottle. People see workers working. They know that bank clerks push pencils and count other people's money. They've seen all sorts of workmen making their weekly wage. But very, very few people have ever seen a writer in the process of writing.

They forget that writing is an occupation that does not permit a loud audience. Obviously, any writer hard at work is hard at work only when he is alone and undisturbed. When the telephone or the doorbell rings, he stops work.

Somehow, people do not stalk up to a carpenter and ask him to outline the details of his latest staircase. They do not interrupt a cement contractor for the details of his latest basement, or ask him to give a blow by blow description of how the sidewalk was laid.

But the sweet young thing asks: "What have you written. Mr. Zilch?"

And our hero, suddenly losing all prestige because of the question says, in a hopefully vague way, "I write science fiction."

"Science fiction?" she replies, equally vague. "You mean deroes and buck rogers and stuff like that?"

"Well... er... I..."

"Mr. Zilch, tell me. What are the Flying Saucers?"

This, no doubt, is the reason why the female element in science fiction has, until recent date, been a bit conspicuous by its absence. It has probably been the end of more promising friendships than liquor, dice, horses, or the Kinsey Report.

With deep mutterings, our hero retreats, vowing that his vengeance will come later.

Being serious for a moment, I have a hunch that the problem here lies in the fact that people expect writers to perform like dancers or musicians, instead of having their work shown like a painter or a composer. A writer, writing, is in the same category as a dancer practising. The finished production writer comes at a time when he is not at work, whereas a dancer after practise, goes on the stage and dances in person.

"I TRIED, I TRIED!"

Well anyway, the fatal date arrives and Beat Up Science Fiction turns up on the stand.

Again, we will mercifully draw the curtain upon the scene. People who greet the new writer quoting him out of context should be drawn and quartered. Guys who read the tale and sit making marginal notes as to which party used this phrase and at what clambake the author heard which joke sould be dipped in boiling transformer oil.

An aside, here. I've been asked repeatedly why I specify transformer oil instead of the usual hot grease. Transformer oil is a special grade of stuff noted for the fact that it can be run hotter than the usual oil without smoking, catching fire, or vaporizing.

This permits the subject to be dipped in the vat without having a cloud of vapor or smoke to either obscure the pleasant scene, or providing the victim with a case of painless suffocation in the smoke before he hits the stuff.

Former friends go into raptures dramatizing the lovescenes, the wise cracks, the various situations.

Unfortunately, the check is forgotten, overlooked, or waved aside.

He has no defense. Writers are a sensitive lot.

Well, I'll not go into that in any great detail. Just take my wor word for it.

The event of this tempest in a thimble now brings us to

Stage Number Four

The Prodigy. or the New Writer

The arrival of the first check, no matter what the implications, plus the sight of his Name In Print for the first time, have a profound effect upon our neophyte.

No matter what they say, no matter how much they kid him, he did produce.

He has not changed his ambition to write Literature, at least not yet.

But as he sits before his typewriter, visions of that check and the magazine rise in front of him, and so instead of taking off on his hundred and fifty thousand word opus magnus, the damned typewriter takes the affair in hand and the first words sound like---

> "Sam Parrish let his spacer down on the darkside of the closed planet of Merango fighting to keep his flares from lighting up the whole horizon. He sat in the control room for a half hour, watching the horizon for the approach of the vicious natives. Then Sam Parrish laughed with self-confidence. Santching up a blaster, Sam opened the Spacelock and dropped to the ground. He knew that he could not rescue the lovely Gloria Hamsworth sitting in his ship. He had to cut and fight his way through---"

After fighting his way through that wall, dragging his ambition be behind him, our hero gives up on the Great American Novel and lets his fingers run wild.

By the third story, his name appears on the front cover and his tale is illustrated by one of the better known artists.

Our writer has passed the point of no return.

Alas.

One thing, however, has not changed.

He goes to a party. By now he has been selling on a 750 batting average for a year or two, He has spread himself out so that is very hard for him to pass a month without knowing which magazine to step up and buy in front of an admiring friend so that he can crack it to page 104 or page 48 and show his friend the story. Or if a month passes dry-like, he can at least open the magazine to the reader's page and show said friend that he had a tale in last month.

Trouble is, like the guys who cannot see the check for the name of the bank (Corn Exchange) these guys always manage to pick the letter from some reader who takes this golden opportunity to run our hero's work into the mud.

But anyway, our writer goes to a party where he is introduced to a sweet young thing with large baby blue eyes, who look up at him limpidly and asks, "What do you write, Mr. Zilch?"

"Science fiction," says our hero proudly.

He knows that his name has been on a couple of dozen covers, in reader's columns here and there. He gets fan letters, his name is bruited about in fan magazines, and there is no reason to explain any further, except:

"Oh. Science Fiction, Mr. Zilch?" You mean deroes and buck rogers and all that stuff?"

"Well, er--- not exactly. You see---"

"Ohhh. Tell me, Mn Zilch, what ARE the flying saucers?"

Along about two in the morning, our her is fished out of the punch bowl, wrung out, poured back into the bottle, and sent onto his ad-

dress via messenger.

During the hangover, he learns that there are a hundred and fifty million people in the United States of America. There are a stated hundred and fifty thousand reading circulation claimed by science fiction magazines. Pro-rating the two figures, he comes to the conclusion that one out of one-thousand people in this broad and beautiful land of ours may have heard of him. His friends still thing it amusing that Old Zilch actually writes. His relatives think it is rather nice that he is actually getting money for his efforts.

Neither his friends nor his relatives think of him as a writer, for some reason. His writing is more or less of a hobby, amusing, oddly paid-for, but, of course, not as important as pushing a pencil at the Old Third National, or tightening Bolt Number Seventy Three on the old Production Line.

And if, as it was the case during World War II, our writer happens to be engaged in some classified pursuit like developing radar, atomic bombs, or the like, his scientific friends kid the daylights out of him for using certain of their own characteristics in his characters. Or flanging up some cockeyed idea and making side money from it.

However, this total lack of appreciation on the part of his friends who do not take pulp writing seriously eventually gets him down. He looks for an out.

This may take weeks or it may take months, but it eventually comes often in the following manner:

Due to something said, our hero writes a letter of explanation or rebuttal to one of the missives in the letter column which is then printed by the editor. After all, fan columns are unpaid space, and anytime an editor can get a well-known writer to write something for nothing, it gets in.

Now, our writer has been reading the letter columns and he has seen references to things like the Philcon, Pacificon, Torcon, Pittcon, and so on. He is interested but not moved by any great urge to visit until someone in his own city reads his letter and forthwith gets ahold of our writer by mail and asks him over to their science fiction club, which meets on subsequent Sundays, odd Thursdays and Michaelmas Eve.

He is told that he will meet L. Sprague de Lafayette, Fletcher Hubbard, Issac Kuttner, and maybe Henry Pratt, who are in the city on business.

This sounds interesting.

However, at this point if I have given the impression that our friend has an oversized hatband, I'm sorry. He is a writer, sure enough, but with a dozen stories under his belt he still does not feel quite up to meeting these fellows who have been hard at it for anything up to or beyond ten or fifteen, in some cases twenty, years.

Diffidently he walks in and tells the guy at the door that his name is Zilch and he heard tell that there was a science fiction club here and would they mind if he sits in.

He sits quietly whilst some gent runs off an hour or so on some subject or other, but as he sits, there is a whispering campaign going on that grows until the speaker becomes annoyed and stops. Someone asks our little chum if he is indeed none other than Oscar Q. Zilch.

Here the meeting breaks up in disorder, his hand is shaken all around, he is greeted warmly by the same famous names he is awe of, and sort of taken into the family.

Our writer has finally made his connection with organized fandom. He belongs. His name is known and his words are greeted with respect.

During the later portions of the evening, a young female-type fan gazes up at him out of large brown eyes and simpers,

"Mr. Zilch, perhaps you can tell me honestly, What ARE the FIying Saucers?"

Again that does it. Some hours later our hero is forcibly separated from his quart, stood up, and given a gentle launching shove towards home.

Behind him, someone asks, "God! I wonder what drove him to drink

that way."

Someone else says, "Well, you know writers."

And at this point, our writer has reached

Stage Number Five

The Regular

The Regular Science Fiction Writer Stage is ruled by several characteristics.

It must be remembered that our writer now has made the friendship of the fan group, met several other writers, and in place of the worn out question "Mr. Zilch, what have you written?" he is now greeted with the question: "Hello, Oscar, what are you working on now?"

This is one happy change from the old days and separates the neophyte from the regular.

Another change is to his sorrow. Where, as a newcomer, everything he turned out was greeted with howls of glee, he now finds the boys eyeing his stuff with a more critical eye and lambasting him when he turns out a clinker. This is because he has now had enough experence to make it tell, and his readers have read enough of his style and general stuff so that they can begin to grade it more critically.

It is always tough to have a friend come to you and tell you that the last one was a stinker.

Writers, I've said, are a sensitive lot.

Again I'll not dwell on that subject.

Zilch finds another loss in his having become a regular. Where he once found himself given very little credit for writing and was greeted with very little respect by friends and neighbors for it, he enjoyed the change that took place when he found his fan group, where they did give him credit for his stuff and respected his efforts.

But as he becomes a regular, he finds once more that even his fan friends are greeting him with friendly comradeship instead of hanging on his words of wisdom as they did before.

People who agreed with him willynilly before are now arguing with his opinion. At his first auction he happily saw one of his original manuscripts go for twenty three bucks. At his last auction he saw another of his treasures pass across the board for seventy five cents.

This, he feels, is a personal affront.

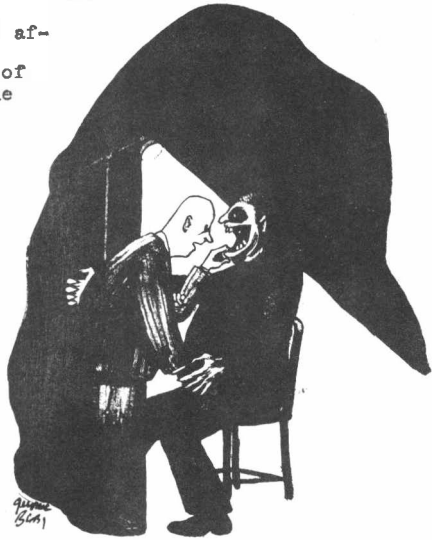
It isn't. It's just the law of diminishing returns at work. The signed manuscript of William Shakespeare would be worth a hell of a lot more moola than a signed letter from George Washington because a lot of the latter exist and none of the former are available.

But this stage has its compensations. Here our writer has his first hardcover book published.

He has his cocktail party. It consists of eight or nine people and one hell of a pile of books. Neither Ike nor Mamie are present, and not even Truman manages to show up, although she's shown up everywhere else.

As the hours wear on, our hero realizes that the eight not-signed copies of his first book are someday going to be worth money.

He is graciously granted twelve copies for himself. For some strange reason, he



"Strange... the foreign body lodged in your throat seems to be a human vertebra."

suddenly finds himself with about 2500 personal friends any and all of whom seem to feel that they should be handed a complimentary, specially inscribed copy.

And some of these characters have the temerity to come back in a week or so and start to criticize the book.

It seems to me that any man who reads a book without having to pay for it is not entitled to throw criticism--- unless he is getting paid by someone for criticizing it.

Our regular, now being well known in the bigger fan circles, is naturally asked to speak at a convention.

This is a big thing. But somehow it does not come off because our hero is a writer and not a professional lecturer. He is expected to be clever with the wisecrack, the repartee, the blinding retort. Unfortunately, he knows that the bit of sharpness that takes a half minute to read may take an hour to boil down to its brightly polished sparkle.

But he tries the first one without a script and muffs it because he can't remember all the things he should say.

He tries the second talk and makes it but is criticized because he read it from a script instead of speaking off the cuff.

But the second try goes better and from that time on he reads his talk and to hell with the guys who don't care for a reader instead of a professional lecturer.

Then, eventually, our writer, for any one of many reasons, is invited to become part of a panel or a radio or television broadcast.

Nervously he goes on the air, hoping he won't forget himself and come out with something that will get the station a pink tinket from the F.C.C. and a nasty letter from the Legion of Decency.

He responds to the questions, finding himself more and more at ease as the program goes on, until finally the interlocutor smiles confidently and says, "Mr. Zilch, with your years of experience in science fiction, perhaps you can tell us What Are The Flying Saucers?"

"Oh for God's sake-" says our hero.

Lightning flashes around the studio. The big switch is pulled. Someone in the control room slaps on a phonograph record in a hurry and through the monitor-speaker system, someone is saying in an unctious voice, "Due to technical difficulties, the program you have been hearing has been temporarily cut off the air. We will return to the studio as soon as the difficulties are corrected."

Correcting the difficulties consist of removing the writer from the the vicinity of a live mike and depositing him abruptly on the sidewalk in front of the studio.

Hours later the bar closes and he is led to the sidewalk, poured into a taxicab, and sloshed home.

In the morning, through his hangover, Zilch realizes with some a amusement that he is now entering

Stage Number Six

The Successful Writer

This stage in its own way is also characterized by certain features.

The writer is aware by now of the fact that just because he has been quoted in the newspaper a few times,

And that because he has four or five books in various public libraries,

And because he is asked from time to time to turn out so many thousand words because the editor has a hole in the next issue,

And because his ratio of sales to rejects has risen to a very good batting average, life time,

That even so he can't stand on any street corner and say "I am Oscar Q. Zilch" and have a lot of people come running to greet him.

He has seen someone on the bus reading a book of his and he has mentioned his authorship--- and been looked up and down with cold disbelief.

He has offered one of his books to someone who looked at it and replied coldly, "I never read this junk."

He has learned to scorn the people who think that writing is either a case of one hour of work per day, or the other guy who thinks

that you have to be a genius to express yourself on paper.

He is greeted at conventions with a roar of mingled cheers and good good natured boos, some of which are not so good natured.

He is occasionally asked to speak and whether he does a good job or is a complete flop depends on whether he manages to guess right as to the nature of his audience.

He has learned to greet people he does not know from Adam with a politely interested expression, but he knows that he has finally arrived at the position of success when two things take place simultaneously:

First, his appearance at some fish fry, clambake, or taffy pull is almost calmly ignored because the people at the convention are all clustered around some new neophyte who has had his first three yarns published and is now the new hero.

And

When he runs afoul of Robert Bloch's Seventh Stage Fan--- which is entitled the Fan-Fan who is so busy running fan mags and engaging in fan activities that he has no time to read the professional magazines. It probably takes place as follows:

Our writer is walking through the lobby en route from the bar to the convention hall when a character comes by and says,

"Zilch, got a spare buck?"

Our hero hands over the dollar.

"Congratulations, Zilch. You are now a member of the N-Triple-F."

Zilch looks startled and groans, "Zeus, what have I done!"

Forgetting the incident, he enters the hall to listen to the brand new prodigy speak at great length on some subject or other. He forgets the incident, has a good time, and eventually goes home.

But the incident is not ended here.

For the next six weeks, at each mail, he has to get out the old crowbar and pry it free. It consists of a veritable snowstorm of letters, cards, mimeographed bits, formally printed matter, fan magazines, requests for: money, blood, an original manuscript, something that he wouldn't mind having printed in a fan mag, and one guy asking for an autograph.

Zilch has just been wrapped in the mailbox by the N-Triple-F welcoming committee which they spell W-E-L-C-U-M in order to save time and foster the Simplified Spelling.

Among these--- after a couple of weeks of this guff he gets a letter from some whistle stop in Idaho, written by a party we shall call Mr. Adam U.S. Royal.

"Dear Mr. Zilch:

Welcum to the NFFF, which is our national science fiction fan organization. We are all glad to have you with us, any new science fiction fan is a welcum addition to our group.

We have found that the way to become prominent in fan circles is to write lots of letters to other fans and to editors' columns, and eventually you will be able to start a fanzine.

We all wish you luck in your new associations.

Signed,

Adam U. S. Royal"

This letter is too much. Our hero sits down and fires a rock back saying:

"Dear Mr. U.S. Royal:

Your card amuses me. But I fear that I'll not be able to become very prominent in fandom by writing lots of letters here and there because I hold down a regular job, and spend my evenings and weekends writing science fiction.

Signed,

Oscar Q. Zilch"

Two weeks later comes the following reply:

"Dear Mr. Zilch:

We are always glad to hear one of our fan group aspiring to appear in the prozines. While I am sorry that you cannot be active in fandom, I hope that your professional writings will be a success. Please let me know if you are ever published.

Signed,

Adam U. S. Royal

Postscript: Since you are attempting to write professionally you must have studied. Maybe you can tell me, Exactly what ARE the Flying Saucers?"

Our writer pal can take no more. He gives up. His binge is long and concentrated and when the smoke clears away he is ready to enter the Seventh and Final Stage.

Now, John W. Campbell once made the statement that every reader would like to be a fan, and every fan hopes to be an author, and the ambition of every author is to become an editor.

This is not true. It is at best an oversimplification. The ambition of every writer is to become financially independant, to exist upon past royalties and reprint incomes and to establish some sort of system where the folding stuff comes in because of his past endeavors, efforts, and long-lived proficiency. He would like to emulate someone like L. Frank Baum who wrote the first of the Oz books at the turn of the century and whose heirs and assigns are still collecting fully royalty payments some sixty years later.

Becoming an editor is not a step in this direction. It may be a sort of short inch, but it is no long step.

Anyway, it does bring us to

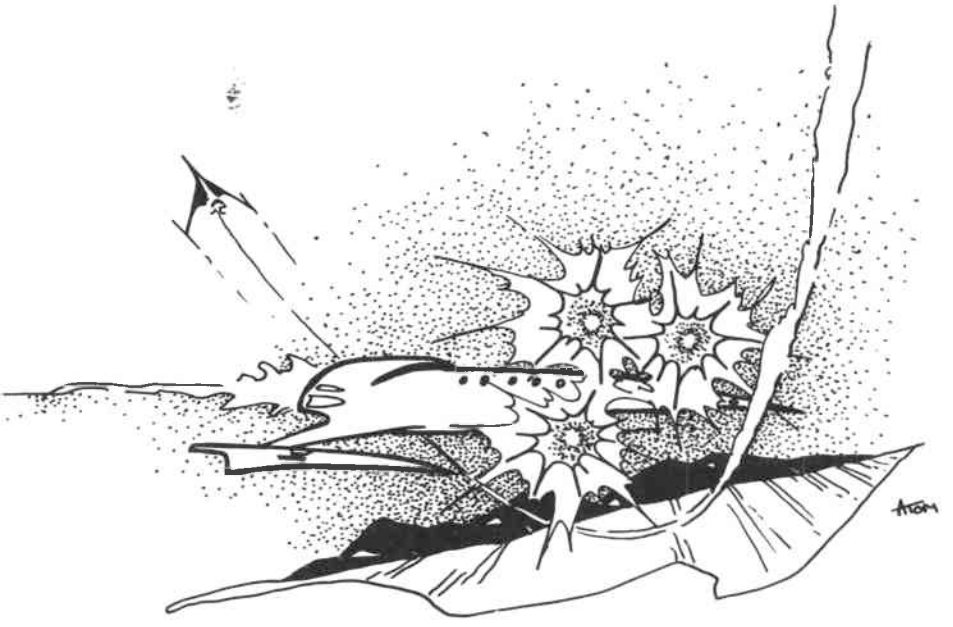
Stage Number Seven

The Retired Writer

As in the case of Doctor David H. Keller, whom I happily misquoted at the beginning of this tirade about the Fourteenth Form of Literary Expression, the Grand Opera, I don't know any retired writers and so I don't intend to spend much time discussing them. All I know is that every so often there is an obit in the news about some writer who died in the middle of his forty-seventh novel at the age of one hundred and three.

Old writers do not die. They just get damned sick and tired of answering damfool questions about Flying Saucers.

Are there any questions?



on the sf screen

Mike Deckinger

IN HOLLYWOOD TERMINOLOGY, a "sleeper" is a motion picture which is released with a minimum of promotional ballyhoo, used to pad out a program consisting of a more highly regarded second feature, and yet, surprisingly and unexpectedly, becomes both a critical and/or box office success. In recent months, two such films, "Ride the High Country" and "Lonely and the Brave," received this status, and from all indications a third film, in a science fictional vein, must be considered a sleeper too. This picture is titled "Panic in the Year Zero" and is very likely playing as an also-ran to some more prominent Hollywood blockbuster in your locals.

However, "Panic in the Year Zero" is an extremely good picture. The first thing to do is to disregard the foolish title. A novelization of this film appeared under the erroneous title "End of the World," but even that was preferable to what American-International chose to inflict upon the finished product. Don't let the presence of Frankie Avalon in the cast deter you from seeing it. My own policy is to shun all pictures bearing the names of such adenoid-exercising adolescents as Fabian, Presley, Avalon, etc., etc., but in this film young Mr. Avalon is given a part that is strictly non-musical, and offers him the opportunity to display any dramatic ability he may possess under the faggish haircut and baby-face smile. And any faults in his performance are superbly offset by the acting of Ray Milland as the desperate, concerned, and thoroughly frightened father, who suddenly learns that survival can consist of more than driving the car to work in the morning, and crawling into bed at night.

Plotwise, "Panic in the Year Zero" offers an unlimited potential for a gifted screeen writer, and, happily, much of this potential is realized in a truthful, plausible, and suspenseful script. A middle-aged married couple (Ray Milland and Jean Hagen) living near Los Angeles depart early one morning on a fishing trip, with their teenage son and daughter. Since this is expected to be an excursion of several days duration, a well-stocked trailer is brought along. As they proceed along a dirt road heading away from the city, there is a blinding flash and a terrific roar shakes the air. They turn to observe the familiar mushroom shaped cloud rising from the city. Pandemonium reigns briefly. Mother wishes to return to the city, in an impractical effort to see her mother. Eventually they decide to retreat.

Throughout the film, the feeling is expertly conveyed of society loosening its grip on civilized man, as survival, rather than social niceties and conventions become all important. As the family pulls into a gas station a customer ahead of them, unable to pay his bill, slugs the attendant and speeds away. The father finds this act unthinkable and barbaric yet several days later, when a full gas tank is a matter of life and death, an attendant seeks to overcharge him, and he does the same thing.

The advantages of having a weapon in one's possession at this time are fully exploited, too. After purchasing several rifles in a small store, Ray Milland finds himself forced to hold a grocery store owner at bay because of his inability to pay a bill. But even in this he retains some vestiges of the civilized man by sincerely pledging to repay the remainder.

A subsequent news broadcast reveals that the enemy (who is unnamed) has bombed all the large U.S. cities, and we have bombed theirs in retaliation. The full irony of this becomes more and more apparent as the movie progesses, for the only enemies which the family contends with are Americans like themselves, fighting and killing for survival.

Meanwhile, the family is beset with other difficulties. Minor problems, formerly regarded only with mild annoyance, are transformed into burdensome obstacles. A large highway, filled with a constant, murderous flow of cars driven by frantic drivers, must be crossed. The

cars refuse to slow down, or even stop to permit crossings, and any attempts to dash into the churning rush would be suicide. Ray Milland finally solves the problem by pouring a stream of gasoline across the roadway, and igniting it, thus providing a temporary flaming barrier, behind which his car and trailer can pass.

Insuring survival means enforced isolation. It means they must take refuge in a large but crudely furnished cave, confiding and trusting in no one but themselves. A half-dozen caches of food and supplies are buried. The car is camouflaged, the trailer abandoned; by its conspicuous nature it would immediately attract interlopers. The cave is outfitted with as many comforts as can be provided, and as a final gesture to civilization, the father declares he and his son will shave daily.

Inevitably, the irresponsible criminals enter the scene. Scarcely more than teenagers, they demonstrate their willingness to adapt to the environment by killing and stealing, trading inhibitions for callous brutality. In all probability, the strongest scene of the entire film is when Ray Milland shoots the two young killers who have raped his daughter and murdered a neighbor and his wife. The starkness of observing a man desperately gunning down two deadly vermin has a stunning impact.

By the film's end the viewer learns that the enemy has suffered the worst damage, and has sought immediate truce talks, thus bringing to an end the brief war between the two countries. But the audience is left to ponder another question- that of war for survival on an individual basis.

There is, of course, some corn in "Panic in the Year Zero," including a superfluous romance, but this is far outbalanced by the plausibility and urgency of the film. It is both a commendable and thought provoking effort, deserving the attention of anyone concerned about tomorrow.

THE WEAPON

"What is that?"
"It is the Fulcrum."
"What does it do?"
"It supports the Lever."
"What does it do?"
"It destroys."
"How does it work?"
"The Lever is the irrestable force. Infinity is the immovable object. The Fulcrum is the pivot, and the power is the mind. The Lever and Infinity presss together to crush the Inbetween. Anyplace is Infinity in relation to the infinite so it can work at any point. It is the ultimate weapon so only one can operate at a time. Now, do you understand?"
"Yes, I think so."
"Then you know too much..."

-David Lasky

inside **BOOKS**

THE UNKNOWN, edited by Don Bensen. Pyramid Books, New York, 192 pp., 50¢, 1963.

This is the second anthology of stories from that most wonderful of magazines, Unknown. Although it would be well-nigh impossible to put together a poor anthology from such a source, Bensen comes fairly close. For each author, there was always a better story or stories which could have been chosen.

The first selection is a Kuttneryarn, "The Misguided Halo," which possesses a practically unlimited potential and which realizes none of it. It is not even a story in a true sense, possessing as it does neither climax nor resolution, and breaking Campbell's Cardinal Rule by leaving the main character in the same state as he was at the beginning. Of it, Mr. Burbee said, "Kuttner did better in high school."

The second tale is by Nelson Bond, who excels at the light touch, but who falls flatter than a pancake when he takes his horror seriously. This story, "Prescience," is, bluntly, terrible: completely predictable and peopled by the most blatant of stereotypes. The editor, Bensen, states in his introduction that Bond has slightly revised the story, and invites all readers with the October 1941 Unknown to compare. So I compared. Slightly revised is right. One of the biggest revisions was the substitution of "poppycock" for "bah." To you, Mr. Bond, "pooh."

The next story is Sturgeon's "Yesterday was Monday," which could safely have been left out, for it appeared in the Campbell anthology, From Unknown Worlds (which, by the way, is still available -at 25¢! and a fantastic buy- in the British edition from Richard Minter). The same applies to Gold's vastly overrated "Trouble with Water."

I could go on and on, for each story. And not only is it a poor selection for the authors represented, but there are so many fine ones omitted. Cleve Cartmill, Frank Belknap Long (most of who's work was terrible, but who produced two gems in "Johnny on the Spot," and "It Will Come to You."), H.W. Guernsey (Howard Wandrei, and some really fine stories), Jane Rice, Lester del Rey and Mona Farnsworth were bypassed in favor of tripe by Bond, Robert Arthur, and Wellman.

Bensen's introduction and introductory notes are informative and lively. Asimov's forward is interesting plus, but it ends on an unpleasant pleading tone, not at all typical of Asimov. Also worthy of special note are the Cartier illustrations which fail utterly to convey the effect they are able on the expansive pulp-size page. The best is the one for Jameson's "Doubled and Redoubled" (which Bensen quietly transplanted from Hubbard's Fear) which must be seen in its original to be believed, along with Cartier's other illustrations for Fear, which show him at the absolute top of his form.

Reader's of this collection will be interested in knowing that an anthology is due from Britain entitled HELL HATH FURY, another pick of the Unknown crop, edited by George Hay, whoe'er he be.

THE GIRL, THE GOLD WATCH & EVERYTHING by John D. MacDonald. Gold Medal Books, Connecticut, 207 pp., 35¢, 1962.

Another variation on the New Accelerator, high paced and well plotted, full of unbelieveable and engaging characters (the super arch criminals, the transformed ineffectual, the moralistic stripper) making up some of the most delightful nonsense that has come this way in a long time.

THE NATURAL HOUSE, THE LIVING CITY and THE FUTURE OF ARCHITECTURE by Frank Lloyd Wright. Mentor Books, New York, 224 pp., 255 pp., 352 pp., 75¢, 75¢, 95¢, 1963.

Beautifully and completely illustrated, these books are a must for anyone interested in architecture, or just in ideas. They are packed solid with ideas, captivating and stimulating ideas, simply and clearly presented. Wright was no Shakespeare. His writing had many faults you might expect of one who created in another field. But he is literate and lucid, and has the knack of arousing in the reader the intellectual excitement he felt in what he wrote.

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SCIENCE FICTION
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On January 15, 1963, Julius Unger died. For twenty-five years the best and largest of the magazine dealers, he was known and liked by practically everyone in the field. Listed below is the remaining stock. The prices have been especially lowered, so that it can be sold as soon as possible.

ASTOUNDING April 1935 to December 1961, practically all in absolutely mint condition. $400
AMAZING April 1926 to July 1929, with Quarterlies and Annual, all absolutely mint. $125
For single issues, almost all 1926 to date, send want list.
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WEIRD TALES Two issues missing in 1923 and 1924, and half a dozen are coverless (but the first issue is here, in fine condition). 1925-1954 are near mint & mint At auction. Minimum bid $900. First $1000 takes it.

Almost all UNKNOWN and UNKNOWN WORLDS at $2 each; defective- $1.50
First issue $2.50 (no other 1939 issues, except April)

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Original Sunday page illustrations by Hogarth for Tarzan stories. Each measure 21 1/2 inches by 28 inches.
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The SILLY SEASON

THE ENCHANTED DUPLICATOR by Walt Willis & Bob Shaw. Published by Ted Johnstone (now Dave McDaniel), 1503 Rollin Street, South Pasadena, California. 75¢

Prior to this republication, I'd heard a lot about the Enchanted Duper. It was Great. It was Terribly Funny. It was The Fannish Classic. So impressed was I by all this that even before reading it I was planning to reprint it (...) Then I read it.

I was not, frankly, disappointed. I suppose my high expectations were tempered by my pessimistic nature. For this work is not great. But it is good, very good, excellent. Willis is clever and inventive. He has a natural and easy wit, and a knack for just the right bit of symbolism which borders on genius. Every once in a while his wit gets a bit out of wack, becomes forced, unsubtle ("My name is Leth, Robert George Leth. They call me Leth R.G. for short." or the squeaky transition from egoboo to the egg of the Bu bird).

The illustrations by Eddie Jones add nothing to the text. But it is still, of course, well worth getting- if it can still be got. Cross your fingers and send McDaniel seventy-five cents. (There were only 150 printed, so you'd better cross your toes, too.)

SPECTRUM, Lin Carter, 2028 Davidson Avenue, New York 53, N.Y. 6/$1.

This is a 'zine devoted entirely to book reviews. Enjoyable, sensible, perceptive reviews. If you can't buy every book on the market you might make this your buying guide. A neat bit of mimeography too.

SHANGRI-L'AFFAIRES 64, March 1963; published by the LASFS, available from Ron Ellik, 1825 Greenfield Avenue, Los Angeles 25, California. 25¢, 5/$1.

The book reviews are fairly enjoyable, but there is not much else here that interested me. Maybe this is a poor issue. The cover -by Mervyn Peake yet- deserves some sort of award for sheer putridity.

XERO 9, September 1962, Pat & Dick Lupoff, 210 East 73rd, New York 21, N.Y. No price tag. Act!

This is one of those fanzines that makes me seriously question the necessity of a 'zine like INSIDE. Absolutely speaking, of c., nothing is necessary, but in terms of relativistic dadaism, there might be a place for it. But a 'zine like XERO destroys the necessity of all but itself. Let us pay homage to the Great God Xero. This mag has everything and one hundred pages of it. Get it. Amen.

WARHOON 17, October 1962, Richard Bergeron, 110 Bank Street, New York 14, N.Y. 20¢, 5/$1, trade, contribution, letter.

My God, another! This issue is highlighted by a con report by Walter Breen. Breen has a special genius for con reports, and this one ably demonstrates it. (And where the hell is FANAC, Walter?) Pepper and spice are provided by Bergeron imself, Charlie Wells, John Baxter and James Blish, plus a lively and very interesting lettercol featuring Fred Pohl on the wrong side of an argument. Ninety pages of this. At 20¢ you can't miss. You couldn't miss at ten times that. Get it, you fool.

FANTASY FICTION FIELD, Harvey Inman, 1029 Elm Street, Grafton, Ohio. 13/$1.

A revival of Unger's old magazine. A newsie that carries no immediate news, mostly stuff on the book forecast level, but worth getting for its dependability. The latest number carries a con report of the Open ESFA meeting by Don Studebaker and Harriet Kolchak. Not too good. Included with each issue is a page of Paul Scaramazza's index to sf in magazines appearing up to 1925.

SATHANAS 4, December 1962, Richard Schultz, 19159 Helen, Detroit 34 Michigan. 25¢ "or the usual."

A sloppy but spirited issue. This one is devoted to a con report. Schultz seems to have spent most of the con being floored by Willis' jokes. Ming the Merciless gives this issue his stamp of approval.

A SENSE OF FAPA, Dick Eney, 417 Fort Hunt Road, Alexandria, Virginia. $3.

The chances are there are none of these left. If there are, then get it, get it! it is a must. There are almost four hundred pages here, and not a dull one among them. A third of a million words representing some of the very best of FAPA. I have been informed by Correspondent X that some of the material here was reprinted for less than honorable purposes. Be that as it may, this is still fine stuff, a monumental piece of work and with genuine historical value.

The piece is, of course, FTLaney's "Ah! Sweet Idiocy," a truly Herculean attempt by the author to evaluate, as well as record, his life as a fan. Laney has been criticized as been totally unjustified in his vitriolic attacks on fans. I have been told that Laney saw homosexuals "like McCarthy saw Communists." He is vitriolic. Maybe these homosexuals that he saw crawl out of the Lasfs woodwork were only figments of a high-strung temperament. But going beyond this, it seems to me that Laney hit upon some basic truths concerning fans and fandom. Briefly: that for the most part fans are social misfits, that their main problems are sexual in nature, that they use fandom to sublimate their drives, to retreat, rather than to find out about themselves.

Laney has a clear, well-paced style. The whole thing is entirely literate and possesses a unity that one would think impossible of a work composed entirely on stencil. Of course there is some stylistic awkwardness, such as his habit of introducing character sketches with "Well, I guess this is about the place for another vignette." Inevitably he gets carried away, and in the last few pages lapses into some of the very sloppiest writing I have ever come across, wrapping up the 130-odd-page bundle with what is undoubtedly the worst concluding sentence in print.

Burbee has a wunnerful bit on how the Summer 1947 FAPA mailing was saved. Rotsler's cartoons are delightful. Curtis Janke contributes an excruciatingly honest bit of self-examination. Redd Boggs on the Skylark. Jack Speer on fan history (the same period of the Moskowitz book- you might compare) and lots more fine reading.

DYNATRON 16, March 1963, Roy Tackett, 915 Green Valley Road NW, Albuquerque, New Mexico. 15¢, 8/$1 or trade, contribution, letter.

A very enjoyable mag. Mostly light stuff, with an especially fine lettercol. Nostalgia for the good old days of the ten cent pulp seems to be a staple of the lettercol. (Alva Rogers: "Every time you mentioned a mag with its price in those days I sobbed right along with you. ASTONISHING 10¢, and a really fine magazine it was, too. And remember when you could get 162 pages of ASTOUNDING for 20¢? Those were the days. And how about all those magnificent novels reprinted from the old Munsey mags in FAMOUS FANTASTIC MYSTERIES and FANTASTIC NOVELS for 10¢ and 15¢ when FFM was still being published by Munsey?" Tackett: "Stop it! You'll have me blubbering in a minute.") Being a pulp collector, I get a big kick from this sort of thing. Rogers & Tackett- did y o u see Beaumont's article in PLAYBOY several months back, which reminisced in fine style on The Shadow and Doc Savage? Why don't you guys stop blubbering for an hour or two and write an article, in the XERO comic-book vein, but on the pulps? I'd like to read it.

THE PANIC BUTTON 13, Les Nirenberg, 1217 Weston Road, Toronto 15, Ontario, Canada. 40¢.

Some of the funniest insanity to come this way in a long time. Nirenberg has successfully combined the best elements of The Realist and "Captions Courageous," to produce a fanzine so way out it's not even a fanzine. Keep this atmosphere, Nirenberg, don't go fannish. The social commentary, through the cartoons, captioned photos and the articles, are the meat of the magazine. Excellent satire, too. If you're John F. Kennedy you won't like it, much. Or if you belong to the DAR. Or the John Birch Society.

Lots of fun.

•

Read a book lately? Contributions to all columns welcome!

wadek

THE MINUTE HE WAS AWAKE, Wadek knew that all was not right in the house. Ordinarily on the Lord's day he slept quite late, indulging himself in one of his few sensual pleasures. He was accustomed on these mornings to hover for several hours in the delicious sloth of half-sleep, realizing that it was morning, and that soon the time to get up would come, but not even considering any effort toward this end.

Perhaps Wadek had been having a bad dream and the horror of it had jarred him awake, while the dream carried over into the sparse light of his small bedroom. In any case, as his eyes opened and he became aware of himself and his bed and his room, his first thought was, "My God, I'm caught, I'm lost!"

His fear was not the unreal, vague terror of a distorted nightmare. It was directly related to his room, his bed, the bed clothes, and his mother's house. Suddenly this home that he had known all his life seemed to be full of terrible danger, danger that hid perhaps below the foot of the bed, crouching to spring at him if he attempted to get up. The bit of blackness that lay beyond the open door of his clothes closet perhaps teemed with indefinite monsters. His discarded suit, crumpled on the chair, had the shape of some pensive sub-human thing. The clutter of pens, cigarette wrappers, and torn envelopes on his dresser was a tangled swarm of insects and serpents as Wadek peered at them in the sombre light that inched into his room around the edges of the drawn shades.

To settle himself, Wadek laughed out loud. "Holy Christ!" he said in self-derision. It sounded weak and hollow. He threw back his quilt and swung his legs to the floor. Feeling his feet touch the cold wood, his sense of a more mundane reality returned to him. It was Sunday, he had only awakrened early because of a bad dream. His mother and sisters would already be downstairs, hurrying about the warm kitchen to ready the enormous breakfast that they would share in the good room with Wadek, who was the single solid pole about which their existence orbited. The cloth would be spread, there would be flowers on the table, and Wadek would read the paper and eat, answering from time to time the gossip they had gathered during the week, or telling them anecdotes from his office, sometimes interpreting world events in the newspaper for them.

Thinking of this, Wadek laughed again. His mother and sisters would be pleasantly surprised at seeing him downstairs so early, and they would marvel when he told them how his dream must have been so terrible that it had even frighted him when he was awake.

Now Wadek stood before his closed door, almost as naked as the day he was born. He scratched his head, deciding to go to the bathroom at the end of the hall before dressing. Washing would clear his mind. He reached out his hand for the knob to open the heavy door, and stopped short.

For he had heard a noise in the hall, a scurrying, rustling sound, as though broom straws were being blown gently by his doorsill. His ears caught the bristly nervous sound and he froze, near-naked in the half-light. There was something sinister in the sound, as if this dry whisper of a noise were a warning of great and tragic importance to him, as though it had promised something more, as though promised rain.

Wadek felt his mouth go very dry. He was holding himself so tightly motionless that his body shook slightly at the base from the strain in his muscles. Cords stood out at his wrists and neck, and he began to focus all his attention on the corridor outside his room.

Gordon A. Weaver

He heard nothing. He listened so intently that there was no realization in him that he could see the door and the knob in front of him, and still he heard nothing.

Wadek coughed from holding his breath too long. Cautiously, he exhaled. The low sigh that his breath made caused him to suspect his room again. The tangle of insects and serpents remained on his dresser. The sub-human man continued to think darkly in his chair, and unknown things lurked in the blackness of his closet.

With an effort he regained control of himself. He was Wadek, this was the Lord's day, he had awakened early because of a bad dream, and his mother and sisters would be downstaris, humming and gossiping, frying and stirring things for Wadek's breakfast at the table in the good room.

"Well, for Christ's sake!" Wadek said. He was utterly disgusted with himself for this childishness. He squared his shoulders and sucked in his slack stomach, determined to seize the doorknob like a man who opens doors to strange rooms as a matter of course. Clearing his throat with manifest purpose, he took hold of the doorknob and turned it, meaning to fling the door open wide with a bang, so that his mother and sisters below would be certain to hear that he was up. But at the last moment he lost his nerve, and opened it only wide enough to poke his head out into the hall, pressing his bare frame up to the corridor, reluctant to throw aside any barrier to the dusky hall.

Wadek peeped into the corridor. It was illuminated by a bulb in the bathroom at the far end. The light bounced from the ceiling to the floor, cutting the hall into yellow and black slices. At first there was nothing and Wadek had almost decided to open the door the rest of the way when he heard the noise again.

There was the rustling of gently blown broom straws, then a faint and fretful scratching as of a dog pawing for admittance, and then the beast crossed from the blackness into the yellow slice of hall. "Jesus, Joseph and Mary," Wadek croaked. It was two feet high and perhaps three feet long, besides the limp string-like rat tail that coiled on the floor behind it. Its fur was the dirty buff grey of rats, but stiff and lying smooth on its back, like a pig's bristles. Its ears were short rat ears, and its teeth were the filthy incisors of a rat. He felt that he must still be in bed, under the quilt, dreaming all this, but the tremors that shook his body, spreading from his stomach to his intestines, to his legs and arms screamed to him that he was awake and that this was.

The beast stopped now in the yellow slice of hall and turned its face toward Wadek. For an instant, a puzzled, quizzical look remained in its sick, evil, rat-pig eyes, and then they glittered with recognition of Wadek. It snorted, and then backed up on its grey haunches and sprang for Wadek's throat. He ran behind the door and slammed it much faster than he imagined he would ever be able to. He threw his shoulder against it and braced himself to take the shock of the beast's weight upon the old wood.

If he had retained any last hope that the beast was something from the morbid pits of his subconscious, it evaporated as the animal landed snarling on the door, pushing the heavy panels painfully into Wadek's braced shoulder. The noise was like a cannon shot, banging and echoing down the hall, shaking the clutter of things on Wadek's dresser. The windows in Wadek's room tinkled and shook with the vibration, and Wadek realized that the crash was certain to be heard by his mother and sisters as they bustled unaware in the kitchen warm with breakfast.

"My God!" Wadek thought; his mother and sisters, they would hear the noise and come running upstairs to see what was the matter, and the beast would get them! He must warn them- this thing would have them, it would perhaps creep downstairs and surprise them and tear them to pieces in the kitchen. "Mother!" he screamed. "Mother, for the love of God, get out of the house, run , hide, get help, get out of the house!" His voice broke, and tears rolled down his face. It would kill them, they would come upstairs, it would spring on them, tearing their throats.

Outside the door the beast snuffed and whined in frustration. Wadek could hear the scratch of its clawed feet. "Mother!" Wadek screamed. He knew they had not fled for he would have heard them leave the house. Were they all three, his dear sisters at his mother's side, paused now at the staircase landing, hesitating about what to do? "For the love of God, go get help, run, bring someone, bring help, hurry!" Wadek screamed again. What were they doing? Surely they had heard.

Wadek, in desperation, allowed himself to slip down the length of the door to the floor. The beast was beginning to gather for another spring against the door. There were quicker and quicker little rasping steps on the wooden floor of the hall.

What was it? God in Heaven, there was nothing like this, where did it come from, how did it enter the house? A moment of silence. Wadek heard the snorting breath as it pulled in its strength. He braced. There was a creak as it pushed off the floor. Why didn't they hear it downstairs? The beast crashed against the door, which herked at its hinges under the force of the impact, loosening the ancient screws, making the old wood screech as it splintered.

But the door held, and the beast landed back heavily upon the hall floor. The ceiling fixtures downstairs were sure to have been set swaying, dishes must be rattling in the cupboards; what was wrong with them? Whenever he called to them, not even loudly, they had always come running to him; they cared so much for him, his mother and dear sisters, where were they now?

"Mother, Mother, Mother!" Wadek called, completely hopeless now. Oh dear God, he thought, won't someone get help, won't someone come and kill it... kill it. No, they would not come. Something was wrong, they did not hear or they did not care, but he was left alone to be slaughtered by this ting. He must save himself.

Wadek thought now of a weapon. Anything, any sort of club and he might be able to hold it off as would a mad dog. He would have to hold the door until he was ready to try and run into the corridor. There would be no chance to dress, he must go as he was, nearly naked, make it to the street and get help, get someone to come and kill it. Wadek cursed his mother and sister, useless, stupid things! They knew what he was facing, why didn't they get help? Didn't they love him?

He squealed in anguish as he swept his look about the tiny dark room for a weapon. The beast raged outside the door, walking in circles and whimpering in eagerness. On the dresser, was there a pocket knife? No, not the dresser, serpents and insects moved there among the clutter of cheap things. The chair? No, the quiet half-man sat there dangerously. Here? The closet? No, something evil waited in the darkness for him there.

"Oh God!" Wadek cried. There was nothing, no weapon. Below, he imagined them joking and carefree, spreading the cloth on the table, setting the centerpiece of flowers, carrying in warm trays of food. In the corridor the beast began to pace smaller circles and to stifle its roaring. It was going to spring again. They had forgotten him downstairs and he was alone. Wadek coldly thought that he now must go into the hall and face it with hands, naked as he was, without help.

Why had it come? When he looked into its angry pink eyes it had seemed to recognize him, to know him as Wadek, to lust to destroy Wadek and no other. Why had it not gone downstairs and attacked his family? Had it been put there, or perhaps sent? Who sent it?

Wadek understood that he must go out into the hall as a man and kill this filthy animal, filthier than any imagination. He dared not let it break in the door and grapple with him in the darkness of his tiny bedroom. Here, in the bedroom, the clutter of insects began to buzz. The pensive monster in the chair stirred, there was a spark in the blackness of his closet.

Again Wadek heard the quick scratch-scratching steps of the beast as readied itself to spring. Wadek drew himself up as a man. He drew in his breath, summoning up the terrible wrath of his dignity and his divine humanity, opened the door and darted out into the hall

He had surprised it and it scuttled back into the shadows as Wadek drove at it, kicking at its ugly head. He screamed with anger at this impossible horrid beast that had held him a prisoner behind his door. He kicked at it savagely, screaming, "Goddamn, goddamn, goddamn you," with all the hate that had piled up in his barren life with his mother and sisters over the years.

The huge beast wheeled into the black slice of the hall, hurt by the kicking. It eyes reflected the light as it watched the enraged man who stood defiantly in the middle of the yellow slice, who it knew so well. It circled in the darkness for a moment and then charged. Its needle-sharp incisors ripped into Wadek's forearm, thrown up in front of his head to ward off the onslaught. Muscles, nerves, and tendons were plucked and severed, causing Wadek to scream in agony.

Gripping his crippled arm, Wadek set himself to receive another charge. This time the beast feinted with human cunning, and as Wadek lashed out with his foot at its head to stop the leap, it turned and sank its long teeth into his heal. Wadek kicked furiously to loosen its bite. The beast twisted, tearing loose the flesh back of his ankle, laming him.

The inner understanding that his survival now hung in the balance, that he, Wadek, might perish in a moment, drove all human sense of pain from him. He could not fight without a weapon and kill this thing that came from outside God's creation, a man needed a weapon. Lamed in arm and foot, he must fall to his knees and fight as the beast fought if he was to survive; it was the only way left to fight.

Now on his hands and knees, Wadek felt the equal of the beast. It sat at the edge of the black slice. There was silence. Had his family not heard this? Enough of them, he would deal with them later. In the silence, Wadek listened to the panting of the tiring beast. His own short breaths punctuated those of the beast. He looked into the pink eyes with equal hatred and recognition. He knew the beast.

It charged into the yellow slice, roaring and rasping its feet on the wooden floor, its tail flicking behind it.

Wadek dropped to his stomach, flat against the cold floor, and then sprang up to the beast's throat as it tried to stop short its rush. Wadek clamped his jaws into the soft hairy neck of the beast, holding its head fast with his good arm and trying to stave off the clawing feet with his crippled limbs. The pig bristle hair choked him and the beast's animal stench poured into his nostrils.

The beast squealed and gurgled as Wadek chewed into its soft underside, shaking its heavy body from side to side. It fell over, and Wadek finished it, bashing and mauling it with teeth and nails, strewing its entrails over the hall. He snarled and raged in the middle of the widening circle of blood, his own mixing with that of the beast.

The beast lay dead next to him. He seemed to have forgotten his own wounds, to have lost all consciousness of himself. He spluttered and spat the pig bristle from his mouth, wiped the filth from his face. Then he remembered his mother and sisters.

Had they not heard it? Did they not know what he had done? They had not come, they had not gone for help. He would deal with them now. He started down the corridor and toward the stairs, hampered in his movement by his wounds.

His mother and sisters had been very busy preparing the breakfast. They sat expectantly at the table now, fresh flowers in the centerpiece, drinking coffee and gossiping as they waited for Wadek to come down for breakfast. The newspaper lay open at his plate.

When he reached the landing, they saw him. They screeched, falling back from the table, upsetting glass serving dishes that fell to the floor and broke as they rushed about the room, clinging momentarily to one another for help, like foolish chickens. "Jesus, Joseph, and Mary," his mother repeated. "Oh, God, God, God Almighty, save us," his sisters cried.

Wadek watched them flutter with hate in his pink eyes. He licked the blood-flecked pig bristles around his mouth, and his smooth rat tail thrashed behind him.

That Man Clarke

william f temple

Inside my last INSIDE was a note from the editor: "Would you do that article on Arthur Clarke you mentioned to Ron a few years ago?"

If I ever did mention such a thing I must have been out of my mind.

Arthur Charles Clarke is an impossible subject, as the Queen of England once remarked. (Clarke had been hobnobbing with her husband, who was credulous about flying saucers at the time, and Clarke handled him firmly. This is true. Clarke told me so himself. " 'Now, look here, Phil,' I said...")

Once, long ago, when Clarke was unknown and the world was blissful in its ignorance, I shared a flat in London with him. It was a perfectly balanced arrangement: he did all the talking and I did all the housework. Both began to wear me down. In desperation one day I went out and married a girl and brought her to the flat to help me with the housework. But I couldn't do a thing about Clarke's talking. Nobody could- then or now.

Correction. One man could: Clarke. But he was far too busy listening to himself talking about himself. I began to call him "Ego." The name stuck. Which, unfortunately, Clarke's tongue never did.

It was around that time that he began to write the Colossal American Novel. "Great" wasn't great enough for Ego. Read his stuff, especially of that period, and you'll find he went for the super-adjective every time. And it didn't matter that he was British. He was always generous with himself. Clarke belonged to the world. In short, he was a one-man mankind. If the Americans wanted a Great- or Colossal- American Novel, he was willing to give them one.

The master opus was called Raymond. To begin with.

He wrote away at it on the kitchen table well into the small hours.

He drove himself hard and me mad. He neglected sleep, food, drink, and (of course) the housework. Around three every morning he'd kick open my bedroom door, kick me awake, and roar: "Listen to this, Bill, it's naked genius." Then he'd declaim from his manuscript, with the ink, sweat, blood and tears still wet on it.

It was all about a colossal spaceship which, some time at a colossal distance in the future, went out on a colossal journey to some colossal star...

It really moved me. Right outof bed, to throw him out.

Eventually he retitled it Against the Fall of Night and sold it to "Startling Stories." Everyone was duly startled, especially the editor, Sam Merwin, who was so startled when he realized what he'd done, he resigned immediately.

Later, having found some new adjectives to stuff in, Ego rewrote it at great length, called it The City and the Stars, and sold it again.

He's currently rewriting it in three volumes. The new edition will be called War and Peace and the Cinerama rights have already been sold. The première will be on the moon in the crater named Bailly (naturally: it's the largest). It will be generally released on Jupiter.

I feel maybe I'm recording only the dark hours. There must have been odd moments when he was bearable, but they seem to have slipped through the holes in my memory. Surely he had some less trying, if not exactly redeeming, traits?

Well, he liked to have porridge for breakfast every day. Nothing wrong in that, except that he would shave with an electric razor at the same time, simultaneously reading his mail, the morning paper, while listening to the readio news and -naturally- talking. (About you know who.)

You see, he'd read Professor Whitehead, who maintained that the sign of the highest intelligence was the ability to perform six different operations simultaneously. Ego was merely demonstrating him intellignece.

He remains the only person I know able to digest hair-and-porridge.

Another trait: everything was a Challenge. (Hence The Challenge of the Spaceship. The Challenge of the Sea, etc.) He felt constrained to prove that he could best everybody and everything- except, unfortuneatly, it.

I taguht him to play ping-pong on the kitchen table when it wasn't being used for the breakfast-time circus or having Raymond written on it. At first I beat him easily. But he improved with surprising rapidity, and soon was beating hell out of me. Later, I discovered he'd been spending every lunch-hour in a Civil Service games room, working up his game until he could prove he was Top Cat.

Again: being reasonably normal, when I came up out of the local subway station I used the Up escalator. But not Ego. He would make for the Down escalator, and race like mad up the descending stairs, trying to beat me to the upper level and show that he could give me a handicap and still win. He'd damn near kill himself with the effort. Often I had to let him win, just to save his life.

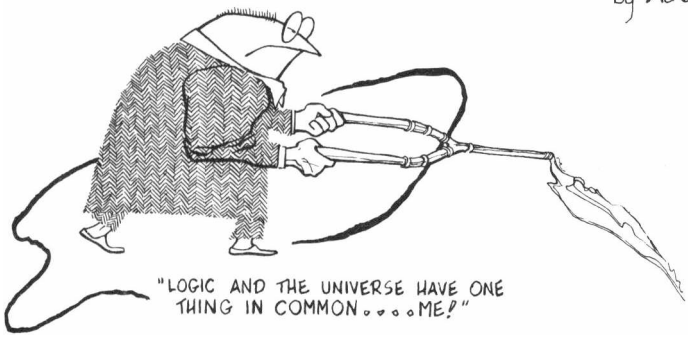
Okay, tell me now that I was a fool. I could have saved the world from Clarke. He would never have lived to invent Telstar, and the world would never have been afflicted with the peril of Instant Bronco. Maybe, even, Russia and the States wouldn't be spitting Sputniks at each other. For he was Top Cat in the British Interplanetary Society. They used to meet in our flat to lay the foundations of space travel. God help me, I encouraged him and them: I used to hand around the doughnuts.

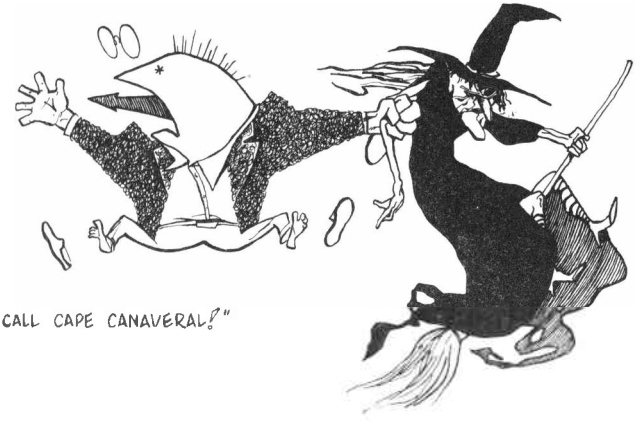
He's still at it. Only the other day I had a letter from him saying he'd been writing (in the intervals between having a round one hundred photos taken of him by "Playboy") his reminiscenses of those early days of the BIS in our flat. He'd just sold the said article to "Holiday" at a rate of some three hundred dollars per thousand words.

And here I am expected to write an article about him for nothing. I won't do it. Like I said, he's an impossible subject, anyhow.

PASTICHE

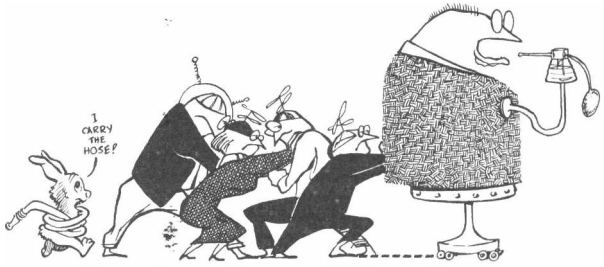
by KASTILIO



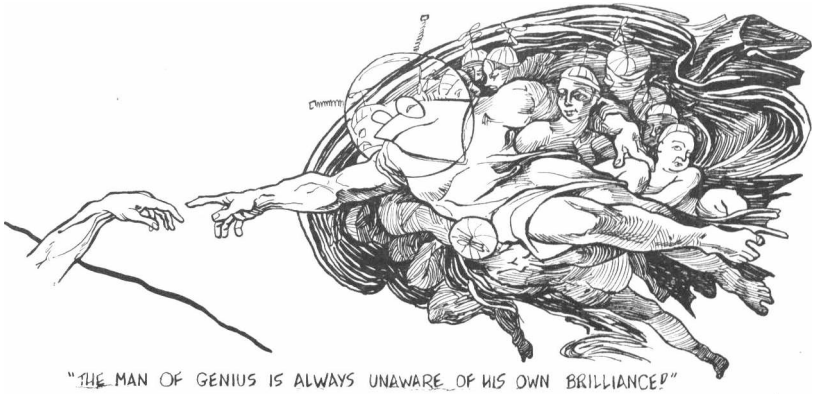


"CORTEZ HAD AN ANSWER FOR IT...
...MACHINE GUNS!"

"LOOK...NO WIRES!"



"THERE IS A DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A TEAM WHICH COOPERATES & A CLIQUE WHICH STRESSES CONFORMITY."



"THE MAN OF GENIUS IS ALWAYS UNAWARE OF HIS OWN BRILLIANCE!"

the anatomy of science fiction

ARTHUR JEAN COX

Most speculative writings on science fiction have described it as a social or psychological phenomenon. Such writings have found it catering to the reader's submerged homosexuality and masochism (Legman), resembling the fantasies of psychotics (Planck), or a representative product, partly cynical, partly naive, of a capitalist society (some marxist writers).

I shall describe it here as a literary phenomenon. My intention is not to controvert the other approaches mentioned above--obviously, science fiction is a social and a psychological phenomenon--but to show how much light is shed by a purely generic approach upon the literary psychology of the writers, upon science fiction's relations with other types of writing, upon its evolution, and perhaps even its future development.

Introductory: Science Fiction and Fantasy.

We all know generally what science fiction is. That is why we are able to reply to a proffered definition by saying, "No, you see, that would leave out this story and probably that one"; an objection which shows that we have in mind some undefined definition, hazy but confidently recognized. We know that science fiction has to do with new inventions and discoveries; with the future; with things "away from the here and now", if only a step away; with unknown and unexplored lands, planets and other worlds; in short, with that which presently cannot be contacted, which has not as yet become assimilated as part of the everyday background reality; in short again, always with something which might be called a metaphysical element, because it touches upon the basic nature of things (even if only locally and somewhat mechanically, as in a 'gadget' story), in a way in which the mystery, western and magazine love story do not. In those stories regarded as most truly science fictional, this metaphysical element is very prominent, appearing as a strong theoretic interest. If a story

has the outward trappings of science fiction, such as spaceships, other planets, and so on, but without any theoretic interest, we speak of it as "space opera", especially if the emphasis is on action and adventure, as is usually the case. (If it is not the case -- that is, if the story is literate and non-melodramatic -- we probably do not press the matter, but simply consider it science fiction by courtesy. Heinlein's "The Green Hills of Earth" and Russell's "I Am Nothing" are examples.)

It will be noted that this observed metaphysical element does not exclude fantasy -- stories of witches, ghosts, magic rings and curses -- which also calls attention, by its very nature, to the nature of things. In fact, science fiction and fantasy might be considered a single kind, set off from the other types of popular fiction by the metaphysical disposition which they share. We remember that all the earlier definitions of science fiction were attempts to devise some ready means of distinguishing it from fantasy; it was only later, when fantasy was largely eclipsed, that the effort became primarily to distinguish science fiction from what was now called "mainstream fiction". But the earlier problem does not seem very difficult once the common metaphysical element is brought to the fore: In those stories which we call fantasy, this element always has a supernatural character, whereas in those we call science fiction, it is naturalistic -- that is, the theoretic implications, whether or not they are drawn out, are not out of keeping with "the laws of nature". Any questions as to whether the imagined events or ideas really are in keeping with such laws, or even whether the author believes them to be so, are not relevant; what is relevant is the manner of presentation in the story. (Of course, it sometimes happens that the metaphysical character of a fantastic story is ambiguous: explicit commitment to either the supernatural or the naturalistic may be witheld, for reasons of plausibility or added effect.)

Science Fiction is a Sub-Literary Genus.

My argument is that science fiction is sub-literary. That is, it is one of those species of fiction which depend for special interests and effects upon various self-imposed limitations. As an example, consider the popular mystery story, especially of the type written by Christie, Queen and Sayers, which makes possible its particular kind of appeal by conventionalizing death and violence. The murder is not completely, passionally, realized. The rage, horror, grief and suffering are not felt, or are only conditionally felt. There are no thoughtful reflections on the nature of guilt, the necessity for punishment or forgiveness, and so on. The mystery writer, clever, humane and literate, sometimes breaches the limitations for the sake of touching upon something feelingful -- and his book is published as a "novel, using some of the techniques of the mystery story" -- but ordinarily the convention is maintained, because otherwise violence of feeling would overwhelm the cozy interest of the puzzle, or confuse the afixing of guilt. The western and magazine love story depend upon other conventions, perhaps even more obvious.

But what does it mean to say that science fiction is sub-literary? Wouldn't that mean that this kind of writing, which has always prided itself upon its freedom from restrictions, upon its wide-ranging novelty of thought, is somehow restricting itself to a narrower compass than is, ideally, available to fiction? If so, what is the nature of the restricting?

Briefly, it would seem to be the literal preoccupation with the subject matter. The emphasis must be understood: It is not subject matter as such. Many works of undisputed genius are indistinguishable, as far as subject is concerned, from numberless

anonymous two-penny thrillers; and if we try to isolate the strategic difference which makes them, despite the similarity, so much more expressive and memorable, we find that it does not consist of style, characterization, or "story-telling genius". These differences exist and they count, but they are not decisive. We finally must concede that the larger work has an added dimension, a fourth dimension, of meaning. This may be plainly a message, an illustrated moral, or social satire; it may be symbolical or allegorical, or something not quite these and yet mysteriously suggestive (as in certain stories by Hawthorne and Kafka); or its meaning may lie in the juxtaposition of two emotions -- which is an idea in itself, and which can be a very brilliant idea; or it may subsist even in the form of the story, made expressive and significant by the way in which it marshalls and places subordinate ideas and feelings. Heinlein has spoken of science fiction as "speculative fiction". It is, of course; but we might recall that "momentous depth of speculation" which Keats found in King Lear. He said that it was this depth of speculation in Lear and in other works of art (he had painting in mind, as well as literature), which permits it to deal with disagreeables, with repulsive and terrible things, without destroying us. We don't have to accept this argument fully to see that it quite rightly implies a much larger notion of "speculation" than is dreamt of in Heinlein's phraseology.

In short, there is a sense in which subject doesn't matter -- except that it can be made to matter, as it does in science fiction. The science fiction story is genuinely interested in its native topics -- the ingenious invention, the marvelous journey, the curious society so unlike ours, the logical extrapolation from a scientific axiom. But consider how easily these things might carry a larger or more urgent meaning: the invention could be a symbol, the marvelous journey an allegory, the curious society so unlike ours a terrible warning or an exhortation, the logical extrapolation a laughable but sinister instant of perverted mind. In other words, the story could be a confession, a prayer, an "anatomy", a parable, a fable, a satire; something rhetorical, didactic and persuasive. But in such cases, what is specifically science fictional or fantastic fades. The invention, the spaceship, the alien society become merely illustrative. They are transparent, or perhaps reflective, but not opaque. The interest is not invested fully in them, and certain kinds of pleasure are not excited or are not satisfied, because there is nothing substantial for them to feed upon: naive wonder, the excitement of playing with conjectures of universal scope, the quieter satisfactions of tracing out the plausible applications of a scientific theory.

There would seem to be an inherent temptation in fantasy to symbolism and allegory, and in science fiction to satire; but the business of the magazine writer is, not so much to resist the temptation, as to ignore it. And with good reason, seeing the kind of interest he wishes to appeal to. Consider Pilgrim's Progress. Allegory turns the fantastic inside out. There is a profuse play of images and incidents, extravagant, fanciful, grotesque and impossible; yet not one of them is fantastic. Always, we see through the incident to the conception. If we pause to marvel, it is at the author, not the story. When the whole intent of any imagined incident or character is to convey some extrinsic meaning, it doesn't much matter whether the incident or character would be, in the actual world, possible or impossible; the question is irrelevant. This is an extreme example, but the implication is clear enough: it applies in differing ways and degrees to any story in which there is a tincture of the figurative. We must not allow any sort of literary vanity or personal identification to blur the thought, by prompting us to object, say, that some stories published in science fiction

magazines are literature. We may grant any particular story anyone wishes to claim as literature: We are concerned here with definition, not classification. We must insist only that what we are talking about is a real distinction and not mere word-play. Roughly, a fantastic story is 'literature' precisely to the extent that it has abrogated or qualified the customary interests of fantastic fiction; that is, precisely to the extent that it is not science fiction or fantasy. It is true that Gulliver's Travels, Erewhon, Metamorphosis, Brave New World, Animal Farm and 1984 occupy honored places on our bookshelves, but the pleasure we take in them is not the pleasure we expect to find, or at least hope to find, when we pick up our favorite magazine.

A few words about the social and political significance of science fiction: We must agree with C. M. Kornbluth when he says, in his essay in The Science Fiction Novel, that science fiction doesn't have much social meaning or force. (Those stories which project present social facts exaggeratively into the future are seldom meant for propaganda and we notice that the advertising councils are just as taken with Gravy Planet as everyone else.) Kingsley Amis' confident misunderstanding of the nature of science fiction, hinted at in his title and running throughout New Maps of Hell, reaches its culmination in his puzzled query as to why the writers haven't busied themselves more with satirizing and attacking particular institutions, parties and political personages. Actually, if any writer should really be in earnest in exhorting his readers to vote this way or that in any political, religious, or even aesthetic issue, he is quickly suspected of insincerity -- the more quickly, the more in earnest he is! His writing would be insincere as science fiction. We admire Ray Bradbury, but we are suspicious of his "preachiness". Boucher and MacComas complain that a story by Walter M. Miller shows how science fiction is ruined by the injection of politics. Heinlein writes a book in which he expounds a reactionary militarism, and P. Schuyler Miller explains that Heinlein doesn't really mean it, he is merely experimenting with an idea, etc. Politics can be the subject of a story, but not its object. For example, a story can be projected slightly into the future and concerned with the realities of international power politics; but such stories present conjectures, not urgent policies. Religion can be handled in a similar way (see "A Case of Conscience"), as can philosophy.

Science Fiction Developes through the Discovery and Exhaustion of Possibilities.

Our working hypothesis is a general statement: that any art developes by realizing the basic possibilities inherent in its medium, whatever it may be. I shall try to adapt this to our present subject by sketching, necessarily using some rather broad strokes, the evolution of the magazine science fiction story.

The years of the Gernsback Amazing (roughly, 1926 to 1930) were the age of what is popularly called "the gadget story" -- the story of the new invention, the ingenious and incredible machine, or some equally singular gimmick, biological, medical, chemical. This is the most elementary form of science fiction. All that the writer needs to do to command the reader's interest is to postulate a single invention or discovery. The narrative structure, as a result, is very limited. Most specimens, with a few wish-fulfilling or comic variations, follow a simple story pattern: An ingenious invention is presented and described at length; but narrative must have a striking and climactic ending -- so the machine turns on the inventor and destroys him. Such an unhappy outcome hints a moral and this is often elaborated

into a fatuous rationale by the author; with the curious result that a magazine self-dedicated to the glorification of science is ridden with superstitious anti-scientific preachments. (See Sapiro, "The Faustian Tradition in Early Science Fiction", for a different angle on this.)

The variations on the gadget story are soon worked out, and the writer casts about for something new. The obvious possibilities are (1), some scientific advances are granted and the story turns upon a further development made possible by the background, (2) the exuberant creation of many inventions spawned by a basic conception (as in Campbell's "Piracy Preferred"), and (3) the marvellous invention or discovery making possible a narrative in which the active interest is in adventure, war or intrigue (the staples of the Clayton Astounding). This last shades off into space opera, where theory is absent or perfunctory; but in these early days, when the inventions are still prominently novel, such stories more easily retain a strong infusion of the speculative.

These offer more resources and they continue to supply Amazing and Wonder for a half dozen years; but, in the meantime, a wider territory has been opened up; because there is another possibility (4), in which the interest is not so much in inventions of any number or kind as in farther-reaching scientific conjectures. The result is stories of universal scope, cosmic flavor and awesome perspectives, such as "Colossus", "Night", "Sidewise in Time" and "Alas, All Thinking!" This becomes the material of the new Tremaine Astounding (1933 to 1937), where it is institutionalized as the 'Thought Variant'. The type relies heavily on atmosphere, often awesome but humanized by a diffuse sentimentality (as with Gallun, Long, Stuart). The large conjectures tempt to a rationale of formless mysticism, which is very pronounced in the poorer writers (again, see Sapiro, "The Mystic Renaissance in Astounding Stories). The best of such stories is exemplified by the mood-essays of Don A. Stuart, where the rich atmosphere is given weight and structure by a strong thematic development (as in "Forgetfulness"). The lasting work being accomplished by the type is that science fiction is freed from a narrow reliance on the expository mode: the author no longer feels it necessary to impart a flavoring of scientific information to his story.

But this, too, is "only a phase". There is a noticeable flagging of inventiveness in 1937 and 1938. The cosmic story is displaced, reappearing intermittently in the work of a few old writers and, very much mutated, in that of a new one, A. E. van Vogt. (In the early 1940s, a new constellation of magazines -- Super Science, Astonishing, Cosmic -- revive the type, but the results are never more than clever and striking.)

The new type is the technological story, where the emphasis is on realism and plausibility. The "sense of wonder" is now deliberately excluded and a matter-of-fact atmosphere cultivated. The delight is in the everyday verisimilitude of the described world. The story is more likely to take place twenty, than two thousand, years from now. The concern of the writer is to show us the post-today world, the future in which we will actually be living. Heinlein's "Future History" series is a predictable product. Heinlein becomes the laureate of science fiction. Also on the crest of the wave are Cartmill, de Camp, George O. Smith, the Hubbard of Final Blackout, the del Rey of "Nerves". There is a greater interest in political and religious movements; history-as-a-science becomes a subject (Asimov, van Vogt); as do the humane disciplines, semantics, sociology and psychology (Kuttner, van Vogt). This last line of exploration ends in World of A, the Baldy series, The Fairy Chessmen.

But now (1946) our synopsis falters. Ideally, science fiction would grow by following the laws of its inward nature; actually, it is subject to influences from outside. For one thing, it is linked to science, which has its own laws: new discoveries and theories, changes in the climate of scientific opinion, suggest ideas and themes. And there are disturbances and interruptions. We might overlook the impoverishment of materials and means caused by the depression and the war, assuming that they had only a retarding or inhibiting effect, but we cannot overlook the atom bomb. It inescapably dictates subjects, as does the Cold War which follows, with its armaments developments and space race. But these things should be no more than interruptions: Any unrealized possibilities would still be present, after these anxieties and problems were cleared out of the way. Talented writers would see that certain basic things could be done which hadn't been done, and would do them.

The Science Fiction "Genius" is one who Sees and Works the Basic Possibilities.

Again, a very general statement: the artistic genius is one who realizes the more radical possibilities of his medium. This thought is adaptable to the lesser categories. The outstanding talent in any of the sub-arts is one who recognizes the basic possibilities in its circumscribed area. We can conditionally apply the label "genius" to such a person. Steinberg, I would say, is such a genius of cartooning. Everyone will agree that Doyle was a genius of the detective story, and Wells of the scientific romance.

Let us consider briefly a few of the major figures in recent science fiction.

Robert A. Heinlein was recognized from his earliest days as a germinal talent and, to many, he now wears the crown. He has cultivated and sometimes achieved in his "fantastic" stories a tone of everyday realism, almost prosaic. This is in itself a science fiction triumph. It is made possible by his unclouded devotion to "facts". ("We must love facts for themselves alone," he says in Farmer in the Sky.) He might be thought of as a debunker. If we hesitate to apply the word to him, it is because it is more commonly associated with writing that is touched with acridity or, like de Camp's, a resigned irony; but is suitability to Heinlein is plain, once it is considered. His story typically points out that that is not true, but that this is. His favorite characters are the man who learns better and, more often, the man who already knows and who, in no hesitant language, sets the others straight. (His boys' books are the natural offspring of this concern with education.) I believe that we might spin out his entire psychology from this one strand, including his political character, but it is enough to note how wonderfully congenial his native disposition is to science fiction. He is concerned with facts and so with science; but not facts abstractly, but pedagogically, and this gives to his stories some social warmth, though not much passion, and some clarity, though not much color. But, more accurately, he is not so much imparting information -- that is, specific facts -- as the philosophical submission to facts, a general attitude "proven" by appropriate illustrations. The metaphysics, of course, is epistemology, the study of the grounds, limits and criteria of knowledge. This is the subject of "Universe". Negatively, his essayistic bent limits the dramatic powers. The plots are inadequate to the interest of the subjects (the Fact can have no effective antagonist) and the stories have weak endings; his most successful stories terminate in impasses.

A. E. van Vogt is not, unlike Heinlein, universally accepted as a primary science fiction talent, but he is the only writer to have challenged the other's position for a period of over ten years. He might be thought of as the heir of the earlier cosmic period of science fiction. Where Heinlein cultivated an atmosphere of everyday reality, van Vogt wrote stories of 'complication', universal scope and cosmic forces. His stories are highly romanticized, sometimes resemble fairy-tales, yet have a curious touch of realism derived from the cool phrasing and shrewd thought. His most individual quality -- the element in his make-up corresponding to Heinlein's factuality -- is his highly personalized pragmatism; not a sophisticated acquired philosophy, but a life-view, naively bone-deep. Pragmatism is the other scientific philosophy, defining essence as action and value as results: it is the scientific content of van Vogt's thought and the intellectual ingredient in his attraction to science fiction. He does not share Heinlein's love of facts. To him, a fact is something to be used, or to be put aside if it is impertinent to one's immediate needs. He rejects a priori knowledge and this leads him into eccentric bypaths. His overmastering interest is in ways of doing things: in methods, techniques, instrumentalities, powers and dominations. His pressing concern with the improvement of life through techniques for solving its problems results in a preoccupation with disciplines (general semantics, etc.) and heightened powers. His characters, biologically, are often possessors of unique abilities (Slan, etc.); politically, they are princes, empresses, dictators and "wizards". Paradoxically, though his writing has an iron-grey tonality and his protagonists are "cold fish", as has often been remarked, his constant regard for Use provides a human interest which many "warmer" writers lack.

Science fiction's status as a sub-literature makes possible a curious anomaly: the person of superior abilities who is an inferior science fiction writer. He is articulate, observant, with powers of narration and invention, but simply cannot find science fiction concernful. We might, with some rather large reservations, consider Jack Vance as an example of such a writer. He is a more cultured man than Heinlein and writes better prose; he is a better educated man than van Vogt and has a more acceptable gift of construction; but his writings have never meant to science fiction what their's have and his reputation, until lately, has been slight. This is because his stories do not involve fully enough what is uniquely science fictional. A single example may do: Big Planet is a memorable story, but the charm we find in it is not such as can be found only in science fiction. Vance's talent does not spontaneously express itself in that rock bottom science fiction written by the more famous names. (There are two or three powerful exceptions: "Telek", To Live Forever, and, lately, "The Dragon Masters".) However, he does have interests which can express themselves better in science fiction than elsewhere, which is why he is attracted to it; but they are not at dead center.

The quality which everyone seizes upon in discussing Vance is an obvious one: the romantic coloring of his writing, the fanciful place names -- Clarges, Banbeck Vale, "the sword-shaped towers of Tran", etc. This is a true quality, enjoyable for its own sake, yet only a minor part of his talent. What should be noted is that his intellect is abstract and formal; it would be bleak, except that he correctively emphasizes what is sensuous. His stories take on an iridescent surface, there are poignant descriptions of landscape and weather, and a fleshy sexuality. (This last is the "decadence" sometimes commented on.) He sees history as pattern, society as modes and styles of conduct, persons as social types. He keenly responds to the specifics of social form, the 'patterns of culture' as expressed in conduct, manners, styles of dress, housing, crafts, artifacts, etc. -- of

which he has sent up a pyrotechnic display over the past twenty years. This is his native subject matter, the theoretic content even of his adventure tales. This virtuosity isn't as much admired as it might be, because it is accepted casually as the usual trappings of the exotic adventure story, and because he seldom writes what is ordinarily thought of as "social science fiction", in which present social "problems" are extrapolated into the future.

Any mention of superior writing talent must bring Ray Bradbury to mind. He is the one science fiction writer, although he is not only such, who is widely known to the public. What is the nature of his talent, considered from the vantage-ground of science fiction? How do our previous remarks on its sub-literary status accord with the widespread critical acclaim given his writings? and with his preaching, moralizing, etc.?

Briefly, Bradbury may be regarded as an interpreter of science fiction to the public, an adapter of traditional science fiction themes and subjects to literary modes of expression. He does this by hinting to the reader the way in which the story is to be accepted, by providing him with the means of recognizing it by giving to it an ideological coloring. This is the function of his anti-scientism, his liberal humane disgust at the mechanization of life, his progressivism and wide social tolerance; ideas variously novel and fanciful in the ways in which they are expressed, but always familiar. He does not use science fiction to persuasively convey his political and moral ideas, but rather uses the ideas, or attitudes, to carry his fiction across to the public. His stories confirm the reader in his liberal virtue, they do not persuade him into it. He stands with his back to science fiction, looking out into the greater literary world, but one foot is within the magic circle and he continues to draw from it substance and vitality. By rendering the customary matter of science fiction with popular literary gestures and tones, he makes science fiction acceptable to many readers who might otherwise pass over it as unworthy of notice.

The Future of Science Fiction.

A question which naturally arises is, What of the future of science fiction? If it evolves through the discovery and working out of its congenital possibilities, what such remain? What would be the next developments?

Personally, I do not see much of a future for science fiction. There are several reasons for hesitating to make such a statement--- one of which is that the detective story seemed to be dead in the 1880s -- but they are all general and negative. I see no specific and active reasons for supposing it has any very lively future.

Nevertheless, a few possibilities do present themselves.

First, mopping up, the consolidation of gains, etc. Classic, or exhaustive, stories have yet to be written on several themes. Immortality, I would say, is one, despite some excellent stories. Too, there could be sentimental or sophisticated recapitulations of earlier themes. Increasing public interest in space flight and other military-scientific achievements will revive some older subjects. Second, some types have a steady interest, such as explorations of other worlds, where the appeal is much the same as the adventure story; the science fictional contribution being the impressive setting, which, like the setting in the historical romance, gives magnitude to the actions.

Third, and more interestingly: Not yet sufficiently exploited

are stories which rationalize the author's sexual and other inclinations by placing them in a new setting, one completely fanciful or metaphysically transformed, so that they are justified or dignified. Sturgeon, Farmer and Heinlein have all worked this vein. It is a rich one, I think, but not the mother lode.

Fourth: politics, religion and philosophy. I have touched upon these before and what was said is, perhaps, sufficient: they can be treated as subjects for abstract or impersonal conjecture. Religion, especially, has many temptations, and I imagine that daring writers will yield to them: It touches upon the Uncanny and the Mysterious and is seldom handled in popular fiction, except in conventional or dismally inspirational ways.

There is something else, much more familiar to science fiction of late, which may be a fifth possibility: namely, "psychic phenomena" or "parapsychology", spiritualism's academic cousin, the mysticism of the literal minded. Campbell's fascination with this has been much deplored, but I think that his editorial instincts are correct: Considered as a field of scientific enquiry and exploration, "psi", as he calls it, offers exactly that prospect of a vast, cloudy and waiting world of facts which offers the most promise for the further development of science fiction. Campbell is very conscious of this, and wishes to repeat the triumph of the atomic prophecies. But the pathos of the situation is -- there doesn't seem to be anything in "psi".

Sixth, and lastly: There has been some talk lately of "improving science fiction by importing mainstream techniques" into it. Assuming this talk to be sincere, perhaps even a little desperate, what the speakers seem to have in mind is simply the crossing of science fiction with other sub-literary species, such as the hard-boiled detective story. Some novel effects might be gained this way but nothing, I think, of any lasting credit. I am confident that there is no future for science fiction in that direction.

Science Fiction will be Completed when all Possibilities are Exhausted.

In tracing out this general line of speculation, we quite naturally arrive at the thought that there will come a time when all possibilities are exhausted. Then science fiction will be "completed". There will be "nothing new", regardless of clever variations. It will have realized everything that is in it as a literary organism and will sink willingly, as it were, into extinction. Actually, it is difficult, perhaps impossible, to foresee a time in which there will not be published occasional stories of the marvellous, the fantastic, and of future science; but it is not so difficult to believe that there will come a time, probably in our personal futures, in which there will no longer be a "field" -- only a "genre".

T H I N K

Richard Schultz (19159 Helen, Detroit 34, Michigan) Thank you very much for sending me the first issue of the revived INSIDE. What with SPECTRUM being launched, FANTASY FICTION FIELD and IN being revived and Lee Hoffman taking a more active interest in things fannish, I wonder we're not on some sort of a slow backwards time machine... /And how about RHODO DIGEST? jw/

Your cover was atrocious as far as I'm concerned. It made me much too envious. One of these daya I'll branch out into offset I keep telling myself...

I'd just as well that William Blackbeard had kept his mouth shut. Now I'll never be able to regain some of the beauty and wonder that Hubbard's work used to fill me with. So maybe it was formula. But it was as good formula as you could find, inside or out of stf as far as I was concerned... At least until this article came out.

It's sad seeing an era die. And to read those unkind words, including "The Indigestible Triton" in the listing of crud was a death blow... Woe is me. I'm afraid that if Blackbeard (symbolism anyone?) continues to dissect all the authors in stf, we will soon have no literature /or better literature?/. Wasn't it Silverberg that said if we look at stf with too jaundiced a view we soon find nothing that doesn't reek? /But there's a difference between a jaundiced view and a critical view. And you gotta have criticism./

Anyways, on the way is SATHANAS 4 as trade for this lovely thing /blush/ and 25¢ for #2 in the new series of INSIDE... the next one you're going to publish, ye see...

With that, I leave you, bidding a none too fond adieu. I fear more articles as thorough and devastating as the one on Hubbard.

Duverne Farsace (Golden Atom Publications, P.O. Box 1101, Rochester 3, N.Y.) Thanks for the new Issue No. One Inside received while we were away in New Orleans over the holidays.

Looking through it, we noticed a quote from Golden Atom and hasten to correct same.

Leland Sapiro's article quotes Larry out of context from the rest of his article, "My Attraction to SF, Fantasy - And Why," and so, has him saying, "Ideas" are the "chief attraction of sf" to him, as if that's the over-all picture.

If he had read the article at all, he would have seen, at the very beginning, on page 6, the following sentence and introductory statement, giving the overall reason quite concisely:

"My chance discovery of sf at this time made it seem the most fascinating thing in the world, since it seemed to be a perfect blend of the poetry and scientific books I had been reading."

Certainly, that statement encompasses much more than merely "ideas."

He also states, "it is the source of motivation which distinguishes a sf story." Then how does he explain the often admitted fact that t the source of motivation is usually the sales value of a story? /You're talking about a different type of motivation entirely./

In addition, has it ever occured to any writer that the chief attraction of his story to a reader may be a quality of inclusion that may only have been an incidental to him, involved as he might have been with his own primary motivation, whether plot or other conflict? And what of the stories which are sf only in background trappings... One could go on and on.

Also, that particular issue of GA ('54-55) was not the 8th, but the 11th.

Bruce McAllister (577 Rosecrans Street, San Diego 6, California) I have received with pleasure the copy of INSIDE, and, getting the impression that it has been four years since this magazine has come out, I wish to say that it is a wonderful "come-back." In answer to your question of how I liked it, I can say, in the lingo Mr. Bloch would appreciate, that it is "TERRIFIC." I thought Mr. Bloch's article was timed very well -- especially for myself, considering I was becoming annoyed reading all the lengthy criticisms by fans who had trouble expressing their views. I appreciated Mr. Sapiro's long article very much, because being a would-be S.F. writer, it has already helped me partially jump the obstacle course of errors between amateur and pro. Although Joseph Farrell's Circulation was slightly reminiscent of Frederik Pohl's Martian in the Attic, I liked it very much. /I don't think Blooh was criticising those who have trouble expressing their views, as much as those who have no views, except for somebody else's, to express. Where did the Pohl story appear?/

Not wishing to be too heavy with the congratulations, I would still like to compliment you on the c o v e r illo. It is better than certain (quite a number of) prozine illustrations I have seen. There was actually only one thing I disliked about the issue: it was short. I wanted to continue reading. I even reread some of the features. Oh well... I see there exists a problem pecuniae with obtaining articles and printing them, so I am enclosing one dollar for a subscription of four issues. Thanks, and keep up the good work. /There is a problem in obtaining articles but it is not, thank God, a monetary one. Hope you like this issue./

Ross Rocklynne (294 St. Albans, South Pasadena, California) Like INSIDE Makes me thimk. Beautiful article on Hubbard, and Bloch wrote a very bloch article. (Truthfully, I have to catch up on most of the rest of your fine magazine, which I aim to do just about now.)

Edward Wood (160 2nd St., Idaho Falls, Idaho) Naturally it is good to see INSIDE again even under new management. I see the issue didn't come out until January /actually, I mailed them out Dec. 11/. That's the way it goes in this game. I sent you the last issue #4 of THE JOURNAL OF SCIENCE FICTION for you to see that attempts have been made in the past to bring fandom some material related to science fiction.

Leland Sapiro's article was of course outstanding. He is one of the few creative intellectuals in fandom. /I agree./ Everytime I don't understand something he writes, I puzzle over it and usually I find that Leland has shed new light into the darkness. It is too bad there are so few like him.

I wish you success with INSIDE but allow me to caution you against optimism. The fan field is so filled with trash and non-science fiction material, that it is hard for a good effort to find sufficient support.

Harlan Ellison (2313 Bushrod Lane, Los Angeles 24, California) By chance, your first issue of INSIDE happened to find its way to my hands and though comments were not elicited, still the dedication (in part) of the magazine would seem to indicate that I am--however tenuously--in some way responsible for a few remarks, and possibly a remembrance or two. You will be pleased to know, for openers, that the two little drawings on pages 16 & 19 of that issue, which you were forced label by "anonymous," were actually drawn by a young woman named Dorie Nielsen. Miss Nielsen was a friend of mine during my days at Ohio State University, when I was trying to put together the final, 300-page issue of DIMENSIONS, and she very graciously contributed some art for that project. She was an accomplished cartoonist and fine artist, and worked with me on the OSU humor magazine, The SUNDIAL. The last I heard of her she had married someone after her graduation from OSU (his name began with a "P" but I can't seem to recall what it was) and had settled down to the drollery of housewifery. Even ten years later, I'm sure she would like to be credited with having done those drawings, and I'm sure you'll see to it, indicative of your already-observable talent and dedication to important minutiae and detail. /???... Any-

way, folks, now you know who anonymous was./

As for the Bloch piece, I am pleased as punch to see it finally in print, but I am a trifle saddened by Ron Smith's failure (I assume this is the way it was) in pointing out that when INSIDE/SFA merged with DIMENSIONS, taking on its list of subscribers and its unpublished material, any such of the latter that eventually found its way into print should be footnoted as: "Published through the courtesy of DIMENSIONS Magazine." I can understand how this oversight was effected, and annoyance does not enter into the matter at all, merely a hope that in the future this aspect of the original transaction which allowed the good scripts to DIMENSIONS to reach you, will be observed. /I'm not sure who's fault the oversight was, but it shan't happen again./

As to the issue itself, I found it a fresh breeze from the past--and that is precisely what I found wrong with it, as well. Aside from its slapdash appearance (which can be excused and attributed to FirstIssue-itis) I think the two greatest drawbacks are the typos (which include such bizarre and adolescent grammatical errors as "opi" for "opera," page 26, line 40) /adolescent?/ and the outdated nature of the material. The former can be remedied by the purchase and retention of a stout dictionary--may I suggest the Oxford Universal, inexpensive but durable and as complete as you might desire--as well as a frequent dip therein. The second is a bit more difficult to rectify, but not nearly as rugged as it might be for a novice fanpubber without the good names and histories of INSIDE, SFA, DIMENSIONS, et al, behind him. I'm certain the acquisition of current, vital, and entertaining copy may be affected in asking in the right places, and suggesting topics to the men whose work you most desire to publish. Don't forget, it's been a meaty fistful of years since the last INSIDE tilted at a controversial topic (and what I've said about controversy, at greater length, in the lead article of the current WRITER'S DIGEST, holds most aptly for the new INSIDE). Years in which the boom of the 50's turned to dust in our mouths, in which the fan world has altered completely, in which the entire tenor of magazine and book publishing has metamorphosised. There is a wide and long plain of appraisal open to you, for at the moment no other magazine remotely approaches the potential for handling subjects of pith-and-moment as does INSIDE.

To spend as much space as you did on Blackbeard's inept and diddling non sequiturs anent Hubbard, is bordering on the criminal. Every page of INSIDE is valuable, much too valuable to waste on trivia At this point in history we can look not too far back on Hubbard, Dianetics, the sales of the book, Campbell's momentary madness, Scientology, the corruption of the good men and the loss of worthy writers, and consign it to precisely the dust-bin Martin Gardner despatched it to in his book "Fads and Fallacies in the Name of Science." It is worth no more analysis than that, as complete as the topic will ever demand... /And then Harlan offers me two pages of specific suggestions for future material, practically all of which I am going to follow up, so I am not going to publish them here./

But to publish outdated material about a crackpot whose theories have long since been discovered to be sheer hysteria and nonsense, to publish a story as empty of merit and as transparently hack as Farrell's "Circulation," to fritter away vital pages of the only amateur magazine currently on the scene with the potential for real comment and real value (not only to fans, but to pros alike, who have always flocked to any such fmz... /not too much flocking this time/), this is unforgiveable.

But I've gone on at greater length than I had intended. My only excuse is that seeing INSIDE again, and remembering what glories it knew in previous guises, I was moved to write, to let you know that someone out here sees great things in store, if you can but shoulder the burden of responsibility and take inventiveness and verve as your cudgels. I hope in some small way, as repayment for your very kind dedication of the first issue to me (in part), this letter will serve as a payment and a pledge of faith that will spur your initiative.

The role of the fanzine publisher (in particular the sort of maga-

zine INSIDE has been, could be, and fares best as) is a traditionally undersold one. /Brother, you said it./ Occasionally someone will be singled out for a Hugo, but that is little enough fame and fortune for the amounts of money poured down what sometimes seems to be a bottomless, thankless pit, for the hours of work and the unflagging dedication to a cause that may really raise a shabby banner, for the drain on time and intellect and resources of all kinds. Poor thanks enough. But I tell you this, Mr. White, what you do for the genre, for the men working in it, for the devotees, and--not incidentally--for yourself, is a reward of a greater, more durable sort. I can truthfully admit, after ten years or more, that I would not be who I am, where I am, doing what I am, were it not for the hours and months I slaved over DIMENSIONS as a teen-ager. I owe this field and the field and the fans a great deal, and in my own silly way, I try from time to time to repay this debt. This letter, in all its verbosity, may be construed as another payment of that debt.

Ruth Berman (5620 Edgewater Boulevard, Minneapolis 17, Minnesota) Re Sapiro: Of course technique and content are inseparable- nevertheless one aspect of a story: characterization, style, etc (all inseparable) can be noticably better than, worse than, different from the rest. This one aspect can then be meaningfully considered separately- and "technique" and "content" are often separable for the critic. The idea that sf is distinguished by external motivation is given implicit approval by Sapiro. /Oh is it?/ Surely this is nonsense? The external motive is found in most sf stories, but can be found in any story, and some sf stories are internally motivated. External motivation, concentration on "ideas"- all these help to distinguish sf from other forms, but are not very reliable guides.

Jack Williamson (Box 761, Portales, New Mexico) I still feel that if science fiction is to be regarded as a legitimate and reasonably sane intellectual pursuit -- which I believe it is -- it can only reach and keep such a position through such sound and vigorous criticism as has appeared in such publications as INSIDE, and seldom elsewhere.

August Derleth (Sauk City, Wisconsin) All thanks for the October INSIDE. Much as I'd like to do an article, I don't know where I'll find the time. I sent off THE SHADOW IN THE GRASS -- a new long (& very dull) historical novel for June publication; I am just ready to send out DARK THINGS, a new anthology of horror stories, to its London publisher; by the first of February I must deliver COUNTRYMAN'S JOURNAL for September publication; and by the first of March, THE IRREGULARS STRIKE AGAIN. And sometime among them I must manage at least half of THE CASEBOOK OF SOLAR PONS, 2 articles on assignment for Country Beautiful, 24 columns for the two regulars I fill, a weird novella, and 2 short stories of a more serious nature. If, sometime next summer, I can find time, I'll send you something. Remind me! /Summer is icomin' in./ Good luck with INSIDE!

Bill Blackbeard (436 4/6 Grand View St., Los Angeles 57, California) For a first, an initial step, INSIDE #1 is a fine job.

I'm damned proud to be associated with it.

Seeing it, I can understand your risky decision to try for bi-monthly publication; it's the sort of magazine that offers so much promise and potential that both editor and reader are eager to see it appear as often as possible. /Too bad the bi-monthly idea didn't pan out./

It hasn't a hell of a lot of personality yet, of course, after all it's still in swaddling-offset -- but it's orderly and tasteful in make-up, accomplished and provokingly varied in content.

It is, of course, already distinct from the Smith INSIDE. Yours is a magazine oriented toward sober and thoughtful observation and judgement; Ron's was a periodical inclined toward irreverent lampoon and boiling point controversy. /I'm still experimenting. I do use critical articles, but I'm also two hundred per cent for lampoon and controversy. Watch future issues./ This difference is not a matter

of super ficial content but of fundamental atmosphere, and the contrast is not in the least lessened by sober and thoughtful articles in Smith's mag or by lampoon's (such as Bloch's or Farrell's) in yours.

You may try to maintain this distinction or, as is more likely, permit the magazine to follow to some extent the direction suggested by reader and contributor reaction and inter-reaction. I am assuming this because of your relative self-effacement in this initial number and your apparent desire that the magazine should develop its own indivviduality as distinguished from that of the editor. /No, as a matter of fact. One of the functions of INSIDE is to serve as a vehicle for my personality. Reader reaction will of course be considered, but I won't be lost in the shuffle./

Favorable comment first, of course. The cover is a curious, striking and not entirely disagreeable amalgam in the commingled styles of Finlay of the mid-'30's and Poulton of the early Mines period. The front half is much the best and most effective in its suggestion of sf and fantasy; the rear portion is little more than a sad, Amrash muscular flexer and the inevitable detached phallic symbol found in such work, duplicated blatantly in this instance. For a fanzine cover, however, it is good and not lacking in distinction.

I won't comment directly on Lee Sapiro's article (he and I discussed it at length during its composition) except to say that it is an eminently fitting piece for INSIDE as I think you conceive it, and would be a distinguished contribution to any journal of intelligence and taste. Typos were rife here, particularly in the interchange of "i" and "e" in words like "review," but neither here nor elsewhere in the issue were there any really garish errors such as sometimes marred Smith's zine.

Bloch's piece seemed to me weak and strained in contrast to much other work he's done, but this is Bloch's fault, not yours. No fan editor really has much choice on receiving a piece of Bob's; he likes Bloch too much to reject it, and is too sensitively aware of the gap between Bloch's estate as a writer and his own to offer editorial criticism. It's no matter, really; the piece is adequate, and Bob's next will probably be a dilly. /How about that, Bob?/

Farrell's story is possibly a thousand words too long, but fundamentally so enjoyable it structural over-embellishment was not fatal. Here I particularly and acutely missed what had already disconcerted me a little in the case of the articles: illustrations or abstracts based on the text and not simply used as New Yorker vignettes. I think many readers will react this way, and if there is one major criticism I would make of the magazine as it stands, it would be the lack of effective tie-in between prose and art-work.

Garrett's "A Tale of Woe" was in the Garrettradition and nuf sed.

Now as to unfavorable comment -- gash, gsnarl!

Hmm -- I find I've incorporated all unfavorable comment, such as it is, with my favorable comment. /Ain't it a shame?/

Frederik Pohl (Galaxy Pub. Corp., 421 Hudson St., New York 14, N.Y.) Thanks for sending me a copy of INSIDE . Apart from its rather antiquarian flavor (you know, there have been several interesting sf stories published since 1934) /any of them in "Galaxy"?/ I enjoyed it very much, and look forward to seeing future issues. /Then you should have subscribed. You're getting this out of the goodness of my heart, what's left. But no more, no more./

There were other letters, of course, but that's a good sampling. Thanks to all those who wrote, and my heartfelt apologies to those whose letters demanded a reply and didn't get it. I find time gets to be a pretty rare commodity.

Which brings up the lateness of this INSIDE. What with school work, college applications and surviving through winter, INSIDE was quietly pushed into the background. I worked as much as I could on it, but that obviously was not enough. I've worked out a little system which should enable me to produce INSIDE at least quarterly, probably more often.

The seven hundred or so complimentary issues sent out brought a five percent response- truly heart breaking. I suppose a few felt they could tag along for a few issues, without subscribing. Uh-uh. Nope. Nay. All those who didn't subscribe or respond in some way have been sent a sub blank, with a free stamp, to encourage them. I also asked all lifetime subscribers- Roy Squires, when he was editing SFA, sold lifetime subs at five bucks a throw, which are still being honored- to acknowledge that issue. I will not send out issues representing a total monetary loss, unless I know they are being appreciated. Sounds corny, but I mean it. All lifetime subscribers who have not yet done so must acknowledge this issue, or their subscription will be discontinued.

I made a blooper of colossal proportions last issue by announcing that I was planning to reprint "The Enchanted Duplicator" and "Ah! Sweet Idiocy" when both had just been reprinted. I learnt of the mistake when the issue was at the printer and it was too late to do anything about it. C'est la vie or whatever. Anyhoo- I'll reprint Yerke's "Memoirs of a Superfluous Fan" if I can get ahold of it. Has anybody stolen my thunder?

The Blackbeard article aroused some comment which I think should be mentioned here. In a DNQ letter, T.G.L. Cockroft mentions that he was unable to find Mrs. Doolin referred to as Mrs. Mudge at the end of Hubbard's "Dangerous Dimension." So I hauled out the the issue and checked. He's right, dammit. Both Louis Russell Chauvenet and Mike Deckinger sent me clippings relating to a government raid on Scientology headquarters (Jan 3rd). Particularly interesting was the fact that Hubbard has now set up Scientology as a religion, and utilizes very underhanded tactics to lure customer-converts. Makes you feel rather unclean.

The general reaction to the issue was that it had too "dated" a flavor. I've tried to improve that this time. The S. Fowler Wright story is being presented mainly for its historical or bibliographical interest as the last published story by Wright. I do not know whether Wright is still alive. If he is, he is eighty-nine old and probably no longer writing. I leave to you to decide upon its literary merits.

The back numbers of INSIDE are still available at 35¢ each, 3/$1, or all nine for $3. They average forty-eight pages, and feature among the contributors Poul Anderson, Chad Oliver, David Bunch, Bill Hamling, William F. Nolan, Bob Tucker, Morris Scott Dollens, Jack Gaughan, Harlan Ellison, Mark Clifton, Howard Browne, Algis Budrys, Sam Moskowitz, Robert Lowndes, Larry Shaw, H.L. Gold, Robert Bloch, Randall Garrett, Dave Mason, James Blish, H.P. Lovecraft, John Brunner, Bob Silverberg and many more. Unqualified as I am to say so, they are the biggest bargain in the world. No kidding.

Preparatory to going to college I'm cleaning out the main bulk of my collection. Lots of goodies here, like old Astoundings and Unknown, old comics, rare & fine fanzines. Grab-bag fanzines- 13/$1, 75/$5, 175/$10. Send me your want list. I might have something you need.

I need- Astounding: all Clayton numbers, 1934 Mar,Jul,Aug,Sep, Dec, 1935 Jan,Feb,Apr, 1936 Mar,Apr,Jun,Jul,Aug,Nov, 1939 Aug, 1940 Feb, Mar, Apr, May, 1941 Mar, 1943 Mar, Apr.
Unknown: 1939 May,Jun,Jul,Aug,Sep,Oct,Nov, 1940 Mar, May, Jun.

AESTHETICS

Why, all the Brains and Critics who discussed
Pure Entertainment versus Upper-Crust
Alike were caught up in the same Old Riddle:
Are Spacegirls Art- or are they (drool) a Bust?
-Keith Nelson

BY FORCE OF MIND

YOU CANNOT MOVE FURNITURE.

YOU CANNOT LOCATE WATER, OIL, OR GOLD.

YOU CANNOT DETERMINE THE FLIP OF A COIN...

But-

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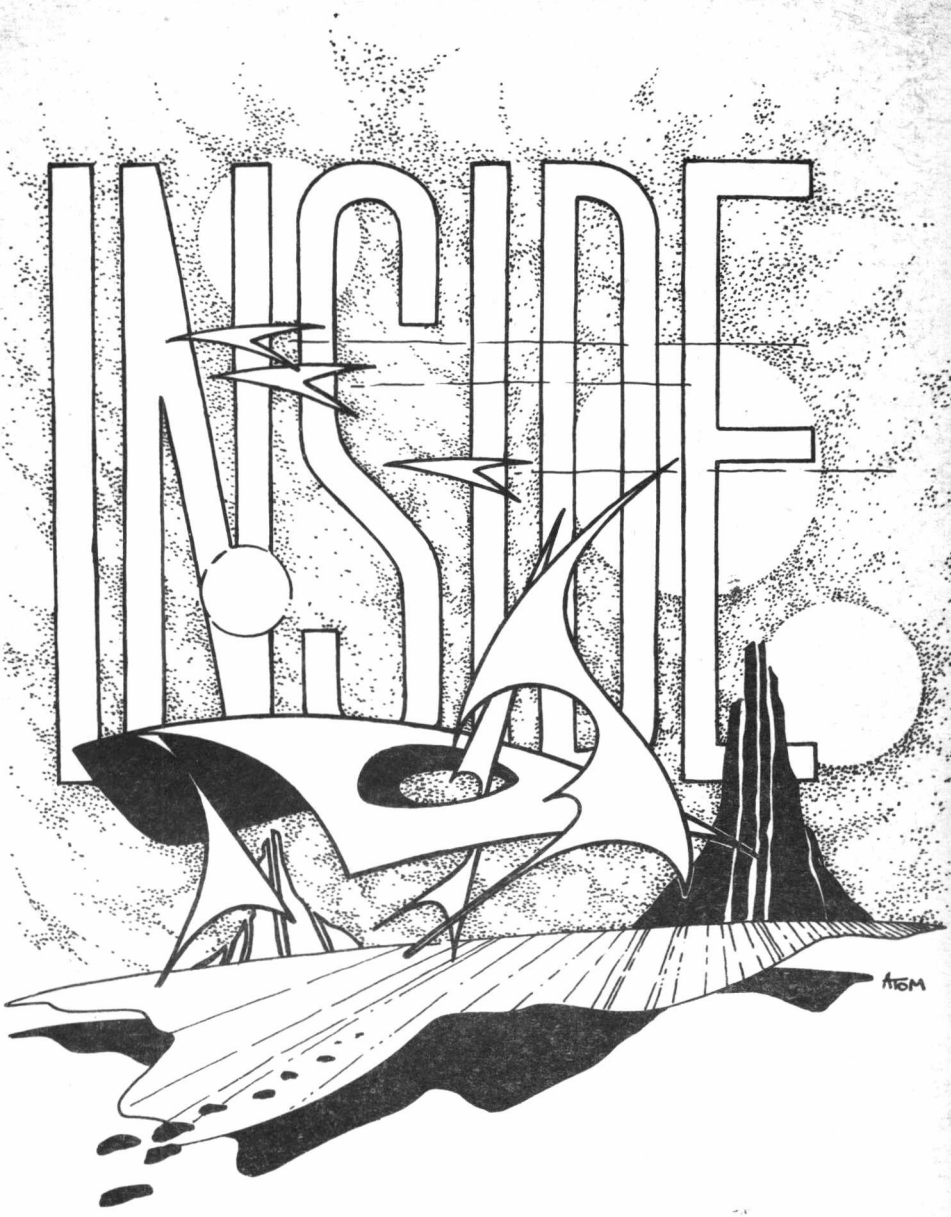
> Let no man think he is without influence. Whoever he is and wherever he be situated, the man who thinks is as a beacon and a light.
>
> Henry George, Progress and Poverty



June 1963 25¢