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This magazine is not available for letters commenting on the previous issue (or any issue). It is available for trading only by prior arrangement. I might add that I'm only interested in receiving fanzines (with certain exceptions) so all you amateur journalists out there calling yourselves fans can stay out there with your ayjay efforts.

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To clear up a few loose ends from last issue the articles from Philip José Farmer and Frank Belknap never arrived as promised. Other material has been returned to the authors (at their request). For this and other reasons no promises will be made about future issues.

Pay no attention to rumors circulating about NF. Some fans have paid attention and as a result there are strange stories going around. Some of these are traceable to Ed Meskys. Just because he gets his mail care of me doesn't mean that he's me or that he knows anything about me. Forwarding his mail to him doesn't mean seeing him even.

Just because I'm a fan doesn't mean that I'm required to correspond with anyone. So this is fair warning not to expect an answer.

More book and fanzine reviews will be back as soon as some of the articles have seen print after all these years. Abandon not all hope ye who enter here.

## PLOTTING AND WRITING UNSCIENCE FICTION

by

Bob Tucker

Quote: "The only faults that I can see ((in New Frontiers)) are that it is a little dry in spots, and perhaps puts a bit too much emphasis on how good the good old days were. But those should disappear in time -- maybe Norman will even get Tucker to write an article on the scientific theory behind his famous short story, "The Princess of Detroit". -- Robert Coulson, in Yandro.

Quote: "How about that article Coulson suggested in a recent Yandro?" -- Norm Metcalf, from his correspondence.

You've been had, friend. Coulson is known for his wry wit.

"The Princess of Detroit" was my second published story, appearing in Future combined with Science Fiction for June, 1942. It was purchased by Robert Lowndes and rushed into print as a sequel to my first story, which shall remain nameless here for fear Coulson will find that one too. "Princess" ran off at the mouth for four-thousand precious words, earned me about twenty dollars, and copped the cover on the June, 1942 issue for one very ordinary reason: it provided an excuse for John Forte to paint a scene showing a Centaurian "birdman", and a handsome hero in a red uniform pointing to a space ship falling through a yellow sky. Do you remember the complaints we used to make about those yellow skies? I daresay that bit of unscience fiction plummeted magazine sales to new lows.

Not everyone can write successful unscience fiction and get paid twenty dollars for it. Fools and ignoramuses can do it easily with only two typing fingers, as I demonstrated, but it requires years of study. I studied the newspapers of the day (mainly The American Weekly) and the scholarly scientific magazines (such as Boys Life). After much hard work, wasted paper and sleepless nights worrying over astrophysics, I produced "The Princess of Detroit" which my fond readers (such as Buck Coulson) remember to this day. Damn him.

Astronomy had always been my favorite branch of science and although I could not remember whether there were six or eight planets up there in the purple void, I knew some were there and this knowledge placed me a cut above the ordinary boob. The possession of a typewriter, plus my superior knowledge, led to the inevitable conclusion that I could enrich myself by writing scientific epics. I did.

The plot of the tale called for a refueling depot to be hanging in space "one day's journey out from Earth". This depot, referred to as "a big metal apple" and a "glorified gas station" was fixed on a traffic route called the Outer Passage, between Earth and Alpha Centauri. The refueling depot was anchored there "more or less stationary by the power (drawn from) the sun and to a minor degree, the other stars". The two gas jockeys running the depot were Pinko, a Centaurian birdman who was in command, and the clever fellow telling the story who was Pinko's assistant. The clever young man believed himself to be a terrific comedian; he was fond of saying funny things and then pausing to give his readers time to laugh. Unfortunately, some of them did. (Hello, Buck.)

The story, soundly based on these scientific principles, then got off to a

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furious start. The assistant discovers a large ship dropping in on them from the wrong direction -- the ship on the cover, although the yellow sky must be blamed on Forte or editor Lowndes, not me. The ship lands clumsily on the outer hull, crawls over to the lowering cradle and is brought inside the depot. And there was another powerful slice of science for you; you simply don't find ships like that anymore!

Once inside, the ship fails to open, and so our two heroes crack it open to find it deserted, apparently. Checking the ship's history they learn that it has been lost for a couple of years -- the crew had deserted long ago and it was thought the vessel had fallen into the sun. Meanwhile, another ship, a freighter, is outside and clamoring for fuel and so the young assistant takes the mystery ship outside to wait while the freighter is brought inside and refueled. Once he gets into space, everything explodes beneath him.

"The poor ship (the waiting freighter) never got inside then, and not for sometime thereafter. Her crack pilot squatted her down dead center on the cradle and waited for Pinko to lower away. Pinko would have, too, if it were not for the fact a three-ring circus suddenly and unexpectedly exploded outside his vision plate window! Too, I imagine that the crew of the freighter forgot all about their landing duties as they lined up at their plates and windows, stupefied, to watch the spectacle. I was a few minutes late realizing it, but me and the Princess of Detroit were providing the entertainment.

"And it wasn't my fault, either. I was sitting there like a perfect gentleman with my hands folded in my lap, watching, when most unexpectedly a blunt object connected with the back of my head! It was most surprising, especially to me. Quite an unsportsmanlike gesture to be sure, so instead of falling out of the chair like any decently black-jacked gentleman would have, I slopped forward across the panel onto a row of studs. And naturally things occurred.

"My wallowing cow was suddenly fed a magnificent burst of overrich fuel, plunging it forward like a rocket amok, which was just what it was! Simultaneously, upper and lower steering rockets burst into flame and the long heavy ship began executing neat somersaults, spinning end on and in turbulent bursts like a pinwheel gone mad! Forward flip-flops. For perhaps a full minute on the stage of deep space it gave a creditable imitation of those theatrical oriental tumblers, six lean lithe gentlemen, each attempting to out-whirl, out-tumble their whirling brothers.

"And then we stopped dead still, like jutting into a wall.

"Forward braking rockets grabbed ether and nullified the push from the rear. The steering rockets continued to belch flame. Jammed as we were between two forces, front and rear, we could do but one thing. We spun. Like a mad little planet streaking its day and night into perpetual twilight, amok on its axis, we spun. Like a runaway merry-go-round, minus glassy-eyed horses and jangling organ, we whirled!"

By this time, I trust, you perceive my knowledge of astronomy and astrophysics leaking through the powerful lines of the tale. But hold! the best is still to come. After all the above there is a moment of peace as the young man comes to his senses and finds that he is not alone on the big ship. It seems that the plastic ceiling of the operations cabin has some of the properties of ordinary plaster, because it has now cracked and powdered down on the young fel-



low. The powder has also fallen on another figure, a nude woman who -- until that moment -- had been invisible. It was she who brought the ship into the depot, she who wielded the blackjack. The young hero attempts to take the weapon away from her, causing another fight and still another exhibition of oriental tumbling on the stage of deep space.

"We were off again! That was a mistake, attempting to part a woman from her weapon. ...Bellowing and leaping backwards I made the second mistake of squatting squarely on the panel board. ...With its rear to the depot my ship suddenly vomited flame and kicked off, the force of the initial explosion shuddering the station on its anchors! Straight away, into deep space we arrowed, as fast as a tardy little comet hastening to complete its orbit. (Note the astronomical detail.) For the space of a few seconds. And then...that long ungainly elephantine vessel checked itself in the time it takes to gasp a breath, and flopped over on its back; completely reversing its direction in one length of itself and then came speeding back! When I scrambled up...and punched a stud, I took up my life where it left off short seconds before and thought to look out the port window. I stared into the ashen face of the freighter captain, seemingly a few feet away. His face was so pale the whiskers stood out one by one. Behind him I caught a glimpse of the crew, swooning where they stood. I grinned a sickly hello. The captain fainted."

I submit, gentlemen, that Dr. E. E. Smith can do no better. He is certainly less entertaining. And I have yet to read a George O. Smith story in which he causes a ship to perform as nimbly as mine. Frankly, I doubt that either Smith possesses the necessary grasp of science to enable a spaceship to reverse its direction of flight in one length of itself. It remained for me to introduce this thought-variant.

Now, about that matter of the invisible woman riding the abandoned vessel. It developed that she had been smuggled aboard by a crewmember itching for company, but the captain had quickly discovered her because she wasn't invisible in the beginning. There was a mutiny, the captain was murdered and the crew abandoned the ship -- also abandoning the woman to her fate. So she rode the starlanes for two years, living on ship's rations and slowly losing her mind. She imagines that she is the Princess of Detroit because that is the vessel's name; she imagines a courtly retinue dwelling there with her; and when fuel runs low she retains sufficient sense to visit the refueling depot and steal some. The Princess and the young hero now spend a short time in space together, waiting for something to happen. She believes that he is a crack pilot, taking her to her people, but he merely stalls along at low speed, knowing that some ship will overtake them and rescue him. They eat meals they cannot see, for although canned rations remain, the labels have disappeared and the foodstuff inside is also quite invisible.

In due time a military cruiser overtakes them, boards them, and rescues the two of them -- but not before some funny business in which the young hero valiantly attempts to perform introductions between the space marines and a woman who cannot be seen.

And then, in the closing paragraphs, it is all summed up nicely with strict scientific explanations. "It was caused by cosmic rays (Pinko declared). The woman was left aboard...and driven insane by fright and loneliness....Yes, it was cosmic rays. Odd that they could cause invisibility!"

Damned odd, eh Buck? I may write a sequel to that sequel if my clamoring public demands it. ((The End))

## PAPER SPACEWARP

by

John Boardman

Should science fiction have anything to do with science? A decent regard for both the intelligence of readers and the principles of semantics would seem to recommend an affirmative answer to this question. Yet much material purporting to be science fiction is either unconnected with, or in flat contradiction to, the science on which this genre of writing is supposed to be grounded.

Let me make clear at the beginning that I am not advocating the limitations of 1960's science fiction to 1960's science. The notion of absolute validity has no relevance in scientific laws. A theory is accepted if the experimental evidence for it is overwhelming, if it can be used to predict further findings, and if no contrary examples of incontrovertible validity are known to exist. On this basis, for example, there is a slight possibility that the phlogiston theory of combustion is correct. However, any author attempting to use resublimated phlogiston as spaceship fuel owes an explanation of some kind to his readers, at a fairly early point in the story.

Examples of flat contradiction of scientific laws are unfortunately rife in science fiction. One whole field where "scientific" charlatanism is widespread is psionics-fiction -- stories whose gimmicks are aspects of "extra-sensory perception". These stories have multiplied like rabbits in recent years, and have virtually taken over one formerly leading prozine. Yet no rigorous explanation of psionics theory has ever appeared (1), while experimental work demonstrates nothing but an ignorance of statistics on the part of such psionists as work in good faith (2).

Another discrepancy between science and science fiction occurs in dealing with gravitational theory. This arises from a dissatisfaction with the slow crawl at which light is accustomed to move. Since electromagnetic radiation travels through a vacuum at a mere 300,000 kilometers per second, some authors have turned to gravitational theory in an attempt to find a higher limiting velocity, or perhaps no limiting velocity at all.

Can this be done? The impression that it might arises from the complexities of Einstein's theory of gravitation. While it is not true that Einstein said that only twelve men could understand this theory, some aspects of it are difficult to explain in a popularized manner. It will be shown, however, that an inquiry to a gravitational field theorist would have prevented many an author from committing howlers. I shall attempt to confine higher-mathematics to the footnotes.

Einstein's theory of gravitation is often called the general theory of relativity, a name which has little to recommend it except several decades of usage

- (1) - Psionic effects could be taken a little more seriously if their supporters would tell us what the Lagrangian of the psi field is, what field equations are obtained from this Lagrangian, what normalized wave functions are solutions of these equations, and how these theoretical conclusions agree with experiments.
- (2) - G. R. Price, Science 122, 359 (1955); Martin Gardner, Fads and Fallacies In the Name of Science (Dover Publications, Inc., New York (1957)), ppv 299-314; D. H. Rawcliffe, Illusions and Delusions of the Supernatural and the Occult (Dover Publications, Inc., New York (1959)), pp. 426-478.

(3). The principle of relativity, as expressed by Einstein in 1905 (4), states that all inertial systems, moving uniformly and in a straight line relative to one another, are physically equivalent, i.e., physical laws are invariant under a transformation from one inertial co-ordinate system to another. (An inertial co-ordinate system is a frame of reference in which the acceleration of a body is proportional only to the net force acting upon it.) The theory of gravitation which Einstein developed in 1916 does not obey this principle except for infinitesimal distances. It is therefore less, not more, general than the theory of relativity earlier shown to be valid for mechanical and electromagnetic systems.

The theory of relativity showed that the velocity of electromagnetic radiation in a vacuum is a fundamental constant, independent of the velocity of the radiation's emitter. This constant, denoted "c", is also the upper limit of velocity for any material object, or for the transmission of information (5).

Since interstellar distances are on the order of light-years, the theory of relativity is inconvenient to many plots. Some authors have met this challenge by building stories around the Lorentz-Fitzgerald contraction, one of the consequences of the theory. This effect, observed experimentally in measurements of the decay times of fast mesons, is a shrinking of the time scale by a factor

$$\left(1 - \frac{v^2}{c^2}\right)^{\frac{1}{2}}$$

where "v" is the velocity of the space ship, meson, or other material object.

Einstein's theory of gravitation does not fit into the framework of the earlier theory of relativity. Therefore, it is necessary to raise the question of whether velocities greater than c are permitted by Einstein's theory. But Einstein's equations for the gravitational field can be put in the same form as the equation of propagation of an electromagnetic wave, with the same velocity of propagation c (6). Therefore gravitational effects will be propagated at the same velocity as electromagnetic effects, and no faster.

Einstein's theory of gravitation differs from all other physical theories in that its field equations are non-linear. The combined effect of two gravitational fields cannot be obtained simply by adding the effects of each field. But the above argument does not depend on field linearity. If we make a linear approximation to Einstein's field equations, by assuming that the gravitational

(3) - V. A. Fock, The Theory of Space, Time and Gravitation (Pergamon Press, New York, 1959), p. 368.

(4) - A. Einstein, Annalen der Physik 17, (1905). An English translation of this paper appears in Lorentz, Einstein, Minkowski, and Weyl, The Principles of Relativity (Dover Publications, Inc., New York, 1956), p. 35.

(5) - The phase velocity of a wave is given by  $w = c^2/v$ ; where v is the velocity of the wave as a signal (group velocity). If  $v \neq c$ , then  $w \neq c$ . However, the phase wave merely modulates the wave which travels at velocity v, and cannot be used to transmit information about the physical system which emits the wave. The next time you see a caterpillar, note that the undulations of its crawling motion travel along its body much faster than the larva itself crawls. These bodily undulations are the phase waves of the caterpillar.

(6) - Fock, op. cit., p. 175.

field is weak, the plane-wave solutions of the field equations propagate with the velocity  $c$  (?): However, this doesn't leave open the possibility that an exact solution will make higher velocities possible.

Several science fiction stories indicate that gravitational waves are misunderstood by authors. Many solutions of both the exact and the linearized gravitational field equations can be interpreted as representing radiation. However, these waves carry so little energy that its detection poses almost insuperable problems. For example, a double-star system would radiate only about one-trillionth ( $10^{-12}$ ) of its total energy per year by gravitational radiation (8). Prof. Joseph Weber has estimated that research into the generation and detection of gravitational waves would cost at least as much as the Manhattan Project, owing to the extremely small values of the quantity to be detected.

An electromagnetic wave may be thought of as a combination of an electric vector and a magnetic vector. This has led some authors to devise "gravito--electric" and "gravitomagnetic" waves, constructed by an analogy from a "gravitic" vector. But the difference between an electric field and a magnetic field depends only on the relative velocity of the field's sources and the observer. We speak more appropriately, therefore, of the "electromagnetic" field. The gravitational field, unlike the magnetic field, is not related to the electric field in this simple fashion.

In an attempt to explain one impossibility by another "gravitoelectric" and "gravitomagnetic" waves sometimes appear in science fiction as the means by which psionic effects are transmitted. Robert Heinlein's Sixth Column and L. Sprague de Camp's The Glory That Was are two examples. In the latter story, a thought-controlled transmitter is set up inside a huge bronze statue. One of the characters wonders why the metal does not absorb the waves. Another replies that, while metal absorbs electromagnetic waves, it has no effect on this radiation because it is gravitomagnetic. However, if a conductor of electricity absorbs electromagnetic waves, a mass would analogously absorb gravitational waves.

Physically different varieties of gravitational waves, with "electric-type" and "magnetic-type" properties, have been deduced theoretically from the Einsteinian field equations for a weak (linearized) gravitational field (9). But these descriptions refer only to the symmetry properties of the radiation's source and not to any relationship with electromagnetic waves.

Einstein's theory of gravitation thus poses a considerable challenge to science fiction writers. Can a story be written in which this theory is interpreted correctly, and is an important gimmick in the plot; and at the same time can such a story be made interesting to the average reader? This problem has been met for other physical theories. It should be very worthwhile to see what can be done with this one.

The End

(7) - P. G. Bergmann, Introduction to the Theory of Relativity (Prentice-Hall, Inc., Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1942), p. 18?

(8) - L. Landau and E. Lifshitz, The Classical Theory of Fields, (Addison Wesley Press, Inc., Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1951), p. 331.

(9) - J. Boardman and P. G. Bergmann, Physical Review 115, 1318 (1959).

## JOSEPH FANN AND HIS BROTHERS

by

Harry Warner, Jr.

### Fans of the Caves

It is customary to assume that Columbus discovered America in 1492, although there is little doubt that many explorers purposely or inadvertently reached this continent before him. We speak of Amazing Stories as the first science fiction prozine, in spite of the irrefutable evidence of the existence of science fiction dime novels that came decades sooner. Such misnomers are the result of the custom of considering as the original whichever latecomer begins a persistent pattern or trend. Columbus didn't really discover but he did a good job of publicity on what he did and began to populate the Americas with people who were not red in hue. Garmsback's magazine resulted in numerous imitators while the dime novel prozines did not survive an uninterrupted life. Something of this sort must be understood when we speak of fandom's origins. We say that fandom began in an unorganized sense with the letter sections in the prozines and at the start of the 1930's with the first fanzines and first fan clubs. But fandom really dates much further back into the past. The earlier forms of fanac do not get the credit, because they did not have consequences that were consecutive and because their major forms of activity differed somewhat from those that were popular in the 1930's. They either died or simmered until general fandom of the 1930's evolved. Like the real discoverers of America, the predecessors to general fandom are difficult to track down in full detail and it is impossible to be sure that we have detected them all. We are doubtlessly ignorant today of numerous small groups of readers and collectors who formed short-lived clubs. It is unreasonable to assume that there were not occasional carbon-copied or hectographed publications from science fiction fans before the first fanzines that we know about. It is impossible to be sure that groups of readers didn't elect officers and meet regularly in larger cities, leaving behind no traces for lack of a prozine publicizing medium. There are enough references to something closely resembling primitive fanac in biographies of great writers to make it probable that much more of the same thing happened involving obscure folks.

But there is no excuse for the failure of previous fan histories to pay attention to the most prominent fandom before the One True Fandom. Lovecraft fandom differed only slightly from general fandom and came many years earlier. For convenience's sake, we call it Lovecraft fandom, although it acquired that title only after the death of Howard Phillips Lovecraft. The name is misleading, in the sense that it was not originally as piously devoted to the writer as later fans might assume.

Howard Phillips Lovecraft might be described as a fan looking for a fandom for many years. He was born in Providence, R. I., on August 20, 1890. He was a semi-genius child, learning to read when four years old and creating at the age of five the imaginary character of Abdul Alhazred, later disguised as the mad Arabian author of the Necronomicon. Lovecraft was a Roman fan when six, building altars and organizing sacrifices for pagan gods. He wrote fiction thrillers, including ghost stories; when nine. His first publishing venture came at the age of eight. He used a pencil and carbon paper to produce a weekly Scientific Gazette, devoted to chemistry. He persisted with this for four years, then used a hectograph to publish in his teens the Rhode Island Journal of Astronomy. He circulated this in a twenty-five-copy edition, and didn't lose interest for another four years. When little more than a boy, he acquired the interest in



mundane amateur journalism that caused him to write for these publications at least as early as 1908, when he published "The Alchemist", a weird tale that he later disowned, in The United Amateur. When 18, Lovecraft destroyed most of his fiction, inadvertently simplifying the later labors of August Derleth. For some reason, Lovecraft did not join an apa until he became a United Amateur Press Association member in 1914. Curiously, in view of his kind and friendly nature, he plunged almost at once into ayjay politics and became a key figure in a literary clique. He was president of UAPA in 1917-18, and remained a force in its politics until the middle 1920's. As early as 1918, the UAPA contained such members of Lovecraft fandom as W. Paul Cook, Edward H. Cole, Samuel Loveman, Arthur Comenough, Clark Ashton Smith, and Frank Belknap Long, Jr., all interested to varying degrees in fantastic fiction. One authority on mundane amateur journalism, Helen Wesson, is convinced that "Lovecraft generated a tidal wave of literary achievement in amateur journalism and the ripples lapped on the shores of contemporary American literature".

There is nothing to disqualify these people from the title of fans. They were not primarily interested in science fiction, but neither were many other prominent figures in general fandom. They corresponded, wrote amateur fiction, articles and poetry, visited one another, feuded, letterbarked, collected, and although they did not have conventions for fantasy fiction fans, they did enjoy the conventions of the apas to which they belonged. They published amateur magazines that frequently featured weird and fantasy fiction and articles about its authors. Lovecraft's first night spent away from home occurred when he was thirty years old and attended a get-to-gether in Boston for those who couldn't make it to the 1920 NAPA convention in Cleveland, a primitive sort of noncon. Moreover, Lovecraft came close to prophesying literally the FIAMOL philosophy in his talk to the Baltimore Conference of Amateur Journalists in 1921: "What amateur journalism has given me is life itself." UAPA was his first love. He was its president three times, won three laureates, and attempted to kidnap members of the ultra-NAPA Hub Club as recruits for his faction. But he finally joined the National Amateur Press Association in 1917, waiting until then because of a fuss with one of its prominent members, Graeme Davis. Lovecraft caused an ayjay sensation when he became the NAPA president in 1922 and managed to calm down its squabbles during his year in office. As late as 1935, he still served on the NAPA bureau of critics.

Lovecraft contributed frequently to apa publications. George Wetzell traced fifty-seven contributions under his own name and known pennames in the years from 1918 to 1926, among the collection of amateur journals that Lovecraft bequeathed to the Fossil Library of Amateur Journalism in the Benjamin Franklin Memorial Library, Philadelphia. These were mainly poems, augmented by essays and fiction. His own publication was entitled The Conservative. It appeared first in 1915 and lasted for thirteen issues through 1923. Literary discussions predominated in it. Lovecraft later dismissed his amateur journalism writing as "a mass of mediocre and miserable junk," and we may never know exactly how much he turned out during nearly three decades of activity.

For a person with reclusive tendencies, Lovecraft showed impressive stamina and gregariousness at ayjay meetings. His death undoubtedly deprived the first fannish worldcons of a pro focal point. He was particularly skillful at the art of going without sleep from start to finish of a con. But it was his corresponding that made him best known to fans. His letterwriting was extensive beyond belief. R. H. Barlow estimated that Lovecraft wrote 100,000 letters, averaging eight per day, some of them up to sixty pages long, always in handwriting. Lovecraft carried out fully a philosophy of dislike for machines like typewriters

similar to that which Bradbury later espoused. The Lovecraft correspondents varied from fifteen youngsters with whom he became a penpal in the last year of his life to the antediluvian C. W. (Tryout) Smith of Haverhill, Mass., who began amateur publishing in 1872, had produced 369 zines by the time he marked his ninety-first birthday in 1943, and handset into type some of Lovecraft's fiction. Lovecraft normally kept from fifty to one-hundred correspondences in motion at all times. One individual received a letter a week from Lovecraft for twelve years, ranging in size up to thirty pages.

Lovecraft never became the equal figure with James and Dunsany as a writer that some of his fans claimed for him. But his goodness as a human and as a fan remained unchallenged. He never published a fanzine in general fandom, although he planned one in collaboration with Duane Rimel in the last years of his life. He participated in many other fannish activities. As a letterhack for the prozines he was quite persistent. His letters frequently appeared in *Argosy*, where he once complained because a story ended with a love scene, an event that Lovecraft rarely observed in the wake of a real life drama. He loved hoaxes. It was not until after his death that the non-existence of Abdul Alhazred became generally known. Claire Beck published then letters that Lovecraft had written to Jim Blish and William Miller, Jr., admitting his invention. Lovecraft did suffer some mild remorse when people wasted time at public libraries hunting for that Arab's book. The *Necronauticon*, supposed to exist only in a Greek translation published in 1567 in Italy, was listed in at least one catalog of rare books, as a sentimental gesture by a dealer who knew the truth. Another Lovecraft devotee somehow smuggled reference cards into the catalog of the Yale University Library, causing repeated false alarms about the book in that institution. In a sense, the book really exists. John Boardman found in a Brooklyn home a slender black volume that contained all passages from the *Necronauticon* that are quoted in fiction by Lovecraft and his followers. It appeared to have been printed privately.

Lovecraft was probably responsible for a mysterious pioneer piece of fan fiction mailed anonymously from Washington, D.C., in the summer of 1934. This single-sheet, "The Battle That Ended the Century", was a tale of a fight on the eve of the year 2001 in which H. C. Koenig, Julius Schwartz, Franklin Lee Baldwin, Cook and Ackerman appeared under thinly disguised names. Even after he became a professional, Lovecraft liked to introduce fannish references into fiction. Robert Blake in "The Haunter of Darkness" is Bloch, with an altered name but an accurate home address. Others in the circle reciprocated. Lovecraft died in ways invoking various degrees of nausea in four professionally published stories: Bloch's "Shambler from the Stars" and "The Dark Demon", Long's "The Space Eaters" and Kuttner's "Hydra". A brutal editor kept the Kuttner story's reference from getting into print.

Lovecraft's personal characteristics have been recited and exaggerated to absurd excess. It is true that he was eccentric, but this condition is common to perhaps half of the nation's adults. He was allergic to cold air, in a degree slightly more severe than that exhibited by half of the women on this continent. He could live on thirty cents a day, and this has been publicized as a wildly freakish thing, while writers who go can go into debt at the rate of \$3 a day pass unnoticed. Lovecraft put many of his fears and emotions into his fiction, a procedure that almost all good fiction utilizes. The only harm from this trick of the trade has been the ruin it brought to stories by imitators who tried to convey horror over matters that didn't affect them personally. In any event, the outward milestones in Lovecraft's life are quickly told. He spent most of his life in his beloved Providence, where various elderly female relatives watched over him. At the 1921 NAPA convention, he met Sonia H. Greene, whom he married

in 1924. They separated in less than two years, and were divorced in 1929. When Lovecraft moved to New York for a couple of years during the 1920's, he joined the Kalam Club that contained such fantasy fiction figures as Long, Loveman, Koenig, and Donald Wandrei. Lovecraft first sold fiction in 1922. Many of the stories that brought in cash had seen original publication in amateur form. Death came on March 15, 1937, at Jane Brown Memorial Hospital in Providence, of cancer of the intestines and Bright's disease. The legend that he starved to death is incorrect. He ate adequately but irregularly, and thought that a lot of food prevented a clear mind.

W. Paul Cook was a pioneer in the circle of HPL admirers. Fruits of his labors to publish Lovecraft became treasured, expensive collector's items within a decade. At least two Cook preprints are even rarer for they never saw publication: "The Shunned House" which Cook withheld, and the uncomplete second issue of The Red House, which he destroyed. Something similar happened to Barlow's edition of "Fungi From Yuggoth", a batch of Lovecraft poetry, whose pages were printed but never collated. Other primitive fans also helped to put Lovecraft into print. "The Quest of Irem" first appeared in an amateur magazine, The Galileon, issued by Lloyd Arthur Esbach. Tryout Smith was publisher for at least three stories.

Like many greater writers, Lovecraft experienced a great growth in his fame and quantity of admirers after death. Derleth, whatever his transgressions as a writer of bad imitations of Lovecraft fiction, generously devoted a substantial portion of his adult life to handling the posthumous literary matters of Lovecraft. With the help of Donald Wandrei, Arnie Gamwell and Barlow, Derleth did much of the work on what was originally thought of as a one-shot memorial volume, The Outsider and Others. In 1939, when Derleth was putting between hardcovers some of Lovecraft's best fiction, it was possible to publish 1,268 copies of this fairly large volume for a printing bill of \$2,500. Derleth borrowed some of this money, made up more of the expense by purchasing personally 100 copies of the book. Wandrei made a similar 100-copy purchase. The 554-page volume was offered for \$3.50 before publication, \$5 after that event. Wandrei and Derleth warned that they would not give a go-ahead signal to the printer without sufficient advance orders. But they risked the venture despite the failure of more than 150 copies to sell in advance. When it took four years for the edition to sell out, the sponsors must have understood why Scribners and Simon & Schuster had both rejected the typescript.

The Kalam Club staged a get-together to celebrate publication. Then the book went into the hands of purchasers with tedious slowness, despite all sorts of fanzine publicity. Finally, when it went out of print, something unexpected occurred. It immediately became the most fascinating object in the history of fantasy, one that every reader must own immediately, preferably in duplicate or triplicate. The second-hand prices soared to at least tenfold the original cost. There were reports that \$100 had changed hands for a single copy and advertisements offered the book at that figure. Nobody has ever produced proof that the figure was ever reached. Wandrei and Derleth, after risking their money and donating huge amounts of valuable time, found themselves accused unjustly of profiteering. Grimly and patiently, Derleth explained what had happened: he and Wandrei had released their own copies after the remainder of the edition had sold out. Derleth sold his hundred for the list price, and an extra thirty cents had been added to the list price for the Wandrei copies, because of added transportation requirements. It was a nasty treatment for a man who had put into the publication expenses some money that the bank had lent him for improvements on his house. Derleth also denied the tales that he was selling books in quantities to individuals for speculative purposes. Even after the inflation occurred on the price of that first Arkham House volume, there were only three individuals on his

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\*Later released by Derleth. Fans of the Caves

mailing list who bought two or three copies of each new title.

This bull market for the Lovecraft collection did not return profits to anyone except second-hand dealers. But Dileth continued his publishing under the name of Arkham House. Cautiously, he published in 1943 another batch of Lovecraft stories, Beyond the Wall of Sleep, in a 11,217-copy edition. The next year, Marginalia, odds and ends of HPL, appeared. The less happy series of literary scavengings from Lovecraft appeared after that and the great age of Lovecraft fandom subsided simultaneously. Francis T. Laney, long one of his foremost prophets, experienced the fandom-wide revulsion in feeling: "Why should any fanzine ever again publish anything by Lovecraft or even about him? If fanzines more or less drop HPL from consideration and one or two other pros stop beating the drums for Lovecraft for even as little as one year, HPL will drop back to his proper status in American literature -- almost completely unknown and forgotten."

Unfortunately, the most important Lovecraft writings are still unpublished. Fans have been unable to quote at length in fanzines from his letters, except in a few sub rosa instances. Dileth holds the rights and exercises them to stop proposed publication. As early as 1940, he and Wandrei had assembled 3,000 single-spaced pages of typescripts of Lovecraft's correspondence, and estimated that this was merely one-fourth of the potential whole. They had permission to publish from three-fourths of Lovecraft's correspondents. But the size of this publishing venture has apparently kept it from realization up to now, and instead Arkham House has issued such items as a sea story that Lovecraft wrote when he was six years old and an extemporaneous bit of fiction dashed off in an effort to persuade a correspondent not to drink rum.

Although Dileth controls the Lovecraft writings themselves, other enthusiasts have done a great deal of publishing of Lovecraftiana of other types. An early effort was Rhode Island on Lovecraft, issued in 1946 by Thomas P. Hailley and Donald M. Grant. This contained useful reminiscences by Providence residents who had known him personally, including Winfield Howmley Scott, Mrs. Clifford Eddy, Dorothy C. Whitlar, Marian F. Banner, and Mary V. Dana. Printed professionally, it sold for only fifty cents. Laney meanwhile had issued The Accolyte, one of time's finest fanzines, specializing in material by and about the Lovecraft circle. The tedium of indexing and glossing Lovecraft's writings was taken up enthusiastically by some scholarly-minded fans. George T. Wetzel, who alienated general fandom by his manner of argument, has been one of the hardest workers in Lovecraft lore. He began research around 1946, and started publishing his findings in 1951, in the fourth and fifth issues of Destiny. Leon Stone, an Australian, started in 1948 to publish a Lovecraft bibliography. It ran for five issues or so in his annual publication, Koolinda. Cole issued a superbly printed number of The Olympian, devoted entirely to material about Lovecraft. Barlow served as literary executor, preserving hundreds of books and magazines, vast numbers of amateur publications, and countless manuscripts found in the study at 66 College Street. Ray Zorn began in 1949 to publish The Lovecraft Collector, a printed leaflet produced "in the interests of amateur journalism and to further the collecting the works of Howard Phillips Lovecraft". Another aspect of Lovecraft fandom must have been more exciting if it indeed existed. Laney claimed that Cthulhu worshippers were active in Boston and some other cities during the 1940's. They were alleged to believe that Lovecraft wrote truth under the guise of fiction.

Some notables in Lovecraft fandom can be introduced through the manner in which they were influenced by HPL. Dileth, for instance, had been known to Lovecraft at least as early as 1929, when Lovecraft wrote a letter of favorable comment to The Dragnet about Solar Pons detective stories that Dileth was selling



them. Darileth was born in Sauk City, Wisconsin, on February 24, 1909, began to write as he was entering his teens, graduated from the University of Wisconsin, and scored professional success more regularly and quickly than Lovecraft managed. Darileth read Weird Tales from its first issue, getting acquainted with science fiction there. He was an Amazing Stories reader from its start, too. Around the middle 1920's, Darileth began to correspond with many fantasy notables, entering penmanship relations with Lovecraft, C. A. Smith, Henry S. Whitehead, Donald Wandrei, Robert E. Howard, Bloch, Kuttner, and Fritz Leiber. But he was not as obsessed with fantasy fiction as many of these gentlemen. He wrote much mystery fiction as a devotee of Sherlock Holmes, held editorial posts on such diverse publications as The Capital Times of Madison and Mystic Magazine, and earned a Guggenheim fellowship in 1938. Darileth never published a fanzine or showed any great interest in fandom. His first big adventure in the field was not too pleasant in nature. He threatened in 1937 to sue Corwin F. Stickney over the latter's publication of a twenty-five-copy printed edition of ten Lovecraft poems. Darileth did not resort to the law, in the end, possibly in consideration of the fact that the booklet was to be given away free, that Lovecraft had provided permission to Stickney to publish some of the poems, and that part of the contents were already in the common domain because of previous fanzine publication.

Less known today but much more important during Lovecraft's lifetime was W. Paul Cook. The details of Cook's devotion to his hobby sound like a hoax created specifically for this history. Cook printed Lovecraft's second published story and much of his other work, long before the prozines became interested. Cook published the first surviving fanzine. Fans marvel in recent years at fanzines that contain 100 mimeographed pages, but Cook published an amateur magazine that contained 312 superbly-printed pages. I have been unable to track down the early details of his life, but he was elderly at the time of his death on January 22, 1948, and had been active in amateur journalism for a half-century. Even before Lovecraft fandom coalesced, Cook published The Noddnock Monthly for thirteen years early in the century. From 1923 to 1927, he issued The Vagrant, whose final issue was the 312-pager. In that same year of 1927, The Ragluse came from the Cook press, the one-shot that represented the first undisputedly known amateur magazine devoted entirely to fantasy. It contained the first appearance of Lovecraft's "Supernatural Horror in Literature", fiction by Wandrei and H. Warner Munn, poems by Wandrei and Frank Belknap Long, Jr., a checklist of the writings of George Sterling, and other material by Samuel Loveman. Only 100 copies were printed. Cook described it as "The realization of a dream, long cherished, of the publication of a magazine to please the producer only. Nothing will be paid for contributions and the magazine will, as have former efforts, be issued as an amateur and money cannot buy it". He had been the individual who persuaded Lovecraft to write the essay, a pioneering study of the field of weird fiction. Cook's final major publishing effort was The Ghost. Five issues appeared from 1943 to 1947, each containing fifty pages that emphasized Lovecraft and collectors. It contained almost every type of verse, fiction, biography, and literary reminiscing, turning it into one of the rarest, most sought-after bits of Lovecraftiana. "Cook's finest gesture was dragging from a darkened den that super-craftsman, Howard Phillips Lovecraft, pushing him with cajolery and encouragement into the lighthearted circle of United Amateur journalists where most members play with little journallettes, not knowing the difference between a manuscript and a mausoleum", Earle Cornwall said.

Henry Kuttner was only a fringe-fan when he began to sell in 1937. But his association with Lovecraft had one special result, unique in the Lovecraft circle. HPL helped Kuttner to meet his future wife. The two men began corresponding in 1935, at a time when Catherine Moore already had a stall in the stable of Love-

craft's numerous correspondents. Lovecraft sent a batch of his unpublished stories with a request to read them, then to forward them to the girl. She and Kuttner fell into correspondence over the matter. They met in Los Angeles and in Indianapolis, romance ensued, and they were married on June 7, 1940. Working as a bank clerk, 'she'd already been selling fiction for nearly a decade when she became Kuttner's bride. Until Kuttner began to hit the prozines, he had done a few things in fandom in addition to a lot of correspondence. Older than most of the Los Angeles fans -- he was born in 1914 -- he had contributed to some West Coast fanzines while residing in Beverly Hills. At the time, he claimed he was too lazy to use his ability to write for the slicks. He was not gregarious, but he was among the best-liked of all the highly-admired men in Lovecraft fandom. "I never heard a bad thing about Henry Kuttner. I never saw evil of any kind in him. I never knew I could miss so very much someone I had seen so seldom. He shouldn't have died.", Ted Sturgeon said in obituary remarks in 1958. The ESFA staged a half-day con in his honor. The only person there who struck a jarring note by deprecating Kuttner dropped dead hours later.

Little has been written or learned about Barlow. He had little or nothing to do with general fandom, aside from his activity in Lovecraft fandom. He published two issues of Leaves in the 1930's, modelling them after Cook's Recluse. Even his death is an uncertain matter. Dr. C. L. Barrett found him still alive in Florida a few years ago and took advantage of the discovery to purchase most of his collection. ((According to the book Accent on Barlow, which is mostly an anthology of his poetry and that of his school, he committed suicide in Mexico in 1951.mn))

Another famous fantasy figure had an amateur publication of his own that could conceivably have taken on fanzine characteristics if an act of God hadn't intervened. Of all the mishaps that have befallen fanzines, none has ever been swallowed up by an earthquake. Farnsworth Wright was a Californian, born there in 1888 and a resident of the state until the San Francisco earthquake. He'd published The Laurel for the United and National APAs until the earthquake ate it. Wright had written, edited, set and printed it himself on a hand press. Many years later, he became the villain of Lovecraft fandom, for his rejection of much HPL fiction while he was editor of Weird Tales.

Bloch is the only member of the Lovecraft circle who both made the transition to general fandom and survived. Born April 5, 1917, in Chicago, but a resident of Milwaukee most of his life, he was precocious enough to be a fourth-grader when eight years old. At that age, he discovered the ecstasy of scaring oneself to death, by viewing the Lon Chaney Phantom of the Opera. "It scared the living hell out of me", he remembers fondly. Two years later, an aunt offered to buy the boy any magazine in the display at a railroad depot. He chose his first issue of Weird Tales. Out of fondness for his fiction, Bloch began in 1932 to correspond with Lovecraft. With typical kindness, Lovecraft immediately offered the loan of books, encouraged him to write fiction, and introduced him by mail to such notables as Deileth, C. A. Smith, and E. Hoffmann Price. Uniquely, Bloch broke into general fandom and into prodom at almost the same moment. He made his first sale to Weird Tales in 1934, two months after graduating from high school. Almost simultaneously, he began to show up in fan publications, starting with Marvel Tales, then The Fantasy Fan. Until 1937, Bloch had met more pros than fans. Jack Darrow made a call on him one Sunday. That was his only encounter with the fannish breed at a time when he'd already walked and talked with such legendary individuals as Stanley Weinbaum, Ray Palmer, Ralph Milne Farley, Wright, Eando Binder, Deileth, Mandel, Julius Schwartz, Mort Weisinger and Otis A. Kline. In 1937, the shock of Lovecraft's death caused Bloch to try to divert himself by traveling to California for a visit to Kuttner... Immediately he met the LASFL

members. He made a trip to New York in 1939 but skipped that year's NYcon, then couldn't afford to attend the first Chicon. But after the war, Bloch and conventions became both synonymous and symbiotic. Acting and floor show experience in his teens may have helped him to prepare for the starring role that he played in many later conventions.

In and out of the fantasy fiction field\*, Bloch built up a major reputation as a fiction craftsman that won him entry to more profitable fields than the pulps where he began. "Yours Truly, Jack the Ripper" probably put him before the public more prominently than any other work until Psycho. Arkham House published Owner of the Way, a collection of Bloch fiction, in 1945\*. A French edition appeared through Editions Fournier. Both the Kate Smith show and Mollie Mystery Theater put the Ripper on radio, then Bloch adapted thirty-nine of his stories for Stay Tuned For Terror, a syndicated transcribed radio program. In Milwaukee, he held a weekly spot on a local television program, It's a Draw. Writing long remained a sideline with Bloch, who had a job with an advertising agency. Then he went to Hollywood to cash in on the reputation he'd built up through his first ten books. He apologized to fandom for taking the time to make real money for a change. More than almost any other professional, Bloch donated his time and efforts to write for the fanzines. He didn't toss them the leavings in the form of stories hadn't sold. Instead he wrote non-fiction for them, polished and wise articles that bear the evidence of ample thinking-out and the most careful composition. The best of them were collected in The Eighth Stage of Fandom, edited just enough to remove the more mysterious fannish language and references. Advent: Publishers published it in both hardcover and paperback condition in 1962. Bloch put fandom into the prozines repeatedly in fictional form, most elaborately in "A Way of Life" which in 1956 turned fandom into a science fiction story in Fantastic Universe. Typical of his willingness to pay attention to his own spawning pool was Bloch's kindness to a completely unknown fan who bobbed up in 1961, William E. Neumann. While many fans snubbed Neumann as a neo, Bloch talked with him for hours about psychopaths and schizophrenia, topics familiar to the new fan who worked as an attendant at a mental institution. "I appreciate more than anything else the friendships and contacts that fandom has brought me through the years", Bloch wrote in 1949, and he has forgotten the gratitude. More recently, he described himself as a middlebrow, "The forgotten man in an era when everyone is being called upon to stand up and be counted. Either you take your stand with the exultant lowbrow majority and glory in the fact that the very biggest names are all catering to your taste or you bare your breast with the young intellectuals and dig moderne the most. Nobody is a middlebrow any more. You're either a company man or a rebel without a cause." His similarly inbetween position, between proim and fandom, offers an interesting parallel to his philosophy.

H. C. Koenig was a New Yorker whose age was never officially revealed but was always considerable. He had read All-Story and Argosy before they combined in 1920, to give you some idea. He was an avid subscriber to fanzines, unlike most members of the Lovecraft circle, and published for FAPA The Reader and Collector, a unique fanzine. Its specialness consisted in the fact that Koenig's secretary did the work. He worked as an electrical engineer for New York's Electrical Testing Laboratories, where he could enjoy the luxury of writing his scathing comments on inane professional writing and stupid fannish opinions, turn the manuscript over to the girl, and let her do all the rest. He even used part of his office to house some of his fantasy collection. Koenig was celebrated for his diligent campaign against prozine stories in which the dialog claimed the characters hissed statements that contained no sibilants. As a collector, Koenig was fond of first editions, a phase of the hobby out of the financial reach of most fans\*. He also liked to restore neglected authors to favor. William Hope Hodgson

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\*Not if they use their heads.mn Fans of the Caves

was his biggest reclamation project. Somehow Koenig was enthralled by a short story by Hodgson in a 1931 weird fiction anthology. Koenig persuaded Lovecraft to include consideration of Hodgson in a revision of "Supernatural Horror in Literature", then published essays in The Fantasy Fan and The Phantagraph of this writer, devoted an entire issue of The Reader and Collector to Hodgson in 1944, persuaded Famous Fantastic Mysteries to print three Hodgson stories between 1943 and 1945, and was one of the reasons why Arkham House published four Hodgson novels in 1946, then his weird detective stories the following year. (The latter under the Mycroft & Moran imprint.) When out-of-town fans visited New York in the earlier days, Koenig and Campbell used to toss a coin. The loser played host to the fans.

Duane Weldon Rimel was distinctive principally for the fact that he almost published a fanzine in collaboration with Lovecraft, then did publish one in co-operation with Laney. Rimel grew up in Asotin, Washington. Inflammatory rheumatism in his early teens left him a semi-invalid. Franklin Lee Baldwin, another Asotin resident, and Rimel got acquainted in the early 1930's and entered Lovecraft fandom together. Both contributed to fanzines and Rimel sold his first story to Weird Tales in the nick of time. It appeared in the last issue of that magazine that Lovecraft lived to see.\* Rimel made many linoleum cuts for The Fantasy Fan and Fantasy Magazine. An interest in jazz got him acquainted with Laney. The Lovecraft fanzine aborted because they couldn't make arrangements for a press. The Acolyte emerged from the Laney association. Its full story is told elsewhere.

The hermit impulses and eccentricities attributed to Lovecraft might go with more justice to Clark Ashton Smith. It takes a considerable imagination to find fannish things to tell about him, despite his long presence in the Lovecraft circle. Born in 1893, he hid away from the world in a cabin at Auburn, Calif., for a long time until he got married, then resided in Pacific Grove, Calif., in only slightly less secluded conditions. He had known Lovecraft since 1923, when Smith sent Lovecraft a copy of his privately printed writings, Ebony and Crystal. He had enough fannish instinct to hold on to some 150 to 200 of the letters from Lovecraft that followed over the years. Lovecraft also provided him with a nickname, Klarkash-Ton. Only a few fans made the pilgrimage to visit him through the years: Kuttner, Price, Wandrei, Paul Freehafer, Henry Hasse, Emil Petaja, Derleth, Barlow, and a scattering of Los Angeles area persons. His last years were difficult ones, with financial demands forcing him to sell off most of his land and treasured items from his collection.

There must be many lost members of Lovecraft fandom. Nobody today knows anything about Howard Davidson, for instance. This Columbus, Ohio, man died leaving behind an old trunk that eventually reposed in a second-hand store. There it was found to contain a Lovecraft manuscript, numerous letters from the same writer, amateur stories by Davidson, and ayjay magazines. Internal evidence showed that he'd been active in UAPA and NAPA before World War One.

But the first stirrings of fandom, even more isolated and nonconsecutive in nature, go back long before Lovecraft, to the middle of the 19th century. Like prehistoric monsters known only through an occasional fossilized thigh or pelvis, these primitive fans must have been infinitely more interesting and colorful than the occasional relics by which we know them today. Usually they survive only in fragmentary bits of evidence. For instance, it wasn't until 1962 that an unknown, ardent collector was known to have been active a century earlier. He had published in 1878 in The University Magazine, a British publication, an article on

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\*Rimel's story was in the Jan 37 issue, Lovecraft didn't die until 15 Mar. What about the Feb, Mar and possibly Apr issues?nm



space operas. It listed classics that are still well known, and added one that is completely obscure: Les Voyages de Milford Seton. The author's name was not given. The name of his protagonist is curiously like the surname chosen by Dr. E. E. Smith for another pioneer space traveler.

Better documented is the stirring of fanish instinct in one of the most celebrated of all filthy pros, Lewis Carroll. He followed an old Victorian custom of compiling collections of his writings in manuscript form, arranged as if they were a printed magazine, and neatly bound. The first Carroll production of this type bore the ominous title of Useful and Instructive Poetry. It lasted a half-year during 1845, when he was thirteen. In 1843, he got material from outside for The Rectory Magazine. After that, his titles sound like an array of fanzines: The Comet lasted six issues in 1848; The Rosebud came next with two issues; The Star, less ambitious, and a half-dozen numbers surviving; Will-o-the-Wisp, whose triangular format no fanzine has yet imitated; The Rectory Umbrella, hardbound and made up at a time when Carroll was already selling professionally, actually printed in 1932; and Misch-Mash, begun in 1855 and intended to set higher standards for what Carroll called domestic magazines. Misch-Mash has received credit for helping to develop Carroll's Alice style. One biographer sounds like certain pros recalling their fanzine days: "Gradually -- and with no very ambitious motive -- he began to give literary shape to some of those whimsical intimations and impressions that had haunted him since childhood, fantasies that belonged to the wonderland country and to the other side of the Looking Glass."

Another fascinating near miss in this instinct toward the fanzine was experienced by one Howard Scott, an amateur journalist in the 1870's. He issued a publication called The Rambler and collected a jay publications of others that laid much stress on speculative science. A surviving bound volume of such apazines contains such items as an article about possible inhabitants of other worlds, information on the more abstruse habits of birds, mesmerism facts, and a discussion on the possibilities of phonetic spelling. There must have been true fanish instincts among Scott's circle. Some of these magazines lamented the personal abuse and anger that had grown prominent in a jay arguments, and this group was getting together for conventions. They held an urChicon in 1878 at the Palmer House in Chicago and the following year convened at Hotel Hunt in St. Louis. They had organizations known now mainly by initials like WAPA and JEAJA, feuds and official organs. Any possibility that Scott might achieve a real breakthrough into genuine fanishness was effectively ruined when he was thirty-five years old. He was murdered by someone whose identity is unknown but not, hopefully, another fan.

A British girl, Grace Burns, summed up the difficulties besetting potential fans before 1930: "When I was in my youth, we too had our science fiction and very keen we were on it, I assure you. Of course, organized fandom was non-existent. As for rubbing shoulders with authors, that was impossible, separated from us as they were by the impenetrable barrier of the editorial office. I think that the main difference was that our enthusiasm had a political bias, whereas modern enthusiasm seems to be non-political. I was a keen socialist in my youth and naturally a secret supporter of the suffrage movement." Who knows what primitive fanatic is betrayed by such a slender clue as a flyleaf that Wollheim discovered in a copy of The Island of Dr. Moreau? Dated April 4, 1909, the inscription reads: "To my dear James A. McGahey in memory of the gambles that have gone with the days when we talked of strange tales and queer things. William King Fisher." Only a newspaper clipping enables us to know about Anna Marie Miller. She was a Brooklyn housewife who admired the works of M.P. Shiel too early in the century to have the opportunity to join in the feuding that was available to the area's residents in the fandom of the 1930's. But she wrote a letter to Shiel in 1931 about The Lord of the Sea. A correspondence resulted, in the course of which Shiel

proposed to her. She objected on the grounds that she already possessed one husband. The writer died in February, 1947, willing a house complete with garden in Sussex, England, to her thirteen-year-old son, Patrick.

Stiel was not unique in finding admirers ardent enough to qualify as active fans. The most famous science fiction writers had lives that occasionally early stirrings of fannishness. Jules Verne was born February 8, 1828, at Nantes, France. He belonged as a youth to a club with the discouraging name of Eleven Without Girls. When he broke into print professionally with "A Balloon Journey" in Musee des Familles in 1851, he belonged to "a club of science writers". These are the facts we know about his own amateur interests. But there is no doubt that he was the first fantasy writer to gain a specialized fandom of his own, like Burroughs and Tolkien. Like most of the Burroughs fans a century later, most of the Verne admirers were young. Starting with "Five Weeks in a Balloon", Verne wrote a series of novels aimed at young people that "immediately gripped not only the boys of fifteen but their parents as well", one of his biographies says, "Children, those spontaneous judges, had instantly accepted him." While From the Earth to the Moon was running serially, many of his fans clamored to be written into the story with a place in the imaginary projectile. Verne also had a letterback problem that later pros have not faced. His feminine admirers used to send him samples of their hair. He kept a pair of tweezers handy to extract it from the envelopes. "Young inmates of reformatory schools used to devour his novels", we are told. "Schoolboys, workmen, clerks, shop assistants, invalids, all those with shut-in lives were the constant companions of all his adventures", adds this unaware accomplice of the Speer handicap theory of fandom. One fan went somewhat further than any modern fan in demonstration of his intensity of feeling about science fiction. He shot Verne. The wound in the author's foot gave him trouble for the remainder of his life. This event in March, 1886, was explained by a theory that the youngster "from excessive work had been overcome by an attack of brain fever". The Boys Imperial League of London did its best to make up for the inconvenience by purchasing a fine walking stick for Verne. He got much posthumous recognition from his fans. Roze, a famed sculptor, designed a monument after Verne's death in 1905 that depicted the author on a pedestal, three young fans at his feet. A hurricane that hit Amiens in 1925 beheaded three of the figures, but there was still enough enthusiasm over the writer to inspire its repair within a year. The more celebrated monument that Amazing Stories once used as a front cover is a different one, standing at the Verne grave at the Cimetiere de la Madeleine at Amiens.

The only specific Verne element in general fandom has been a kind of early groping towards Hugos. This was the Jules Verne Prize Club that had a frail and temporary life around 1933. Palmer was its chairman. It cost two bits to join. The purpose was to sponsor voting for the best science fiction stories of the year, and cups for the authors of them. It seems never to have accomplished its purpose even once. Unconnected with fandom and known only by rumor is a retiring, obscure Verne organization that was reported attempting to produce a prozine in 1940 that would publish untranslated Verne fiction.\*

It should be noted that Verne was proof that Gamsback could be right, under certain circumstances, in his claim that interest in science fiction is good for science. Simon Lake read Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea as a ten-year-old sunning himself at the beach, told himself that he wanted to be Captain Nemo, and Lake eventually invented the submarine in practical form. The celebrated balloonist, Charles Richet, credited his interest in air travel to Five Weeks in a Balloon. Admiral Byrd said after a flight to the South Pole: "It was Jules Verne who launched me on this trip.". A French scientist, Georges Claude, said: "It was through his extraordinary prophetic insight that I first conceived the ambition

of placing at the service of humanity some of the countless resources nature offers us. I am sure that my enthusiastic reading of his works made just as great an impression on my subconscious as on my conscious mind." It must be emphasized that Gernsback's theory had opposition even then. An early insurgent was Pope Leo XIII who said: "I am not unaware of the scientific value of your works. But what I esteem most of all in them is their purity, their moral and spiritual value."

Biographies of H. G. Wells give the impression that here was an individual who was constantly attempting to become a fan but was always foiled by a success in this or that venture. He was born an impressively long while ago, on September 21, 1866, in a London suburb. He grew up with a fondness for toy soldiers that lasted through adulthood and once inspired him to publish a leaflet of rules for playing with them. As a twenty-year-old student at London University's Normal School of Science, Wells started an amateur publication, Science Schools Journal, intended to serve both the interests of literature and socialism. Previously, he'd practiced with a handwritten newspaper, The Up Park Alarmist. A teacher forced him to give up the editing of the Science Schools Journal, blaming it as the cause for poor marks. But he published in it three instalments of an amateur science fiction story that he wrote during convalescence from a football accident. He called the story "The Chronic Argonauts". After these April through June, 1888, instalments, Wells decided that the story wasn't written quite right. Later in life, Wells bought up all the copies he could find of issues that contained his fiction, articles and mailing comments, and destroyed them, in the hope of preventing researchers from tracking down his immaturities. He failed to make a clean sweep. "The Chronic Argonauts" later began to appear professionally in revised form in The National Observer, which collapsed before the story ended. Under a new title, "The Time Machine", it eventually was published serially in The New Review and in book form.

Wells' science fiction stories developed lots of personal fans. Artists, writers, and sensation hunters took their wives along when they visited their hero. This procedure was more devoted than it may seem on the surface, for those were prudish times and Wells was living with a woman to whom he was not married. On a visit to the United States, Wells discovered that Teddy Roosevelt had read and thought a great deal about The Time Machine. Alas for Gernsback, the president was mainly interested in its sociological implications. Wells lived long enough for real fans to hear him speak but he had no real association with general fandom. He was an old man when he died in London on August 13, 1946, pathetically confident that because so many of his predicted inventions were coming true, the world union and universal peace he had also prophesied were equally imminent.

Fans had begun to show interest in the variant versions of "The Time Machine" as early as 1934, when Barlow tried to explain about them in The Fantasy Fan. But, curiously, there seems to have been no attempt to compile a bibliography of Wells in fanzines until Ackerman produced a memorial volume soon after Wells' death. Paul Spencer probably wrote the most typical fannish obituary: "Wells' fantasies are the most completely satisfying ever written. Wells' prose at its best was remarkably vivid, flowing and poetic, his characterization delightful, his plots engrossing. Despite his often incredibly poor evaluations of current events, Wells had on a general level a vigorous insight into both the evils and the potentialities of human society which deserve acclaim." Independently of fandom, an H. G. Wells Society was formed in England around 1960. It published in the first issue of its fanzine, The Wellsian, a complete bibliography.

The first genuine prozines in the English language did not develop a fandom while they were at their height. They were dime novels. They must all the tests to qualify as prozines and they contained original fiction instead of the reprints with which Gernsback filled up first few years of Amazing Stories. The best-known dime novels are the Frank Reade, Jr., series. This began with an issue dated September 24, 1892, containing "Frank Reade, Jr., and His New Steam Man, or The Young Inventor's Trip to the Far West". Boys who wondered about the name of this hero might have learned from their parents that this was the son of Frank Reade, whose adventures began to appear serially in Boys of New York in 1876, then were reprinted complete in Wide Awake Library publications beginning in 1882. That first Frank Reade, Jr. novel must have been patterned after the January 24, 1883, issue that contained "Frank Reade and His Steam Man of the Plains". The Reade magazines followed the dictum that Wells later laid down as the way to write science fiction: introduce one unfamiliar factor in a normal environment, and describe what results from the combination. Thoughts of airplanes, submarines, and automobiles were running through boys' minds at the end of the 19th century, so these dime novels put heavy stress on the use of known forms of power to create such futuristic transportation machines as an electric air canoe, electric submarine, steam horse, deep sea diver, and the slightly anticlimactic electric tricycle. There were other dime novel series that also laid stress on science fiction. The Boys Star Library of the late 1880's and 1890's had an extensive series of science fiction novels starring Jack Wright, who also liked to use electricity for travel purposes. One novel by Richard R. Montgomery, "Two Boys' Trip to an Unknown Planet" was such a popular example of early space opera that it appeared in the Boys of New York series in instalments in 1889, later turned up in 1901 in Pluck and Luck.

Quite prominent men were avid fans of the dime novels. Irvin S. Cobb never forgot them. In 1926, he told an acquaintance that he would like to present to a hypothetical son squally imaginary leatherbound collections of the old dime novels with this speech, on the non-existent youth's fourteenth birthday: "Here, my son, is something for you; a rare and precious gift. Never mind the crude style in which most of them are written. It can't be any worse than the stilted and artificial style of your school reader. Read them for the thrills that are in them. If fortune is ever kinder to you than it was to your father, you may be inspired to sit down and write a dime novel of your own." A most unlikely enthusiast was Frederick Delius. He encountered parental opposition to the British, version of dime novels, penny dreadfuls. Delius as a boy devised a scheme more practical than the type of music he wrote as a man would indicate. He ran a cord from the gaslight in his bedroom over a system of pulleys to the head of his bed, read the tales from between the sheets until he heard footsteps, yanked the cord and doused the light, and pretended sleep. His mother finally discovered the subterfuge but the tale has a happy ending. She glanced at one of the novels herself, began reading it, and became a penny dreadful fan as a result. Swanney Todd, the demon barber, was Delius' favorite hero.

Dime novels survived in the United States until March 6, 1929, when Pluck and Luck published its final issue. Even before then, dime novel fans were reprinting the older ones and were publishing fanzines. Many of these reprint and fan publications had science fiction as their content. Frank Fries, of Orrville, Ohio, seems to have been the first enthusiast who began an elaborate reprint program. He concentrated on the Reade and Reade, Jr., series. Beginning in 1923, Fries produced eighty-two issues of a small fanzine that republished some Reade tales in serial form and supplemented them with articles, letters to the editor, and such fillers as a request for information on the real first name of pomp, (sic) Fries continued this fanac at least through 1935. Another famed dime novel fan-



zine was Happy Hours Magazine, published by Ralph P. Smith, Lawrence, Mass. It flourished during the 1920's. Walter A. Coslet was apparently the only member of mainstream fandom with much interest in this specialized field. His collection contained some 400 issues of dime novel fanzines, including many of interest to science fiction readers. George Sahr began to reprint the Frank Reade Weekly Magazine in 1931 in facsimile form. The Dime Novel Club also issued numerous facsimiles of the Reade, Wright, and other series. Prices at which they were offered were generally higher than the cover price of the originals, which had often sold for only a nickel despite their generic name, but still much lower than the going price paid by collectors for originals. Fries, for instance, sold a facsimile of Frank Reade's Steam Man for fifty cents in 1927. Nobody has issued a checklist of dime novels with science fiction and fantasy themes. Collectors who sought them all, fantastic and mundane, had big jobs. Sahr spent fifteen years attempting to complete his run of Frank Reade Weekly Magazine, despite the benefit of a huge headstart when he bought up all but ten issues from the original publisher.

One way to be certain that there was an early fandom lies in the survival into contemporary times of various individuals who were ardent collecting fans long before the first issue of Amazing Stories. Laurence Manning was known to fandom only as the writer of prozine stories in the 1930's. But he had been a fantasy book collector long before that. A Canadian by birth, a Staten Islander by residence, and a nursery man by profession, he specialized in utopias, assembling more than 500 volumes on this theme. The mystery fan, W. S. Houston, quite possibly antedates fandom as a collector. This enigmatic figure is old enough -- reputedly in his 80's -- and subscribed to fanzines from their start. Lynn Hickman, one of the few fans who have visited him, described his collection as one of the finest of all. C. A. Bramitt, known today as the first literary editor of Amazing Stories, had a tremendous collection of fantasy books in both English and other languages, in the early days. This German-born chemist was reputed to be the world's greatest authority on science fiction when a second-hand book dealer put him in touch with Gamsback to be wet nurse for Amazing Stories. A letter in All-Story Weekly in 1917 in which he asked help with a bibliography of George Allan England is proof that he did more than read the books he collected. Bramitt, who was credited with introducing the calculating machines to the United States, suffered the loss of his collection when it was sold out from under him while he was overseas in World War Two. Nothing daunted, in his sixties he began to rebuild this collection. He willed the second collection, upon his death in 1946, to Ackerman. He had attended his first fan meeting, a postwar convention in Newark in March, just before his death. Wilbur C. Whitehead, an auction bridge expert who also helped with the early editing of Amazing, was described as another fan. Gamsback himself might have qualified as a semi-fan. He'd gone into wild enthusiasm at the age of nine when he encountered a German translation of Percival Lowell's Mars As the Abode of Life, almost memorized the novels of Verne and Wells, and wrote his own science fiction stories as a boy.

There is no doubt that quite celebrated people have had fannish instincts that were frustrated by their success in other fields. Thomas Wolfe, if we may trust his description of Eugene Gant, flitted all weird fable and wild invention, in prose or verse, from the Golden Ass to Samuel Taylor Coleridge, the chief prince of the moon and magic. Helen Traubel says in her autobiography: "I have a dozen long shelves packed with fairy tales from all over the world. For years, I have collected the doings of never-never land with the same devotion that a miser might count his gold. I enjoy reading them over and over, smiling at their pleasure, and feeling my eyes moisten at their disasters. The adventures of the children, dwarfs, kings and princes, swans and geese, heroes and cowards, giants and elves -- these, I find, are not unreal at all. They seem to me to be more

genuine than many of the happenings in real life. In the best sense, my own life has been a fairy tale. Robert Batman in an essay on "Modern Mythological Fiction" even proposed the theory that a sort of fandom can be traced through the majority of the important English novelists and poets of the past three-quarters of a century, originating in the theosophical writings of Madame Blavatsky, and evidenced in such men as Lawrence\*, Yeats and Huxley. Then there was the first known Spanish fan, Manuel de Falla. He also formed a precedent for Coventry. As a boy, around 1890, he invented an entire imaginary city, Colon, complete with a newspaper, El Mes Colonthino, and satirical weeklies, El Burlon and El Cascabel. This had genuine science-fictional elements, because de Falla arranged for letters and messages to go from Colon to Seville by "a rapid vehicle of his own invention", an old friend recalled. There is no telling how far de Falla would have gone with this dream city-cum-publications, if he hadn't been so engrossed in it that he failed to watch the carnival revelry in the street below the balcony of his home at the start of one Lent. His parents investigated this sudden disinterest, found him busy collecting taxes, discovered all the receipts and papers involved in the city, and called a doctor. The physician ordered all the records taken away from the youth, lest it end in madness. The disappointed de Falla had to settle for the life of a composer.

The lack of a rallying point like a full-fledged prozine must have prevented a consecutive fandom from originating many decades before the 1930's. Too many persons with intense interest in science fiction simply did not realize the existence of others with similar devotions. Thus, at a time when a great deal of collecting and bibliography was already in progress, we find one Edward Shanks writing in The New Statesman an article about novels set in the future. He claims in his essay that no amateurs have begun collecting the books. Shanks, writer of a fantasy book of his own, The People of the Ruins, published in 1920, foretold in his essay much of modern fanzine fandom when he recommends fantasy as a theme for anyone seeking essay material that could combine literature, sociology and the psychology of the slightly insane.

But it must also be remembered that amateur journalism could not flourish until economic conditions and technology set the stage. The first known amateur magazines date back to 1750, but they were issues of a university magazine financed by well-heeled students of Oxford and Cambridge in England, not susceptible of imitations elsewhere. It was not until just after the Civil War that low-priced printing presses became available in the United States and literate-minded youngsters could find a way to express themselves without a professional medium. It is significant that the National Amateur Press Association of today was formed in 1876. The British "ayjay organization" did not arrive until 1890. Mimeographs did not become generally available until the 20th century. The only copying system available in the 19th century was a device that permitted making only a single copy of a document. The inventor of the hectograph for obvious reasons has concealed so well all traces of his identity and details of its discovery that I have been unable to determine the date on which he unlocked this secret of nature. But the devilish things must have been available before the turn of the century. Frank Swinnerton's autobiography tells how he published with the help of a hectograph a small monthly journal as a teenage office boy. Swinnerton, incidentally, gives credit to the Boer War, of all imaginable things, for helping to create a great deal more amateur journalism. He thought that it supplied a rallying point for young minds with liberal tendencies and thoughts.

But fan historians have overlooked the most telling piece of evidence proving the existence of a numerous body of enthusiastic fans before 1926. Gamsback, who reprinted in Amazing Stories several items from The Lane Tech Prep, the school publication of a Chicago high school, put the evidence into black and white in

Amazing Stories at a date when he cannot be accused of falling victim to an unreliable memory. In the June, 1926, Amazing he wrote: "From the suggestions for reprints that are coming in, these 'fans' seem to have a hobby all their own of hunting up scientifiiction stories, not only in English, but in many other languages. There is not a day, now, that passes but we get from a dozen to fifty suggestions as to stories of which, frankly, we have no record, although we have a list of some 600 or 700 scientifiiction stories. Some of these fans are constantly visiting the book stores with the express purpose of buying new or old scientifiiction tales, and they even go to the trouble of advertising for some volumes that have long ago gone out of print." This passage is also notable as the first public use of "fan" as the name for the person who likes science fiction too much to be content with merely reading it occasionally. The reference to "fans" quite possibly settled the general name for the hobbyists, and prevented us acquiring as distinctive a term as the hams of amateur radio or the buffs of Civil War lore.

End of Part 1

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Science fiction, fantasy and supposed such

- Kelly, James Paul - Prince Izon, A. C. McClung, 1910, five ill. in color by Harold H. and Edwin Betts, binding starting to give, slightly worn, though otherwise in good condition and a copy of the 1st edition. \$1.50
- Wallace, Edgar - The Day of Uniting, Mystery League, Inc., 1st, 1930, stains on cover, binding starting to loosen, otherwise in very good condition, this is one of the few sf novels by this one-time best selling author, the earth is threatened with destruction by a comet. \$1.00 \$1.00
- Wright, S. Fowler - Deluge, Gossard & Dunlap binding of the first edition, binding loose, bucking and cracking of the covers, otherwise clean and good \$1.00 \$1.00

Other Books all at \$1.00 each, all with dj (except 'ndj') and recent sf mostly.

- Anderson, Poul - Twilight World, SFBC
- Asimov, Isaac - The Stars Like Dust, 1st, ex-libris
- Brantlett, Leigh - The Starman, 1st, ex-libris
- Clarke, Arthur C. - From the Ocean, From the Stars, SFBC, \$1.50
- Clemart, Hal - Mission of Gravity, 1st, ex-libris
- Clifton, Mark - When they Come From Space, SFBC
- Collins, Hunt - Tomorrow's World, Avalon, nd, ex-libris
- Dick, R. A. - The Ghost and Mrs. Muir, Ziff-Davis, 1945, 4th,
- Gold, H. L. - The Fifth Galaxy Reader, SFBC,
- Hally, J. Hunter - Encounter, Avalon, nd,
- Hoyme, Thomas Temple - Intrigue on the Upper Level, Reilly & Lee, 1934, 1st, ndj
- Leinster-Murray - The Forgotten Planet, 1st, ex-libris
- Merrill, Judith - Shadow on the Hearth, 1st, ndj, ex-libris
- Merrin, Jr., Sam - The White Widows, 1st, ex-libris
- Moore, Ward - Greener than You Think, 1st, ndj, ex-libris
- Nourse, Allan E. - Tiger By the Tail, SFBC
- Pohl, Frederick - Star of Stars, SFBC,
- Randall, Robert - The Dawning Light, 1st
- St. John, Phillip - Rockets to Nowhere, 1st, ex-libris
- Santesson, Hans Stefan - The Fantastic Universe Omnibus, SFBC
- Schneider, John G. - The Golden Kazoo, Rinehart, nd, ex-libris
-

by

Dick Eney

Harry Warner, just the other day, was urging us to put Grace Metalious' Peyton Place in our fantasy libraries, on the ground that it certainly wasn't a novel about any Earthly small town. Well, he was kidding; but I'm not speaking entirely in jest when I tell you that L. Sprague de Camp's The Bronze God of Rhodes (Doubleday, 1960, \$4.50, Bantam, 1963, 60¢) will be enjoyed by every fan who digs good science fiction.

It's true that The Bronze God of Rhodes concerns itself with events in Classical Greek history; namely, the siege of the island city of Rhodes by Demetrius Poliorketes in 305-4 BC. And of course it has some of the things science fiction usually lacks and historical fiction is strong on: raging hand-to-hand battles and voluptuous, passionate women for the hero to enjoy. But they're handled with such a difference that we sfists, reading this book, should get a real kick out of seeing how one of the masters in our field addresses himself to writing that crazy Samuel Shalabarger stuff.

For a beginning, de Camp's sfnal orientation shows somewhat in his choice of a hero. All (well, 82.7%, last survey I made) historical-novel heroes are downtrodden folk who itch to better themselves, but Uncle Hugo himself couldn't have boggled at de Camp's choice: Chares of Lindos is a brilliant young Technician whose ideas are rejected by his Elders and Betters. (Be it noted that Sprague is far too good an artist, however, to employ the Jealous Diabolical Opponent gimmick; aside from mere conservatism, Chares earns all the ill-will he gets.) The new invention he's trying to get adopted is the lost wax-method of bronze-casting, to be sure, but the principle's all there.

Another prime source of Sense-of-Wonder de Camp uses freely is our Martian Observer gambit: the device of clarification or exposition by comment from an observer of alien culture. That's not a device peculiar to sfantasy, though we inherit it legitimately -- through that part of our pedigree that runs back through social criticism -- and de Camp was notably fond of it when he was writing in Campbell's zines during the forties.

What I find the most impressive feature of this as of most of de Camp's writing is not one peculiar to sfantasy, even if he's its greatest practitioner in our microcosm. I'm talking about his almost preternaturally acute sense of realism -- that quality in his work which makes me understand why he credits the ability to create fascinating lands of fantasy to "the faculty for conjuring up seemingly-solid eidetic images". (I trust he won't slit my throat when he recalls where that quote came from, and who it's supposed to describe!) After reading a few dozen of Sprague's books and stories nobody can doubt that this is the only way to account for his mastery of the Unnoticed Detail; he's there, watching the story happen, and not up at Osgesden at his typer imagining it. So it's natural that he notices the minor details that would catch the eye of any modern observer on the scene. Even the historical novel's requisite Sexy Love Affair and Reconciliation with Parents become altogether hilarious under the influence of de Camp's system of Pitilessly Objective Exposition -- that gift of his which so many people have mistaken for the more mundane quality of humor -- which shows us just what would be likely to happen with a girl who's willing to run off with a stranger because she's hotblooded and, ah, inadequately loved;



and how Chares (used as he is to tame and submissive women) would get along with the wench, after he's explored the more obvious pleasures of co-existence.

The chief defect of this work is that natural to historical novels whose authors are afflicted with scholarly integrity; I mean thematic diffuseness, history (despite Spengler and Toynbee) not being as well-plotted as a best-selling novel, de Camp has himself pointed out that the wars of the Diadochi -- the generals who started grabbing for pieces of the Macedonian Empire on the death of Alexander the Great -- simply had no discoverable trend or moral; it's too bad that the heroic theme of Rhodes standing against the Antigonids, a single free city against an Empire, ended with a peace agreement on exactly the same terms that had been proposed before all the fighting began, but that's the Historical Muse's goof, not the author's. A superficial flaw -- that the tale of the war crowds the overt theme, the construction of the Colossus of Rhodes, into a dozen pages at the end -- is not really a defect, since it's really the war and its theme that's central to the book even if Chares does claim that he tells of it only to explain how he came to have the inspiration for his colossal statue of Helios-Apollo which he really wants to tell about.

Throughout, characterization is handled in the superior de Camp style, the best possible synthesis of the hack method of telling us outright how to appraise a subject and the introspective "arty" fashion of never being explicit; de Camp tells us, all right, but only to confirm an impression he's already made. When he remarks that Bias, despite his faults, is "wise to resolve, and patient to perform", it's only after we've seen the older craftsman invent a new missile-thrower of improved range and straighten out the egotistical Chares without a residue of ill-feeling; when Chares himself tells us he's the owner of a hot and hasty temper we've already noticed it -- what de Camp is really telling us is that Chares isn't blind to his own faults.

Sprague's meticulous realism, again, informs the entire book and -- in my prejudiced view -- would repay a fan's reading even if The Bronze God ... weren't the whacking good story it is. Glancing at random at half a dozen pages I find the man flinging out asides and parenthetical explanations of: the reaction of Athens to some of Demetrius' psychological warfare; the Greek cure for hangover (cabbage\*, if you wondered); Rhodes' methods for dealing with class warfare; the internal administration of Ptolemaic Egypt; the theory and practice of fencing stolen valuables; and field-expedient methods of dealing with armored military vehicles. This fantastic knowledge of and attention to detail, as I've said, awes me rather; I can't shake off the impression that de Camp merely thought of a good dramatic situation, paused a moment to sort out the pertinent data in his mind, and then wrote it just as the real events happened (perfect with the first draft, of course), with his characters acting out the happenings for him to record without requiring any authorial adjustments of the stage and props. When an author can do that, he has nothing to learn about technique.

The End

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READER'S FORTHRIGHTLY

Redd Boggs, P.O. Box 57242,

Los Angeles 37, California

Norm:

Damon Knight's article or rather speech strikes me very favorably, but I don't think it compares closely with DK's usual book reviews as literary criticism. As a plea for "reality" in sf, it's fine, but it tells nobody anything very useful in the method of achieving the effects he points out in the passages by Heinlein, Shirley Jackson, et al. To me one of the more interesting bypaths trod by Damon Knight here is the penultimate paragraph where he talks about the sf hero who lived in a strange world beyond reality, cut off from real life. I was trying, unsuccessfully, to describe this essential quality of much costefnal age sf to someone not long ago, someone who argued that the "sense of wonder" in that type of sf was created by the fact that the hero went from a familiar world into a strange new world of tomorrow or in another dimension. He mentioned Williamson's The Green Girl as an example. Yet, as Damon points out, the hero was in the opening scenes of that yarn, completely cut off from real life and the "reality" pictured in the beginning was no less fantastic than the imagined world visited later in the story.

Redd

((A Utopian world of 4 May 1999 with the sun going out is pretty fantastic.))

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Mike Deckinger, Apt 10-K, 25 Manor Drive, Newark 6, New Jersey

Dear Norm,

In my short list of the recent Verne films, I've completely neglected to mention Mike Todd's Around the World in 80 Days and rather than suffer the verbal assaults of more astute readers I'd like to clarify my points. First of all Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea, From the Earth to the Moon, and Journey to the Center of the Earth were all presented as sf films. Around the World in 80 Days, on the other hand, was a travelogue spectacular. Granted it may have been sf when written, but today it is not. Just what is the fantastic element in the Todd film? Only that it is possible to circumnavigate the globe in the relatively short time of 80 days. And this theme is underplayed in the film. Todd is more concerned instead with presenting lovely scenery, excitement and adventure, rather than any science-fictional element. What he did was simply use Around the World in 80 Days as a vehicle for presenting a panorama of stars and situations, most unrelated, on the assumption that the more "spectacular" the film, the bigger crowd it will entice to the box office.

SIN cerely,  
Mike Deckinger

((The Verne book isn't sf, either.))

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Poul Anderson

Dear Norm,

Enjoyed the last NF, especially the pleasant review of We Claim These Stars. However, since you appear to concern yourself with the minutiae of science fiction as well as the important issues, perhaps I should make one small correction. The story was not "rewritten and expanded by (me) and abridged by Ace", as you

report. The version which appeared in Amazing Stories was, indeed, cut (not by me), often to the point of incoherence. But -- as they have not always done -- Ace printed the whole story, exactly as in the MS, with the exception of the title, an occasional typo, and a last-minute correction by myself of a goof regarding the Strauss family, which you spotted in the magazine version and pointed out to me.

The whole question would be trivial except for the fact that there is so much wanton editing in the pulp and pb fields that an editor who has done the decent thing and kept hands off should get the credit due him. Agreed?

Regards,  
Poul

((I'm sorry about the error regarding who did what. That is what comes of looking at events as chronological with regard to newsstands, and then applying loose terminology. But the cover carries an Ace euphemism for abridged, you'd better check again. Wohlheim has abridged on the covers of books when only one paragraph was missing. At least he's honest about it.))

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Robert E. Briney

Dear Norm,

I note a small misstatement in the review of Anderson's Murder in Black Letter: the book is not Trygve Yammura's third appearance, but at least his fourth. Another short story, "Pythagorean Romaji", was in the The Saint Mystery Magazine, Dec 59; another story, "The Gentle Way" appeared in the Aug 60 issue, but this was after the magazine had gone to the printers.

Now for the letters. I've been saving them for the end, since several of them are more than slightly irritating. (My reactions have cooled in the week or so since I first read the issue....) Especially irksome were the comments of William F. Temple and John Pesta, who it seems would like to eliminate from sf one of the qualities which distinguishes it from other fiction -- the presence of science as a basic ingredient in the story. Granted, all science and no story makes pretty dull reading (just go back to the early Gernsback and Sloane days and see); but on the other hand, all story and no science (which is what these gentlemen seem to prefer) just is not science fiction, and can be found in far greater quantity and quality in many other fields. To quote Earl Kemp (in his symposium "Who Killed Science Fiction?"): "If you don't like apples, get out of the tree."

In addition Temple seems to slide from disparaging comments on Anderson's article into a denunciation of "heavy-science" stories, implying that Anderson's novel belongs in the latter category. If that is his impression of the story, we differ; I found The Enemy Stars one of Anderson's best and most moving stories. In fact, it was so good that I didn't even begin to notice the scientific skeleton underneath until the second or third reading, and it took his article in NF #2 to bring it fully to light. I'll always be grateful to him for writing the article and to NF for printing it, precisely for that reason.

Cheers!  
Bob Briney

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Reader's Fortnightly

Jim Groves, 29 Lathom Road, East Ham, London, E. 6, England

Dear Norm,

I must take Bill Temple up on this letter of his. Anderson's story "We Have Fed Our Sea" was not overloaded with science, but the background working was necessary to make sure that everything seemed authentic. The article was interesting but you don't have to understand it to appreciate the story. It's just that some people have the type of mind that tends to pick holes in theories, even those behind stories written and read purely for entertainment, so that to enjoy a story it has to stand up to that sort of scrutiny. That's the sort of mind that scientific training gives you. If Bill's more interested in human situations then he should stick to mainstream writings, sf is the interaction of people with speculative science situations and for the story to ring true both must be able to stand up to reasonable scrutiny. There are certain limits to human behavior and the same goes for scientific possibilities. I can't see what Bill was complaining about since Anderson didn't put this theory into the story, only into an article.

Bill's last line stinks -- real life, which the writer is trying to portray, is written with slide rules, not with pens. Men will get the 20 or even 10-hour working week eventually not because philosophers write that they need it to become really human but because men with slide rules make the machines that do the routine jobs more efficiently than men. If a writer writes a novel set in an area of country he is well advised to have a map of that area so that he doesn't have his characters performing impossible feats like running from one point to another in a few minutes when he has previously indicated that they are some 10 or more miles apart. And if the country is imaginary then publication of a map and article about it comes under Bill's prohibition. And if the story is based on an idea that has no objective reality at the moment then such an article is like unto that of Anderson's in NF #2. Some people buy cars just to take them to pieces for fun, and some do it because they are car manufacturers and they need to analyse its structure in order to improve their own product. Likewise some people read sf just to dissect the ideas in it, just for fun, and some do it because they are writers themselves and don't yet know it all. Even if it doesn't give you any definite ideas it's nice to see how the other bloke does it, you never know, a slight modification of your own style might improve it no end.

Yours,  
Jim

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James Blish

Dear Norm,

Just got around to reading the current New Frontiers, which I enjoyed thoroughly; but I find it raises a ghost I would like to see laid. One of your correspondents remarks that the science in The Triumph of Time is gobbledegook, according to the testimony of an unnamed person he thinks competent to judge such matters.

This is the third time I have encountered this remark. The first time, of course, was in Schuy Miller's review in ASF, where he said almost precisely the same thing. John R. Pierce, whom I would think competent to judge, made the accusation directly, but failed to supply specifications when challenged, shifting instead to the grounds that he found the novel philosophically unsatisfying.

I wish somebody would either put up or shut up on this matter. Certainly I don't claim that Triumph is entirely free of scientific error, or that all my speculations could be defended; on the other hand, as far as I know it is neither more nor less inaccurate than most of my other books, and cost me just as much time and effort in the science department. If there is anybody who is prepared to document the charge of gobbledegook, let him come forth with chapter and verse, and be prepared to slug it out. (Bearing in mind, of course, that I take no responsibility for typos and dropped lines, since I wasn't given the opportunity to proofread the Avon edition. I will stand by the text of the English edition, A Clash of Cymbals, which I did proof; it is otherwise identical with the American.)

I feel as strongly as Poul does about getting things right, and up to now, readers generally seemed to trust me not to foist nonsense upon them, at least not deliberately. I'd like to keep that record clean -- especially since there seem to be very few sf writers anymore who seem to have any conscience at all about the science half of their idiom (see, for instance, Mr. Temple's letter in the same issue).

Regards,  
Jim

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Donald Franson, 6543 Babcock Avenue, North Hollywood, California

Dear Norm,

Damon Knight says something really important, that science fiction writers should try for more convincingness (a word preferable to "realism" which has so many meanings that it is bound to be misinterpreted). In the old days, the slow start, the much derided "frame" helped to convince. When I first started reading science fiction I enjoyed most those stories which I believed could happen -- as when the remarkable invention that would have destroyed the Earth was itself destroyed, along with the scientist -- because if this wasn't the outcome how could the narrator be telling the story, and how could I be reading it? In Jack Williamson's "Stone From the Green Star" the frame helps make believable the incredible future by telling about the author himself receiving this box with the message in it. Wells used this technique, so did Dunsany, to good effect -- the last in short-shorts, refuting the idea that frames make the story unbearably long. When authors assumed the reader knew it was "only a story", some of the sense of wonder went out of science fiction -- and fantasy. Take Lovecraft, whether you like him or not, he spent most of the wordage in trying to convince, and succeeded quite well.

Science fiction should have an advantage over fantasy in convincingness, since it can rely on facts instead of denying facts, but authors must convince first in either case, and they don't try hard enough. I think being convinced is of primary importance to enjoying a serious story. A light fantasy need not be too convincing, as the reader brings a willing suspension of disbelief, because he wants to enjoy, say, a John Cullier story. That's why I say fantasy has it tougher, or should have, than science fiction. In practice, the science fiction writers, knowing this, are lazier, and are not as convincing, as they should be. Nevertheless, don't you think ghost stories, for example, were much more thrilling when, as a child, you believed in ghosts? (If you did) And aren't sf stories that are plausible more exciting (if they are exciting, of course) than the ones the author himself couldn't possibly believe in? I never went for F. Orlin Tremaine's "thought-variant" formula, where anything can happen, like magic. And if you believe that sticking strictly to things that the



author himself can believe in as possibilities (not necessarily probabilities, of course) will restrict the scope of a story to the humdrum and the here-and-now, read Asimov's "The Last Question" (SFQ, Nov 56) or some of the old Campbell epics.

August Derleth has some intelligent things to say about his book business, some of which apply to the "Who Killed SF?" argument, as the point about saturation of a limited readership.

Yours,  
Donald Franson

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Books For Sale (cont. from page 23)

Schoonover, Lawrence - Central Passage, SFBC,  
Simak, Clifford D. - Time Is the Simplest Thing, SFBC (The Fisherman)  
Smith, Thorne - Topper Takes A Trip, Sun Dial, nd, ndj,  
Sohl, Jerry - The Altered Ego, Rinehart, nd, ex-libris  
          - The Haploids, Rinehart, nd, ex-libris  
          - Point Ultimate, Rinehart, nd, ex-libris  
Verne, Jules - Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea, World, 1946, ill. by  
          Kurt Wiese (color illoes) (but mostly black & white), ex-libris  
Wyllie, Philip - Tomorrow!, Rinehart, nd, ex-libris

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