RIVERSIDE QUARTERLY

VOL. 3 NO. 4

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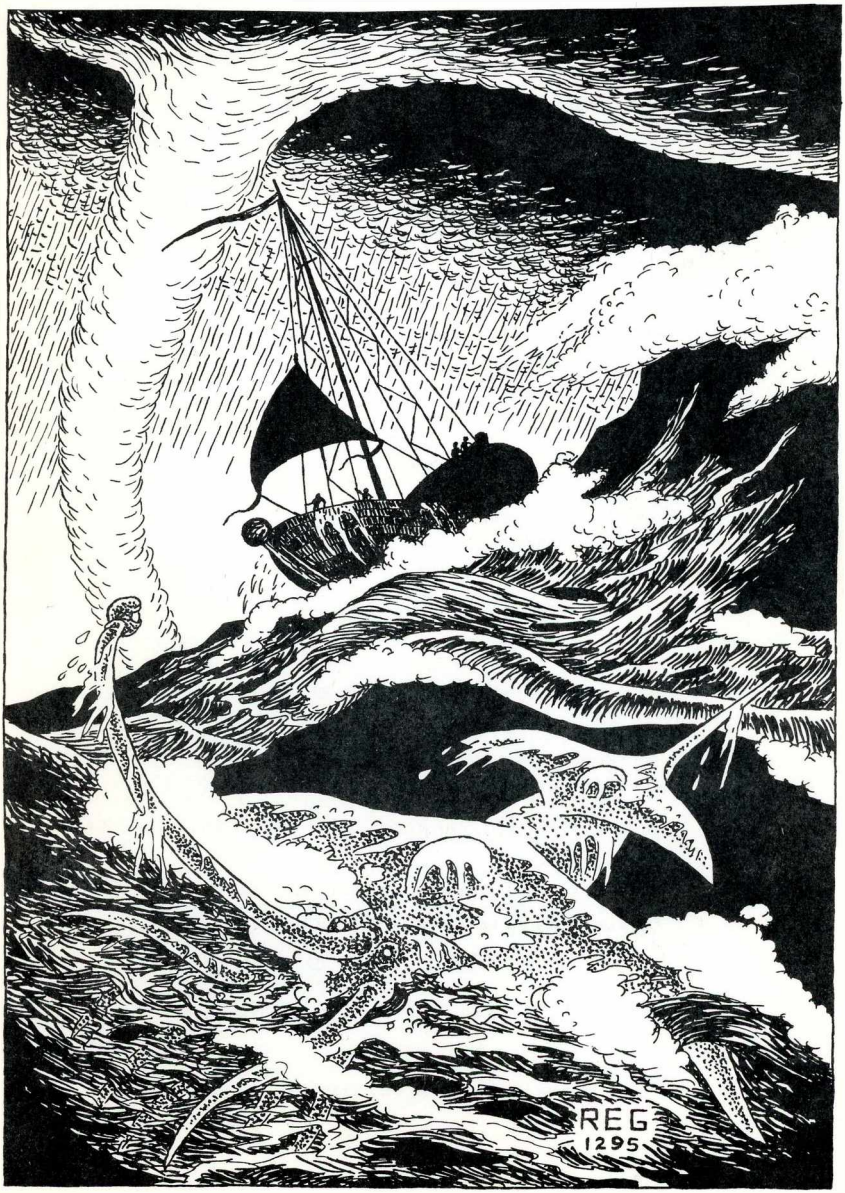

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Editor: Leland Sapiro Associate Editor: Jim Harmon

Poetry Editor: David Lunde

Assistant Editors: Redd Boggs Bill Blackbeard Jon White

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RQ MISCELLANY

MORE TRASH FROM "MAD"

The remarks (p. 296) on insanity bring to mind a U.S. television show, The Invaders, whose popularity can be explained only by assuming that its subject--extra-terrestrials disguised as humans--corresponds to the paranoid fantasies of its audience. (Compare U.S. paranoia concerning the International Communist Conspiracy.) See, for example, the titles in the Award Book Series: Flying Saucers are Hostile, The Flying Saucer Menace, etc. Their latest issue, The Allende Letters, reports on a trio of mysterious strangers, who warn "ufologists" to stop their investigations. "Three Men in Black" designates an article by Brad Steiger and Joan Whritenour, while another team writes: "Men--or beings--dressed in black, driving black cars, are terrorizing UFO witnesses and investigators into silence!" (Robert Stiff and Jerome Clark, "The Silencers Are At Work; 18). But I'm anxiously awaiting a visit from these black-clad beings in order to tell them my own theory: that the UFO's actually are cardboard dinner-plates, tossed into the air by Australian Bushmen and flown across the Pacific by intelligent ants.

PIERCE DOWN THE JOHN

The essay listed under the above title in the Boskone Program Book (a reply to John Pierce's "S.F. and the Romantic Tradition") appears this issue as "Notes on S.F. and the Symbolist Tradition." Although the original title expresses more accurately my opinion of Mr. Pierce's article, I felt that the newer title gives a more precise idea of what the refutation contains.

AUSTRALIAN SCIENCE FICTION INDEX: 1925-1967

This is a mimeographed revision of the previous 1939-1962 INDEX; it contains 115 foolscap pages, with corrections plus a few additions. Listed are 73 issues of magazines, 142 paperbacks, 4 hard cover books--i.e., most of the s.f. published as such in Australia. About half is locally written; the rest is from mainly American sources. U.S. and Canadian readers can obtain this book by sending $3 to the F&SF Book Co., Box 415 Staten Island, New York 10302; others should send $3 to the Australian Science Fiction Association, Box 852, Canberra City, A.C.T.2601, Australia.

COSMOS: SCIENCE FANTASY REVIEW

In a previous RQ I ruminated about what fanzine could replace Walter Gillings' old Science-Fantasy Review, but now such speculations are unnecessary, since Gillings himself has resurrected his magazine under the title listed here (6 issues, 12/- (U.S. and Canada, $2.25), 115 Wanstead Park Rd., Ilford, Essex, England). The very first Cosmos does not attain the quality of the best SFR, but then neither did the very first SFR. In any case, the familiar names--Tom Sheridan, John Carnell, etc.--are all here.

(continued on page 322)

TARZAN AND RIMA, THE MYTH AND THE MESSAGE

by

Tom Henighan

(Carleton University)

Toward the end of the nineteenth century, the advanced Western technological societies began to feel some of the strains that were eventually to reach a climax in the outburst of the 1914-18 war. Among this vast complex of changes, one specific area of crisis which may conveniently be isolated is the relationship between city and country. In England and the United States, in France and Germany, there was an accelerated growth of urban populations and a breaking up of the old agricultural order.[1] Though the first birth pains of what Lewis Mumford has ironically dubbed the "palaeotechnic paradise" of the modern industrial city were over, at least in England, "the archetypal industrial town nevertheless left deep wounds in the environment; and some of its worst features have remained in existence, only superficially improved by neotechnic means."[2] During the years under consideration more and more people were being drawn into the urban vortex Mumford describes. As G.M. Trevelyan observed:

> The close of the reign and the end of the century saw the so-called "feudal" society of the countryside still in being, but under changing conditions indicative of the advance of democracy even in rural England, and the penetration of village life by forces and ideas from the cities. In the following generation, with the coming of motor transport, the intrusion of urban life upon the rural parts became a flood, turning all England into a suburb.[3]

In the States, whereas only fifteen percent of the population had lived in cities in 1850, by 1900 the figure had risen to thirty-nine per cent (Davidson, op. cit., 103). And what Trevelyan writes of the new English urban masses was true for their American counterparts as well:

> To millions the divorce from nature was absolute, and so too was the divorce from all dignity and beauty and significance in the wilderness of mean streets in which they were bred, whether in the well-to-do suburb or slum.
>
> (ibid., 217)

The growth of an elaborately artificial and luxurious urban culture in England and America is paralleled during this pre-World War I period by an increasing resistance to the city and its lush blandishments. Literature and art began to express not only a revolt against urban bourgeois life -- that was already a fact during most of the nineteenth century -- but a positive demand for a return to the natural world that was rapidly being exterminated. In England, Hardy, D. H. Lawrence, E. M. Forster, and others make the conflict of rural and urban a central part of their work, with a strong bias in favour of the rural, while in the States and Europe, writers like Willa Cather, Knut Hamsun, and Johan Bojer express the glories of the vanishing frontiers. In European painting the general influence of primitivism; the celebration of the natural world in impressionism; and the creation in post-impressionism and German expressionism of simplified natural symbols which "annihilate the reality that oppresses the artist"[4] are obvious analogies. In everyday recreations too, the tension of the city and country is reflected; it is during this time that the wide popularity of sunbathing and nudism occurs, and, as Mircea Eliade has shown, such activities express in a secular vehicle the felt need to return to a paradisal unity in which man is at one with nature.[5]

It is against this background that one can understand the popularity of Green Mansions by W. H. Hudson and Tarzan of the Apes by Edgar Rice Burroughs. These works, more successfully than any others in our Anglo-American literature of the period, crystallise the longings of urban man for the primitive, the natural,[6] the animal self. Written within ten years of each other at the height of the final urban transformation of Western society, they are expressions of personal longings, which, in the mysterious chemistry of the literary symbol, have taken on the quality of myth. Greater writers have been servants of the credo of the moral triumph of a return to nature and the natural -- Tolstoy and the Hemingway of "Big Two-Hearted River" -- but only Hudson and Burroughs have won the kind of popularity that is reflected in the commissioning of statues[7] and of television serials and the publication of a seemingly endless stream of reprints.

Green Mansions, which Hudson had been working on for a long time, appeared in 1904. By then, Hudson had been living in London for thirty years, for twenty-seven of them married to Emily Wingrave, "a slight, gentle little woman, twenty years older than himself."[8] As a boy, of course, he had experienced the almost limitless freedom of the pampas, wonderfully described in his autobiography Far Away and Long Ago, and as a young man he had roamed South America. After his marriage, poverty held him on close rein; he and his wife eked out a living running a boarding house, but even later, when money finally came, some psychological quirk seems to have kept him in London. Robert Hamilton comments that

It is impossible to conceive of any greater incongruity than this naturalist visionary cooped up in such a place as No. 40, St. Luke's Road, Bayswater. It is not too bad a place as suburban houses go --I know it well, and used to pass it every day at one time, and have been inside; but for Hudson it must have been a cage. The mystery is why he chose to live there when he could have lived where he liked. In the later years of his life he had a Civil List pension which, together with the sales of his books--especially Green Mansions in America--brought him in a small but steady income; and the house at Bayswater could have been sold for quite a reasonable sum. (ibid., 44)

It may be difficult to explain why Hudson remained in the midst of the urban world he had spiritually rejected, but it is not difficult to see why a book like Green Mansions should emerge from such a situation. In so far as it is a poem in celebration of a natural Eden centred around the figure of Rima, bird-girl and goddess, it is an expression of the longing for an ideal glimpsed in various ways by Hudson the visionary but pathetically absent from his everyday life.

When Edgar Rice Burroughs wrote Tarzan of the Apes in 1911-12, he was living in Chicago and working as a department manager for a business publication.[9] Burroughs was advancing into middle age and must have many times faced the fact of his being (apparently) permanently mired in the lower ranks of the economic war, his days of romance far behind him. Earlier, according to his own story, he had been in the 7th U.S. Cavalry, and had "chased Apaches but never caught up with them" (ibid., 8). He had also been a cowpuncher in the west. It is not difficult to agree with Richard Lupoff that Tarzan of the Apes has its origin, partially, as a kind of day-dream. Again, urban entrapment seems to have triggered the creation of a poetic figure who in most ways negates the artificial on behalf of a reasserted naturalism.

Let us begin with a statement of the obvious: both Green Mansions and Tarzan of the Apes are badly written. What does this mean? First of all, it does not mean that either book is a bad book, or a failure. In calling the books badly written I am trying to express the fact that in neither of them is language subjected to the kind of shaping process that results in the creation of complex, revelatory experience. In both books the language controls the writer; not the other way around.[10] I should like to give two examples, first from Green Mansions. Here is Abel reflecting on the death of Rima:

> "Did you know, beloved, at the last in that intolerable heat, in that moment of supreme anguish, that he is unlistening, unhelpful as the stars, that you cried not to him? To me was your cry; but your poor, frail fellow-creature was not there to save, or, failing that, to cast himself into the flames and perish with you, hating God."
>
> Thus in my insufferable pain, I spoke aloud; alone in that solitary place, a bleeding fugitive in the dark night. Looking up at the stars, I cursed the Author of my being and called on Him to take back the abhorred gift of life.[11]

This, at one of the high points of emotional intensity in the book, is a completely conventional language of cliché and rhetorical appeal; it has the worst kind of staginess, and is without originality or freshness. It dissipates rather than focussing the pathos it evokes.

Burroughs is even less in control of his language than Hudson. Tarzan of the Apes is riddled with cliché and stock phrase. Here, for example, is a curious sentence full of the worst kind of clichés and in its freight-train method of composition (just hook one phrase to another) a good example of Burroughs's lack of rhythmic sense:

> From this primitive function has arisen, unquestionably, all the forms and ceremonials of modern church and state, for through all the countless ages, back beyond the last, uttermost ramparts of a dawning humanity our fierce, hairy forebears danced out the rites of the Dum-Dum to the sound of their earthen drums, beneath the bright light of a tropical moon in the depth of a mighty jungle which stands unchanged today as it stood on that long forgotten night in the dim, unthinkable vistas of the long dead past when our first shaggy ancestor swung from a swaying bough and dropped lightly upon the soft turf of the first meeting place.[12]

If both books are badly written, in that their language generally breaks down, they have compensating narrative virtues. Hudson is able to control his overblown rhetoric in most of the descriptive passages and conveys the atmosphere of Rima's Eden-like wood with sure power, while Burroughs keeps his narrative moving at a brisk pace. Even if we allow for these and other skills, however, the final effect of either story seems to add up to a great deal more than the sum of its parts. The reason for this, I believe, is that each book creates a central figure in whom the ideal unity of being to which we aspire is captured, a figure in whom we can see our fractured sensibilities joined, and the natural self crushed by our age restored. C.S. Lewis points out somewhere that it doesn't really matter in what form a myth appears, for it isn't so much the language we remember as the central images or story. Those of us who have to read Beatrix Potter's Peter Rabbit to our children will testify that it is no masterpiece of prose; yet it never palls, for after all --as Malcolm Lowry realised -- it is the story of our lives.

Rima, the bird-girl, whom Abel Guevez de Argensola meets on his wanderings following the failure of a revolution and his fruitless search for gold, lives in a magic wood (28-30). Although she is surrounded by Indians who are engaged in a Darwinian struggle for existence, Rima's awesome character as "daughter of the Didi" keeps them from carrying their hunting into the wood.

There, in that sacral space, the truce of nature exists. No animals are killed and even Nuflo, Rima's foster father, though he secretly eats meat, does it only outside of the guarded precincts (117-9). Dressed in airy spider-webs, with a voice that enchants Abel even before he sees her, Rima sums up in her person the union of mental and physical qualities that civilised men have lost:

> What inner or mind life could such a one have more than that of any wild animal existing in the same conditions? Yet looking at her face it was not possible to doubt its intelligence. This union in her of two opposite qualities, which, with us, cannot or do not exist together, although so novel, yet struck me as the girl's principal charm. Why had Nature not done this before--why in all others does the brightness of the mind dim that beautiful physical brightness which the wild animals have? (p. 80)

It is significant that Abel here laments the fact of Rima's singularity. For as Hudson makes clear, Rima is truly one of a kind, a species of her own, like the mysterious Hata flower, of which only one exists in the world. Again and again we are made to feel Rima's loneliness: her language is understood by no one (148, 217, 230); her mother has vanished forever (232); she is surrounded by enemies. Abel's attempt at communion with this being whom he loves takes the feeble form of a resolution not to eat flesh (238), but this is hardly adequate, and by that time Rima is already on her way to destruction by the savages. Though Abel has sworn to give up the corrupt civilisation of Caracas in order to settle forever in the Eden-wood (125), it is his interference which destroys the Indians' superstitious reverence for Rima, and ultimately causes her destruction. Hudson's message is clear: something of the essence of this perfect union of mental and physical qualities has been lost forever; man cannot return to complete union with nature.

Green Mansions, although it evokes an image of perfection in Rima, is really the story of a man coming to terms with the Darwinian world of struggle and change. The movement of the book is from bliss, to despair, to resignation. The Indians break across the magic circle of the wood, and Abel has to face his loss. Although nearly driven to suicide, he comes to accept the fact that nature is not a guarantor of personal bliss, but a true mirror in which man, if "self-forgiven" and "self-absolved" can find his own inner peace reflected (296-7). This development closely parallels Hudson's own life experience, for he moved from a childhood sense of the perennial beauty of all things to a later acceptance of evolutionary change which would destroy the beautiful along with everything else.

One of the keys to the strange dichotomy of Green Mansions is the question of sexuality. Abel falls in love with Rima in her character of daughter of the Didi, but finds that she is also a simple peasant girl, who is quite susceptible to his wooing. Nothing serious comes of this, however, and Abel is haunted after Rima's death by the vision of a snake with obvious phallic overtones. Here is the old Christian conflict between spirit and nature. Abel cannot mate with Rima unless he is willing to share her paradise of "natural bliss" but his Christian conscience, or rather Hudson's, balks at anything beyond flowery language until it is too late. Sexuality cannot be introduced into paradise without destroying it,[13] --at least so Hudson felt when he constructed his own utopia.

Later, he specifically decided that "the ending of passion and strife is the beginning of decay; this is the hardest lesson we can learn without losing love and bidding goodbye to hope."[14] Abel cannot possess both Rima and paradise, yet one is bound to the other. By making the conflict between the paradisal-utopian realm and the realm of Darwinian struggle the centre of his narrative, Hudson creates a moving drama in which Abel's acceptance of the reality of suffering is seen to be ultimately more heroic than his former desire for static bliss.

The figure of Tarzan exhibits the same compelling force of unity as does that of Rima. Like Rima, Tarzan is a perfect combination of mental and physical qualities, and represents a wholeness that has been lost to modern man. "His straight and perfect figure, muscled as the best of the ancient Roman gladiators must have been muscled, and yet with the soft and sinuous curves of a Greek god, told at a glance the wondrous combination of enormous strength with suppleness and speed. A personification, was Tarzan of the Apes, of the primitive man, the hunter, the warrior" (30). Raised above the apes by "--that little spark which spells the whole vast difference between man and brute--Reason," Tarzan has retained the powers of senses atrophied in his civilised fellows, since "from early infancy his survival had depended upon acuteness of eyesight, hearing, smell, touch, and taste far more than upon the more slowly developed organ of reason" (86, 140). Burroughs decorates his heroic conception with mythological references: like Siegfried, Tarzan knows no fear (73); like Odin, he bears a scar (89); when he and Jane sleep in the forest the sword of Tristan lies between them (153). Through the eyes of Jane, Tarzan seems "...a perfect creature! There could be naught of cruelty or baseness beneath that godlike exterior. Never, she thought, had such a man strode the earth since God created the first in his own image" (148). Later, we learn that Jane finds Tarzan so appealing just because he is so unlike the civilised men she has known -- he brings out the primeval woman in her (217), apparently because he retains the physical splendour other men have lost, while exhibiting as well an intellectual capacity equal to or better than theirs.

Although at one point Burroughs creates an Eden-image similar to the one called forth by Hudson's forest (153), it would be a mistake to see Tarzan of the Apes as simply another version of the paradisal myth. On the contrary, while Hudson moves from the paradisal to the Darwinian, Burroughs maintains the image of Darwinian nature throughout his narrative.

The struggle for existence begins on the ship carrying John Clayton to Africa (16), continues as he is thrust into the position of man's primitive forebears (21), and not only underlies the whole story of Tarzan himself, but through Burroughs's clever plot-making is seen to exist just as fiercely in civilised society as it does in the jungle (e.g., in the competition over Jane, in the treasure hunts). Although the most obvious example of the book's popular Darwinism is in the description of the rites of the Dum-Dum (51-6), the skill with which Burroughs implicates all kinds and conditions of men in the unceasing struggle for dominance is one of the book's outstanding achievements.

Amid such struggle and brutality, however, Tarzan himself retains his godlike integrity. Burroughs shows him as physically and morally superior to his surroundings. While one of his relatives mumbles in the House of Lords, Tarzan's mighty cry shakes the jungle (79). When a party of Frenchmen ask Tarzan, whom they think to be boasting, why he does not kill a lion, if he can, he replies simply: "I am not hungry" (195). What Burroughs is exalting here, therefore, is (in the terminology of Lovejoy and Boas) "hard primitivism."[15] The difficult life of Tarzan in the jungle has given him a voice which must be heard and a moral clear-sightedness which takes him through the harshest trials untainted.

At the same time, it is clear that Burroughs felt unable simply to confer upon Tarzan the qualities mentioned, leaving the mystery of his perfection unexplained. The Darwinian sense of challenge producing response is in the background, but there is another factor. As a writer of his age in a popular vein, and due no doubt to his own honest convictions, Burroughs provides an "explanation" for Tarzan's superiority in the fact of his noble English ancestry. This connects Tarzan with other heroes in the popular literature of the time, notably Raffles, who, as George Orwell has shown, embodies the homage mass writers then felt called upon to pay to the English upper classes.[16] The kind of assumption present in the Tarzan books is summed up in a little scene from Beau Geste by Percival Wren, in which it is observed (approvingly) that people of similar social classes cluster together instinctively and despite national difference, a passage so shocking to my democratic sensibilities at age fourteen that I have never forgotten it. Though snobbery certainly plays a part in accounting for Tarzan's superiority (for I can hardly believe that Burroughs means us to extend our sense of Darwinian struggle producing the fittest to the House of Lords), it does not obtrude sufficiently to tarnish the mythic coinage -- Tarzan appears in all his splendour, and we are convinced. The explanations become unimportant.

It seems to me that the curious sexual tone of the book derives from a similar cause. Sexuality is certainly present, not only in the obvious passages between Tarzan and Jane, but in the sado-masochistic "killings" in the jungle; yet the book is a model of middle-class morality. Again, Burroughs was no doubt honestly reflecting his own beliefs, and at the same time producing the only kind of sexual tone acceptable to his audience.[17] The fact that Tarzan of the Apes was written as popular literature, while Hudson's book only became popular explains the more puzzling mixture of the personal and the conventional in the former.

Both Tarzan and Rima, then, are coinages of the central myth of recovered integrity, images that have reminded our fractured age of the possibility for men of mental and physical development in the highest combination. While Rima is the last member of a mysterious lost race, Tarzan is an example of heredity "telling" once it has been launched in a new and challenging environment. Both Rima and Tarzan are absolutely at home in nature and speak the language of the animals with whom they live; both are notable for their vocal powers, the one beautifully musical, the other terrifying in its wild ferocity. While Tarzan is a creation of the "hard" primitivism of challenge, Rima is born of the "soft" primitivism of Eden, and is destroyed once she considers leaving it. Tarzan is the ultimate masculine image, man the hunter and fighter, whose technological superiority (his knife) enables him to win out, while Rima is the feminine nature goddess, surrounding herself with protective tabus, yet capable of being approached through ideal love.

In each of these images we see a sustained tension between the desire for the ideal possibility and the knowledge of reality.[18] Hudson was forced to admit that the world of Darwinian struggle would probably break in and destroy any such figure as Rima; man's ideal of wholeness had to be adjusted to fact as well as to dream, and his triumph was ultimately a matter of inner struggle. Burroughs shows Tarzan as swinging uneasily between the poles of civilised communication and jungle freedom -- not because Tarzan himself has any real inner conflict -- but because of the necessity for his being a true image of the age. Both Hudson and Burroughs realised that modern civilisation and the scientific conception of nature had made any complete return to the animal self impossible. Yet each was driven by inner need to create a figure in whom the unity we have foregone is present, though constantly qualified by a sense of reality creating tensions around this unity. Our urban industrial world had to be reminded that it was paying a price for its technological triumphs, that something profoundly important to humanity was being lost in the process of technological insulation from growing nature and the human sense factors responsive to it.

What has happened to both Rima and Tarzan is significant. Readers have chosen to ignore the qualifications and the tensions implicit in the narratives of Hudson and Burroughs and have created for themselves mythical Tarzans and Rimas -- perfect images of wholeness to whom they respond with a boundless affiliation and with a marked disregard for the original texts. This is a striking phenomenon, but it is a subject for sociological rather than literary analysis. What is certain is that if the pressures on man to abandon or forget his animal self become stronger, and every day more irresistible -- as seems likely -- such myths of wholeness will resound in each of us with ever more potent force.

FOOTNOTES

1) See David Thomson, Europe Since Napoleon (Pelican Books, 1966), 251-1; Marshall B. Davidson, Life in America (Boston, 1951), II, 102.

2) Lewis Mumford, The City in History (Pelican Books, 1966), 545.

3) Illustrated English Social History (Pelican Books, 1964), IV, 213.

4) B.S. Myers, The German Expressionists: A Generation in Revolt (New York, n.d.), 11.

5) The Sacred and the Profane (New York, 1961), 135, 207.

6) Since Green Mansions was apparently still incomplete during the interval 1901-3, less than a decade separates Hudson's book from Tarzan of the Apes, which was started in December, 1911.

7) I refer, of course, to Jacob Epstein's statue of Rima in Hyde Park.

8) Robert Hamilton, W.H. Hudson, The Vision of Earth (London, 1946), 42.

9) Richard A. Lupoff, Edgar Rice Burroughs: Master of Adventure (New York, 1965), 152.

10) This conception of the language controlling the writer is from Alfred Liede's Dichtung als Spiel. See the review of that work in "The Times Literary Supplement," April 22, 1965, pp. 301-3.

11) Green Mansions (Bantam Pathfinder Edition, New York, 1965), 263-4. The introduction by Carlos Baker, one of the best statements on Green Mansions, also mentions a possible connexion with Burroughs. See p. xii.

12) Quotations are from the Ballantine Books Edition, New York, 1966, in this case pp. 51-2. Although Burroughs texts vary, my arguments here do not depend on the apparently slight variations from text to text. I am restricting my observations to Tarzan of the Apes because that book presents the Tarzan story in practically all its essentials. I agree with Lupoff that the first two Tarzan books form a unity, and that the series should logically end there, but I consider that The Return of Tarzan adds only one key fact to the myth, namely, the marriage to Jane. See below, note 17.

13) See W.H. Hudson, A Crystal Age (London, 1887).

14) See Hudson's preface, written in 1906, to the second edition of A Crystal Age (New York, 1916).

15) A.O. Lovejoy and G. Boas, Contributions to the History of Primitivism, "Primitivism and Related Ideas in Antiquity" (Baltimore, 1935), 10.

16) George Orwell, "Raffles and Miss Blandish," Decline of the English Murder and Other Essays (Penguin Books, 1965).

FOOTNOTES (continued)

17) This probably explains Tarzan's marriage to Jane, too, in which the good primitive life (enhanced by a good many creature comforts imported from England) becomes officially monogamous. But speculation along these lines would ultimately require us to take Tarzan seriously as a character, which I find impossible to do. The reason Burroughs ran into increasing difficulty with the series is that Tarzan is neither a character like Tolstoy's Levin, a consciousness subject to growth and change, nor is he, like Odysseus, a more generalised figure, rendered human by specific incidents full of poetry and pathos, and set in a world of tragic suffering. Tarzan is mythic, sometimes comic, but ultimately a figure of fantasy--real suffering does not exist in his world.

18) Because Hudson does not rest in myth and develops the sense of Darwinian reality in terms of his main character--not shielding him from the impact of the experience, as Burroughs shields Tarzan--I would argue that Green Mansions is the more profound statement of the two.

NOTES ON SCIENCE FICTION AND THE SYMBOLIST TRADITION

by

Yogi Borel

(Sam Houston Institute of Technology)

Received last month was a bulky document by one John Jeremy Pierce, who wants to register his dislike for the New Thing in science-fiction.[1] After denouncing "Naturalism," which he sees as today's dominant literary mode, Mr. Pierce warns us about the "pernicious influence" of avant garde "Literateurs." This group, it seems, wants s.f. to be fused into "Mainstream" (there, presumably, to be contaminated by "Naturalism"), and so we are admonished "to save the genre before it is too late" (12).

Mr. Pierce's discussion is virtually a catalogue of critical cliches on modern writing: that it is incoherent, being merely "words...strung together at random," that it is devoted to "piddling little experiments...in technique," that it is excessively concerned with "neurotics," i.e., "...frustrates, jerks, homosexuals...,"[2] and that it exists only through its endorsement by a "self-idolatory clique of Literateurs" (3).

Generally, these arguments (of which the first two are mutually inconsistent) need no detailed refutation. For example, any "literateur" who hears about neurotic behavior in the New Writing will recall its continual presence in the Old, from the deceitfulness of Jacob to the self-delusionment of Emma Bovary and the monomania of Captain Ahab--plus the murderously psychopathic behavior described by Poe and Dostoevski. This complaint, then, we can dismiss at once, since at their worst our modern "neurotics" only emulate their literary forebears.

However, Mr. Pierce repeats not just the cliches on general contemporary literature, but also those relevant to its subfield of s.f.--nor does he omit complaints about its vanishing "sense of wonder." In particular, there is Jim Ballard, "uncrowned king of the New Thing" (29) and "prophet of anti-reason and anti-science" (31). In Mr. Ballard's novels, we learn, the "dissolving hero" does not fight disaster but accepts it -- as in The Crystal World, where he "wants to achieve the perfect immobility...of a crystal!"(36).

Here Mr. Pierce's criticism is irrelevant and incomplete. No person in the story needs to seek immobility, which is to be everybody's final state--the result of a galaxy-wide process explained by analogy to the crystallisation from a super-saturated liquid. Also, there is no explanation why the story's general theme, the sacrifice of individual to group identity, has preoccupied mystics of many centuries--with this "mystic" category including writers of the older s.f. that our critic tacitly approves. Thus Clifton Kruse's "Fractional Ego" (Astounding Stories, Feb.'37) depicts a scientist being absorbed into the great sea of "universal consciousness," while Donald Wandrei's "Earth Minus"(Astounding Stories, Sept., '37) shows a "horrible communion" of literally everything on earth.[3]

One might object that these writers show no personal inclination for such union, but this cannot be said for Robert Heinlein --a writer endorsed and quoted repeatedly in the essay[4] --whose Stranger in a Strange Land specifically extols it:

> Grok means to understand so thoroughly that the observer becomes a part of the observed--to merge, blend, intermarry, lose identity in a group experience. (204)

As a science-fiction story, "Stranger" exemplifies the same irrationality attributed to Jim Ballard. E.G., its notion of each "believer" eventually going to his own Christian or Muslim or Martian heaven is not just unscientific but senseless.

But there are more surprises, since our critic not only discusses illogical thinking; he exemplifies it, relative to Cyril Kornbluth. This writer once commented unfavourably on Edward E. Smith, whose only crime was "...that fans enjoyed...his stories" (34). But Kornbluth, our critic agrees, also was enjoyed, so his criticism of Dr. Smith is termed "not consistent"--the inconsistency, I take it, being that Kornbluth wrote enjoyable stories and yet criticised another writer who did the same.

However, if Kornbluth hadn't been popular, he could have been called incapable of judging an author who was--so he is damned either way, as inconsistent or incompetent. With respect to Kornbluth, then, we infer that his only crime was to deride E.E. Smith, whom our essayist considers as the apostle of Romanticism in modern s.f. For, a protagonist of Dr. Smith exhibits that "rational nobility" characteristic of romantic heroes, and thus confirms Mr. Pierce's own opinion that literature ought "to project human ideals and aspirations" (9).

The difficulty is that a Smithian epic-quest contains no recognisable human beings:

> The characterization of romance...means that subtlety and complexity are not much favored. Characters tend to be either for or against the quest. If they assist it they are idealized as simply gallant or pure; if they obstruct it they are caricatured as simply villainous or cowardly. Hence every typical character in romance tends to have his moral opposite confronting him, like black and white pieces in a chess game. 5

The Romance of Dr. Smith leads to our critic's positive recommendation: that science fiction recover its "traditional Romanticist orientation" (19).

Relative to English literature the original Romantics (in the word's narrowest sense) were the Lake poets (Coleridge, Wordsworth, etc.), but the general concept of Romanticism[6] is still the subject of debate.[7] For brevity let's understand by Romanticism (which Mr. Pierce confuses with the Romance or chivalric epic) a literature of the Self, an emphasis on the writer's own sensibilities and emotions. (We also can say that a Romantic writer reaffirms the "organic" viewpoint, as opposed to the mechanical (Newtonian) view, since the inhabitants of a clockwork universe reputedly have no emotions.)

But there was distortion and sentimentality entailed by this inward gaze, so Romanticism, in its turn was partially displaced by Naturalism.[8] Representative of this particular school (and most accurate commentary on its predecessor) was Flaubert's Emma Bovary, whose distaste for rural life was nurtured by her literary diet of "romance" in distant lands.

Mr. Pierce thinks that Naturalism still prevails, an opinion that makes him almost unique.[9] Actually, the present century has seen a "change from the exterior to the interior world...due..." to a general dissatisfaction with the limitations of naturalism."[9] Today, there is no single dominant literary mode, but Symbolism is surely the most conspicuous aspect of our nineteenth century heritage. The original Symbolists (Mallarme, Verlaine, etc.) did not repudiate emotion, but they wished to present it indirectly and so were obliged to emphasise technique rather than sensibility. Emotions were no longer to be conveyed via the "journalistic" language of ordinary discourse, but were to be elicited through their "correspondences" to objects in the external world. In Baudelaire's famous words, "Nature is a forest of symbols..."

To the Symbolist the external world is relevant only when it corresponds to his own internal states—and here is where the New Wave writers show most clearly their Symbolist parentage. To quote an inquiry from Jim Ballard's "Delta at Sunset"—"How is nature meaningful unless she illustrates some inner experience?"

Such correspondence is the subject of Ballard's novel, The Drowned World, where the earth's atmosphere is super-heated through the activity of solar flares and the earth itself experiences a second Triassic age, with its polar caps being melted and its continents flooded. This physical regression of the earth induces a corresponding regression of the human psyche. Just as the pre-natal development of a human infant recapitulates geologic time, with the foetus passing through successive stages of evolutionary development, so the reversal of geologic time causes a human temporal reversal, as manifested in "jungle dreams" of scenes from Earth's pre-history.

But the author's "drowned world" is not only the terrestrial globe. In particular, biologist Robert Kerans finds himself reluctant to leave the inundated city of London because he is attracted, somehow, by its new oceanic contours. In his own words, "Perhaps these sunken lagoons simply remind me of my own uterine childhood." Finally, accepting "the logic of his own devolutionary descent," Kerans heads south, through the increasing rain and heat, "a second Adam searching for the forgotten paradises of the reborn sun."

Perhaps Mr. Pierce is distressed at this return to an amnionic paradise—but his own nostalgia for s.f.'s Golden Age is just a less articulate expression of this same sentiment: a desire to recapture his younger days when these "wonders" first were perceived. There is no adult reason to go back to previous decades, but only "...a measureless regret...a cloudy sense of...having been a prince, once, in some enchanted far-off land...and lord, no chance ever to go back there again."[10]

Of these regressions to the womb, therefore, I much prefer Mr. Ballard's to Mr. Pierce's.

I cannot discuss here the comic aspects of Mr. Pierce's essay—his references to the "exacting" standards of the Ayn Randites and the "human interest" of Dr. Smith's Lensman series or the inept passage (doubtless a present embarrassement to its author) that he quotes as an example of imaginative writing—nor is it necessary to discuss his other failures in evaluation and comprehension. For, despite all these, Mr. Pierce is right: the literary pretenders do form a self-idolatory clique—at whose head sits Mr. Pierce himself.

FOOTNOTES

1) "Science Fiction and the Romantic Tradition," Different, III, 3 (October 1968), 2-39.

2) The sources for these quotations (all on p.4) are given by Mr. Pierce as: L. Sprague de Camp, "Introduction," The Fantastic Swordsmen (1967); Poul Anderson, "The Critique of Impure Reason," IF (Nov., 1962); Robert Heinlein's essay in The Science Fiction Novel (1959).

3) See Leland Sapiro, "The Mystic Renaissance" (RQ II, 75-88, 156-170, 270-283) for a more complete discussion. Also see Arthur Cox, "A Matter of Identity" (RQ I, 88-109), which shows how this mergence of individual with group consciousness is expressed in Harry Bates's last s.f. story, "The Triggered Dimension," Science Fiction Plus, Dec. 1953.

4) Mr. Heinlein's stricture on "...frustrates, jerks, homosexuals..." is quoted six times, on pp. 4, 6, 7, 20, 26, 35—perhaps inadvertently the last three, since no quotation marks are used.

5) Northrup Frye's remarks (Anatomy of Criticism, 195) on The Faerie Queene apply equally to the tales of E.E. Smith.

6) See, e.g., Rene Wellek, "The Concept of Romanticism in Literary History," Concepts of Criticism (New Haven, 1963).

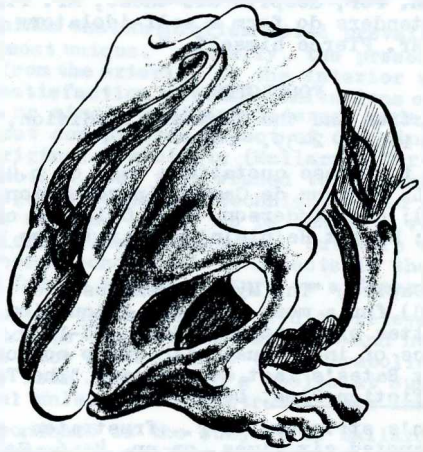
7) The terms "Naturalism" and "Realism" are used interchangably, since I didn't think the distinction especially relevant in this context.

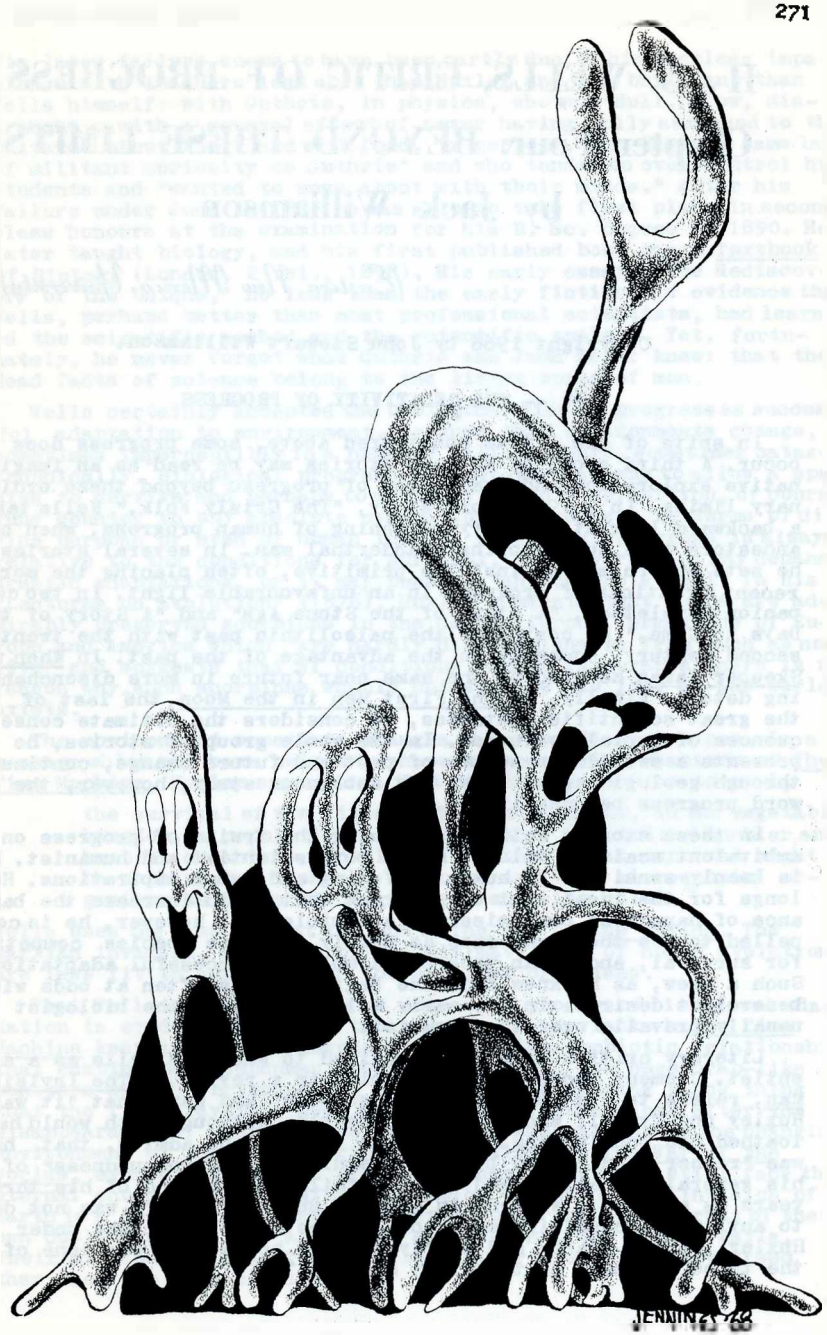
FOOTNOTES (continued)

8) Judith Merril also thinks this. See her statement that in 1951 "...'mainstream' fiction was still straitjacketed in a 'realism' left over from the certainties of nineteenth-century mechanics..." ("Introduction," SF 12 (New York: Delacorte Press; 1968), 10). Such critical naivete explains, perhaps, why her "Best" anthologies were so replete with the anti-machine sentiments that were popular in literary magazines of the 1920's.

9) Gore Vidal, "Novelists and Critics of the 1940's," Sex, Death and Money (New York: Bantam Books, 1968), 108.

10) Mark Twain, letter to William D. Howells, quoted by Tony Tanner, The Reign of Wonder (New York, 1965), 148.





H. G. WELLS, CRITIC OF PROGRESS

Chapter Four: BEYOND THESE LIMITS

by Jack Williamson

(Eastern New Mexico University)

#1 -- THE RELATIVITY OF PROGRESS

In spite of the limits considered above, some progress does occur. A third group of Wells's stories may be read as an imaginative exploration and evaluation of progress beyond these ordinary limits. In a 1921 short story, "The Grisly Folk," Wells takes a backward look at the very beginning of human progress, when our ancestors were outstripping Neanderthal man. In several stories he sets modern man against the primitive, often placing the more recent creations of progress in an unfavourable light. In two companion novelettes, "A Story of the Stone Age" and "A Story of the Days to Come," he contrasts the paleolithic past with the twenty-second century, somewhat to the advantage of the past. In When the Sleeper Wakes he studies the same near future in more disenchanting detail. Finally, in The First Men in the Moon, the last of the great scientific fantasies, he considers the ultimate consequences of social evolution. In the whole group of stories, he presents a sweeping panorama of past and future change, continued through geologic ages. Under his ambiguous study, however, the word progress becomes ironic.

In these stories Wells is weighing the fruits of progress on an ambivalent scale of values. He is both scientist and humanist. He is keenly sensitive to human suffering and human aspirations. He longs for the ideal sort of progress that would increase the balance of happiness over misery. As a biologist, however, he is compelled to see the human race as merely one more species competing for survival, and human progress simply as successful adaptation. Such a view, as he knew from the beginning, is often at odds with benevolent desires. In the early Wells at least, the biologist usually prevails over the humanist.

Literary critics have been inclined to sneer at Wells as a scientist. Clement Shorter, for example, in a review of The Invisible Man, refers to his "smattering of science" and says that "it was Huxley and Tyndall who made him possible, although both would have loathed his conclusions."[1] It is true, as he admits, that he was "rather handicapped by the irregularity and unsoundness" of his general education, and that he failed at the end of his three years as a science student in London. But the failure was not due to any intellectual incompetence. At the end of his year under Huxley, though shabby and poorly fed and housed, he was "one of the three who made up the first class."[2]

His later failure seems to have been partly due to his restless impatience with teachers less able than Huxley and less brilliant than Wells himself: with Guthrie, in physics, who was "dull, slow, distraught...with a general effect of never having fully awakened to the universe about him," and with Judd, in geology, who "had the same lack of militant curiosity as Guthrie" and who tended to over-control his students and "wanted to mess about with their minds." After his failure under Judd in 1887 he was able to take first place in second class honours at the examination for his B. Sc. degree in 1890. He later taught biology, and his first published book was a Textbook of Biology (London, 2 vol., 1898). His early essay, "The Rediscovery of the Unique," no less than the early fiction, is evidence that Wells, perhaps better than most professional scientists, had learned the scientific method and the scientific outlook. Yet, fortunately, he never forgot what Guthrie and Judd never knew: that the dead facts of science belong to the living world of men.

Wells certainly accepted the biological view of progress as successful adaptation to environment. He knew that environments change, sometimes imperceptibly in a hundred million years, sometimes catastrophically. Biological progress is whatever happens to allow a species to survive and perhaps to multiply. Such a definition, of course, runs counter to any absolute evaluation of progress in terms of divine purpose or even of human ideals. Biological progress is always relative to the conditions for survival. The environment may demand drastic adaptations, or it may penalize any change at all. In his "Lectures on Evolution" (1876), Huxley comments that there are admirably preserved scorpions in the Carboniferous formations of Europe and America which "are hardly distinguishable from such as now live" and suggests that if conditions remain favourable there is no reason why such scorpions whould not survive "as long as the world exists."[3]

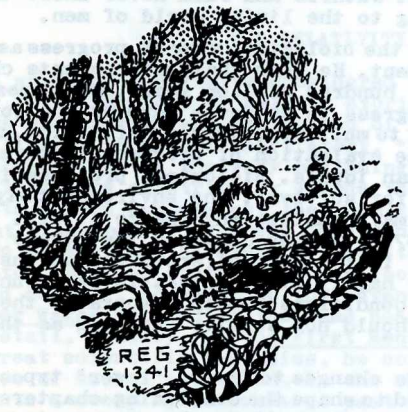
The environment sometimes changes to favour "lower" types. In a passage which may have helped to shape the concluding chapters of The Time Machine, Huxley speculates that, if our planet were to cool,

> the survival of the fittest might bring about, in the vegetable kingdom, a population of more and more stunted and humbler and humbler organisms, until the "fittest" that survived might be nothing but lichens, diatoms, and such microscopic organisms as those which give red snow its color.[4]

Wells uses the same idea at the end of The War of the Worlds. The Martian invaders, symbolic of the ultimate peak of human evolution, are less fit to survive than the simplest organisms.

That Wells saw progress as an unceasing process of biological adaptation is evident from these two novels. The Morlocks in The Time Machine keep and eat the degenerate Eloi, in a symbiotic relationship that enables both subhuman species to survive. The huge crab-like monsters and the bright-green lichen and the hopping black thing that the Time Traveller sees in the remote future, long after the disappearance of mankind, are successful adaptations to the changing environment of the dying earth. The Martians in The War of the Worlds, even at the summit of evolutionary progress, still face the eternal choice of successful adaptation or death. The invasion of Earth is a desperate attempt to meet the environmental threat of their own cooling world. For all their advancement, the effort fails. Their millions of years of intellectual progress have not freed them from the laws of biology.

Considering the possibility of a kind of progress closer to the human ideal in "Evolution and Ethics" and its "Prolegomena" (1894), Huxley discusses the "ethical process" as "the gradual strengthening of the social bond" which lends to cooperation instead of ruthless competition within each social unit (ibid.,35). He states optimistically that "much may be done to change the nature of man himself" (ibid., 85). But "cosmic nature is no school of virtue" and even in society men remain subject to the cosmic process, which is opposed to goodness and virtue. So far as the ethical bond is an evolutionary adaptation which makes the social unit fitter to survive, it too depends upon environment; it is just as relative and temporary and pragmatic as any other mark of progress. With the same ultimate pessimism that haunted the early Wells, Huxley wrote:



> The theory of evolution envourages no millenial anticipations. If, for millions of years, our globe has taken the upward road, yet, some time, the summit will be reached and the downward route will be commenced. The most daring imagination will hardly venture the suggestion that the power and the intelligence of man can ever arrest the procession of the great year.
>
> (ibid., 85)

The direction of biological progress--that is, the kind of adaptation that has favoured survival--has generally been toward greater specialisation. In the physical evolution of such "higher" forms as mammals from the first simple organisms, specialisation of the cells created new tissues and organs and functions. In the social evolution of mankind, a similar specialisation of the individual has created the functional units of society. The family, the basic social unit, was not built upon sex or even upon love, in the opinion of contemporary anthropologists; it was a device for the division of labour between men and women, a social step beyond the physical specialisation of sex. "The men typically hunt and make weapons; the women gather wild plants and take care of the home and the children." Wells considers the ultimate results of specialisation in The First Men in the Moon.

This kind of progress has a long record of success, all the way from the first multicellular creature to the modern industrial assembly line, but it has been expensive. The simplest living things are normally immortal, fissioning instead of dying; having no specialised senses, they can hardly experience pain. The "higher" organisms are still paying for their physical progress with suffering and death, and for their social progress with the painful suppression of the individual self. Wells reveals in The First Men in the Moon, more clearly perhaps than anywhere else, his feeling that these costs of progress are intolerably high.

Such was Wells's dilemma. As a romantic individualist, as an enlightened liberal, he knew that the vital human values reside in the individual; he knew that society is simply a means to happiness, not an end in itself. As a realist, however, as a biological scientist, he knew that "social progress" is almost inevitably a surrender of individual rights and freedoms to a more and more powerful society. Though his deepest personal concern for that dilemma is expressed in "The Country of the Blind," the problem is explored more fully in the stories considered below.

Wells's own hopes for progress, never so completely optimistic as his critics have commonly believed, were restrained from the beginning by his realistic conviction that "progress" does not equal happiness. Evolution must continue. The individuals and the social units making the more useful variations will continue to eliminate the less successful. Beyond that pragmatic test, however, there is no absolute. Huxley confesses

> that the violator of ethical rules constantly escapes the punishment which he deserves; that the wicked flourishes like the green bay tree, while the righteous bege his bread. 6

Wells finds a dominant theme in this cautionary idea, that intellectual and technological and social progress are irrelevant or hostile to the utopian ideal of universal happiness.

#2 -- PROGRESS TO THE PRESENT

In "The Grisly Folk," published six months after The Outline of History, the later Wells glances approvingly back at the first great act of human progress. The grisly folk are Neanderthal men. The narrative, more anthropological essay than fiction, reconstructs the epic of their extermination by the fitter race. The grisly folk are pictured as mute and stupid cannibals, originals of "the legends of ogres and man-eating giants that haunt the childhood of the world." The conquerors were more highly social, taught by their women "the primary cooperation of sonship and brotherhood." They have the gift of speech. Fighting the grisly men like dogs fighting a bear, "they shouted to one another what each should do, and the Neanderthaler had no speech; he did not understand. They moved too quickly for him and fought too cunningly." The story is interesting for its glimpse of the change in Wells himself. Twenty years after The First Man in the Moon, he has buried his earlier misgivings about the nature and the value of progress. He approves this crude display of human fitness for survival without visible reservations.

The earlier Wells is more critical. His pessimistic view of the relativity of progress shapes many stories. If ethical behavior is only that which is biologically good, then ethical standards are also relative. Supporting Huxley's point that we condemn in men what survival has proved good in apes and tigers, Wells makes a comic hero of the burglar in such tales as "Mr. Ledbetter's Vacation" and "The Hammerpond Park Burglary." The criminal's revolt against society is justified with the lightly satiric argument that, since men have been degraded by civilisation, the burglar is "the only true adventurer left on earth." The same attitude recurs The History of Mr. Polly. "Arson, after all, is an artificial crime."

This same relativistic theme shapes another cluster of the short stories, in which Wells's favourite device of tossing something improbable into the everyday world takes the form of an impact between modern man as the familiar element and something primitive as the novelty. In "Aepyornis Island," the modern man is cast away on an Indian Ocean atoll with an egg which hatches into an enormous prehistoric bird. Butcher, the comic and scarcely admirable symbol of modernity, is able to survive the attacks of the primitive bird, but only through the primitive elements in his own nature and by the use of a primitive device. But Wells is writing to amuse, not to preach any doctrine. In "The Flying Man," a lighthearted tale written under the spell of Kipling, progress is allowed to triumph. A young infantry lieutenant, cornered by headhunting savages on a high mountain-ledge, escapes by improvising a parachute from a tent.

"The Lord of the Dynamos" develops the same conflict more thoughtfully, and in a tragic mood. The electrician Holroyd embodies the worst of the scientific culture. "A heavy, red-haired brute with irregular teeth," he doubts God but accepts Carnot's cycle, and has "read Shakespeare and found him weak in chemistry." He bullies his black assistant, Azumazi, who has come to London "to worship at the shrine of civilisation." The black man comes to adore a dynamo, as his father before him had adored a meteoric stone, and finally offers Holroyd to it as a sufficient sacrifice. Among many meanings, this powerful and intricately symbolic story points out that the materialistic progress that Europe has offered the rest of the world can be a very deadly gift, both to giver and receiver.

"The Treasure in the Forest" and "Pollock and the Porroh Man" are tragic melodramas in which progress is defeated by the primitive. The degenerate moderns in the first story discover too late that the murdered Chinaman has protected his buried treasure with thorns "similar to those the Dyaks poison and use in their blowing-tubes." Pollock, another symbol of corrupt modernity, is pursued out of Africa and finally driven to suicide by the primitive magic of the Porroh man.

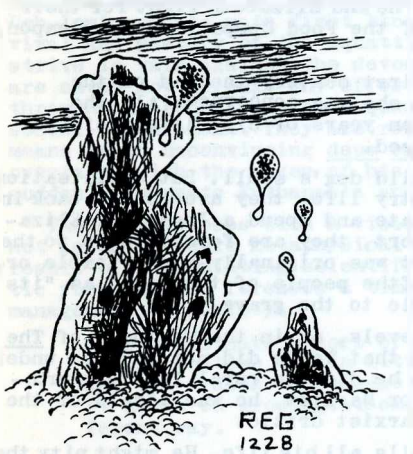
By 1903, when he wrote "The Land Ironclads," Wells displays a little more sympathy for progress. A primitive country is at war with a progressive industrial nation. The war correspondent, a figure out of Stephen Crane, believes that in civilisation, for all its suffering and injustice, there lies "something that might be the hope of the world." The story accurately forecasts the deadly stalemate of trench warfare, and the invention and tactics of the tank, a prediction of which Wells was always proud (see Exp. 583-4). The tanks defeat the primitives.

The correspondent, at the end of the story, is allowed to observe that the young men

> standing about their victorious land ironclad, drinking coffee and eating biscuits, had also in their eyes and carriage something not altogether degraded below the level of a man.

The companion novelettes, "A Story of the Stone Age" and "A Story of the Days to Come," both first published in 1897, form together a thinly fictionised survey of human progress over a span of fifty thousand years, from the invention of the axe by the first men in England to the invention of Euthanasia by their degenerate descendents at the beginning of the twenty-second century. These stories show Wells turning to the sort of thinking that produced When the Sleeper Wakes and Anticipations. They foreshadow the later Wells, more concerned with historic and prophetic speculation than with his characters. Yet his attitudes are still curiously contradictory; his approving visions of past and future advancement are often blurred by misgivings that seem to spring from a romantic primitivism.

In "A Story of the Stone Age," Wells looks somewhat wistfully back at the childhood of humanity. His cave man, Ugh-lomi, is a Promethean hero of progress, who not only makes the first axe but rides the first horse and kills the first cave bear. Yet, even though triumphant progress is the overt theme, the narrative is ambiguously flavoured with the romantic primitivism of Kipling's Jungle Books. In the beginning, when the little buff-coloured children of men are dabbling in the edge of the river, there is "no fear, no rivalry, and no enmity between them and the hippopotami." The animals are named; they think and speak. Andoo, the cave bear, greets the fatal shape of progress with the fatuous complacency of an ursine Colonel Blimp.



"I was never so startled in my life...They are the most extraordinary beasts. Attacking me!"

"I don't like them," said the she-bear...

"A feebler sort of beast I never saw. I can't think what the world is coming to. Scraggy, weedy legs... Wonder how they keep warm in winter?"

"Very likely they don't," said the she-bear.

"I suppose it's a sort of monkey gone wrong."

"It's a change," said the she-bear.

Ugh-lomi's progressive achievements merely enable him to survive; they do not threaten the stability of his somewhat idyllic world. He is only slightly less inarticulate and superstitious than his fellow savages. He destroys his enemies, rescues his abducted mate, kills a man-eating lion, and fights his way to mastery of the tribe. If, at last, he himself is "killed and eaten," it is only after he has been master for many moons and has had his will in peace. In this story, Wells's desire to celebrate the early triumphs of progress is at odds with a nostalgia for the primitive past. If these conflicting attitudes had been successfully embodied in antagonistic characters, they might have contributed dramatic form and effect. As they are, however, they merely weaken the story.

The companion novelette, "A Story of the Days to Come," begins with a satiric jab at Victorian conservatism in the person of a very proper Mr. Morris, a human Andoo, who is "one of those worthy people who take no interest in the future of mankind at all." A nearly identical descendent, in the twenty-second century, is the principal villain of the conventional melodrama in which Wells has clothed his study of the world to come: the same one described in When the Sleeper Wakes and "A Dream of Armagaddon."

Mwres, as the future Mr. Morris spells his name, is attempting to force his daughter to marry a worn-out playboy named Bindon. She and young Denton, her true love, are misplaced primitives who affect the archaic art of reading and seek escape from the commonplace wonders of their daily lives into historical romances of the fine old times of Queen Victoria the Good. When the villainous father hires a hypnotist to erase Denton from her mind, the young man rescues her and has her memory restored. Persecuted by the father and Bindon, the penniless young lovers are driven first out into the open country and then down through the class levels of the enormous city.

The escape into the vacant country is an excursion into primitivism. Denton carries a sword; he and Elizabeth fight for their lives against the savage dogs of the Food Company. For a weapon, she finds a rusting spade.

> It might have been the first century instead of the twenty-second, so far as she was concerned. All the gentleness of her eighteen years of city life vanished before this primordial need.

With the spade, she cleaves a wild dog's skull. But civilisation has left them too soft for country life; they are forced back into the city, where they anticipate and spend a legacy of Elizabeth's. As a last desperate resort, they are forced to go to the Labour Company, which, though it was originally a charitable organisation, now holds a third of the people of the world as "its serfs and debtors from the cradle to the grave."

In the people of the lower levels, as in the Morlocks of The Time Machine, there is evidence that Wells did not like or understand the urban proletariat, as he did the rural folk of southern England. Neither democrat nor Marxist, he was afraid of the common man. Bergonzi quotes a Marxist critic:

> That fear remained with Wells all his life. He might pity the workers, he might want to brighten their lives, but he could never see them as anything but a destructive force which must be led, and controlled and, if necessary, coerced. 8

As Wells saw the process of social evolution, it would tend to isolate and alienate all kinds of special groups. He shows this tendency separating the Morlocks and the Eloi in The Time Machine, and he projects it to an ultimate conclusion in The First Men in the Moon.

In only two centuries, the barriers between the upper classes and the wearers of the blue canvas have risen so high that Denton and Elizabeth, among the labour serfs, feel almost as if they were falling among inferior animals. Yet Wells sees a kind of ambiguous virtue in the primitive side of life in the depths. In a passage that recalls Jack London, Denton is befriended by one decent wearer of the blue, who beats him up at first, but later defends him from the bullies, and instructs him in self-defense.

The same kind of ambiguity is reflected in Denton's attitudes toward social progress. In an hour of depression, he sees civilisation as "a monstrous fraud...a vast lunatic growth, producing a deepening torrent of savagery below, and above ever more flimsy gentility and silly wastefulness." He perceives civilisation "as some catastrophic product as little concerned with men--save as victims--as a cyclone or a planetary collision." But this gloomy view of society is suddenly brightened when his newly learned primitive skills enable him to defeat the bully. "The idea that he was a martyr in the civilisation machine had vanished from his mind. He was now a man in the world of men." In this more expansive mood, he has a vision of progress as the growth of

> a Being of Life in which we live and move and have our being, something that began fifty--a hundred million years ago, perhaps, that goes on--on: growing, spreading, to things beyond us, things that will justify us all.

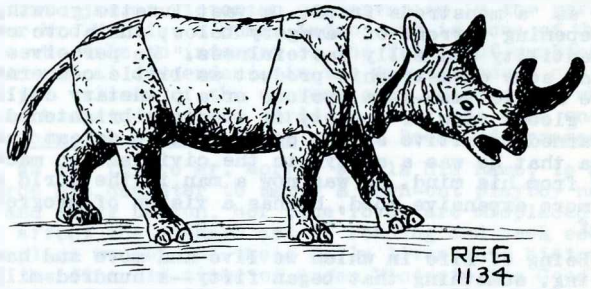
His bruises and his pain become "the chisel of the Maker."

Despite a few such optimistic instants, however, the world of Ugh-lomi seems far preferable to that of Denton and Elizabeth: all the centuries of progress have resulted in a net decline. Ugh-lomi and his mate fight bloodily but successfully for survival and mastery of the squatting place. Denton and Elizabeth strive in vain against the devouring society of the future. They are saved not through any effort or merit of their own, nor even through any beneficent consequence of fifty thousand years of social advancement. They are rescued instead by the author, by means of an unconvincing deus ex machina: the playboy Bindon, overtaken with the wages of his life in the Pleasure Cities, suddenly requests Euthanasia and leaves Elizabeth his heir.

The story closes with a vision of creative evolution--seen not as any obscure metaphysical influence, but as a practical result of accumulating scientific knowledge. Bindon's optimistic young doctor foresees a time when science will assume the management of society.

> Some of us have a sort of fancy that in time we may know enough to take over a little more than the ventilation and the drains. Knowledge keeps on piling up, you know. It keeps on growing...Some day, men will live in a different way.

Both novelettes, in summary, present optimistic visions of progress somewhat dimmed by romantic yearnings for the primitive past. In neither story does Wells succeed in making a dramatic asset of his own divided attitudes, as he does with Graham and Ostrog in When the Sleeper Wakes and with Bedford and Cavor in The First Men in the Moon. Both stories are exercises in intellectual speculation, and consequently lack the richly imagined and complex symbolism of his best work. Yet Wells, with his wealth of ideas, his splashes of vivid colour, and his melodramatic action, has made both stories highly readable. Even though he is writing in praise of progress, on his ambivalent balances the appeal of the past seems to outweigh the promise of the future.



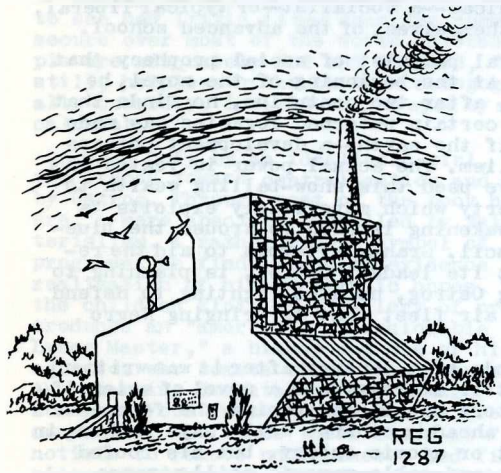
#3 -- WHEN THE SLEEPER WAKES

The future world of The Time Machine, Wells writes, is "a mere fantasy based on the idea of the human species developing about divergent lines" (Exp., 550). In When the Sleeper Wakes, he is making a systematic study of the trends of progress, in greater detail and nearer at hand. His method of extrapolation from the present to the future is outlined in The Future in America: "one sets to work to trace the great changes of the last century or so, and one produces these on a straight line and according to the rule of three."[10] The plot pattern is borrowed from Bellamy's Looking Backward (1888), whose hero "had so oddly anticipated this actual experience." Bellamy, however, was writing a didactic utopia of the world as he wanted to make it; Wells, in the better part of his book, is offering a realistic social forecast of a future he dreads. This novel, however, is flawed by Wells's conflicting attitudes.

The evidence hints that he did not understand the trouble. He calls the book "one of the most ambitious and least satisfactory" of his earlier novels,[11] and admits that he "scamped the finish" of it in his haste to leave for Italy on a trip with Jane (Exp. 494), because Love and Mr. Lewisham, which he was writing at the same time, had "taken a very much stronger hold" upon his affections (Works II, x). He writes Bennett, "There's good stuff in it, but it's a big confused disintegrating thing."[12] In one letter he shows his early elation when the story had "assumed really noble proportions";[13] and in another his later frustrations: "I'm having awful times with my beggar. He won't shape ...I'm midway between a noble performance and a noble disaster."

Dissatisfied with the novel, he undertook to revise it for a new edition which finally appeared in 1910 with a few changes and a few thousand words omitted (EHGW, 140). The generally unfavourable critical reception may have contributed to the decision which he announced in Anticipations that fiction and prophecy do not mix.

When the Sleeper Wakes lacks the unity and power of the best of the scientific fantasies, perhaps because Wells's systematic method of social prophecy had left him too close to his material. The earlier romances, as Bergonzi points out, had been mythical and symbolic. Although Wells's new method of projecting the probable future does not create a fully symbolic world, it does act as a powerful magnifier for the actual forces of social change. In the words of Anthony West, the book



> is the nightmare of a man who would have liked to find himself inside Shelley's imagination but finds himself instead inside Hobbes"; and its most frightening aspect is that the tyranny it describes is not just a construction with an ideological basis, but an organic growth. It has evolved from the society of 1899 along lines set by the weakness of the average man and woman, and is simply a machine for exploiting those weaknesses to the utmost.[14]

West concludes that the novel shows Wells's fundamental pessimism more clearly than even The Island of Dr. Moreau, and that it "makes one realize how far his later optimism went against the native grain of his thought."

Bergonzi suggests that the book is incoherent, partly because of the unsatisfactory mixture of prophecy and fiction, partly because of a fatigued imagination, and more largely because of the conflicting ambiguities of Wells's imaginative and intellectual attitudes. In the earlier fiction, Wells had been able to express his "dual allegiance both to the past and the future" in terms of imaginative symbolism,

> but from about 1898 onward Wells' concern with the future was to be expressed in increasingly intellectual terms and his imagination became increasingly coerced by his intellectual convictions. (EHGW, 145-6)

The later Wells, in other words, was trying to impose upon himself an intellectual discipline that violated some of his most profound emotional attitudes.

Wells describes his projection of the social background for the novel as

> essentially an exaggeration of contemporary tendencies: higher buildings, bigger towns, wickeder capitalists and labour more down-trodden than ever and more desparate... It was our contemporary world in a state of highly inflamed distension. (Exp., 550-1)

The hero, Graham, is one side of Wells himself: the Wells who cherished an idealistic hope for human progress, "a man of considerable gifts, but spasmodic, emotional." So another character describes him.

> He had grave domestic troubles, divorced his wife in fact.. He was a fanatical Radical--a Socialist--or typical liberal, as they used to call themselves, of the advanced school.

He has written a controversial pamphlet of social prophecy that was "wild, whirling stuff." At the beginning of the novel, he falls asleep. When he wakes, after two centuries, he finds that the accumulated income from certain unearned legacies has made him the nominal owner of half the earth--a development perhaps intended to satirise capitalism. The actual power is vested in a council of trustees, who have used this snow-balling wealth to establish a tyranny of property which mercilessly exploits "a third of the people." His awakening is used to arouse the blue-clad masses against the council. Graham attempts to aid the revolt until he discovers that its leader, Ostrog, is planning to betray the people. Resisting Ostrog, he dies fighting to defend the insurgent masses from an air fleet that is bringing Negro troops to put them down.

Even now, nearly two-thirds of a century after it was written, When the Sleeper Wakes is still impressive as a novel of scientific and social prophecy. History has lagged behind the forecasts in some directions, and run ahead in others; Wells says nothing in this book about space flight or atomic energy, but his roofed city with its moving streets and cable-ways is still strange enough to evoke wonder. Time has not always chosen the Wellsian nomenclature: our electronic communication systems are not called Babble Machines, or even General Intelligence Machines, but they are used in the same way for broadcasting commercial and political propaganda. If the people of a few favoured Western nations seem happier than Wells predicted, we may either reflect that his forecast period has another hundred and thirty years to go, or we may look at the rest of the world. Though Wells was writing before the Wright brothers flew at Kitty Hawk, his descriptions of air travel and air battles are convincing and exciting. He not only conveys the sensations of flight, but anticipates the tactics and strategy of air warfare. He has caught the heartless power of the labour racketeer, the nauseating intimacy of the television commercial, the sex freedom of Hollywood, the monopolistic self-interest of the American Medical Association, and the commercialized religion that offers "Brisk Blessings for Busy Business Men."

Though Wells was writing thirty years before Aldous Huxley and fifty before George Orwell, he anticipates many of the pessimistic predictions of Brave New World and 1984. Hypnotism is used somewhat in the way of Huxley's soma to adjust people to the discomforts of their mechanised environment, effacing memories, removing habits, eradicating desires.

As in Huxley's satire, the family has all but vanished, the conditioning and decanting of the test-tube infants in Huxley's hatcheries is anticipated by the aseptic and efficient care which unloved babies receive from mechanical wet nurses in the creches of Wells's new world. Ostrog, equivocating his cynical lust for individual power, is not much different from Orwell's party leaders in 1984. Like the police of Orwell's Big Brother, he spies upon his city with television equipment. Anticipating the pessimistic theme of Orwell's Animal Farm, Ostrog says that even if the people win against him they will soon fall to other masters. "So long as there are sheep Nature will insist on beasts of prey...The coming of the aristocrat is fatal and assured. The end will be the Over-man--for all the mad protests of humanity."

Graham is awed by the technological progress, but astonished to see how little it has done for common men. Life and property are secure over most of the world, diseases have been conquered, people are adequately fed and clothed, "but the crowd...was a crowd still, helpless in the hands of demogogue and organiser, individually cowardly, individually swayed by appetite, collectively incalculable."

Aided only by an idealistic girl, Graham is too weak to alter the trends toward centralisation and specialisation rationalized by Ostrog. Through most of the book he is a somewhat shadowy figure, a mere spectator appalled by this world of unrestrained materialism. A rather wooden symbol of an anachronistic ideal of progress, he finds abundant evidence of social evolution but no realization of his idealistic hopes. The rich are as useless as the childish Eloi. In a gallery of prominent people, Wells introduces an "amorist," a fashionable "capillotomist," the "Black Labor Master," a bishop and one of his "subsidiary wives," an educator who boasts of having "completely conquered Cram," and the charming daughter of the manager of the Piggeries of the European Food Trust. These people are fantastically conspicuous consumers, who waste their lives at Pleasure Cities, employ hypnotists to remove unhappiness, and finally ask for the expensive rites of Euthanasy. They represent the corruption and destruction of the individual self.

The poor have been forced into the Labour Company. Their women are flat-chested and plain, because the more attractive have been weeded out by the Pleasure Cities and the Euthanasia clinics through centuries of natural selection. They are all pinched and feeble; the burly worker of Victorian times has followed the draft horse into extinction. They send their unwanted infants to the mechanized creches, and submit to the black police. As a follower of Darwin and Huxley, Wells feels that the evolutionary process will be ruthless in eliminating the unfit --who, in this age of ever more narrow specialization, are the unskilled, the unspecialized.

Although the novel has seemed more successful to many readers than it did to Wells,[15] it does have real faults. Like "A Story of the Days to Come," it contains more intellectual speculation than fully imagined symbolic action. The first half of the book is weak in narrative interest, because Graham is merely a bewildered spectator, not a participant. The original ending attempts to make him a melodramatic hero: having learned to pilot a small aircraft, he goes up alone to defeat the whole air armada that is bringing Negro troops to crush the movement for freedom. (He dies in the revised version too, but is uncertain of his victory.)

Even as an isolated anachronism, however, Graham functions as an effective symbol of the relativity of progress. He is the selfless social man, who finds that social evolution has left him behind. His quarrel with Ostrog reflects Wells's conflict with himself. Graham represents Wells's own strong hopes of progress toward a world where "all men and women might live nobly, in freedom and peace." But every feature of the future world reveals Wells's scientific certainty that progress is more likely to destroy the free individual than to create the utopia he longs for.

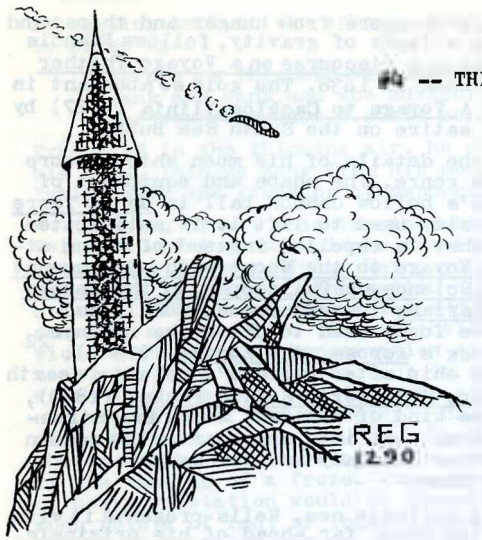
Though the ambiguous ending shows Wells's deep reluctance to accept his own more pessimistic intellectual conclusions, the strongest theme of the book is the relative and ambivalent nature of progress. Exploring the forces shaping the future, Wells finds no support for his idealistic hopes, but instead the ugly outlines of all the totaliterian dictatorships that have flourished since he wrote. Progress as adaptation for survival is as inevitable as the accumulation of knowledge, but the progress that Wells and Graham wanted, progress toward the liberation of the human spirit, is no more than an uncertain alternative to universal slavery and destruction, a possible but unlikely reward for intelligence and courage and compassionate effort. It must reckon forever with Ostrog.

Ostrog, in contrast to Graham, is the animal man, the selfish primitive intellect. As another side of Wells, he is the scientific realist. As prophecy, he prefigures Krushchev and Hitler and Peron and De Gaulle, and doubtless other Overmen yet to appear. Like the Grand Lunar in The First Men in the Moon and like Wells himself, he views democracy with contempt. Cynically, in his own push for power he has revived "the old ideals of universal happiness--all men equal--all men happy" (ch. 19). Now in power, because he has the air "and the mastery of the air is the mastery of the earth," he is deliberately betraying his popular following. He assures Graham cooly that social evolution has now discarded the expedient of democracy, in favour of aristocratic tyranny.

> It is the way that change has always travelled. Aristocracy, the prevalence of the best--suffering and extinction for the unfit, and so to better things...The Crowd is a huge foolish beast.

Ostrog in his boyhood had "read your Shelley and dreamt of liberty," but now he says "there is no liberty, save in wisdom and self-control." So long as nature breeds sheep, he will be among the beasts of prey.

Through a bitter paradox, Ostrog's selfish drive for power and Graham's idealistic self-abnegation operate in precisely the same direction. Ostrog would destroy the individual rights of all except himself; Graham urges individual surrender to "an immortal life of Humanity in which we live and move and have our being." Both are aiding the evolution of a more rigid social order in which individual liberty must fade and die. That is the main trend of change revealed by Wells's method of extrapolating the future. The progressive idealism of the nineteenth century had been merely an eddy in the stream of thought. As a biological observer of the human species, Wells is forced to accept the relativity of progress. In the symbol of Ostrog, he does accept it. But as Graham, as the romantic utopian, he tries to evade it. His own unresolved conflict weakens the novel, but in spite of the heroic effort of Graham in the ending of the first edition, Ostrog seems likely to win the argument.



#4 -- THE FIRST MEN IN THE MOON

The basic ambiguity of Wells's view of progress shows up clearly in The First Men in the Moon. The book is often read simply as a great space adventure story used as a vehicle for incidental satire on human specialisation.[16] Kingsley Amis writes that "Wells's main drive here is simple delight in invention, in working out an alien ecology, typical of what I might call primitive science fiction."[17] Norman Nicholson, although he gives Wells credit for basing a romantic myth upon everyday life and brilliantly investing it with the sense of wonder and even for "satirising to some extent," yet says that "on the whole he is just improvising for the sheer joy of it."[18] Basil Davenport classifies The First Men in the Moon, along with The Time Machine, among the "utopias in reverse, showing the degeneration of a society."[19] As Wells states his own purpose, he intended "to look at mankind from a distance and burlesque the effects of specialization."[20] His actual accomplishment is greater and more complex than such comments suggest, even though weakened by his own ambivalent attitudes.

It is the last of Wells's great fantastic romances, and, in his own opinion, probably the best (Works, VI, ix). As a sustained effort of creative imagination, it has seldom been equalled. Wells came to the story from the two or three years of analytic study of human progress that had produced Anticipations and When the Sleeper Wakes. Perhaps the act of writing this novel helped to bring some of his internal conflicts into conscious reconciliation. After The First Men in the Moon, at any rate, the inner tensions seem to subside. They flare up briefly again, in a few such stories as "The Country of the Blind." But the later scientific romances, The Food of the Gods (1904) and In the Days of the Comet (1906) and the rest, lack the concrete reality and the sustained dramatic interest of the earlier stories, perhaps because that inner drive had ceased to operate.

The First Men in the Moon is less original in outline than most of the earlier scientific novels, which are generally shaped by Wells's own ideas in collision. Here he deliberately follows an old conventional form, the imaginary voyage,[21] as he acknowledges with the epigraph from Lucien's Icaromanippus. Many details of plot and setting are borrowed from the traditions of the genre. The plant life of the moon, gigantic in size and brief in span of life, comes from Kepler's Somnium (ibid., 48).

The freedom of the space voyagers from hunger and thirst and fatigue, which are seen as effects of gravity, follows Francis Godwin's Manne in the Moone: or a Discourse on a Voyage Thither by Domingo Gonzales, published in 1638. The gold so abundant in the moon is borrowed from A Voyage to Cacklogallinia (1727) by "Captain Samuel Brunt," a satire on the South Sea Bubble.

Wells found most of the details of his moon ship in more recent stories of the same genre. The shape and equipment of the craft echo Jules Verne's hollow cannon ball in De La Terre a la Lune (1865). The cavorite used to lift it is anticipated by Lunarium, a new metal that is repelled instead of being attracted by the earth in A Voyage to the Moon: with some account of the Manners and Customs, Science and Philosophy, of the People of Morosufia and other Lunarians (pseudonymous, 1827), and also by Apergy, a repulsive force used to drive the immense space ship in Percey Gregg's Across the Zodiac (1880). The accidental loss of the ship after Bedford's return to earth comes from Hugh McColl's Mr. Stranger's Sealed Packet (1889), in which precisely the same kind of accident sends Mr. Stranger's ship, the Shooting Star, off into space after his return to earth, with his meddlesome landlady and her daughter screaming inside the open door.

Though his plot is not entirely new, Wells presents it with an imaginative and narrative power far ahead of his originals. With a striking use of contrast, he begins his tale "of super-terrestrial and aerial topics" with his characters mired in very convincing adhesive mud at Lympne, at the edge of Romney marsh, in the clay part of Kent. The narrator, Bedford, is an undischarged bankrupt, rusticating while he writes a play that he hopes will restore his losses. He meets Cavor, who is perfecting his gravity screen, and they are soon landing the Cavorite sphere on the moon--just in time to watch the daily thawing of the frozen air and the explosive growth of the lunar jungle. Lost from the sphere, they are captured by Selenites that have come out to pasture their gigantic moon-calves. They are carried into the moon. Bedford leads an escape, finds the sphere, and gets back to earth with a fortune in golden chains and crowbars. Cavor is left in the moon. His further adventures are revealed through a series of wireless messages. Recaptured, Cavor has been carried deep into the lunar hive, where he observes the physical and social adaptations that fit each Selenite for his own piece in an utterly rigid society. When he reveals too much of the selfish destructiveness of mankind, his messages are abruptly cut off.

As an adventure story, Bedford's narrative is hard to surpass. Kepler's enormous plants, imagined with the aid of Wells's biological training, help create an unforgettable atmosphere. "The very cells that built up these plants were as large as my thumb, like beads of colored glass." Against that background of wonder and hostile mystery, we hear the "Boom...Boom...Boom.." of underground machines, we see the opening of the enormous lid above the shaft, we meet the grotesque herdsmen and their bellowing cattle. Captured, we follow the river of blue light down into the moon, fight our way out through the cave of the moon butchers, find the jungle "brown and sere now and thirty feet high...brittle and ready to fall and crumple under the freezing air, so soon as the nightfall came."

Struggling back to the sphere, Bedford leaps, and each leap is seven ages.

> Before me the pale serpent-girdled sector of the sun sank and sank and the advancing shadow swept to seize the sphere before I could reach it.

Exhausted in the thinning air, he crawls. The frost gathers on his lips, icicles hang from his moustache and beard, he is "white with the freezing atmosphere."

In spite of all this breath-taking verisimilitude Wells is writing not science fiction but his own sort of scientific fantasy. Jules Verne couldn't quite understand it.[23] Actually, in spite of the patter about helium and the circumstantial details of its making and testing, Cavorite is as impossible as travel in time or invisibility; its existence would violate the laws of conservation of energy. Wells's carelessness with bare scientific fact is evident when he lets Bedford write that the moon has "only an eighth part of the earth's mass and a quarter of its diameter" (ch. 8), getting the mass too great by a factor of ten. He knew that the moon has no atmosphere, and he must have realized that all the changes produced by the thawing of a frozen atmosphere and the growth and decay of heavy vegetation would be clearly visible from earth. But such points of fact or logic scarcely matter. Wells's admitted method is to trick his reader "into an unwary concession to some plausible assumption and get on with his story while the illusion holds." The method here is notably successful.

Delighted as Wells may be, however, with his own skill at spinning a tale of exotic adventure, that is not his main interest in The First Men in the Moon. If it were, the four chapters relating the further adventures of Cavor inside the moon would be clumsy anticlimax. In fact they form the real climax. All the freely borrowed plot materials are only a convenient frame for what Wells really wants to say. His real subject is physical and social specialisation, regarded as a basic device of evolutionary progress. He follows that subject from the first chapter to the last. He examines it with mixed and sometimes conflicting attitudes, but he never lets it go.

This theme, though more original than the cosmic-voyage story in which it is framed, may have come from Huxley, who wrote in 1892 that

> society is possible only upon the condition that the members shall surrender more or less of their individual freedom of action...Thus the progressive evolution of society means increasing restriction of individual freedom in certain directions.[24]

Even the insectile nature of the Selenites may well have been suggested by a passage in Huxley's "Prolegomena" (1894) to Evolution and Ethics.

> Social organisation is not peculiar to men. Other societies, such as those constituted by bees and ants, have also arisen out of the advantage of cooperation in the struggle for existence.

Competition among the bees is strictly limited, each queen and drone and worker receiving food so that it can perform its function in the economy of the hive.

> Now this society is the direct product of an organic necessity, impelling each member of it to a course of action which tends to the good of the whole. Each bee has its duty and none has any rights.

Huxley remarks that, although an ethical philosopher among the drones might theorize that "an external and immutable principle, innate in each bee" is responsible for this selfless devotion to the common good, the biologist familiar with all the stages of evolution between solitary and hive bees finds in it "simply the perfection of an automatic mechanism, hammered out by the blows of the struggle for existence...during long ages of constant variation" (E&E, 24-5). Huxley even suggests the comparison between human history and that of the hive. "I see no reason to doubt that, at its origin, human society was as much a product of organic necessity as that of the bees" (ibid., 26).

The moon is a hive of social insects--although Wells compares the Senelites to ants, rather than to bees, the humming of the moon ceases only when the Grand Lunar is about to speak. Like the symbolic creations of Dr. Moreau, the Selenites show the ultimate plasticity of living matter. They demonstrate progress through specialisation of form and function, projected to the limits of Wells's imagination. They range in size and dignity from tiny beings that do the work of small electric motors, to the ruling Grand Lunar, whose "brain-case must have measured many yards in diameter." Leather-skinned Selenites herd mooncalves; big-brained Selenites remember facts; siren-voiced Selenites screech orders and information; bellows-lunged Selenites blow glass: "every one of these common Selenites is exquisitely adapted to the social need it meets."

As satire upon existing human society, all this is deadly enough. Wells casts human vice or folly into these insect shapes to make it absurd or horrible; then, before we can recoil, he reminds us that this insectile nightmare is more rational and more humane than human society. Cavor is horrified when he sees a method of producing machine-minding specialists: baby Selenites are confined in jars, with one hand protruding to be "stimulated by irritants and nourished by injection while the rest of the body is starved." For all his intellectual admiration of "this wonderful social order," Cavor admits that this

wretched-looking hand sticking out of its jar seemed to me to appeal for lost possibilities; it haunts me still, although, of course, it is really in the end a far more humane proceeding than our earthly method of leaving children to grow into human beings, and then making machines of them.

(The image of this bottled baby must have haunted Aldous Huxley, too; the Selenite hive contains many striking anticipations of Brave New World.)

Gulliver's adventure with the Houyhnhnms seems to have been the model for Wells's satire here--he often admitted his debt to Swift. His Selenites are as rational as Swift's horses, and his satire, like Swift's, operates at several levels. Satire must attack from a base upon some accepted norm. Man, as Cavor reveals him to the Grand Lunar, no more fits the rational norm of the Selenites than does man, revealed by Gulliver to his master, fit the norm of the superior horses. Yet that rational norm fails in each case to fit a higher ideal norm. Wells, no more than Swift, intends to praise pure reason. The Grand Lunar is deliberately made pathetic and absurd. He sits in solitary splendour, with attendants spraying cooling fluids over his distended brain. "Ineffectual-looking little hand-tentacles steaded this shape on the throne...It was great. It was pitiful."

However devastating, this burlesque upon specialisation in contemporary society is only a minor part of Wells's main theme. His elaborate construction of the lunar culture is a very serious study of the division of labour as a tendency of progress. The ant-like Selenites, with their rigid social organisation and their complex physical adaptations, are a logical culmination of the kind of progress that began in the seas of ancient earth when the first groups of sister cells began to cooperate instead of simply competing for survival. Effective enough as a satiric image of modern mankind, the Selenites are at the same time seriously prophetic of man's probable future: a future that Wells examines with deeply divided feelings. Sometimes his fascination with the rational world order of the moon is pure admiration, but more often it slips into something nearer horror. In writing the story, Wells seems to be proving to himself that the selfless conformity of the Selenites is the only ultimate alternative to such selfish human disorders as greed and war, but he shrinks from both horns of the dilemma.

Bedford is the novel's unspecialised individual, resisting the law of the hive. Unmarried and unattached, he is waging a solitary war both against human society on earth and against its satiric symbol in the moon. Lacking special adaptations, he is ready for anything but competent at nothing except the most primitive sort of cunning and slaughter. He has failed in business. We find him writing a play, with no special training and no visible prospect of success. He gets lost on the moon, gets drunk on lunar mushrooms, gets himself and Cavor captured. He is too primitive to understand the rational Selenites. After his escape, he sleeps on his way to search for the sphere and fails to signal Cavor after he has found it. Back on earth, he leaves the moon ship open to trap a meddling boy.

His one spectacular success is the triumph of his brute strength over the civilised Selenites. When he strikes the first one with the golden chain wrapped around his fist, the moon creature

> smashed like some sort of sweetmeat with liquid in it. He broke right in. He squelched and splashed. It was like hitting a damp toadstool. The flimsy body went spinning a dozen yards and fell with a flabby impact.

His primitive strength snaps chains and bends bars. A man berserk, he massacres his Selenite pursuers.

> I remember...wading among these leathery thin things as a man wades through tall grass, mowing and hitting, first right then left--smash, smash! ...It did not seem to me that the Selenites were unexpectedly flimsy, but that I was unexpectedly strong. I laughed stupidly.

This display of selfish primitive violence as the invulnerable enemy of civilised society is an important link in the symbolism.

Bedford is as purely selfish, at the beginning, as the Invisible Man. When he first hears of Cavorite, it strikes him as

> one of those chances that come once in a thousand years... Among other things, I saw in it my redemption as a business man..."We're on absolutely the biggest thing that has ever been invented," I said, and put the accent on "we."

When he finds gold in the moon, "knocking about like cast iron at home," he immediately determines to come back "in a bigger sphere with guns." Although he claims extenuating circumstances, his own selfishness aids Cavor's recapture by the Selenites. His narrow concentration on his own immediate comfort allows Master Tommy Simmons to trap himself in the unguarded sphere.

He is no villain, however, for all his naked selfishness, but rather a comic hero. His candid confessions strike the universal human chord of self. He is acceptable because his selfish behavior is generally shortsighted and unsuccessful. He had been the victim of malignant creditors, and his adventures satirise the collective selfishness of society. His own primal selfishness is relieved, as the story goes on, by flashes of concern for Cavor. Along in space after he has left Cavor behind on the moon, he sees a new view of himself.

> The most prominent quality of it was a pervading doubt of my own identity...I saw Bedford in many relations...I saw him not only as an ass, but as the son of many generations of asses.

Back on earth, however, he is soon himself again. Prudently changing his name to protect the gold from his creditors, he publishes his narrative as fiction under the name of "Wells."

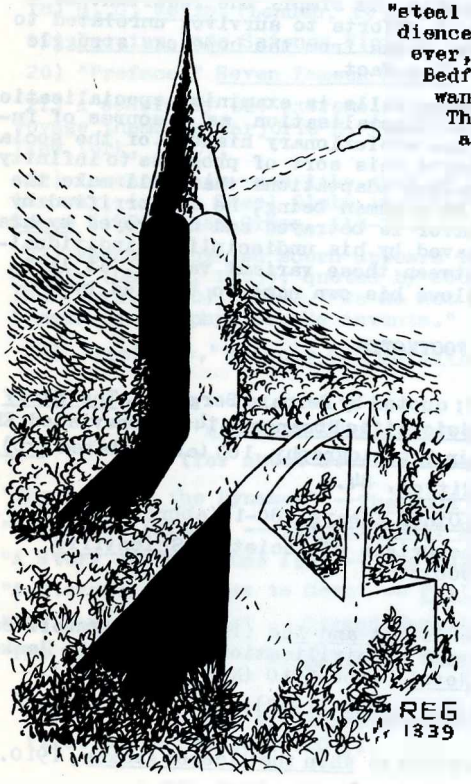
In contrast to Bedford, Cavor is the specialist and therefore the social man. As a specialised intelligence, he is the human counterpart of the Grand Lunar. Yet he seeks no personal advantage through his intellect; as the scientist, he is the polar opposite of the self-seeking Invisible Man. Lacking the essential human traits of self, Cavor has the nature of a machine. "A short, round-bodied, thin-legged little man, with a jerky quality in his motions," he first appears walking by Bedford's house, gesticulating and jerking his head about and buzzing "like something electric." He stops, looks at his watch, turns convulsively back towards his laboratory. Like a marionette, he repeats this same mechanical behavior every evening at the same time in the same way, until Bedford makes him helpless by breaking his set pattern of habit.

His only passion is knowledge. Utterly selfless, he is as indifferent to the practical uses of Cavorite as he is to the accidental damage caused by his first experiment with it, which comes near whipping the atmosphere off the earth "as one peels a banana."

To Bedford's astonishment, he has "troubled no more about the stuff he was going to turn out than if he had been a machine to make guns." As Bedford points out, he has never married, never grown richer than he happened to be; he has just "rooted after knowledge." He conceals his responsibility for the disaster at Lympne because he "cannot consent for one moment to add the burden of practical considerations to [his] theorizing." Even as the prisoner of the Selenites, as Bedford says,

> He was not absolutely in despair at the prospect of going ever deeper into this inhuman planet burrow. His mind ran on machines and invention to the exclusion of a thousand dark things that beset me. It wasn't that he intended to make any use of these things: he simply wanted to know them.

Cavor is appalled by Bedford's violent resistance to the Selenites, and horrified by Bedford's intention of coming back with guns. The man of reason against the man of instinct, in the messages from the moon he accuses Bedford of becoming "impulsive, rash, and quarrelsome," and of making off with the sphere in order to "steal a march" on him. In his audience with the Grand Lunar, however, he is betrayed by what Bedford calls "his disastrous want of vulgar common sense." The Selenites learn about men, and learn that he alone knows the secret of making Cavorite. Rationally, they stop his messages before he can transmit the information that might bring Bedford back to loot the moon.



Cavor's austere intellectuality is warmed by occasional human inconsistencies. Sometimes he shows a flash of liking for Bedford. Though his education has been "purely scientific," he carries the works of Shakespeare with him to the moon. His intellectual admiration for the wonderful social organisation of the Selenites is tempered at times by aversion or horror. At the end of the novel, in spite of his acceptance of the rational ideals of universal peace and order symbolised by the Selenites, he dies fighting for survival.

The novel is alive because of the dramatic tension between two attitudes in Wells himself. Cavor is the social man, the enlightened intellectual, pointing the way to progress through an ever more elaborate division of labour. Bedford is the animal man, the primitive self, denying the biological law that reads: specialise or die. Wells himself wavers between the two. He clearly disapproves of the brutal greed that would make Bedford a second Pizarro. He sees with Cavor and the Grand Lunar the need of a social structure strong enough to end war and waste, and to control the human environment. But, doubting that the brain is an instrument of virtue, Wells is not content with rational conclusions. Anthony West writes:

> What Wells is saying here is that a further extension of human intellectual powers in the post-Renaissance direction of abstract rational thinking will lead to the growth of cruel and inhuman planned societies utterly indifferent to individuals and individual happiness. The scientific apparatus for examining reality is hostile to values since it shows that any system of values is purely arbitrary. (DW, 69)

Progress, to Wells the biologist, is simply the resultant of a ceaseless series of improvised efforts to survive, unrelated to ideals. The life of the novel grows from the hopeless struggle of Wells the artist to deny that fact.

In The First Men in the Moon Wells is examining specialisation and particularly intellectual specialisation as a source of future human progress. Using the evolutionary history of the social insects as a guide, he projects this sort of progress to infinity. As a scientist, he can visualise adaptations that will make the human race more efficient. As a human being, he is horrified by what he sees. At the end, Cavor is betrayed and destroyed by his own intellect. Bedford is saved by his undisciplined individualism. Wells himself, torn between these variant values, at last reveals a choice when he allows his own name to be used by Bedford for a by-line.

FOOTNOTES

1) Bookman, XIII (1897), 17; quoted by Bernard Bergonzi, The Early H.G. Wells: A Study of the Scientific Romances, 14 (abbreviated EHGW).

2) H.G. Wells, Experiment in Autobiography, 163 (abbreviated Exp).

3) Science and Hebrew Tradition, 84.

4) Evolution and Ethics and Other Essays, 80-1 (abbreviated E&E).

5) Marshal D. Sahlins, "The Origin of Society," Scientific American (CCIII (Sept., 1960).

6) E&E, 58.

7) Cf. Zit, of Henry Curwen's Zit and Xoe (1897), who symbolises the entire climb from the ape to civilisation; see Leo J. Henken, Darwinism in the English Novel: 1860-1910 (New York, 1963).

8) A. L. Morton, The English Utopia (1952); quoted by Bernard Bergonzi, EHGW, 151.

9) First published 1899; revised as When the Sleeper Awakes, 1910.

10) 1906, pp. 11-12; quoted by Bergonzi, EHGW, 144.

11) Atlantic Edition of the Works of H.G. Wells, II, ix (abbreviated Works).

FOOTNOTES (continued)

12) Harris Wilson, ed., Arnold Bennett and H. G. Wells: A Record of a Personal and a Literary Friendship, 44.

13) Royal A. Gettmann, ed., George Gissing and H.G. Wells: Their Friendship and Correspondence, 69.

14) "The Dark World of H. G. Wells," Harper's Magazine, CCXIV (May, 1957), (abbreviated DW).

15) Hugo Gernsback puts it among "the five greatest scientific stories that have been written so far." See "Introduction," When the Sleeper Wakes (New York, n.d.).

16) See J. O. Bailey, Pilgrims Through Space and Time: Trends and Patterns in Scientific and Utopian Fiction (New York, 1947), 110-112; also Roger Lancelyn Green, Into Other Worlds: Space-Flight in Fiction, from Lucian to Lewis (New York, 1958), 138-42.

17) New Maps of Hell (New York, 1960), 40.

18) H. G. Wells, (London, 1957), 29.

19) Inquiry into Science Fiction (New York, 1955), 6.

20) "Preface," Seven Famous Novels (abbreviated SFN).

21) A scholarly but extremely readable study of the cosmic voyage theme is Marjorie H. Nicolson's Voyages to the Moon (New York, 1960).

22) Another ship much like that of Wells, propelled in a similar way, is the Steel Globe in Robert Cromie's A Plunge into Space (1890); see Green, 114-17.

23) Verne's puzzled scorn appears in an interview in T.P.'s Weekly (Oct. 9, 1903); quoted by Geoffrey West, H. G. Wells (New York, 1930), 141-2. "We do not proceed in the same manner.. I make use of physics. He invents."

24) "Prologue," Science and Christian Tradition, 52-3.

MAGAZINE PUBLICATION DATES
(for short stories cited in text)

"The Lord of the Dynamos" -- The Pall Mall Budget (Sept. 8, 1894)
"Aepyornis Island" -- The Pall Mall Budget (Christmas Number 1894)
"A Story of the Stone Age" -- The Idler (May-Sept., 1897)
"A Story of the Days to Come" -- Pall Mall Gazette (1897)
"The Land Ironclads" -- Strand Magazine (Dec. 1, 1903)
"The Grisly Folk" -- Storyteller Magazine (April, 1921)

(Publishers and publication dates for books listed in the first three chapters (RQ III, 1,2,3) are not repeated above.)

PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED

NEW WORLDS, February 1969; Michael Moorcock, editor; 271 Portobello Road, London W-11, England; subscriptions: 60/- or ten dollars (12 issues), single copies: 5/- or one dollar.

A key sentence for this issue occurs in Tom Pynchon's story:

> ...he found in entropy or the measure of disintegration for a closed system an adequate metaphor to apply to certain phenomena in his own world.
>
> ("Entropy," reprinted from Martha Foley and David Burnett, ed., The Best American Short Stories, 1961)

So often in New Worlds physical events do not initiate human actions, but dream reveries. Usually the reader can see what is intended. Mr. Pynchon, e.g., describes a party with drunken sailors and fun-seeking co-eds, plus a man in the apartment below attempting to transfer warmth to a sick bird by holding its body next to his own. Yet at the same time the universe outside the building has reached thermal equilibrium (the "heat death") at thirty seven degrees! A scientifically literate reader would expect an equilibrium temperature close to absolute zero, but in any case would know that a literal interpretation of the story is impossible--since under such conditions there would be no activity of any kind, whether drinking or fornication or bird-warming.

A similar instance is C.J. Locksley's "Angstrom Palace," a latter-day version of Ray Cummings' Golden Atom. Instead of being reduced to atomic dimensions, however, Mr. Locksley's voyagers shrink only to the size of a cell, i.e., a cell in the brain of a "dying Russian chess-master." But there is no romance or intrigue in this microcosm, only a shattering vibration at the subject's moment of death.

As to what the trip actually is--a literal reduction in size or a sequence of images elicited by thoughts of a reduction--the reader could note the "purple robes" that drape the "switching circuits" (possibly nerve synapses), an allusion that makes sense only if the author is abandoning our own physical world to exploit the "royal" connotations of purple, as befitting the "palace" in the title.

Usually we say that an author is cheating if he ends a story by having the protagonist find that it was all a dream, so the question arises: is it not equally unfair if the entire story consists of dream imagery?

A New Worlds author might say that our argument on cheating is essentially a causal argument. In the typical dream story the reader has been led to expect a rational causal order, only to learn at the end that such an ordering is impossible. But our author might claim that he is concerned with "outside" events only as "metaphors" to convey states of mind, "reality" for him being his own subjective universe where causal relationships do not apply.

But this answer is too simple, since a mental sequence has no literary interest unless it is related in non-trivial fashion to events in the external world. The literary universe has many other categories--similarity, difference, irony, contiguity, etc.--so that a writer who abandons causation is obliged to find other relationships to take its place.

"Entropy" is a failure because it exhibits no relevant connexions of any kind (except for the bird-therapy, which by itself does not make a printable story). We see only the causation at the start, where the notion of entropy initiates thoughts about the "heat death" in the same trivial way that I initiate a dream by going to sleep.

Mr. Pynchon's attempt would have been more successful had he not mentioned the Second Law of Thermodynamics, but instead had expressed its personal or social equivalent via a transfer of "randomness" from one person or group of persons to another. (A better try is P.A. Zoline's Heat Death of the Universe in the July 1967 issue.)

Far better is "The Master Plan" by Tom Disch (John Sladek), with its many correspondences between the life-history of the expiring General Parks, his uncompleted monograph on military Game-Theory, and the hospital's medical-psychiatric report. These serve to explicate the General's hallucinatory relationship with the enemy's Chief of Staff--who knows the General's war plan and who knows that the General realises he knows it--envisaged by Parks as the direct cause of his illness. At the last, we have the transcendent irony of the General's final moments, which are accompanied (on the television set across the room) by a war movie with the customary Hollywood rhetoric of dying.

Now, it is not just coincidence that three other stories in this issue end with the death of a principal character (and two others with his watching somebody else's death), since the hallucinatory images of a mind under stress are naturally adapted to fantasy. Indeed, for Tom Disch the imagery is the fantasy--all of which leads us to New World's central aesthetic--that subject and form are identical.

But now we must inquire about the fantasy aspects of people in everyday situations. Relevant here is Jim Ballard's essay (NW's bonus item for February) on Salvador Dali and, in particular, his remarks on Dali's "hallucinatory naturalism."

> Dali...was the first to accept completely the logic of the Freudian age, to describe the extraordinary world of the 20th century psyche in terms of the commonplace vocabulary of everyday life--telephones, wristwatches, fried eggs, cupboards, beaches...Elements from the margins of one's mind--the gestures of minor domestic traffic, movements through doors, a glance across a balcony--become transformed into the materials of a bizarre and overlit drama. The Oedipal conflicts we have carried with us from childhood fuse with the polymorphic landscapes of the present to create a strange and ambiguous future--the contours of a woman's back, the significance of certain rectilinear forms, marry with our memories and desires.
>
> (p.28)

> Even without Freudian insights we could infer that an artist's habitual mental state is akin to that of an ordinary mind in a state of delirium: the "bowler-hatted literary customs clerk" does not expect (to cite Dali's own examples) to be served a lunch of boiled telephones or to ride in taxicabs fitted with interior rainfall.
>
> Of course, Dali provides more than just shock value: his importance lies in showing that "surrealism, far from being a gratuitious dislocation of one's perceptual process, in fact represents the only reasonable technique for dealing with the subject matter of the century." (p. 30)

These results also apply to the present discussion. Before, a "speculative" story was defined as one that conveys non-trivial relationships between the external world and a state of mind; now we must add that this state of mind is created by the "deliberate neuroticism, self-indulgence and love of the glossy, lurid and bizzare" that characterise our present century. Of course, New Wave authors often fail to convey the desired mental states because they abandon causality without substituting anything in its place--but their failures are still more exciting than a humbler group's more limited successes. For this reason, New Worlds is literally the only adult magazine in its field: the others are just kid stuff.

A SCIENCE-FICTION SONG

See, there is the bug-eyed monster, tentacles and hair,
See the Mad Professor's daughter, breasts discreetly bare,
See the Dimpled Blond Space-Captain come to save the day,
With his jolly band of crewmen chase them all away.

See the cunning Sirian monarch, eyes all out on stalks,
This evil alien smiles and slips us death-rays while he talks.
He plots with bird-men from Antares, shaped like giant hawks,
And nameless things from Aldebaran that slither when they walk.

See the kindly alien prophet crossing temporal bars,
His head's a dome, it shines like chrome on futuristic cars.
He comes with scientific secrets from beyond the stars,
But cannot give them to a world as primitive as ours.

The paper space-ships ply the stars, the restless void they fill,
Next issue's guaranteed to give your money's worth in thrills,
And yet I look into the stars and feel the death's-head chill,
The empty void can fill the soul, and naked star-light kill.

--James L. Hockenhull

FROM THE TOP OF THE GATE

He raised his
baton and sliced
an icy downbeat

read to blues
by Roland Kirk
with moods like

suede who galloped
in over blowing
his oaken reed

into the light
night air came
a sphere like

a whole note
that did spin
around his head

in minor proportions
then seas of
saliva spilled over

the whole note
and it gurgled
into rock beats

and it buzzed
like mosquitos around
lizards and humming

birds around beast's
lairs there came
hooting and howling

like a madman
when he's happy
and strutting with

Melody-woman who
was the evening
riff then clouds

in opaque perfection
were blown by
the crowd of

angels when Roland
Kirk went trotting
off the stage

amid applause which
too was light
when He set

down His baton
and said the
word which was

cool.

--Carl E. Kirkland

EPITAPH

'Our other event in London--
a trip to Westminster Abbey
and who should be buried there,
in a choice spot, but you.'

--Norman Klein

1

Sir Peter Warren,
'Knight of the Bath,
Vice Admiral of the Red Squadron
of the British Fleet
and Member of Parliament
for the City and Liberty of Westminster,'
who had long hair
and was shorter
than my shortness
has lain, some years
beneath the marble bust
of himself.
But then, if I am he..?

2

Sprinklers water the lawns of ugly houses
in Billings, Montana.
And fat children waddle over the cracked streets.

The big ugly Plymouth sits,
without tail or brake lights,
in the corner of my crushed rock yard.
Bugs have eaten the nasturtiums and hollyhock.

A glittering pink, next door bicycle
on my step.

3

Small blonde children, laughing, mow the next door lawn--
sciesors and an old push-mower sounding a recalcitrant rhythm.

The garbage cans by my house are full of a stink.
And the birds are gone--black and purple birds

that were here yesterday, on my roof, the branches of my tree.
Pregnant cats, chasing, ate them in their minds.

Tree needles turning brown. Some wax on a floor.

4

All our lives have come together.
Become something.
Full of a fear,
and we are all going.
We hope our nasturtiums will not die.

As new shoes,
we have become beautiful.
White and black.
Black and white.

And now,
on the moth breath of a falling star,
an old man lifts his case
and points to some red roses
that are dying.

AND NOW,

because the leaves fall
from their branches,
the mountains come out,
brown and blue,
to make the horizon.

-- Peter Warren

WINDLESS HOURS

I knew a day when she was dead and cold;
when windless hours
swept snow into her footprints.
She knew of time,
forcing herself to stand
pregnant under my window,
blustery petals
of carnations and azaleas
softly withering on snow-covered ground.

I knew a day when she walked quickly
from the eaves and chalked
the images of fools
on virgin skies, to delve
the depths of sanity.

Silently the light crept
into the chasm and rested
on subtle features poured
by a man in tight clothes.
Tightly corseted, the man
who drives daylight dreams
into cracks in a sidewalk,
his shoulders thick
as railroad ties
to carry a footprint in a block of snow.

--T. C. Burtt, Jr.

MARTYROLOGY I

NO! NO!
KNOW! KNOW!
The air smells like caps, remember?
Black powder, bitter almonds,
(which almost smell like cyanide in the air)
KNOW! KNOW!
The President acted swiftly
To avert a major Art Crisis.

In her towered highness Her Highness the Rubber Queen
Bends Yolanda's body backward her melon breasts
(NO! NO!) taut against the tattered
Skimpy, filmy remains of her
(And so little will)
Through the canvas she sucks hungrily at the
Filmy, skimpy air ... almonds!

The Art Market closed lower today
Despite inactive trading
NO! NO!

--James L. Hockenhull

THE SEASONAL FAN

by

Jim Harmon

WHAT HATH FANDOM WROUGHT?

As Guest of Honour at the Baycon Science Fiction convention in 1968, Philip Jose Farmer delivered a speech that involved some cautiously liberal political views that Mr. Farmer regarded as dumbfoundingly radical. So did a procession of his critics.

Glancing through the fanzines put out by various individuals and clubs, including a club for older fans (many of whom have dropped into figurative or literal senility) called the Science Fiction Writers of America, I was reminded of nothing so much as the appearance of a pro-gun regulation advocate on radio or TV. Virtually all of the studio audience or telephone respondees have been recruited by a club of impotent, sadomasochist, overcompensated masturbators and homosexuals. The faithful have conspired to give the impression that the "general public" is 100% opposed to gun legislation. The true general public which is not so obsessed with fear of castration is too lethargic or bombed out on Lucky Lager to really give much of a damn. Of course, everybody who counts knows that the gun maniacs have stacked the deck; yet for their own obscure purposes they--the media commentators, the senators, the mayors--pretend that they do not know the game is rigged.

There are a great many right-wing nuts, fascists and bigots in science fiction. This is hardly surprising since hard core science fiction has long been dominated by the right-wing extremist editor Farmer refers to, and by one right-wing extremist writer everybody has referred to. Of course, soft-core science fiction, those futuristic fantasies read by the general literate reader, has been dominated by Ray Bradbury, who eloquently expresses the feelings of the liberal man. But those engineering-oriented readers who find it difficult or impossible to relate to other human beings emotionally prefer even faulty intellectualisation to the expression of literate feeling.

The Poul Andersons of our world are inevitable; it is the Philip Jose Farmers who are the miracles. If Farmer does not practise liberal politics on a genius level, it is a miracle that he does it at all--like a woman preaching or a dog dancing--having been intellectually raised in both a culture and a subculture as nigh hopelessly deficient as ours.

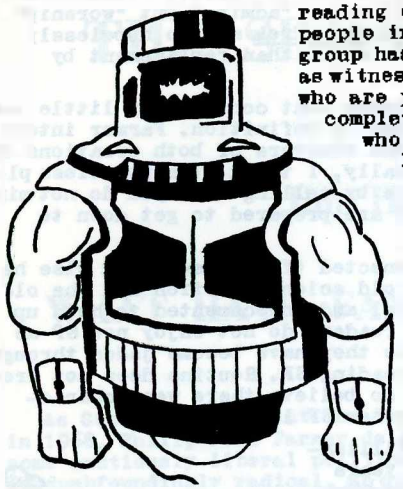
Unlike Farmer, I have given up on science fiction Fandom. Any group of people who not merely "like" or "admire" but "worship" (to quote many) Harlan Ellison and Star Trek are so hopelessly stupid to be beyond any redemption other than replacement by generation slough.

Ellison and Star Trek are cartoons that convey very little useful information but on a high level of definition. Farmer interestingly enough throws bones to the admirers of both creations of expediency in his address. Personally, I think it a pointless ploy to address the School of Cardinals by telling them you do not mind their believing in angels if they are prepared to get down to serious business.

Mr. Farmer also makes a disconnected (from everything else he has to say) argument against the old science fiction and the old "Sense of Wonder." It is too casual and undocumented to hold up very well. The main reason older readers do not enjoy new SF as much as the old is clearly because they have become jaded through repetition of the experience of reading SF. Routine does not create vivid experience. However, I do believe there were characteristics of the old SF which the new SF lacks.

I had never before read Jack Williamson's Legion of Time until a few years ago. Nor had I read anything by him other than a few short stories and novelettes. Yet in 1965 or 1966 I was struck by the vividness and vitality of Legion compared to contemporary SF. This could hardly be nostalgia on my part, even if that factor might contribute to the views of Sam Moskowitz. Williamson told a story that interested and held me. Today, SF writers often create good scenes in which they use words well to describe some psychedelic fantasy of theirs, some sexual hangup of theirs, some political theory of theirs. It is true that the TV-raised audience can predict almost any plot, but just because a plot may be predicted, that is not enough excuse to dispense with it. If the writer executes his story well enough, that old "willing suspension of disbelief" can appear. The patternless mosaic has also invaded the movies, but I have observed a well-done, if predictable, suspense film such as Wait until Dark can produce the greatest audience reaction even today and even for a supposedly sophisticated Beverley Hills audience.

SF writers are stuck with the same cultural evolution as the rest of the arts. The public of today is too "in" ever to be as genuinely scared of the Frankenstein monster as we were back in the Thirties and Forties, or as genuinely frightened by H.P. Lovecraft, or as awed by the mere concept of space travel. The artist is working against diminishing returns of wonder. But in SF, many writers have really stopped "working." They assume that their audience is as lethargic and world weary as they are.



Most science fiction reading--most fiction reading of any sort, I suspect--is done by people in their teens and twenties. This group has a great capacity for enthusiasm, as witness their enthusiasm today for writers who are perhaps competent or sometimes completely without redeeming qualities, who are not fit to wipe the quills of Bradbury, Asimov, Sturgeon, et al.

Farmer's complaints that early SF had little social or sexual awareness is true, a priori. I mean, who ever said that it did, for crissake? Early science fiction magazines were clearly stated to be science fiction magazines. Whatever speculation was involved centred around the physical sciences. If not, you were slanting for the wrong market as a pulp writer. If you wanted to write about sex in those days, and were aware of the limits publishers could go to in that milieu, you wrote for one of the Spicy type magazines. Politics? There were plenty of left-wing and right-wing journals. You might even get out a hard-cover novel. Upton Sinclair made his choice of markets as did Jack Woodford and Edmond Hamilton. Why all this blithering about the deficiencies of a literary genre when Farmer knows the requirements of commercial field at least as well as I do?

Mr. Farmer practices the "mosaic pattern" in his speech, so a critique of it may become equally as patternless. My main point, lest the hurried reader forget, is a defence of Mr. Farmer's right to say and have widely published his political views, and furthermore, a basic agreement with those political views.

Capitalism as current in America is doomed, either by overthrow by a fascistic state or gradual or immediate abandonment by a radical government. I did not realise that this matter was even at question except by frothing reactionaries. Capitalism only survived the Thirties in the United States through the historical accident of Franklin Roosevelt. Serfs, peasants, slaves eventually arise. It has been thought that revolution in a modern industrial state is impossible, but that thesis is being challenged by our ghettos regularly. The only problem today seems to be whether violent revolution or one through legislation can be achieved before the Establishment achieves true thought control of the masses through chemical or electronic means.

Obviously, communism is too reactionary ever to do America or Russia or any other state much good. Stokely Carmichael is too much of an Uncle Tom. I agree with Philip Jose Farmer that the people must reap what they own.

In science fiction, the rabid relics rant. The people are too sheeplike to be trusted. They are not wolves like us. So say they all. The dottering old fellow who preaches that the world belongs to the strong and tough. The aging halfback who wanders around at conventions picking fights with teen-agers, demanding "Define your terms!" The anaemic Viking.

I agree with Philip Jose Farmer. You don't have to be a superman to demand your rights as a man.

GIANT

by

Patrick Welch

I found them when I was travelling through a land foreign to me. One was a tree. It was gigantic; it must have been a hundred kilometres in diameter and nearly as old as the planet itself. The man who stood beside it was no less awesome; he was eight feet tall with skin the shade of snow and arms as thick as hogsheads. He wielded a tremendous double-bladed axe which bit deeply into the tree and withdrew huge pieces from it. The man's arms moved like smoothly-oiled pistons, and I was sure the tree would topple within a week. But each time he withdrew his weapon, the tree miraculously grew over the wounded area and appeared unharmed. I watched his futile efforts for a moment and then I ventured to ask if that always occurred.

The man turned and for the first time noticed me. "You are a stranger," he stated. "Only a stranger would ask that."

"Maybe I can help."

He threw back his head and laughed. "How? Surely you are not as strong as I."

"No," I admitted, "but in my land science has taken the place of brute strength. There when we cut into trees we cover the wound with pitch so the tree will not bleed or be attacked by disease or insects. Perhaps it will stop this tree from healing."

He looked at me for a moment and evidently decided I was serious. "Perhaps." He made a gesture and suddenly his silver blade was covered with boiling tar. He hefted it tentatively and then continued his labours. As I had predicted, the tar covered the wound and the tree couldn't grow over it. He gave me a brief smile, then returned to the machine-like rhythm I had found him in. I watched a few moments longer and then left.

Farther up the road I came upon an old shepherd and inquired about the giant. He laughed. "Him? He's one of the frost giants. They have been trying to destroy Ygsdrasil for centuries now."

"Ygsdrasil?"

"Yes. The tree is Ygsdrasil. Her roots go to the very centre of the world and her highest branches are seen in Asgard. If the giants ever succeed in felling her our planet will share the same fate and Asgard itself may perish. But that is impossible."

"Yes. Impossible," I agreed and quickly rode away.

OPERE CITATO

by

Harry Warner, Jr.

I thought for a while I was just imagining it. Then I dug back into old chronicles. They seem to prove a reality backing up the imaginary vision I'd undergone of a new all-time peak in productivity of fanzines.

Nobody publishes year after year a running account of all the fanzines that are distributed. Bruce Pelz has been attempting to keep up such a record in recent months. Bob Tucker used to report annually on the number of different non-apa fanzine titles that had actually published in the past 12 months. But nobody receives all the fanzines nowadays, if you define "fanzine" liberally enough to include those specialising in subfandoms and those that deal mostly with mundane matters or with one particular activity of fans themselves; Henry Wasserman's Fantasy News, Ted Paul's Kipple, and any of the scores of little publications based on postal Diplomacy games would be examples of the respective types.

So the best I could do was to assume that the proportions of fanzines I receive to the unknown complete corpus of fan publications has no reason for varying widely as long as I maintain approximately the same level of fan activity. With this in mind, I checked back on fanzines received over the past decade, the era that marks my resumption of full fanning after a stretch of semigafia during the early 1950's.There wasn't any extended stretch of time within those past ten years which seem to rival recent months, in either total fanzine output or in the number of extremely fat and imposing fan publications.

In the third quarter of 1968, for instance, I find that I received 114 fanzines, excluding those in FAPA bundles, and after you sort out about fifteen issues of newszines, four or five separately mailed fanzines that were also considered FAPA postmailings, and a batch of minor effusions--single-sheeters, announcements disguised as fanzines, and the like--you still have me on the mailing list for perhaps 75 full-scale fanzine issues from July 1 through September 30. In contrast, the third quarter of 1959 brought 44 fanzines to my mailbox, again not counting the summer FAPA bundle. Ten of them were news fanzines, five were FAPA publications separate from the bundle, and there couldn't have been more than 25 issues in that period which were independent fanzines voluminous enough to occupy more than two or three minutes reading time apiece.

Total fanzine output in each of those quarters may have been twice or thrice the quantities reaching me. Moreover, there was a special trend between 1959 and 1968 which would be much harder to prove, but had a major effect on fandom: the quantity and influence of fanzines meant for apa distribution increased in the early 1960's, then began to decline again two or three years ago. But I'm sure that this publishing trend exists, more fanzines and larger fanzines, with all sorts of accompanying imports on such things as declining reader response, ignorance about how at least the other half if not the other two-thirds of fandom lives, and scarcity of quality material for publication. And more curious yet, the recent population explosion in the fanzine field has included increasing evidence that we now have a steady output of a type of fanzine that used to exist only on the rarest occasions, the fanzine that is too thick or too expensively reproduced or too high in general quality for most fans to publish.

This is, I think, a situation unparalleled since the 1930's, when Conrad Ruppert was printing fanzines that were completely beyond comparison with anyone else's productions from the hectograph or mimeograph. Since then, there have been occasional titles with exceptional attributes, like the professionally printed Stardust and Bizarre, or the photo-offset issues of The Fanscient. But almost never was more than one of these exceptional publications alive at any given time. Suddenly we have nearly a dozen titles alive, each of which has some particular quality or combination of characteristics which are simply beyond the financial or intellectual or leisure time capabilities of most fanzine publishers. Their coexistence with a record outpouring of less ambitious fanzines seems to be assurance that they aren't causing the rest of the fanzine editors to languish in gafiation out of sheer envy. But I have begun to wonder if we are entering a new era, one in which the fanzine field will be divided sharply between these giants and the more familiar kind of fanzines. Perhaps we can foresee some of the differences already. Contributors to the luxury-type fanzines already lean heavily toward the people who spend at least as much time making money out of science fiction as they do in amateur fanac. It's increasingly difficult for the fanzine that is modest in appearance and deliberately limited in circulation to win a Hugo nomination. A typical fanzine now encounters severe problems if it becomes too popular, like the one whose editor asked me not to mention his publication in this column, because his spare time can't keep up with his circulation. As fandom grows larger and as the barrier between fandom and prodom reaches an increasingly tenuous condition, I suspect that there will grow up an increasingly sharp differentiation between the two types of fan publications --those with unlimited circulation, high prices, strong continuity of editorial personality, great emphasis on professional-calibre artwork, and in most cases a system of reproduction less labourious than the mimeograph; and those which are kept determinedly down to a couple of hundred copies, no more pages than one or two people can conveniently prepare, a ue method of reproduction which will not bankrupt an editor who gives away most of his copies, and in most cases material designed to interest only a small part of fandom.

Perhaps it's significant that the September issue of Psychotic hints at the great transition that the most ambitious fanzines seem to face. Geis takes his title so literally that the editorial always is presented as a sort of one-man adventure in self-analysis known as The Couch. " 'I now have a little extra loot and I've been thinking... ..Ph-ph-photo offset?' "Well...' "But photo-offset is so cold and unfannish!' 'Not nowadays. Besides, I'm only toying with the idea.' 'It does have merit. You would have more time to do pro work.'..." This issue runs to 56 pages, with material by such as Harlan Ellison and John Christopher, plus a fold-out InMate drawn by Jack Gaughan and another InMate, this type photographic in nature, by Bill Rotsler, as fandom's answer to the PlayMates.

It's curious, perhaps nothing more than coincidence, that so many of the fanzines which threaten to become a separate sort of fanzine are revivals of long-dead fanzines that were much less complicated in their first incarnations. The most startling of the transformations which Psychotic threatens to undergo can be found in any issue of Odd. The summer issue is particularly lavish in its imaginative use of art: outright portraiture, in the form of a far-out spaceman; complete unintellgibility carried to the very verge of comprehensibility in a comic strip by Vaughn Bode, whose dialog and events carry a Carrollian logic of their own despite derivation from some other universe; a crucified Phantom; and one of those Ray Nelson cartoons that you hardly ever see nowadays, for instance. It runs to nearly 100 pages, in all, with prose that ranges from grim semi-fiction by Roger Zelazny to a Bob Tucker review of The Passion Plot. And all this was once a teen-ager's grubby little mimeozine.

Apparently back to stay, despite predictions of a one-shot revival, is Shangri L'Affaires. The Los Angeles fans who are editing and writing it are producing perhaps the most consistent amalgamation of fandom and the protest generation, although there is no shortage of other fanzines in which a paean to Dylan is followed by a review of 2001, carefully separated. Like so many of the other elaborate fanzines today, Shangri L'Affaires still feels a trifle self-conscious about its typographical elegance, and even looked back to a six-year-old fanzine, Axe, to reprint a complaint about the use of offset, followed by the credo of these publications: "We aren't doing our zine this way out of presumption or a desire to 'go professional.' Rather, it's a matter of making the best use of the materials and resources we have on hand." The September issue is distinguished in particular for ingenious use of colours in full-page art work; black and blue on the cover and interior combinations of blue and orange create an effect on the eye very close to full-colour printing.

Cry, yet another fanzine that has rolled aside the stone, actually had a full-colour front cover to celebrate its exit from the tomb. It has since subsided to another way of using a professional type of reproduction, with lithography that looks at a hasty glance almost like the most skilled Gestetnering that has ever been done, and only limited use of art to break up the succession of type-jammed pages. It is by far the most faanish of the fanzines in this batch, running heavilyto the kind of material whose appeal derives partly from the reader's familiarity with the other readers, after a breath-taking escape from the Star Trek interest that has helped to revive Seattle's fandom.

Typical of the distinctive fanzines that still emerge from a mimeograph roller is Nyarlathotep, whose sixth issue has just appeared in 84 pages that recall for neatness and uniformly high quality of material the later issues of Terry Carr's celebrated Innuendo. Ted White gives evidence that science fiction fandom is taking up a ritual long familiar in mundane literary critical circles: reviews of reviews; Alexei Panshin proves that he reads and reviews fiction other than that written by Heinlein; and Arnie Katz embodies L'esprit de l'escalier in a wonderful little essay that tells us a great deal about New York's science fiction enthusiasts. Editor Ben Solon writes the wisest summary I've ever seen of what a fanzine editor should and shouldn't do.

Psychotic: Richard Geis, Box 3116, Santa Monica, Calif. 90403, 50¢ / copy.

Odd: Raymond D. Fisher, 4404 Forest Park, St. Louis, Mo. 63108, 75¢ / copy.

Shangri L'Affaires: Ken Rudolph, 745 N. Spaulding, Los Angeles, Calif. 90046, 50¢/copy (for most issues).

Cry: Vera Heminger, 33214 108th Ave. S.E., Auburn, Wash. 98002, 40¢/copy.

Nyarlathotep: Ben Solon, 3933 N. Janssen, Chicago, Illinois 60613, 50¢/copy.

(Please note that many fanzines discourage subscriptions for more than (say) six issues, and that cheques should be made payable to the fan, not the magazine's name, for the benefit of banks that haven't yet discovered fandom.)

Editor's note: Geis's magazine now bears the title, Science Fiction Review--but address and price are unchanged.

SELECTED LETTERS

Box 852 P.O., Canberra City
ACT 2601, Australia

Dear Leland,

Mullen's article is quite a revelation to me. Not having read Spengler I had not realised how closely his words were followed in Black Destroyer. But more to the point, I have imagined all these years that van Vogt's intention was if anything to argue obliquely against Spengler and anthropomorphism. Korita's claim that knowledge of history defeated Coeurl was patently false: all the theorising about his culture was at best irrelevant. The expedition never understood, what the reader was told, that Coeurl had survived for some hundreds or thousands of years in person since the downfall of his civilisation; they never suspected that his race had achieved a form of immortality, and then killed themselves off by mass cannibalism due to shortage of phosphorus, the key element in their diet. A situation like this is not (I think) covered by Spengler, and the wild guesses discussed in the story all figure as beautiful theories slain by an ugly fact. Or am I mistaken? I admit it was a long time ago that I read the story and haven't it handy to recheck.

Note for Harmon: The Witch's Tale was broadcast in Australia --beginning when, I don't know, but it was running in 1940 and still, or again, at least in 1942. The only two of many programs I heard that can now remember anything of were about a cowboy ghost wearing a ten-gallon hat, and a missionary and a shark-god of "Haiwaii" as Nancy pronounced it.

Sincerely,
Graham Stone

From a strictly logical standpoint, Spenglerian principles should not have been mentioned, since they helped not at all to defeat the enemy. But from a purely literary point of view their inclusion is justified, as giving the story a wider background than it otherwise would have possessed.

---

7 Elm Drive, St. Albans
Herts., Great Britain

Dear Leland,

Settling in St. Albans means that my own collection of s.f. is far away, so I cannot refer to the Okie collection. But several points spring to mind reading Richard Mullen's fascinating article.

The contradiction between the Earth Police and a deserted Earth can be explained in two ways: (i) the title "Earth Police" bears as much relevance as the title "Holy Roman Emperor" did in the Dark Ages, (ii) what Richard Mullen refers to as "their shame" resulted in a psychological desire to prevent any repetition, this aim best being served by policing all offshoots of Earth.

Surely Spenglerism deals with cultures rather than individuals? Caesarism was developing under MacHinery, but the cities that went Okie would have taken the culture with them, and the Okies would have collapsed with Western Culture. In the table, the overlapping requisite for survival is shown: if the Vegan War had not occurred, some other event would have replaced it. This view of the inevitability of history is rather comfortable, in that although individual cultures go, the race survives to greater heights. As Al Stewart sings: "The circle turns and turns and turns." Blish seems to realise that this circle may come to an end, and introduces the Web of Hercules: only to show that, on a higher level, the rise and fall of interstellar races follows a Spenglerian pattern. Even cosmological theory is used to make the point: the end of one universe producing the individuals necessary to seed another into life.

...John Boardman puts forward a rather surprising argument for a noted left-wing person. Science was not alone in improving the living conditions of...the human race: without the humanitarianism of such reformers as Lord Shaftesbury we would have a scientific age hand-in-hand with "the abyss...of drudgery." Science provided the means to survive without (so much) discomfort: the humanitarians provided the will.

...Despite several (your own?) comments on Kingsley Amis, New Maps of Hell is still a standard critical work: as a matter of interest, a British editor might fairly not mention the works of Knight and Blish, they being unobtainable on the general British market, but I don't think the same arguments apply to Amis, in the USA.

Yours, Gray Boak

The "Earth Police" title could indeed be kept solely for its historical connotations, like the "Royal Canadian Mounted Police."// A Spenglerian discounts the Vegan War not because "other events would have replaced it" but because it did not start or terminate any historical cycle. In this sense (to use a very famous example) we discount the invasion of the Goths, who didn't cause Rome's decline, but (as Gibbon wrote) discovered it, i.e., (at most) just hastened a fall made inevitable by the Empire's own "immoderate greatness" // Our correspondent didn't deny the importance of humanitarians (many of whom, like Pasteur and Einstein, also were scientists); he simply emphasised that science was a necessary if not sufficient condition for human betterment.// Amis's book is "standard" in the sense of "generally available,"not in the sense of being taken seriously by knowledgeable s.f. critics.

579-A Sixth Street
Brooklyn, New York 11215

Dear Leland,

Not surprisingly, I find that it's Dr. Mullen's article in your August issue that inspires the most comment, though most of it is of a minor nature; in the main, I'm in agreement with his analysis of Cities in Flight, even down to most of the errors and inconsistencies he points out.

Though I hadn't realized it before, it now occurs to me that van Vogt's superficial use of Spengler just might be explained by the observation that all his quotes come from 150 early pages of Volume II. This volume was published many years after the first and was quite a disappointment to Spengler's admirers. It consists mostly of illustrations of the general principles laid down in the first volume, not very well arranged; occasionally, and on no general plan that I can see, a few important new ideas crop up. But the real meat and structure of the system is all in Vol. I.

There is an additional relationship between the Cities stories and van Vogt, though it's very remote and accidental. The essential idea occurred to me while I was looking at an ASF cover for a van Vogt story. The cover showed many space-ships standing so close together that at first I thought they constituted a city. My next thought was, "Well, why not?" I no longer remember which vV story it was, but I do recall that the cover (by Rogers, I believe) didn't turn out to have much bearing on it. I had just read Spengler for the first time the preceding year (1947) and he got into the stories directly, with no intervention from the Black Destroyer.

A number, perhaps the majority, of the inconsistencies -- probably more than Dr. Mullen kindly allows -- did indeed creep in through authorial inattention, largely as a product of the order of composition of the work as a whole. I started with the episode of New York vs. IMT, which Campbell rejected on the logical grounds that it ought to be the end of a series. I then went back to the preceding episodes of Earthman. The two key episodes ("Bridge" and "At Death's End") of the first volume were written next; then Vol. IV; then Vol. II. The whole effort was spread out over some 15 years, interspersed with other work (for example, "The Triumph of Time" was written in the same year as "VOR" and the book version of "A Case of Conscience.") In the process, I struggled mightily with the chronology and the details, and lost. Dr. Mullen has provided me with an excellent if somewhat rarified out, though!

However, I don't regard the later shooting of deFord as an inconsistency. In the volume devoted to him, it is pretty clearly shown that he has a tendency to go off half-cocked which is bound to get him into trouble later. (Incidentally I amplified this somewhat in the first film, the shooting script for which I finished last year -- and in which Dr. Mullen will find still more genuine inconsistencies.)

The model for Dr. Corsi was not Oppenheimer but Dr. Condon (now head of the Air Force's embattled UFO project), who was actually drummed out of the Bureau of Standards, which he had headed with distinction, by the forces of Attorney General Brownell, then the titular boss of the FBI -- though Mr. Hoover apparently has never had an actual boss.

Dr. Mullen's chart is an impressive document, and I can't help being awed by the way it makes the first volume of my story appear to flow smoothly out of previous real history.

To the best of my knowledge there are three other authors in s-f who have used Spengler: Lowndes (see The Issue at Hand, same page cited by Dr. Mullen), Kornbluth and Kuttner. He thus offers a good illustration of the fact that not all science fiction stories necessarily and exclusively "derive" from other science fiction stories. Incidentally, I have just compounded my use of him in "A Life for the Stars" by drawing upon him for another, non-sf juvenile, "The Vanished Jet," coming up in October from Weybright and Talley. There was a sort of interregnum when I came reluctantly to believe that Spengler's system bore no more relation to actual history than anybody else's system (that is, none), but I now think I just hadn't waited long enough. Things look very Spenglerian indeed lately...perhaps even a little ahead of schedule.

I hope your magazine survives. It richly deserves to.

Regards,
Jim Blish

Despite their mutual independence, the works of Messrs. Blish and van Vogt share one common trait--as when Damon Knight says that Earthman, Come Home exemplifies the "Kitchen Sink Technique," and explains that "...in method it's a van Vogt story."

"Heathwood," 11 Cherry Garden Avenue
Folkestone, Kent, Great Britain

Dear Leland,

I should have intimated ere this my appreciation of Jack Williamson's masterly summation of Wells's work. Glad to see it was noted in the Bulletin of the H.G. Wells Society, of which I'm a committee member in the Spade House Group. Spade House was Wells's "new house at Sandgate," mentioned by Jack, where he wrote Anticipations, etc. We meet in it monthly and are planning to make this corner of Kent Wells-conscious via a series of films and lectures--Arthur C. Clarke has promised to give one of these lectures.

The atmosphere of Spade House is caught by David Hughes in his recent novel, The Man Who Invented Tomorrow:

> As they stood together in the garden with their backs to the house, a hint of the sea below murmuring past their ears on the breeze, Hubert could feel almost as a physical sensation the decades receding, slipping away from the rose-bush, the descending cliff, the immense panorama that not only included France but also, by reason of the very immensity of the view, the force of the wind, the high hurrying patterns of the sky, contained the whole of Europe, the continents beyond it, the world, the stars--that universe which Wells, standing here too, had set himself to conquer. He had not succeeded of course, but he was perhaps the last man among us who thought it was worth trying on quite that scale. Skies had not frightened him. "It makes one stop being afraid, doesn't it?" said Anne-Marie with uncanny precision.

Wandering in Sandgate, I came upon Beach Cottage where Wells, waiting for Spade House to be completed, conceived The First Men in the Moon. Just around the corner from it was a small dwelling, Bedford House, there in Wells's day. My theory is what Wells's eye alighted on that sign when he was trying to think of a name for his lunar traveller--and Mr. Bedford was born.

A few weeks back I met Wells's son, Frank, born in Spade House. Facially and physically, he's much like his father. We discussed, among other things, the abortive New Faust film, based on The Story of the Late Mr. Elvesham, with which H.G. hoped to follow up his two Korda films. Frank Wells said the script (of which I have a rare copy) was too complicated and confusing to get off the ground at Denham Studios.

Hope you print the above observations, which may interest Wellsians from the purely human angle. Sometimes I think RQ suffers rather from the too constant thesis approach. (Jim Harmon's The Infamy of Fame was a welcome spot of light relief.) It's as if everyone were clinging to the world of his college days, the Literary Appreciation studies and the debating society, and shutting their eyes to the world of experience which lies beyond the covers of books and the college walls.

> Experience dispenses with proof; proof rests upon, and can rest upon nothing else than, experiences, which speak for themselves. (W. Macneile Dixon: The Human Situation)

> The fact is that eggheads (taking an egghead to be one who approaches life in terms of ideas rather than of what seem to be immediate realities) are nearly always wrong. (Malcolm Muggeridge)

I'm afraid that, so far as I'm concerned, you can't kill my few but actual experiences of psi-effects by weaving spells of bookish theory or by wielding the blunt instrument of logic. They were much more real than either, and intuition tells me there's an unknown wind moving those straws.

> Who has seen the wind? Neither you nor I.
> But when the trees bow down their heads,
> The wind is passing by. (Christina Rossetti)

> All things are discovered by intuition, as the lives of the great mathematicians and scientists prove again and again. Logic plods after intuition and verifies discoveries in its own pedestrian way. (Colin Wilson: Religion and the Rebel)

I saw the straws move. I conjectured by "mind-stuff," a term over which you cavil. Mind is akin to horsepower, you say. O.K., then, power--an output of energy, if that's what you mean. Stuff, material, is energy also--temporarily shut-in-a-box energy. Free energy and imprisoned energy interact--somehow. Sometimes in ways we comprehend and sometimes in ways we don't--yet.

I didn't overlook the apparent contradiction of cause and effect if precognition is to be accepted. I agree precognition's "unthinkable" if you think of time solely in linear terms. Which came first, the chicken (cause) or the egg (effect)? Maybe the answer is that neither did: they're complementary.

> The future supported the past just as much as the past supported the future. Cause and effect were like two balancing sides of a Gothic arch. It was nonsense to pretend that one came "first." Yet he still had the power of choice. It made it no less a choice because his future self made that choice. Time was an edifice, all of a piece, like some vast cathedral, architecturally perfect. Arch beyond arch, myriads of interlocking arches.. (William Temple, "A Niche in Time," Analog, May '64)

Does that make nonsense of morals, because no one can be blamed for a fated sin or praised for a predestined virtue? A film of Crime and Punishment can be projected only frame by frame but we think of it as a whole, a unit, a work, a recorded morality play. Pilgrim's Progress can be read page by page--or you can dip about in it. It remains a whole: it's only your attention that's fitful. "Life must be lived forwards but it can only be understood backwards" (who the hell said that?). Maybe a man reading the book of his life does occasionally turn over two pages by mistake--though I think the pre-echo on a magnetized tape a better comparison. Maybe one half of the brain absorbs while the other hemisphere reflects, a simultaneous two-way movement of thought through time. Now I'm floundering somewhere out beyond Dunne...

At least I'm trying to think for myself. Maybe you should try it too. You'll claim that you do, of course, but I feel (and should be glad to learn I'm wrong) that you're thinking only within the confines planted in your mind by the Behaviourist dictatorship still ill-treating rats (which they confuse with human beings, though admittedly the error is sometimes understandable) in the psychology/physiology departments of so many American/Canadian colleges. ("When a fixed idea makes its appearance, a great ass makes its appearance"--Nietzsche.) They seem to think that when a woman is raped, the stimulus is invariably one-directional.

A good start to clearing your mind of these fixed partial-truths would be to re-read and really take in what John W. Campbell, in Voluntarism, says about the SSS (Self-Styled Scientists).

Amicably,
William F. Temple

So the sceptic is urged to abandon logic (in favour of "experience") and at the same time to think for himself--as if non-logical thinking were possible! But science is only the combined experience, refined and systematised, of many people thinking for themselves. E.G., anybody who thinks that past and future (cause and effect) are interchangeable is invited to unscramble an egg or put it back into its shell. As any child knows, all the king's men couldn't put Humpty Dumpty together again --and what we call the 2nd Law of Thermodynamics is just a generalisation of our experience with Humpty and thousands of others. (Of course, the Analog quotation, whil convincingly written, shows only that William Temple, like Willy Loman, "fell for his own pitch.") // More about eggs: If I watch a chicken lay an egg I know the chicken preceded the egg; if I see the chicken hatch from the egg I know just the opposite. (The classical "which came first" argument, which concerns the class of chickens and the class of eggs, is irrelevant.)// Finally, as to telekinesis and what made the straws move, I re-quote Christina Rossetti: "Who has seen the wind?"

592 16th Street
Brooklyn, New York 11218

Dear Lee,

Concerning the discussion on voluntarism in the last RQ, I think we ought to go back to the dictionary definition. The only philosophical dictionary I have immediately at hand is Howard Selsam's Handbook of Philosophy, an adaptation of Short Philosophic Dictionary by Rosenthal and Yudin.

> VOLUNTARISM (Lat., voluntas, will), a trend of thought in philosophy which is connected with subjective idealism, attributing primary significance to the will. Representatives of voluntarism are such writers as Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, and William James.
>
> In modern philosophy...voluntarism is connected with certain views of Kant and Hume, the denial of objective necessity in nature, and the position that the human mind prescribes the laws of nature. A clear example, in Lenin's opinion, of such "voluntaristic idealism" is Machism, with its denial of objective laws in nature and society, and its assertion of a world of individual will.
>
> ...In Nietzsche's thought voluntarism stands for a justification of the coercion exercised by the governing class and the enslavement of the oppressed masses.
>
> In William James' essay "The Will to Believe," the primacy of the will and the subordination of reason and science are stressed, while "faith" is given a primary role in social activity.
>
> In contemporary bourgeois philosophy, voluntaristic tendencies are widespread. A fear of proletarian movements and social revolution and of the inevitability of the collapse of the capitalist system impels the bourgeoisie to seek escape from the inexorable laws of social evolution in various theories of free will, the independence of the human psyche, and the like. The ideology of fascism, both in Italy and Germany, contained marked voluntarist elements.

Now what does parapsychology maintain? The assertion is made that the human mind has the power to make external physical changes, without the use of any physical medium, in the external universe.

Campbell uses his own definition of "voluntarism" or "volitionism," and it is largely a straw-man, set up to be knocked down in Anal Og editorials when he can't think of any new defenses for thalidomide. He claims that scientists "hold...that everything in the Universe can be explained by known logical techniques applied to now-known laws of the Universe." No scientist holds this.

The "deduced Universe," another straw man, is not science but mathematics. Science is empirical and inductive; mathematics is deductive. There is no such thing as a "deduced Universe," so one can't very well reach it incorrectly by picking the wrong axioms. In case Campbell has missed the last 3½ centuries since Bacon, science isn't done this way any more.

His assertion that scientists claim "perfect knowledge" is a flat lie and an excellent example of what passes for an argument with Campbell.

He frequently uses the term "self-styled scientist." I claim that this derogatory label is more appropriate to him than to me. I was "styled" a scientist by the members of my doctoral examining committee at Syracuse University in 1962. Who, beside Campbell, has "styled" Campbell a scientist?

And, citing their alleged use of dowsing rods in Vietnam, Campbell styles the United States Marines as "scientists." His citation of this band of hired killers as "scientists" shows the character of a Campbell argument. I have no doubt that the Nazi naval officers who used Pendellehre to locate the British fleet (Willy Ley, Astounding Science-Fiction, May '47, p.90) also believed that they got results. Isn't it curious how voluntarist politics produces voluntarist pseudo-science in both cases?

Stay well, John Boardman

Having served a term in the U.S. Marines, I can testify that its members display an abiding interest in what Hugo Gernsback denoted as Sexology--although perhaps Dr. Boardman would not consider this as a science. Also, the Marines are not hired killers in the sense of choosing to do it--as when a professional gunman hires himself out to perform murder--but ordinary American boys who kill because they are told to.

---

54 Clearview Drive
Pittsford, New York 14534

Dear Leland,

...I agree with Dick Lupoff about the quality of the New Yorker review of 2001; this was one of the best three or four reviews that I've seen. The others, in no particular order: Breen's review in Warhoon 24, Roger Ebert's series of three discussions in the Chicago Sun-Times, and the review in the Saturday Review. You, Leland, like many mainstream (and fannish, including Ted White) critics, miss the whole point of the computer sequence. This is not simply a subplot about the stock computer; Hal 9000, as the most "human" character in the picture, represents the position of man in 2001. In addition, he is the Ultimate Machine, the Ultimate tool--as the bone was the first tool in the opening sequence. Hal's insanity not only symbolizes man's inability to cope with the universe and man's inherent faults, but also visually demonstrates the inability of the tool to advance him beyond a certain level. Intercession of the monolith is again necessary, just as it was back in the "Dawn of Man." 2001 is almost a perfect picture; except for a few very minor points (like the necessity of the astronaut's going outside to check the component and of Bowman's not putting on his helmet) almost every possible element is put there on purpose and, more important, works.

In later adventures on onsite voting, the Baycon business meeting took at least one step in the direction of keeping voting in the hands of the relatively informed fans. A motion was passed requiring that those who wish to vote for a given site, besides being members of the convention, must pay a fee of at least two dollars toward the membership of that upcoming convention, in order to insure their good faith and interest.

Now, this is not a perfect solution: many fans at a con are really short of money, and can't afford this extra fee. But it does help make sure that walk-ins will at least think several times about voting, if they have to shell out good money only for that privilege...

Be seeing you Jerry Lapidus

I'd classify as art a film like Fritz Lang's Metropolis, which exhibits, in highly stylised form, the industrial mechanisation of humans. Stanley Kubrick was limited by his use of straight narrative form to the converse idea, the humanisation of machines (as when Hal "goes insane"), which is just a modern version of the Pathetic Fallacy. In the last reel, of course, Kubrick abandons the naturalistic mode, something Lang had done at the very beginning; this is why Metropolis leaves a lasting total impression, whereas 2001 is memorable only for its final scene.

10265 Cheviot Drive
Los Angeles, California 90064

Dear Leland S.:

Thanks for the review by Mr. Boardman. My response: Mr. Boardman must be talking about some other plays. I don't recognize my plays from his hysterical description. I am pro-science, and lecture at Cal-Tech every year. After reading this silly review, I suggest the readers re-read my stories To the Chicago Abyss, The Veldt, and The Pedestrian, and decide for themselves. As for the plays, they ran 44 weeks, in two sets, in Los Angeles. New York? Where's that?

Best,
Yours, Ray Bradbury

I'm obliged to deny that Mr. Bradbury's stories can be made into comparably good plays, since I think that literature and drama are, in general, distinct art-forms whose "essence" is lost when we translate from one to the other.

---

151 Rock Creek Lane
Scarsdale, New York 10583

Dear Leland & Co.,

Anyone interested in religion in The Lord of the Rings should read the "Notes and Translations" in The Road Goes Ever On . In this section of the book, Professor Tolkien discusses "A Elbereth Gilthoniel" as a hymn. He also gives a translation of Sam's invocation to Elbereth:

A Elbereth Gilthoniel	O Queen who kindled star on star,
o menel palan-diriel	White-robed from heaven gazing far,
le nallon si di-nguruthos!	Here overwhelmed in dread of Death I cry:
A tiro nin, Fanuilos!	O guard me, Elbereth!

Elbereth, a "divine" or "angelic" person,

> ...was often thought of, or depicted, as standing on a great height looking towards Middle-Earth, with eyes that penetrated the shadows, and listening to the cries for aid of Elves (and Men) [and Hobbits!] in peril or grief. Frodo (Vol. I, p. 208) and Sam both invoke her in moments of extreme peril. The Elves sing hymns to her. (These and other references to religion in The Lord of the Rings are frequently overlooked.)
>
> (J.R.R. Tolkien and Donald Swann, The Road Goes Ever On (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1967), 64-5.)

I admit I'm no expert on prayers, but Sandra Miesel says that "Prayer is unknown in Middle Earth..." (RQ III, 209). Sam's invocation to Elbereth certainly sounds like a prayer to me.

Maybe some day soon (I hope!) we can all read the Akallabeth and The Silmarillion, which will explain everything.

...I would like to see discussed...the role of the Istari, particularly Gandalf, as stewards or guardians. Gandalf, speaking to Denelnor, said,

> "...all worthy things that are in peril as the world now stands, those are my care...For I also am a steward. Did you not know?"
>
> (The Return of the King, 30-1, Houghton Mifflin hardcover second edition)

Cirdan apparently knew Gandalf's purposes, and "whence he came and whither he would return" (ibid., 366).

Another factor in considering religion in Lord of the Rings would be the role of the Valar. Particularly,

> ...when Ar-Pharazôn set foot upon the shores of Aman the Blessed, the Valar laid down their Guardianship and called upon the One, and the world was changed.

In the sincere hope of starting an argument--I mean, of course, a constructive discussion,

Adrienne Fein

Also received was a note from Gary Lee Phillips (6459 Shadelawn, Dearborn, Michigan 48127) on behalf of the Michigan State University Tolkien Fellowship. Mr. Phillips and Company also disagree with Sandra Miesel's "footnote that the hobbits' invocations of Elbereth were not prayers." For, while "this may be true in most cases...on one occasion while fighting Shelob, Samwise invokes Elbereth in these words." [There follows a citation of the first passage quoted above by Miss Fein.] "This to our mind," the letter continues, "certainly constitutes prayer, an actual plea for personal intercession on the part of Elbereth."

(continued from page 255)

LANGUAGE FOR SPACE-TIME TRAVELLERS

Should extra-terrestrial creatures ever be foolish enough to visit our planet (or should the human race survive long enough to visit theirs) there will be formidable problems in communication--and in a recent article for Linguistics (May 1968) John Krueger discusses the solutions hitherto proposed by science-fiction writers.*(Also discussed are the problems met by time-travellers owing to changes in language.) It is naughty of me to point out omissions in Dr. Krueger's article, since he makes no pretense at completeness--and because a reviewer always can list works that should have been read, but weren't. Still I must express the customary regrets that the writer restricted himself to books (i.e., to works originally printed as books or reprinted therein from magazines) since he misses not only important secondary sources (like L. Sprague de Camp's classic "Language for Time Travelers," Astounding, July 1938) but primary sources as well. Thus we get no specific examples of invaders who "...come charging in from far Arcturus...speaking a brand of English a professor might envy," but only Fletcher Pratt's complaint (just quoted) about such examples.**

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*Full title: "Language and Techniques of Communication as Theme and Tool in Science Fiction." Inquiries can be directed to the author, Box 606, Bloomington, Indiana 47401.

**One such story, where the hero overhears the "...stupid Earthlings, heh, heh, heh!" talk of conspiring invaders, was sent to the RQ several months ago. The rejection note elicited the following reply (which I swear I'm not making up): "If they hadn't been speaking English (how) could you have understood them? Anyhow how can you be certain the Invaders wouldn't be speaking English?"

Having risked one criminal charge ("lifemanship"), I'll make myself vulnerable to another by quoting my old review (in Kol Hillel) of P.J. Farmer's The Lovers: "Praiseworthy is the author's linguistic awareness (duplicated since only by Jack Vance) as exhibited in his references to the fearsomely complicated Siddo syntax and the difficulties involved for any terrestrial who tries to learn it. Surely we have progressed far from s.f.'s neanderthal period, with its notion of an alien language being imparted by telepathy or some equally silly device." I'm puzzled why The Lovers is not discussed by Dr. Krueger, since he does cite less important works by its author. Also, he discusses none of the Jack Vance stories that really delve into the communications problem, but only relatively inconsequential items like "Languages of Pao." Dr. Krueger's is still the most complete survey to-date, and so is required reading for linguists (amateur and professional), but it fails to discuss adequately the two writers who have done the best thinking on its subject.