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July

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J U L Y  
VOLUME VI, No. 1

1952

# Science Fiction Advertiser

is published at

1745 Kenneth Road, Glendale 1, Calif.

THIS MAGAZINE HAS CHANGED ITS NAME FROM...

*Fantasy Advertiser*

This Issue Contains--

Beginning on page 3, the second and concluding part of the article which has won the cash prize in our recent contest, DEUS EX MACHINA: A STUDY OF A. E. VAN VOGT, by ARTHUR J. COX

OUR COVER this issue is a scene from a forthcoming short film by MORRIS SCOTT DOLLENS

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# Deus Ex Machina:

A Study of A. E. van Vogt

by

Arthur J. Cox

(second of two installments)

C

Once I was at a gathering at which a person who knew van Vogt slightly said to another who had never met him, 'He's a social lion'. His voice held a peculiar emphasis, which I believe must have puzzled the other. Why this emphasis? What is unusual in a person's being a social lion? The answer must lie in the fact that something in the appearance of van Vogt, himself, contradicts his being 'a social lion', or seems to.

This is true. The impression van Vogt imparts is much more that of an ascetic - a detached, sensitive person who withdraws from social contacts. He is mild-mannered, has a bookish look, especially when he wears his pince nez. There is a hint of stiffness in the way he holds himself and in his gestures, though there is little noticeable nervousness. Primarily, his manner suggests shyness; and yet, he possesses social aggressiveness, shows no reluctance in giving public lectures, or in instituting what he considers necessary undertakings.

His whole character might be described in terms of such contrasts.

He speaks with seeming sophistication, phrasing his words carefully and forcefully. His speech suggests insight, incisiveness; his statements verge on epigrams, never quite become them. And yet, one also gets an impression of naivety.

Van Vogt's spoken sentences are as 'crisp...metallic...compact' as his written sentences. He speaks with great care. If he doesn't like a sentence he has started, he hesitates, says in effect - 'cancel.' - and runs it off again. This is self-consciousness in the formal meaning of the word, but he is not embarrassed by the habit. His interest is vested in the rigorousness of his phrasing, only partially in its effect on the person he's addressing.

This incisiveness is particularly well adapted to casual street conversations. I recall meeting him accidentally one day while walking, and my interest in his description of a discovery he had made. It seems that he'd been washing his hands - he held them out as if he were doing so, then - when he began to wonder just how soap worked. He looked it up and, to his surprise, found that it functioned in a fashion entirely foreign to his preconceptions. This illustrated to him the ease with which our ideas of those things we most take for granted may betray reality and how necessary it is, then, to be conscious of our 'abstractions from reality' as 'abstractions'. 'The Artist', he added, 'does not feel this.'

Often, we sense from his speech that same quality of sardonicness that was exhibited by the fourth resurrected man in 'The Monster': the

ready recognition of irony. This sardonicness should not be mistaken for cynicism, a trait of temperament which is impossible to van Vogt, if we are to judge from those times in which he has attempted to portray cynical characters in his fiction - for example, the gambler, Seal, in 'The Weapon Shops of Isher'. I can't resist quoting a passage from 'The Wizard of Linn' which shows, I believe, his conception of cynicism. It is the first installment. Clane Linn, in a period of national crisis, is walking through the city of Linn, accompanied by some guards. On approaching a crowd of people, interested in some street spectacle, he is recognized:

'...There was a sullen surging of a mass of people to get nearer to him. Somebody yelled: "There's Lord Clane, the man responsible for all our troubles."

'A furious murmur swept the throng. Beside Clane, the guards captain quietly motioned to the two dozen guards. The powerful men pressed forward, hands on swords and daggers. Clane, who had been watching the incident develop, stepped forward, a twisted smile on his lips. He raised his arm, and just for a moment, received the silence he wanted. He called out in his most resonant voice:

' "Long live the new Lord Advisor, Calaj."

'With that, he reached into a pouch, which he had carried for years for just such a moment as this, and brought it out clutching a handful of silver coins. With a flick of his wrist, he tossed the money up into the air. The metal glinted in the sun and came down over a wide area about twenty feet away. Even before it landed another handful sparkled in the air in the opposite direction.

'Once more he called, more cynically this time, "Long live the Lord Advisor Calaj."

'The crowd wasn't listening. There were shrieks as people stampeded after the money. Even after Clane's party was clear of the danger, he could hear cries of, "Give it to me, it's mine." "You wretch, you stepped on my hand." Feet scuffled, fists smacked audibly on the morning air.

'The incident made him bitter. Once again, he had been forced to rely on a technique for handling masses of people. Simple, effective, cunning, it was part of the vast fund of information he had about the man in the street.'

This passage reminds us of another line of thought about van Vogt: His fear and distrust of masses of people, of crowds. One evening in 1948, after a meeting of The Los Angeles Science Fantasy Society, several of the members were sitting around, discussing in a casual fashion some of the psychological and philosophical problems of life. Someone described an anxious experience he had had while in the army. It was VJ day and he had left the post; everyone else was off, also, having a hysterically happy, drunken time of it, the streets filled with shouting people, and--

'--and you thought they might harm you,' interjected van Vogt.

As it turned out, this wasn't what the other had felt or was leading up to, at all, but van Vogt's projection shows clearly what his own feelings would have been.

Besides the Clane Linn-mob incident, several scenes dealing with mobs, crowds, masses, appear in van Vogt's fiction. 'Slan' opens with a mob chasing a frightened ten-year old boy. One of his rare metaphorical flights of writing occurs in van Vogt's magazine version of 'World of A', third installment, in the description of a greedy lot of junk dealers who are scrabbling for the remains of the destroyed Games Machine and the much larger mass of people who witness this event:

'Even for a null-A, it was difficult to think of a third of a mile barrier of human beings as if each unit was an individual with a

personality of its own.

'The mob swayed or stood still. It had volitions that began like a tiny snowball rolling downhill, and grew into a landslide. There were gasps as people were crushed by the pressures; there were shrieks as the unlucky lost their foothold, and went down. People must have wondered vaguely at times what it was that they were standing on. But it couldn't have worried them very much.

'The crowd was a soulless woman; it reared upon its legs, and stared mindlessly at the ghouls who were feasting on the destroyed symbol of a world's sanity.'

This passage is toned down a bit in the book version. In another one of the Clane Linn stories, 'The Barbarian', the city of Linn is over-run by barbarians. The patrician lady, Lydia, views these rough men from the outer planets, and van Vogt says of her:

'...Looking at them, she felt justified in all the pitiless actions she had taken in her day. They were, it seemed to the grim old woman, living personifications of the chaos that she had fought against all her life.'

As far as I'm aware, none of van Vogt's characters have ever thought that crowds stink, a concern popular with those who dislike large masses (or certain groups) of people. In one story, just the opposite. In 'Far Centaurus' our protagonists have come from a more or less contemporary Earth into a later period of civilization. They are exhibited to vast, unwieldy, hero-worshipping crowds from enclosed cars so that people of that day wouldn't realize that they had an offensive body odor. ...An inversion of the usual feeling, which accomplishes with story-level justification, the same thing: standoffishness and protection from the crowds.

One might suspect that feelings such as this would lead to anxieties about the political or military dangers potential in the large mass of people. It is possible that van Vogt's stated belief in the impending American-Communist revolution justifies this suspicion. The gist of this belief is that there will be a political revolution in the election of 1956, in which Communism will become the dominant political philosophy of this country. The people of the United States, he feels, have been sold on a great idea - and that is, that our choice is between Capitalism or Communism, and that when the next depression occurs (which, I gather, will be between 1952 and 1956) they will react in a violent fashion. Seeing that Capitalism has 'failed', they will find nothing left but Communism. After that - he told us at the June 25th, 1948, meeting of the Pasadena Chapter of the General Semantics Society - general semantics would have to go underground, as Communism has shown itself to be against general semantics on several different occasions. At that time, he advocated the setting up before this revolution took place of an underground general semantics society, organized on the 'cell-system' of the current Communist movement.

He modified his views somewhat later. One evening, I attended a meeting of the Los Angeles cell of the General Semantics Society, at which van Vogt was to be guest speaker. It was a small gathering, largely because it had been transferred from its customary meeting place.

Van Vogt began his talk by describing his previous speech at the Pasadena Meeting and the views he had advanced then. It seems that afterwards he had been approached by the gentleman who was either acting Director or Secretary of the Society. This person's name I remember as Bill Nagle, though I'm told that his name was Charles Nagle. Nagle had a plan for saving general semantics, for enabling it to survive, even spread, under Communism; the founding of a General Semantics Church. A church, he felt, would be relatively secure from both suspicion and attack. It would provide a definite structure around

which to organize meetings; it would be able to cross borders, not being a political movement; and so on.

'At the word "religion"', van Vogt said, 'a shock went through my body. But on reconsidering...'

They discussed the project between themselves, and with several others. Nagle wrote a 'General Semantics Bible', in which general semantic principles were laid down, and another book which I suppose might be called a Testament or a Manifesto. Call it a Testament; the latter term is esthetically inappropriate. These discussions, I understand, went smoothly except for one factor which bothered everyone but Nagle: Nagle wanted to be Bishop, or Pope, for life. The others felt that it should be an elective office of shorter duration. But their problem was unexpectedly resolved: A short period of time later - some two weeks, I believe - Nagle died.

But van Vogt carried on the work, gaining permission from Nagle's widow to publish the 'Bible' and Testament he had written. Van Vogt read them both, in their entirety, the evening of that meeting. They were not overly lengthy. Both were written in Elizabethan English. Verily, I thought that the reaction would be negative, but I was disappointed in this. To my recollection, not a single critical word was uttered and there were quite a few words of enthusiasm.

However, I have heard nothing of the project since and Nagle's books have not been published. This may be because van Vogt found a more suitable means to achieve those ends for which he was striving in general semantics.

In September, 1949, an Eastern correspondent of mine, Bill Heijn, sent a letter to John W. Campbell suggesting that he be allowed to do an article for Astounding on one or several of such related subjects as general semantics, the Bates' eye-training methods, the Ames' relaxation exercises, and so on. Campbell replied no, because in the near future he was going to present to the world a new science which included all those things as a sub-science. Heijn was amazed and a second letter to Campbell brought the information that the new science was called 'dianetics'. Still that meant nothing to Heijn, or to me, when he told me about it by mail. Then he received from Campbell a 5000 word letter attempting to explain the system. Heijn typed out a copy which he passed on to me.

The first thing I discovered was that dianetics was invented by the science fiction writer, L. Ron Hubbard. I was somewhat surprised at this. Hubbard - to fill in the background briefly - was prominent in Los Angeles science fiction fan circles in 1948. He first showed up in January of that year. At that time, he told us a story more remarkable than most of his printed pieces: It seems 'that during an operation being performed on him for certain injuries received in the service he was actually dead for eight minutes.' While dead, he went toiling up a long hill; voices ahead were calling him - then, something pulled him back. He woke up on the 'white mule' being wheeled out of the surgery. 'I was dead, wasn't I?' he said to the nurse. 'She looked startled.' The doctor came over. 'I was dead, wasn't I?' he said to the doctor. 'The doctor gave the nurse a dirty look for having told me.' Hubbard realized that while he was dead, he had received a tremendous Inspiration, a great Message which he must impart to others. He sat at his typewriter for six days and nights and nothing came out - then, 'Excalibur' emerged. 'Excalibur' contains the basic metaphysical secrets of the Universe. He sent it around to some publishers; they all hastily rejected it. In all, twelve people read it. Four of them went insane, the other eight were seriously disturbed. Finally, he realized that 'Excalibur' was too potent. He locked it away in a bank vault. But then, later, he informed us that he would try publishing a 'diluted' version of it.

Shortly after this, it was mentioned in an article on him in Writers' Markets and Methods that he was writing a book entitled 'Traumatic Psychology'. Now, of course, 'traumatic psychology' has emerged as 'dianetics'. Dianetics, I was recently told by a friend of Hubbard's, is based upon one chapter of 'Excalibur'.

Dick Timmer, a friend, and I read Campbell's letter. It seemed hardly coherent at the time but as Campbell explained in the letter, he was writing it in one sitting, without revision. Timmer and I took the letter over to the van Vogt residence to see if he had heard about dianetics. He had; he'd received one or two similar letters from Campbell and was - perplexed. We spent some time discussing these letters, and later there were other sessions, as more letters arrived from Campbell and Hubbard. At many of these gatherings, Al Ashley, Charles Cooke, who is a professional hypnotherapist, a sister of Mayne van Vogt, and my younger brother, Bill Cox, were present as well as the van Vogts and I; Dick Timmer was present at only the first one.

Since then, all these people with the exception of Timmer, my brother, and I, have become convinced of the validity of dianetics. At that time, Ashley and I largely tended to be critical of the statements contained in the letters. Mayne was skeptical, but made no objections to the theory. Only van Vogt seemed to be impartial. His habit was to go through the letters and break them down, clause by clause, checking the 'validity' of each statement or assumption.

Much of the discussion dealt with Hubbard's activities when he was in Los Angeles. Van Vogt had been more impressed with Hubbard than most of us. Hubbard, it seems, had never told him the story of his death and resurrection. In fact, Hubbard had never told him much of anything; my impression is that he had mostly listened while van Vogt talked.

When Hubbard had been here, both he and van Vogt had been interested in hypnosis. Their approaches to the subject, however, were at opposite poles. Van Vogt's interest seemed to be speculative, experimental. He used what is sometimes called 'the laboratory technique' in hypnosis, characterized by its calm, scholarly approach, dependent upon a maximum of co-operation from the subject, and having as its end some definite goal. Hubbard used 'the stage technique'. He delighted in having his subjects sing 'God Bless America', seemingly under the impression that their listeners were entranced, view cavorting kangaroos through water glasses and be forced to take off their shoes 'because of the heat'. Hubbard seemed to be the more adept of the two, though he, despite his statements to the contrary, was obviously just learning hypnosis. He showed his usual social ease and command in handling it, but his work was often slipshod - he'd forget to bring his subject out of hypnosis, for instance, after he'd finished with him.

Van Vogt seemed to feel that Hubbard had done some mysterious things while he was in Los Angeles. It seemed to him that at least one person whom Hubbard had hypnotized had much improved - that there had been a change in his personality for the better. This person, though, had no memories of any extra-curricular activities on the part of Hubbard in their hypnosis sessions. It was true that he had once gone to Hubbard for advice about some emotional difficulties but all Hubbard had done (as he recalled) was to recommend that he read Dale Carnegie's 'How to Win Friends and Influence People'. But this didn't necessarily mean anything as, after this hypothetical dianeticoid-hypnoid session, amnesia might have introduced. I informed van Vogt that this person was amenable to hypnotic investigation to see if Hubbard had done anything with him of which he wasn't conscious and van Vogt was interested, but somehow it never came off. However, other efforts were made along that line: Another person who had been hypnotized by Hubbard once was willing, and a group of us journeyed over to his place for some hypnotic detective work. Nothing was discovered from him,

but - almost incidentally - Cooke, who was doing the actual work, decided to 'warm up' on my brother, who is a deep-trance subject. And it was discovered that Hubbard had given him a post-hypnotic suggestion to meet him one day on a certain street corner. Hubbard had then, apparently, had him do various little tricks such as being 'forced' to hold his hands on a 'red hot' wooden railing, then had patted him on the shoulder, laughing, and told him he could go home. Nothing very dramatic.

In one of the letters he received from Campbell, van Vogt was informed that some of the easiest results in dianetics had been gained by 'automatic writing'. He decided to try this. 'Dissociating' his right arm, he asked himself why he was continually getting head colds. Promptly, he began writing out a description of an incident which had supposedly occurred between his mother and a nurse prior to his birth. When he told me this he did not seem surprised, and neither was I. Why shouldn't we imagine anything which pleases our fancy in response to such a question, especially as a rational answer is negated by the very nature of the desired ('engramic') answer? I suggested to van Vogt that he might try asking himself in that manner some questions which were equally pertinent to reality, such as--

'Wait a minute,' he said. 'We'll try it right now.' He disappeared momentarily into the next room, and came back with a ouija board. He sat down on the couch, placing the board across his knees. 'Now ask your questions?'

'What was the number of the re-incarnation of the Hindu god, Vishnu, as Chrishna?' I asked.

His arm jerked, shivered; the pointer-weight moved beneath the question mark on the board and poised there.

I tried again. 'Is it true that Jesus Christ is the son of God?'

This time his arm moved, spelled out on the board, I-D-O-N-T-K-N-O-W.

For some reason, it didn't occur to me that the reason why the dianetic-oriented question got so much more of a positive response than the others might lie in an essential appeal of dianetic ideas to van Vogt. At that time, I still had no suspicion that his eventual decision would be anything but negative to dianetics.

In March of 1950, van Vogt received an advance copy of the May issue of *Astounding Science Fiction* containing Hubbard's first article on the subject: 'Dianetics: The Evolution of a Science'. I went over to visit him and to see the issue. 'It's on the mantle,' he said, indicating with his hand. I plucked it down and found myself staring into a dark visage which glared outward with yellow eyes, beneath which were the words, 'Dianetics, A New Science of The Mind'. The effect was startling. Van Vogt said that he had read the article and that it was quite well written and presented; he supposed that Campbell had helped Hubbard in its construction.

I read the article. Though it was coherent in a fashion, I found it atrociously written. Could it be that my reaction against dianetics was so strong that I couldn't even recognize quality of writing in accounts of the subject? When the issue appeared on the newsstands I read the article again, and discussed it with other people. Gradually, I became confident in my feelings about it. No one but van Vogt thought that it was intelligently presented or well written, not even those who had received it most enthusiastically. It was then that I knew what van Vogt's decision would be.

...In June or July, 1950, Alfred van Vogt was appointed head of the California Branch of the Hubbard Dianetic Research Foundation. At just about that time, some friends and I discussed, and I wrote, a crit-

ical article on dianetics. I submitted it to Astounding - Campbell rejected it - and also sent a carbon of the first draft to van Vogt to get his reaction. A couple of months later, in October, he called me and suggested that I come over to the new building housing the Foundation to discuss the article.

My brother accompanied me. Van Vogt showed us over the building briefly, and then we adjourned to a large sitting room. There we were later joined by a young man named Ray Something-or-other and, still later, by Mayne and a friend from Georgia. Hubbard wasn't present at the Foundation at that time. He was in Wichita, Kansas, I understood, setting up a dianetic foundation there; a good thing, too - it was to this sanctuary that he later retreated when Los Angeles became legally too hot for him.

The discussion of my article didn't last long. Van Vogt had not been impressed by any of my suggestions and he quickly disposed of them to his satisfaction. It was evident that he didn't take either my objections or my objecting seriously and considered it only a matter of time before I came around to the dianetic point of view. I wasn't particularly ambitious in carrying out the argument, as I was unsure of the points I'd developed in the article. The conversation went to other matters.

Van Vogt did most of the talking. He spoke a great deal about Hubbard. The man's ingenuity in dianetic auditing had greatly impressed him. He told about Hubbard's sending copies of a manuscript explaining dianetics to the American Medical Association and the American Psychiatric Association before the book was published, and the significant silence from them both. He mentioned with admiration Hubbard's description of the internal disintegration which occurs when a person - a German, for example - accepts Communism. And so on.

The conversation lasted a long while... Van Vogt said, in response to a question, that general semantics had always lacked something - a positive plan of action; something to do. It told you how to react, but not how to act. That was its limitation. He told us that he, himself, at that time, hadn't had more than a few hours of 'auditing' - 'practically none at all.' But, he added, Hubbard had issued an order that all executives in the Foundation had to have a specified amount of (extensive) auditing before a definite date.

He revealed that he was planning to establish the Hubbard Dianetic Educational Foundation. He was developing some techniques for teaching children, using dianetic ideas. 'I remember that when I was in grammar school,' he said, 'we spent six months studying South America alone.' He seemed to feel that, with the proper methods, a child should gain all the practical information he needed about South America in a few hours. These methods involved the use, mechanically, of a projector-screen set up and, dianetically, the placing of the child in a hyper-stimulated condition.

However, the Educational Foundation never materialized and soon after the Hubbard Dianetic Research Foundation folded. The furniture of the big building was auctioned. On December 9, 1951, the van Vogts re-opened the Hubbard Dianetic Research Foundation at a new address. The format was revised; the courses, probably abbreviated, were offered at \$15.00 a month, rather than \$500. In a little newsheet, 'The Computational Moment', van Vogt said that he was financing the organization from the advance royalties of some five or six books he has coming out in 1952. 'As you can see,' he said, 'we consider dianetics important.'

Thinking of van Vogt's acceptance of both general semantics and dianetics, we see that they hold certain characteristics in common. Perhaps the reader recalls the passage by van Vogt quoted in the last issue:

'...We start with baby, who has no convictions. He is easily frustrated by busy parents. The growing child suffers a thousand shocks of which his parents are not aware. There is next, the situation with other boys and girls, and with adults. And, above all, there is the fact that a young person's cortex is not physically fully grown. He is incapable of understanding emotionally what is happening to him. And this is just the beginning. Without proper training, even the fully grown cortex becomes easily "tangled"...

This view of the development of personal disturbances is not significantly different from that which is embodied in dianetics: The 'tangles' have become 'engrams', but structurally they are similar.

But there is another relationship between the two, and that lies in the relationship which each bears to authoritarianism. I would like to call the reader's attention to a recent book, 'The Authoritarian Personality', by T. W. Adorno, Else Frenkel-Brunswik, Daniel J. Levinson, and R. Nevitt Sanford. 'The Authoritarian Personality' is a study of - italics theirs - 'the potentially fascistic individual, one whose structure is such as to render him particularly susceptible to anti-democratic propaganda.'

The authoritarian usually comes from a family in uneasy circumstances. By this, a poor family is not necessarily meant but rather one in which the parents are concerned very strongly with economic and social position. The parents are usually disciplinarians. A 'breaking the spirit' routine imposed on the child inhibits spontaneity of feeling. Hostility is developed towards the parents, later generalized to include others, but since the child cannot allow himself to express these feelings because of the (imaginatively exaggerated) punishment it would involve, this animosity is excluded from consciousness; it is projected outwards upon others and so he comes to see the world in hostile terms - that is, he sees others as being essentially or potentially hostile to him. Since affection, friendliness, warmth of feeling, and so on, are inhibited he does not see relationships between people in these terms. Group status - hierarchy - and the relations between ingroups and outgroups become an automatic explanation of human relationships. We see here the basis of 'prejudice': Groups are thought of as being naturally inimical to one another, except under those circumstances in which they are bound together in a larger group as protection against other similar mass-groups. (In this connection, note Hubbard's four 'dynamics of survival': 1) Self; 2) Family; 3) Nation; 4) Mankind.)

Dianetics is an elaboration of the authoritarian attitude towards the world and the self. There is more of an association than there appears to be even at second glance. For example, the researchers on 'The Authoritarian Personality' project found at the Langley Porter Clinic in San Francisco that those emotionally-disturbed patients who would rate high in authoritarianism...

'...more often brought up the onset and causes of their symptoms because they felt as if these symptoms had come about mysteriously "all of a sudden" on a certain day and that "everything had been quite all right before." This is another example of the high scorers' unfamiliarity with their inner lives, their need to be like everyone else, and their strenuous efforts at keeping less acceptable impulses and emotions completely out of consciousness. When these impulses finally do break through in the form of symptoms, they are often felt as ego-alien intruders, which appear "suddenly" and often "without any reason at all.'" Page 939.

I am assuming here that the reader has at least a slight familiarity with dianetics, and so can see the similarity between the attitude described above and the formalized expression of this attitude in dianetics. Those patients, incidentally, at the Clinic who were least authoritarian in their attitudes did not assume that the cause of the psychological illnesses lay in some specific incident, but were inclined to relate their

disturbances to their entire life history.

We find another association. Dianetics seems to be primarily concerned with the 'psycho-somatic' diseases of allergies, arthritis, paralysis, and so on. The overwhelmingly major portion of its publicity has been about the removal of these illnesses by 'erasing' the 'engrams' which caused them. Besides the miraculous aspect this lends to the method, the findings of the research project at the San Francisco Clinic suggest another significance for this emphasis:

'There is also a tendency on the part of the high scorers to develop somatic rather than psychological symptoms. Many of these somatic symptoms, on closer examination, turn out to be an expression of repressed effects. Thus, the tendency to develop and focus on somatic complaints can be considered part of the defensive activity of the high scorer's narrow ego, which shuts out extensive parts of the individual's inner life and, as an additional defensive measure, causes rejection of any thinking in psychological terms and, instead, an emphasis on thinking in terms of physical causation.' Page 937.

Dianetics affords the authoritarian - 'pre-clear' - with a situationally-acceptable excuse for verbalizing his hostility towards his parents, family, and associates who have wronged him ('given him engrams') when he was helpless (in painful unconsciousness, or while embryonic). This emotional discharge results, or can result, in the release of the specific effect, or symptom, with which the 'pre-clear's' particular fantasies were, in this instance, associated.

So, we have the authoritarian: A person who has had to fall back upon substitutes for feeling, back upon an explanation of society phrased in the idiom of anger. But, now, imagine an even further bankruptcy of personal values. Imagine that this person's unconscious faith in the in-group-outgroup and status structure of the world is so shaken by some process that he does not even have that left. He has been cast loose without moorings, since he is tied to others neither by group-feeling nor by emotional attachments.

Paradoxically, though this person is in one sense poorer than the authoritarian, he is also in a much better psychological position: He is no longer so strongly subject to the irrationalities and prejudices inherent in authoritarian thinking; at least, he can be reached - something which is difficult with the authoritarian, because of the rigidity of his outlook.

I believe that this is the process behind the creation of the general semantic mind. I believe that the general semanticist is a person who has an authoritarian background or history, but that social or economic conditions have loosened the tightness of his grasp on group (class) thinking. Therefore, his sense of the 'rightness' of things becomes disturbed. Automatically, he seeks to dispel this anxiety from the area in which it rises. General semantics is an elaboration of this attempt. It is a means by which he both conceals and reveals the nature of his disturbance: Instead of examining the real area from which his conflicts originate - group (class) feeling and thinking, and its dissolution - he examines grouping (classifying) behaviour in general. The general semanticist repeats in an endless litany, 'To be is to be related', 'The map is not the territory', 'Stone<sub>1</sub> is not Stone<sub>2</sub>', like the compulsive neurotic who can face his anxieties only by acting them out, again and again, in disguised form.

This seems to be a special case of the attitude underlying most scientific thinking. One might say that the difference between the Artist (as a type) and the Scientist (as a type) lies in their relation to reality. The Artist is confident of reality: he reaches out and grasps it, molds it into a semblance of himself. The Scientist lacks this confidence. He attempts to establish the reality of the world by divining its boundaries:

he describes it, categorizes it, numbers its parts and draws a blueprint showing how they fit together. Since he lacks an emotional assurance of the reality of the world, he builds an intellectual counterpart of that assurance. The special difference between the scientist and the general semanticist is that the general semanticist's feelings were tied up with group thinking and so his examination is specifically limited to that area.

The general semanticist has a deep concern with always being correct. His reality-assurance is so low that any error or mistaken belief of his own which comes to his attention creates anxiety. Outwardly, he sees this as a recognition of the necessity for holding valid assumptions in order to 'adjust to reality', to 'survive'. This last word reveals the intensity of the anxiety. Possibly, many general semanticists were previously inclined to stereotypy in their thinking, and their interest in the subject is a reaction against this. This would tie in with our suggestion that the historical background of the general semanticist, either familial or personal, was authoritarian in nature. (I have noticed that most general semanticists seem to come from middle class, often upper middle class, homes and backgrounds. If nothing else did, this restriction of background would suggest an explanation of subscription to the philosophy in economic and social terms. Most of these people are lawyers, dentists, school teachers, and, occasionally, writers and psychologists. Few seem to have had an extensive education in philosophy; many seem to be vaguely anti-intellectual in their attitudes.)

An evident characteristic of many general semanticists is emotional repression. The system, itself, promotes this. The so-called 'semantic pause', or as van Vogt called it in 'World of A', 'the cortico-thalamic pause', is a method for achieving this in what would otherwise be difficult moments for persons for whom repressions of, say, anger is necessary. This 'pause' is also an Agency-revision of the mystic trance (see Addendum). General semantics attempts to promote 'integration' - that is, the general semanticist feels a lack of 'integration', a lack of harmonious union between intellect and feeling. This division between intellect and feeling, usually implied in general semantic statements but often denied explicitly by semanticists, also gives evidence of emotional repression as does the emphasis on the supposed difference between the neurological functions of the cortex and the thalamus. In the general semantic approach to psychological problems one is reminded of those long-armed grapples that atomic pile researchers use for handling small radio-active materials.

The conflict between intellect and feeling is one with which every authoritarian is familiar. He has present within him a semi-conscious anxiety that his 'primitive impulses' may rise up and overwhelm his reason, his sanity. He feels a need for control, for self-possession. (General semantics is a 'discipline', and general semanticists are often interested in 'related disciplines'.) This results in a hierarchal view of the ego; Emotions welling up from below; reason superimposed from above. The general semanticoid expression of this schemata is the 'thalamus-cortex' relationship (now officially discarded) and the dianetic version is the reactive-mind analytical-mind set up. This hierarchal system is also reflected in the psychoanalytic trinity, 'id-ego-superego', but psychoanalysis is by its nature non-authoritarian; it attempts to destroy repression, establish intraceptiveness, and so on.

The great distinction between the general semantic and dianetic systems is that general semantics is a movement away from fascistic modes of thought, whereas dianetics is a reaffirmation of authoritarian values. But general semantics reflects its origin in its structure, even while it searches for a humanist solution to the problems of existence. The general semanticist stands between authoritarianism and non-authoritarianism, painfully conscious of both. When dianetics appeared in Los Angeles, the local General Semantics chapter fell into two neatly

divided halves, dianetic and non-dianetic, like the two halves of a loaf of bread cut through by a sword - in this case, Hubbard's 'Excalibur'.

Narrowing our attention to van Vogt again, we find the conflicts discussed here - between authoritarianism and non-authoritarianism, between repression and expression - easily discernable. In recent years, he has become interested in the problems of emotional repression. In his analysis of people, he has often stressed this factor, although he also regards being 'too emotional' as dangerous, and criticised Andrew Salter's 'Conditioned Reflex Therapy' on this basis. When he first accepted dianetics, he discovered that he was an 'emotion-shutoff'. The reaction which seems most alien to van Vogt is anger.

In what is possibly his finest story, 'The Monster', we find a suggestive pattern.

A ship, manned by members of the galactic race of Ganae, looking for planets to colonize, comes to Earth. They find that it was once inhabited by a civilized race which was destroyed suddenly by some mysterious catastrophe. Before they can live on Earth without anxiety they must discover the nature of this disaster. By a remarkable method, they resurrect four men, one by one, from four periods of Earth's history, each successively resurrected man being from a later period than the previous one. And, one by one, they destroy each man after they discover his ignorance of the nature of the catastrophe - that is, they destroy all but the fourth who can control matter at will and so is immune to their weapons. He is 'The Monster'.

These Ganae have an intense race-consciousness. The story is told 'through the eyes' of Enash, one of the Ganae. This viewpoint is made feasible by the great detachment which Enash feels from the rest of his fellows. He stands slightly apart, looking on, and this depersonalized creature forms a bridge between the reader and the aliens. His feelings of alienness to what should be familiar to him makes seemingly familiar what should be alien to us. This is true up to a certain point in the story. Briefly, at this point Enash becomes outraged by an insult of 'The Monster' and, in a burst of anger, attacks him. The Fourth Man simply removes Enash from his presence, along with his fellows, who suddenly find themselves back on their ship. In that moment of emotional reaction, Enash merges with his race and so becomes alienated from us. He continues to be the vehicle of our impressions, but our sympathies are now divorced from him and have attached themselves to the only other character of importance left in the story, the Earthman.

Enash's anger is followed by his death. This sequence is not accidental, but illustrates the pattern underlying repression of the sort we have been discussing: If you show anger, you will be punished - i.e., destroyed. Note, too, that in Enash's conversion, he becomes an active member of a group, a mob, demonstrating once again the connection van Vogt feels between masses and anger, or destructive impulses.

In many of van Vogt's stories, anger is absent in those situations in which we are most sure it should be an ingredient. As is easily discernable, the great majority of his stories are, by their nature, paranoid fantasies: A man discovers that he is being controlled, used for mysterious purposes by unknown people or forces; concomitant with this discovery, or following on its heels, he finds that he is a superman with a destiny of world salvation. But in these story situations, one factor is missing that would make the paranoid pattern complete - and that is, our hero is not being persecuted. Of course, there are people who would like to see him out of the way, but open opposition is not persecution. The quarter from which this persecution should be expected to appear is from those mysterious beings who are controlling our protagonist. But we discover that these individuals - the 'Unknown

Chessplayer' in 'World of A', Lear in 'The Chronicler', Craig's wife in 'The Changeling' - do not have malevolent purposes. Their ends are mysterious, but supposedly commendable.

What does this unseemly lack of persecution suggest to us? First, we see that these people who control our protagonists generally turn out to be parent-figures - the bearded Lavoissier in 'World of A', the several thousand years old Lear in 'The Chronicler' - and what is more logical than that this should be so? Though this observation means little in itself, it brings another thought to our attention: The authoritarian, whose character has a paranoid cast, usually feels that he has been victimized by his parents. Consciously, his attitude towards them is conventional, often sentimental, uncritical of their behaviour; but thematic apperception tests readily outline the great load of hostility he bears for them. It's also revealed, of course, in dianetic revery by the violent nature of the fantasies constructed around the parents - for example, the 'attempted abortions' of the pre-clears', so numerous that they were given the abbreviated designation of 'AA'.

Van Vogt's feeling doesn't seem to be so much one of having been victimized by his parents, but rather of having been neglected. I would like to call the reader's attention once again to the quotation from Van Vogt's reply to Jack Catherin, in which he explains the genesis of psychological disturbances. In this paragraph he says: 'The growing child suffers a thousand shocks of which his parents are not aware.' There is a similar, more personal sentence in the printed version of his talk, 'Tomorrow On the March', in which he describes some of his personal shocks as a child. He says, 'My parents were not even aware that such problems existed for children.' Here, the feeling of neglect is clearly evident though the phrasing of the sentence absolves his parents of all blame; this casting into completely non-hostile terms is made necessary, I suspect, by an anxiety which arises whenever hostility appears. Van Vogt recognizes these images for what they are and so, just at that point where unconscious forces should come readily into play, they are blocked and diverted from their main course: He finds it necessary to divorce all hostility from the controllers of the protagonist, so that the protagonist, identified with himself, will have no reason to hate them. But the hostility is still present in the situation; it is represented by the antagonists: The story thus becomes one of a protagonist, controlled by mysterious forces, who through him are fighting people of groups who are hostile both to him and to the people controlling him. As pointed out in the last issue, in many of these stories a point is reached at which the protagonist graduates from his minion status; this point often occurs at the death or occlusion from prominence of a previously dominant character.

The lesser disguised stories of a truer paranoid would have the protagonist in conflict with strange, hostile forces who are controlling him or attempting to control him.

In the last issue we stated that van Vogt felt a great need for a strongly-held morality. We also stated that an act was by its very nature real and, if by acting in a moral fashion, one influenced others, they, in turn, might influence still others, so that a chain-reaction of good effects is created... 'In this way, one could accept the non-absoluteness of morality... as the general semanticist must, yet feel that it had a basis in reality.' If our thesis is correct that van Vogt was originally mystical in his outlook but, under pressure of necessity developed an essentially pragmatistic viewpoint - which is realistic in appearance, yet includes ingredients of mysticism - then it's not only possible, but likely, that his unconscious ideas of morality included an identification between it and the physical universe. This possibility is supported by his own account of childhood experiences. In 'Tomorrow On the March', he stated:

'...I came out of the mists of childhood in a small village in Saskatchewan, Canada, although I had been born in Manitoba. As I remember myself, I was quite an extrovert until about eight years of age. At that time I went to the rescue of my younger brother, who was being beaten up by a kid my size. Justice was on my side, but for once right did not triumph. The bully, who, as I have said, was no bigger than I, turned on me, and proceeded to give me the lambasting of my life. It was so unfair, so completely at variance with all the moral teachings I had received that I was devastated by the defeat. I who had been gregarious became a lone wolf...'

Here we see openly the felt connection between morality and the external world. We might suppose that this described incident was one of the first, or most important, incidents which disrupted his feelings of identification with reality; this disruption is similar to that same alienation mentioned previously which the scientist and the general semanticist have experienced - the specific scientist in his more general way, the general semanticist in his more specific way. Probably, van Vogt's morality was connected with group-feeling, which is not unlikely; the impairment of one was the impairment of the other. Traditionally, by the way, it has always been through the medium of morality that man has felt his most potent identification with the physical universe.

We find this need for morality in van Vogt illustrated in his stories in a peculiar way: In his death-and-resurrection theme, in 'Slan', Kathleen Layton Gray, our heroine, is murdered and then revived from the dead. In 'The Weapon Makers', the Empress Innelda Isher reawakens, vivified, on her death bed. In 'The World of A', Gilbert Gosseyn is killed on page 54, but continues afresh on page 55. In 'The Monster', four Earthmen are resurrected from the dust of their bones.

These are interesting, but there are even more significant variations on the theme: Sickness, delirium, and near-death. I believe that it's in 'Attitudes Toward History' that Kenneth Burke points out the meaning of symbolic death scenes. He noticed that whenever a scene occurred in a novel in which the protagonist passes through a period of deep sickness - becomes deathly ill - that the quality of the writing changes afterwards, as well as the nature of the story. It is not too difficult to discover why: What is being presented is a scene of death-and-rebirth. In most fiction, a real death and rebirth would be unfeasible, and so a substitute is needed; this substitute is, simply, near-death, a period of unconsciousness, perhaps accompanied by feverishness of body and spirit, with hallucinations (death - purgatory - rebirth).

Several van Vogt stories are excellent illustrations of this. In 'The Wizard of Linn', an illness overcomes Clane Linn. He is wracked by fever and nightmare for many days; his life is despaired of by his friends and servants. But one morning he awakens, not only well but refreshed; the nightmare period was over: 'It was as if vistas had sealed shut, and fantastic depths receded behind him.' The story departs from its former gloomy atmosphere. Clane is filled with new purpose. And suddenly, one-two-three-effortlessly, he solves all the problems of the story, everything falling into place.

In 'World of A', we have a similar situation. Gilbert Gosseyn has been told that he must die a second time, so that the third Gilbert Gosseyn can come onto the scene. He is dismayed by this suggestion but, eventually, circumstances and the realization of the inevitable force him to it. He buys a gun, a hypnotic drug, and a phonograph record. With the disc, he makes a recording, in a monotone voice, of a repeated suggestion to kill himself. Then, he takes the drug and waits. Concurrently with this, the Games Machine is attacked by atomic torpedoes coming from the direction of Venus. In the process of its destruction, it broadcasts frantic warnings to Gosseyn, whose radio picks it up, not to kill himself because his third body, into which his 'psychic spark', so

to speak, would leap when the second body is dead, has been destroyed. But Gosseyn, drugged, is delirious and cannot understand what the Machine is saying. This nightmarish near-death is the symbolic death; Gosseyn is prevented from actually committing suicide by Patricia Hardy who binds his hands, after turning off the record and removing the gun. When he awakens, instead of 'the dark impulse of suicide', Gosseyn finds a different emotion:

'.....Out of the depths of him welled a cheerful confidence, a bouyant sense of certain victory, a conviction that nothing could stop him.'

And it is from this point that the story changes, in the same fashion as 'The Wizard of Linn'. Van Vogt writes: 'It was so close that it was as if he had died, and this was resurrection.' The story becomes surer-paced; Gosseyn is confident, aggressive. He is no longer controlled by others; he controls himself.

There is a similar pattern in 'The Changeling', though the episode depicting the symbolic death is much longer. Once again, our hero awakes and effortlessly solves the problems in the story. This one, incidentally, has a more basic story-connection with the theme of death-and-rebirth than do most of the others, as it concerns 'totipotism', rejuvenation and regeneration of limbs and parts.

The death-and-rebirth sequence also takes place in 'The Rull'. It begins with the passage quoted at the beginning of Part One of this article: 'The will to death is in all life...' Here, it comes near the end of the story but the pattern is complete.

Death-and-rebirth is primarily a conversion phenomenon. It grows out of a need for morality and feelings of guilt. It's embarrassing to condemn a fraud, if ones own hands are not clean. It's awkward to praise truth when faced by the memory of a lie, no matter how much one regrets having lied. To such a moral dilemma, there are two obvious solutions: Confession, by which ones sins are 'washed away' by public expiation - and death-and-rebirth, which introduces a break in the continuity of the self, so that the guilt belongs to the older. The moral life is begun anew. Here we see the meaning of the Christian doctrine, 'You must be born again.'

As mentioned, the death-and-rebirth theme cannot be presented in most fiction in a literal fashion because of its 'unrealistic' nature. In science fiction, we do not have this limitation as, for most practical purposes, any event can be depicted as happening. Therefore, it was inevitable that it should take place in van Vogt's stories several times. I believe, however, that these 'real' deaths are less satisfying than the symbolic deaths, as their literal nature does not permit easily the inclusion of the fever-nightmare-purgatory element. This is why the 'real' death of Gilbert Gosseyn in 'World of A' is but a staged rehearsal of the 'false' death, which is the real thing. There was a slight nightmarish sequence preceding the killing of Gosseyn I by the palace guards, as presented in the 'torture scene', but this was not sufficiently intense to set the whole pattern in motion.

It's interesting to note that the second Gilbert Gosseyn was more powerful than the first; and that the Unknown Chessplayer had planned to have Gosseyn II killed so that the even more powerful Gosseyn III could appear and destroy the antagonists. But, as stated, I do not believe that these painless deaths were satisfying enough to van Vogt, so he prevented the second one from occurring and substituted for it the symbolic death.

This sequence of Gosseyn I-Gosseyn II-Gosseyn III, each with greater powers, is reflected also in 'The Monster': The Ganae revive four men, each from a later period of Earth's history: The first is an ancient Egyptian who believes momentarily that he is before the gods of Egypt; he is ignorant both of his own nature and of the nature of the exter-

nal world. The second is a man of contemporary period who thinks that he's experiencing an alcoholic hallucination (he was killed in an accident, driving while drunk). When asked how an internal combustion engine works, he told them that you just put the car in gear and step on the gas. The third man is from a period much later than this. He sits up, sees them, and instantly understands their origin and implications of their presence. His thinking is very quick and accurate. He can control flows of energy but not well enough to prevent himself from being destroyed by an atomic bomb dropped on the city in which he's present. The fourth man revived is too powerful to be destroyed.

That each body should be graduatingly more powerful is interesting. Why should a power theme be presented in a pattern connected with morality, which grows out of morality? The answer must lie in the fact that van Vogt subjectively finds some connection between the two. In his description of the beating he took from the childhood bully, we see an implied association between 'power' and morality there - in his feeling that he should have won, because justice was on his side. Right makes might. He lost, and that was psychically disastrous because it destroyed, or helped destroy, his confidence in the justice-is-power and power-is-just ideals in which he'd been trained. This right-makes-right association was founded on authoritarian (group-and-status) value; and the shaking of his confidence in these, in group thinking, turned his attention in the direction of grouping (classifying) behavior. Years later, this attitude found expression in his subscription to general semantics. Philosophically, he found it possible to retain much of his previous moralism by disguising it in pragmatistic dress (Purpose becomes Agency), and this was in harmony with the nature of general semantics, dianetics, and other systems which he has accepted.

Van Vogt has a strong concern with power and status, with position. His stories deal with emperors, queens, kings, and presidents 'because these are dramatically more interesting'. The names of his characters, Gosseyn and Czinczar, were selected from the names of ancient rulers. (Gosseyn also means 'Go Sane', as has been pointed out by Forrest Ackerman, much to van Vogt's surprised realization; and Czinczar phonetically contains the titles of the three greatest hereditary lines of ancient times - Tsin, Czar, and Caesar.) His heroes are potentates and princes.

But van Vogt is not unaware of the conflict between humanism and authority - power. This conflict is often acted out in his stories. In the Clane Linn series, for instance, we might say that Clane represents morality, Czinczar, the striving for power. However, the desire for power is not easily controverted, as we note in that unapproachable arrogance which the humble sometimes unwittingly display: Although Clane Linn doesn't desire to become Lord Leader, he does become so, almost against his will, as was the case with Claudius Caesar in 'I,

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THERE WAS NO MAY ISSUE OF S.F.A. \*\* AND THIS IS WHY...

When the March issue went to the printer, I had arranged a schedule which would have brought out the May, July, and September issues at seven week intervals. This is about the tightest scheduling possible, but the major articles for the next 3 issues had been set up, and nothing seemed likely to interfere with its accomplishment. The Nov. '52 issue would have been the 18th since Nov. '49, which would have been par for my first three years of publishing the Advertiser.

BUT -- immediately after the printer placed the March issue with the express co., there was a strike among the drivers and the issue reached me a month late. I might yet

Claudius'. Again, 'Deus Ex Machina'.

The conflict over power - not simply a conflict between two powers - is also the subject of his recent story, 'Fulfillment', which, commencing from an authoritarian viewpoint, arrives awkwardly at a humanistic solution.

'Fulfillment' seems a good portent in a couple of ways. For one, van Vogt once again displays in it his old freshness of writing, that pleasurable sharpness of prose which has been missing from so many of his recent stories. Then, too, its conclusion speaks well for the future. I believe that van Vogt has a genuine impulse to truth. He also has an ingenious mind. Unfortunately, the two often seem to be at odds with each other.

#### ADDENDA

Some very brief accounts of Hubbard's statements and activities while he was in Los Angeles may be found in the Los Angeles Science Fantasy Society minutes published in Shangri-La's 5, 6, and 7; mostly confined to statements he made during meetings of the club.

'The Authoritarian Personality', by T. W. Adorno, et. al., is part of the 'Studies in Prejudice' series; published by Harper & Brothers, 1950. My statements about the authoritarian basis of dianetics have also appeared, in a different form, in Rhodomagnetic Digest, October-November, 1951, issue, under a group-name for myself and some friends.

For an interesting discussion of the relation of the mystic trance to general semantics' 'semantic pause', see the Autumn, 1951, issue of ETC.: A Review of General Semantics, an article by Charles Morris entitled 'Comments on Mysticism and Its Language'. Kenneth Burke, in his book, 'Attitudes Toward History', also gives a description of the physiological mechanism involved in the mystic trance - quoted in his book, 'Grammar of Motives' - which one suspects is equally applicable to the 'semantic pause'.

Some of the suggestions as to the nature of general semantics included here were suggested to me by Kenneth Bannell. He has written one paper on the authoritarian basis of general semantics and is working on another in which he will demonstrate the similarity of the social forces behind general semantics and nominalism, which arose with the breakdown of feudal society - just as general semantics seems to be connected with the dissolution of the middle class in the United States. The first paper was submitted to ETC., but was rejected by its editor as being 'too limited in its appeal' to justify printing.

My remarks about general semantics should not be taken as a criticism of semantics as a research science; nor as a criticism of philology, linguistics, metalinguistics, or similar studies. I am speaking of general semantics as a movement.

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have published a May issue, but (inasmuch as, in general, it is receipt of the current issue that brings out ads for the next) it would have had only about 2 pages of ads. I'm not that much of a philanthropist -- and the issue would have disappointed you anyway.

Regarding SFA's responsibility to advertisers when an issue is delayed: if the delay occurs before printing, I will give each advertiser the opportunity of withdrawing or revising his ad. If it occurs after the copy has left my hands, I will take a very dim view of demands for refunds. SFA loses a considerable sum each issue and cannot survive many such additional losses. I want to thank each advertiser and subscriber who has not held me personally (and financially) responsible for the recent unfortunate delay. the editor

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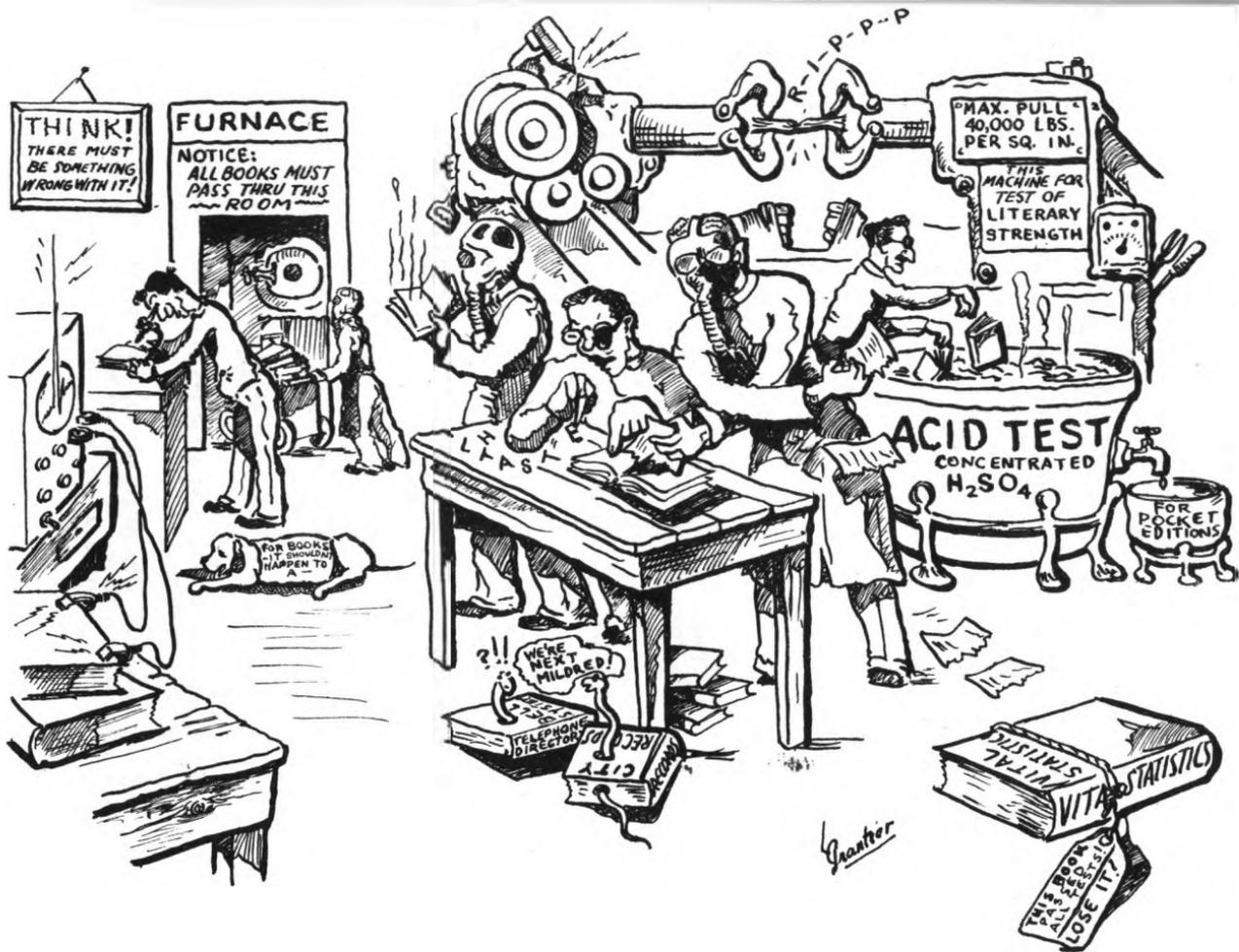
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# Book Reviews

## The Weapon Makers by A. E. van Vogt Greenberg, New York, 1952. 2.75.

"... van Vogt used the same pattern in his second novel, 'The Weapon Makers', (with) a chapter dealing with Captain Hedrock alternating with one dealing with Dan Neelan. But this time he was less successful, for in the case of 'Slan' the shape given the story by alternating chapters had a definite meaning ... in 'The Weapon Makers', however, we simply have two stories taking place against the same background and connected with a variety of minuscule, meaningless themes. Our major impression is a sense of disorder." (---Arthur J. Cox, in "Deus Ex Machina", March issue of SFA.)

I would appreciate knowing what Cox thinks of the novel now; whether the sense of disorder has been increased (as in the case of this reviewer), or whether the work has become more clear to the casual reader because of extensive revisions.

In the above quotation from his article, Cox is speaking of the magazine version published by Street & Smith in 1942, and the first book version published by the Hadley Publishing Co., (Providence) in 1947. (Not having the magazine serial at hand, I'm assuming these two versions are identical.) Two months ago, however, Greenberg brought out a new edition on van Vogt's second novel which easily may be regarded as a different version, or even a new story if the reader prefers. The author has not only revised and polished the original version, he has accomplished a major surgical operation on the body of the story, drastically altering the original plot, theme and action. For this reason, it will be necessary to review both the Hadley and Greenberg books here, for comparison purposes.

In the original, as Cox has pointed out, alternating chapters tell two alternating but simultaneous stories. In the one story we follow secondary-hero Neelan (gambler, meteorite miner, scientist) as he seeks his twin brother who is supposedly dead. Neelan returns from a lonely meteorite to find the brother missing, amid hints that he may have been working on an interstellar drive. Tracing leads, Neelan eventually discovers an actual ship equipped with such a drive and is hired to repair the motors; the villain in charge is of course the man who did away with the brother. Meanwhile, the Empress Innelda of Isher stumbles onto the ship and traps Neelan into her power, offering him untold riches if he will turn the ship over to her. Instead, the secondary-hero steals a lifeboat powered with the same drive and flies to Centauri, where he not only locates his twin brother almost dead from exposure, but finds himself captured by spider-like creatures. At the end of that story, the Neelans are re-united, the spiders have departed elsewhere, and all hands settle down to await the day when Earth will build interstellar ships and come to their rescue.

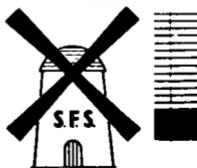
Meanwhile of course, alternating chapters have been spinning the tale of primary-hero Robert Hedrock (immortal man,

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founder of both the Weapon Shops and the Royal House of Isher.) Hedrock finds himself in trouble with the Shops because of his (concealed) superior intelligence and is nearly executed; he also manages to get into trouble with the Empress and is nearly executed. His openly-announced business is to marry her and thus provide the Isher Empire with an heir; despite the machinations of van Vogt and the early opposition of the empress, he finally does just that. In the course of the story he learns of the interstellar drive, but takes little part in its development because he is busy fighting off the Shops who are getting out of line and becoming dictatorial. In the end of that story, the Shop Constitution is reaffirmed, the wayward councilors are spanked and the Empress has his child - in the meantime learning that Hedrock is immortal and "reappears" from time to time to keep the Royal Line going. So much for the original versions of "The Weapon Makers".

For the Greenberg edition, van Vogt outstrips his past performances and this reviewer, for one, is left helpless.

The book opens with solitary-hero Hedrock (who is all things to all men) in trouble with both the Empress and the Shops, and threatened with execution by both. Very briefly, Dan Neelan appears, seeking his lost brother, and is then tossed aside to be seen no more as Hedrock takes up the search for him. Thereafter, Hedrock plays both parts of the original version, doubling over as Dan Neelan when the need arises. He traces leads and locates the hidden interstellar ship, is hired to repair the motors, hints to the villain that he is the twin brother, is offered riches by the Empress to deliver the ship to her, instead steals the lifeboat and flies to Centauri, locates the missing brother, and gets himself captured by the spider-folk. At this point, as an experiment, the spiders allow him to return briefly to Earth, and Hedrock then takes up the first-version battle to put the dictatorial Shop councilors in their place. He is afterwards brought back to Centauri where he vanquishes the spiders, revives the dying brother and his associates, and all hands look up into the sky to find an interstellar rescue ship awaiting them. Again on Earth, he sits in on the birth of his child and the Empress knows the truth about him.

Hedrock playing Hedrock is the smooth, superpowerful immortal man, master of all; Hedrock playing Dan Neelan, seeking and reviving the dying brother by means of the brothers' close emotional and mental ties, is something else again. It fails to satisfy, fails to become believable. And here and there through the Greenberg book are traces of the Hadley version which should have been erased, to be consistent with the new order, but were overlooked. As an example: in the original, Neelan emerges into the open wearing an invisibility suit but is quickly spotted by an Isher soldier equipped with a scanner. In the new version, Hedrock emerges into the open wearing an ordinary atomic radiation suit, but is quickly spotted by the same soldier with the same invisibility scanner. Although I did not make notes as I read, I finished with the impression that other such mistakes were included.

I don't believe this new edition will affect the price of the earlier volume, not when the nature of the later edition is known. That Hadley version remains a scarcity.

Bob Tucker

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## Three Magazine Collections

THE ASTOUNDING SCIENCE FICTION ANTHOLOGY

Simon and Schuster, New York, 1952. 583 pp., \$3.95.

THE BEST FROM FANTASY AND SCIENCE FICTION

Little, Brown, Boston, 1952. 213 pp., \$2.75.

GALAXY READER OF SCIENCE FICTION

Crown Publishers, New York, 1952. \$3.50.

Each of these collections has been assembled by the editor(s) of its magazine. Presumably, whatever other considerations may have intruded themselves, each of these volumes was compiled with its editor's thoughts not entirely dissociated from his magazine's future circulation quantity. Each, then, is to be accepted as illustrative of each editor's editorial preferences. If your selections would have been different, you may say that these don't reflect their native magazines at their best. But, what is probably of greater significance, it must be conceded that they are accurate representations of the kinds of stories each editor now wants and which he will prefer to buy until such time as that preference undergoes revision. There is a partial exception in the case of Campbell's selections: his choices have been drawn from a period beginning with 1940.

Beyond that point of editorial favoritism, until now known to us only by inference of doubtful accuracy, I have little to say of these to readers of this magazine ... short of essaying lengthy analyses of the individual magazines: Astounding Science Fiction and its extensive, sometimes reckless playing with philosophical and sociological aspects of future technology; Galaxy and its slick-paper type stories in future situations; Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction and its wide coverage of obscure older stories, its many new writers, and its emphasis on maturely finished fantasy. But this I have no inclination to attempt. Arthur Cox has done an excellent treatment of an important facet of ASF in this magazine recently ("Astounding's Science Fiction: Some Changes in Form", September 1951), and presumably he or some other scholar in the field will here present similar discussions of the other two magazines.

Let it now suffice to remark that we now have available in hard covers convenient samplers of the three quality sf magazines - those who like to proselytize have had their task greatly simplified. Of course, if you haven't been reading the magazines, each of these titles is a must for you. And I predict that after reading them, you'll be seeking back issues of at least one of them.

George D. Martindale

## The Planets: THEIR ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT

by Harold C. Urey. Yale University Press, New Haven, 1952; Svo, 236 pp., photograph, and indices. 5.00.

This book is principally a contribution to knowledge of its subject. It was not written as a summary of previous work, although there is presented here a wealth of such information. But that is mere groundwork upon which the author



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constructs his concepts. This, of course, is done with the emphasis being on physical chemistry. In his preface, Dr. Urey says:

"Perhaps it will surprise readers of this volume that a physical chemist should undertake to prepare a book on 'The Planets - Their Origin and Development'. And indeed it astonished me that I or anyone of similar training and experience should be able to say anything on the subject. As time has gone on my surprise has disappeared. The physical chemical problems are many, they are very involved, and the evidence in regard to them is very detailed....

"The chemical data must be understood in terms of physical facts and physical theory as well as in terms of geological and geophysical evidence, and all must fit into astronomical evidence and theory. However, as astronomers have had undisputed possession of the field since ancient times, except for some interference from religious leaders and ancient religious writings, some discussion from other sciences may prove useful. In most scientific work it is necessary to have some acquaintance with neighboring scientific fields. In the case of the origin of planetary systems, the study of each new phase of the problem calls for learning another complete science."

The physical chemical evidence as here applied to the study is in support of the theoretical body that has grown from the Kantian suggestion of a cloud of dust and gas forming concentrations which became the sun and planets. Dr. Urey's contributions greatly augment and in some degree break from the theory as he found it. My knowledge of his field is insufficient to entitle me to an opinion of his work.

It is not necessary that the reader be acquainted with previous planetary origin theory. Dr. Urey supplies that background skilfully. The quantity of pleasure and knowledge afforded the reader will vary directly with his knowledge of chemistry, but one who has studied the subject only in high school will find both in sufficient measure to repay him amply for buying and reading the book.

Folded in is a one-foot-diameter composite photograph of the moon, first and last quarters, which provides greater detail than any full moon photograph.

John Elstrom

## **Jack of Eagles** by James Blish Greenberg, New York, 1952. 246 pp., 2.75.

As is his wont in science fiction, James Blish has written in "Jack of Eagles" an extremely entertaining and consistently exciting story. The novel, however, is not, whatever the lack of a previous copyright credit on the nether side of the title page may imply, to be classified, like de Camp's "Rogue Queen" and Williamson's "Dragon's Island", as a completely original and previously unpublished book, but should be recognized, in company with Temple's "Four-Sided Triangle" and van Vogt's "Voyage of the Space Beagle", as a reworking and enlarging of a shorter work initially published in the science fiction magazines. The skeletal structure of the story, thinly but adequately fleshed in Kuttnerian prose, ap-

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peared as a "complete novel" under the title "Let the Finder Beware" in the December, 1949, number of Thrilling Wonder Stories. The present novel, some three and a half times the length of the magazine story, is, in contrast, a firm, rotund, healthy work, fully matured, though its prose fleshing is still distinctly Kuttnerian.

Aside from its competent writing, fairly careful plotting, excellently maintained suspense and frequent gusts of humorous commentary which occasionally border on real satire, "Jack of Eagles" is not a distinguished or unusual book. There is nothing at all unique in the thematic concept of the novel - indeed, Blish seems to have imbibed more heavily than most of the Rhine wine that has been going the rounds of the more overworked professionals in the field lately - and the characterization is about standard for pulp fiction, some of this latter being given a rather engaging edge, however, by the very real quality of humor of which Blish is the happy possessor. The fundamental drawback of the book, however, lies in its complete lack of any quality of individuality: the novel has, for me, no Blishness to characterize it, to set it aside from the general anonymous waste of science fiction prose at large. Consequently, despite the quite thorough pleasure one enjoys at the time of reading the book, in a week the novel has subsided in the reader's memory into that dull gray category of books one never remembers having read unless reminded of the fact.

It is a precept of mine, in reviewing, not to enter into specific details of the plot of a book I feel I can, within whatever limits, recommend to the reader; I feel the reader should have the chance to experience the same pleasures of discovery that have been the reviewer's. However, I should like to make a minor exception in this instance in order to mention the single, if minor, element of the extraordinary in "Jack of Eagles". This is that the novel's hero, Danny Caiden, indulging in the hypermachinations necessary to offset those of the villain, utilizes his psychokinetic power to bring down a bolt of lightning upon the building in which he is a prisoner and, in the process, kills an innocent bystander. This does not faze young Caiden for a moment, who promptly makes his getaway, but the extraordinary thing is that it happened at all in a pulp fiction story. That the sympathetic central character in such a work should inadvertently but through his own doings bring not just grief or disaster which can be (and is) corrected or amended later, but final, irrevocable death to a completely innocent person is so astoundingly unusual that the reader finds himself stunned, halted dead in mid-passage, unable initially to accept this complete upheaval of accepted values. It is, I think, courageous of Blish to face the probable outcome of the destruction wrung from the skies into the heart of a great city by his protagonist, but the sudden intrusion of a sordid and realistic happenstance into the otherwise enchanting skein of his fantasy was, I feel, an artistic error.

"Jack of Eagles", then, is a book for those of us whose reading tastes are broad enough to include books whose sole quality is entertainment value; as such, Blish's novel is to be greatly recommended: it should be read, at least, if not really to be considered as a permanent addition to the select library of one's shelves or one's mind.

William Blackbeard

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FIVE AGAINST VENUS by Philip Latham

EARTHBOUND by Milton Lesser

John C. Winston Co., Phila., 1952; each approx. 210 pp., \$2

Inasmuch as juvenile stories are by ordinary written about people of somewhat more advanced age than that of the intended reader, I infer that these books, whose typical protagonist is sixteen years old, were written for readers of about ten to fourteen years.

This reviewer, who has had full opportunity of recovering from the dissipation attendant to his fourteenth birthday, has read two of them and spotted one other. I do not count this time entirely misspent. Good juvenile writing is not poor writing. Its plotting and development is not less exactly done. Its principal limitations are defined only by the experience and background common to the age group the author seeks to please. What I have read of these I count good juvenile writing. Your fourteen year old son, brother, or friend will enjoy them, and you might try them before giving them to him.

The best of those I tried is Raymond Jones' book. Its protagonist - Ron Barron, astronomer, electronics experimenter, hot-rod enthusiast, etc. - is discoverer of a crashed flying saucer. Sole survivor is an alien, Clonar, of maturity approximating Ron's. Clonar becomes in turn guest of Ron, prisoner of the army, fugitive, and ambassador who convinces his people that Earth (barely) deserves more than extinction.

Ron has a continual fight with army brass of various alloys (whose collective attitude follows the "Day the Earth Stood Still" pattern) and eventually proves himself their superior in intelligence, ethics, and intuition. Surely a not unlikely contrast.

Jud Marshall

## Frontiers in the Sky by Rog Phillips. Shasta, 1952 (reviewed from galley proofs; to be published in July)

I read this book in circumstances which, it is to be hoped, will suggest imitative ideas to other local writers. When the galley proofs from Shasta had been received, the author and his wife most bountifully wined and dined me, and then, during that part of the day when a writer works and a working man reads, Rog wrote and I read. Let no one deny that the press is privileged. And now, perhaps, if I were to take them a copy of this script, Rog could review the review of his book for The Club House and Mari could do the same for Fandora's Box, all before the book's publication.

But whenever that is to happen, it is of course necessary for me to say that I liked "Frontiers in the Sky". I think it fortunate, though not unexpected, that that may be said with sincerity.

This story posits that travel from Earth to "upstairs" may, because of practical limitations, become a one-way pos-

OPERATION FANTAST HANDBOOK, 1952 Edition, containing 40 pages of information for and about the science-fantasy world, will be available in April, 1952. Contents include a full list of currently published magazines and fanzines, with details of editorial addresses, prices, etc.; addresses of fan-clubs, book dealers and publishers, libraries, pocket book publishers, magazine dealers, and many other notes of use to fans. Naturally enough, it also contains full information on OPERATION FANTAST itself. Copies will be mailed free to advertisers and O. F. members upon publication. Others may obtain copies by sending 25¢ to Phil Rasch, 567 Erskine Drive, Pacific Palisades, California.

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## Other Publications Received

MURDER IN MILLENIUM VI by Curme Gray. Shasta, Chicago, 1951. 249 pp., \$3.00. A first novel, previously unpublished.

MY JOURNEYS WITH ASTARGO by Perl T. Barnhouse. Bell Publications, Denver, 1952. 212 pp., wrapps., unpriced.

SPACE HAWK by Anthony Gilmore. Greenberg, New York, 1952. 274 pp., \$2.75. A novel from the legendary Hawk Carse series which appeared in Astounding Stories, 1931-1932.

GREEK HISTORICAL THOUGHT by Arnold J. Toynbee. New American Library, New York, 1952. 202 pp. and index, 35¢. Reprint.

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2. A 'new' subscriber shall for this purpose be defined as one who has not previously been a subscriber since the November 1951 issue.
3. Shorter than \$1 subscriptions won't count and larger ones, though acceptable, will count only as \$1 subs. to refund-winning contestants
4. New subscribers may send in their orders themselves and designate the contestant who is to be credited.
5. Subscription orders postmarked through September 10th will be honored, and winners will be announced in our November issue.

GOING TO SAN DIEGO? CHICAGO? OR ANY CONVENTION? When you do, try to find time to do a little stumping for SFA.

D'YA PUBLISH A FANZINE? Need a filler for it? Then think real hard, see if you can come up with something good to say about SFA. Your readers who subscribe may name you as the contestant who won them over.

ARE YOU A MEMBER OF A LOCAL CLUB? It wouldn't be easy, but if you could sign up the majority of your club's members, you would very likely win one of the top prizes.

ARE YOU ISOLATED FROM ALL OTHER SCIENCE FICTION READERS? You may still have a good chance, if you've the time and a little postage to spend. Dream up a good sales talk and mail it to the fans who write letters to the magazines. Ask them to give me your name when they subscribe - I'm honest.

I VERY MUCH DOUBT THAT THE TOP WINNER WILL GET OVER 20 SUBS! If you're thinking that your chances are small, that some other fan will desert his job, family, and magazine collection for the next three months in order to win this contest let me assure you that everybody else reading this suspects the same improbable thing and is deciding not even to try. This contest was announced two months ago. So far, there are two entrants. You might be the only other one!

ABOUT THE FIRST PRIZE: This book has been called 'the most beautiful and valuable fantasy book ever published', and we think its winner will agree. It's over 12" high, 2" thick, bound in half vellum; the text (which is strictly fantasy, not s-f) is reproduced from beautiful hand lettering, and it and the 49 wonderful, full color pictures are each separately mounted on mat paper. An ad in this magazine last year, offering \$500 for a copy, flushed only 3 (and one of these was not for sale at the offered price!). THIS IS A BOOK THAT YOU MIGHT NEVER FIND AGAIN. ONE THAT THE WINNER WILL TREASURE FOR AS LONG AS HE READS OR COLLECTS BOOKS OF ANY KIND.

AS THIS ISSUE GOES TO PRESS THE LEADING CONTESTANT HAS FOUND ONLY TWO NEW SUBSCRIBERS - DON'T YOU THINK YOU COULD BEAT HIM?