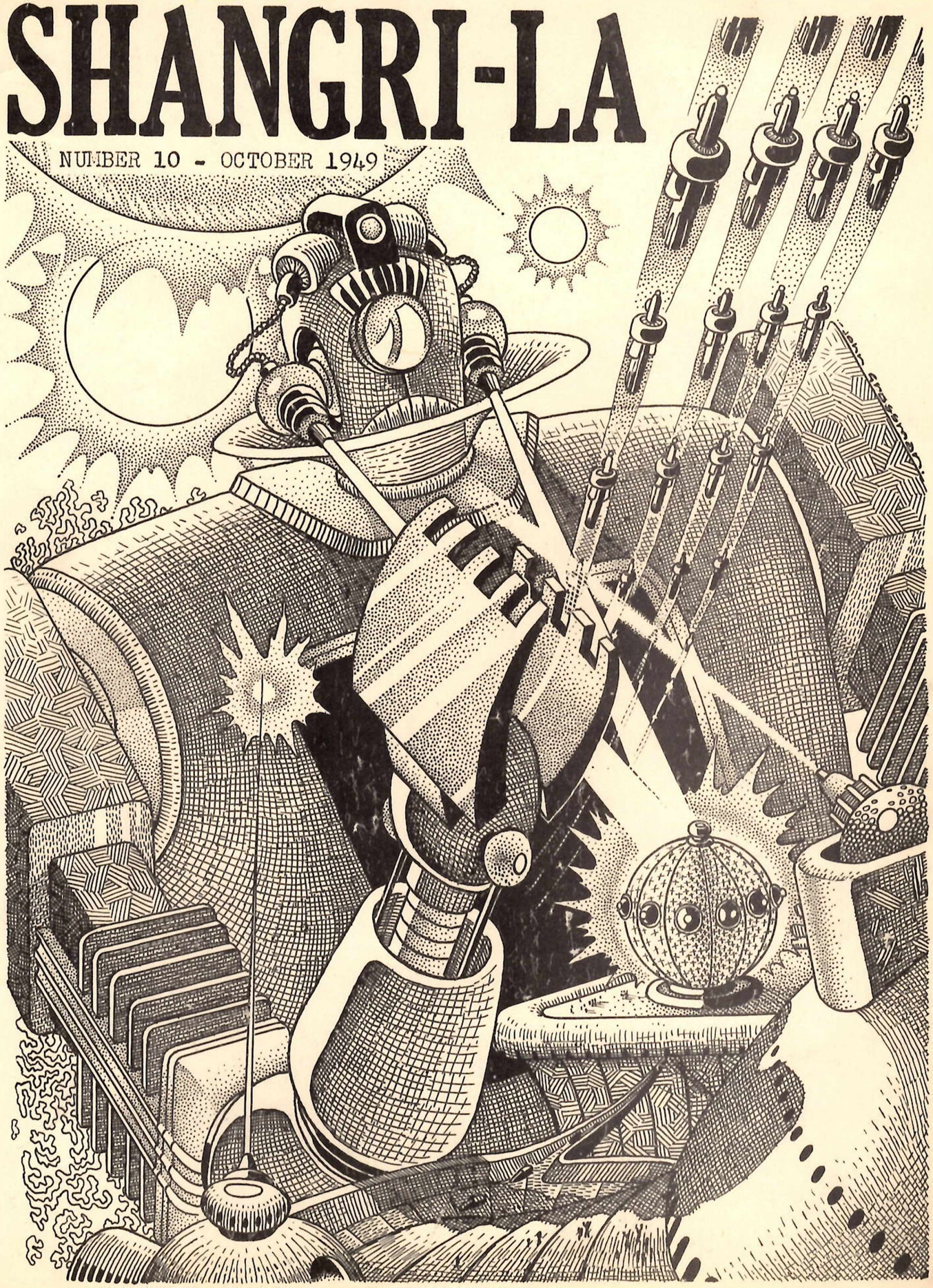
SHANGRI-LA

NUMBER 10 - OCTOBER 1949



SHANGRI-LA No. 14 OCT. 1949

CONTENTS

ORGAN of the Los Angeles Science Fantasy Society, 15th Year of operation, meeting every Thursday evening at 8:15 at 1305 Ingraham, Los Angeles 14. Comments on and subscriptions to the magazine are solicited, and both should be sent (single copies 15c, 7/$1) to Forrest Ackerman, 236-1/2 N New Hampshire, Hollywood 4, Cal.. Issued approximately each 6 weeks.

THE ELEVENTH HOUR

I am writing this editorial not with one foot in the grave but the Greyhound. A few hours hence I'll be bustling off on the bus for the Big Cinti. It was not possible for me to get this issue out before I left, so Walt Daugherty has come to the rescue as publisher. The letter-inguide work is being left to him, as well as the crank turning. Assembly volunteered by Louise Leipiar.

THE STAPLEDON REPORT: Moskowitz turned in 6000 words (worth 90 bucks as an article in a promag). This unfortunately had to be abbreviated considerably in order to make way for THE BRADBURY REPORT and THE NULL-A RETORT and other features of one sort and another.

Flash! Exclusive to the readers of Shangri-LA (the world's most select audience): The descriptive phrase from THE OCTOBER MAN that was deleted from the October Masters of Fantasy feature in the Oct FFM: "One Walpurgisnacht a mandrake mated with a woman of the wood, and later Pan piped to all subjects of the Luciferian realm: Raymond Douglas Bradbury is born!" Incidentally, if anything about the Ackermanuscript on Bradbury strikes you as familiar, it is because certain passages of it were used in the Summer Fantasy Review of England in a composite interview called "Fantasy's Prodigy".

'Twixt pages 12 & 13 you'll get a preview of Grossman's great cover for THE FANTASY ANNUAL, the 125 page review which may be ordered when you read this: $1 from: Weaver Wright, Box 6151 Metro Stn, Los Angeles 55.

Heading on Collectors Corner by Howard Miller, a Chronoscope feature forwarded by Redd Boggs.

Editor for Next Issue--
LEN MOFFATT--
with a great line-up of articles including contributions by
Sneary
Hershey
Cox
Pederson...Faulkner...Evans...and
Yours Sciencerly -- Forry Ackerman.

BOLD MAN IN NEW WORLD OLAF STAPLEDON

SAM MOSKOWITZ gives an editorialized report on the recent appearance in America of the author of "Old Man in New World", "Odd John", "Darkness and the Light" and other distinguished works of science fiction and philosophy...

Space limitations force us to summarize a number of Mr Moskowitz' introductory remarks.

Newark, NJ, 28 March 49--aftermath of The Cultural and Scientific Conference for Peace. An attendance of about 3000 at The Mosque to hear a panel of the prominent world-travelers plea for peace. Among the many speakers of the evening, Dr Stapledon, who was introduced very late in the program. Moskowitz reports: As he walked across the stage to his seat, we caught a glimpse of him. His body was thinner than his face seemed to indicate, he walked with considerable stiffness. He was of average height, his face was plain appearing, and his greatest distinguishing feature was his striking mass of hair, once red, now almost entirely grey.

In Stapledon's introduction he was eulogized as "the author of that magnificent fantasy, LAST AND FIRST MEN. 'And Dr Stapledon has told me that the reason he is speaking here today is because he does not want to be the last man in the world.'"

The report follows in Moskowitz' own words:

FOR THE FIRSTIME that evening we were able to get a clear view of Olaf Stapledon as he rose and walked stiffly to the front of the stage. He disdained the podium and the microphone and took up a position some 10 feet to the left of them. He placed his hands solidly on his hips, leaned back and in cultured English, with its expected British accent, said in a high-pitched voice: "Tonight I am going to speak to you..." At this point the audience loudly interruped him with shouts of "Mike! Mike!" His voice was not carrying too well and with a good-natured movement of his hands Stapledon walked behind the microphones and resumed his talk without completely finishing his first sentence.

He told the audience that as an individual he did not like travel, he did not like meetings and he did not like cities, but he had overcome these pointed aversions in acceptance of the idea of the cause of peace.

He noted that he was the only member of the British delegation that had been granted a visa, and could no ways offer an explanation for the preference shown him other than to conjecture that it was probably felt that of the group he was the most harmless.

"I am not a communist," he stated with emphasis. "I am not a Christian." And with a trace of a smile: "I am just me." This was received with appreciation by the audience.

"I am, however, a socialist," he conceded, "as are the majority of my countrymen." The connotation he gave the statement could be likened to an average American admitting he was a democrat in a strongly republican community. "It doesn't matter anyway," he went on, "you'll all be socialists in one form or another in the next 50 years."

Stapledon wryly informed the audience that he really was not at his best, feeling completely helpless without his wife to take care of him, but he intimated that he was carrying on to the best of his ability despite the handicap.

"I don't see why there is so much excitement about all this business," he said, referring to the strained relations between Russia and the United States, and in a sense to the fuss raised over the peace conferences. He felt that the US was unduly alarmed that it was not facing the world situation with anything resembling a mature attitude.

The British attitude he felt could be summed up by quoting the statements of a British cabby who had driven him to the airport: "Tell those Yanks to stop putting it over on us. We don't want to sell our souls to the Americans!" Like this cabby, he intimated, the entire British nation was anxious about the belligerent stand the United States had been taking against Russia. They felt that it lacked any finesse or statesmanship and could easily lead to war. "England," he said, "can sympathize with both sides." And being so ambidextrous mentally, Britain, and himself, felt that war was not inevitable, that a change in the approach of the US toward Russia might change the situation over night.

The Russians (he said in essence) feel that the eventual triumph of communism is inevitable. They predict the depression in the US and a quick conquest of their ideology here and elsewhere. To the contrary, Stapledon, as a philosopher, felt that "Human beings and events can interfere with the inevitability of history," and that the Russians might find the triumph of their system was much further off than they dreamed.

"Much happens in Russia which we must condemn," he said, "but much happens here which Russia must condemn. Therefore, have forbearance."

In conclusion: "Let individualism triumph over your sense of individuality. Forget one another's mistakes." And, with heavy emphasis and throwing his hands upwards: "...And for God's sake let's get together!"

There was a good round of applause and Olaf Stapledon returned to his seat.

Mentally reviewing what he had said, here were my impressions: That Olaf Stapledon was a very confused man. At least as confused as any in the audience, and despite his many excellent volumes of philosophy to fall back on, in this crisis he had no answer, practical or philosophical, to contribute to the occasion. He was in attendance and speaking, it seemed, because his conscience would not let him rest unless he did something, however impractical and useless, however misguided and pointless, contributing in the direction of peace. He did not pretend to know what was wrong, but having listened to dozens of parrot-like speeches, each one with only a very few

exceptions placing the lion's share of the blame on the US, he had become infected to the point where he weighted the blame for the present world situation upon the United States' attitude and policy, tho he did not attempt, as did a large number of the others, to completely overlook the Russian contribution to world discord. The man who recognized in the introduction to STAR MAKER, written in March 1937, that "Europe is in danger of a catastrophe worse than 1914", who pleaded for an evening of the social equalities of the world at the time, who presented in the guise of fancy his idea of a philosophy by which men might live, had nothing to offer now but the phrase born of desperation: "For God's sake let's get together!"

THE NEXT MORNING (Wed 30 Mar 49) I purchased copies of the Newark Evening News and Newark Star Ledger. Both papers had more than a page of write-ups and pictures on the peace rally, and Stapledon was clearly shown in the fotos of the feature speakers at the rally, but neither paper had as much as a sentence of comment on his talk.

At 6 that evening Dr Stapledon called me. He was extremely friendly and very apologetic that he had been unable to reply to me earlier. He would liked to have attended the meeting of the Eastern Science Fiction Assn, but was regrettably unable due to a previous commitment in Boston.

I commented that he had shown very little enthusiasm in his talk the night before and he explained that he had been extremely tired and undoubtedly had not been at his best.

In person and conversationally William Olaf Stapledon impressed me as a very human, very decent, very likeable sort of individual. I now regretted more than ever that he would be unable to attend the ESFA for I felt then and do now that he would have been happy there. At the ESFA he would have been met by about 75 enthusiasts of fantasy, most of whom had read some of his works, a large percentage of which greatly admired his work. There would have been hundreds of books for him to autograph, presented by collectors who had gone to considerable time and expense to procure his work, much of which still has to be imported from second-hand dealers in England. These people knew who Olaf Stapledon really was, knew a great deal more about him than the cryptic "British philosopher" that preaged or followed his name in the newspapers. These enthusiasts had read his work, could intelligently question and debate his philosophies, would have been held in thrall by his talk of the far future, the cultures and species of man yet to be, the conquest of the planets, the stars, the concept of the cosmic mind, and Olaf Stapledon would have been in his element speaking about things which only his gigantic imagination had been capable of creating, things which he had long thot and dreamed of and half believe in. At the ESFA he would have been a celebrity of real stature and respect and he would have been dined and toasted as one. Perhaps amid the extravagant extrapolations of science-fantasy he might have encountered a fragment of his own philosophy which held some relevancy to the present world situation and as a result could have spoken more definitely, more concisely of means and manners to combat the "inevitability" of a new world conflict. Here, too, most of the bad taste created by the picketing and adverse newspaper publicity could have been re-evaluated as he met a

group of Americans with no political ax to grind, who could have given him, thru mere association and conversation, a far greater insight into the American viewpoint than he obtained from his hotel window. Perhaps he would not have said in an interview upon returning to London that "there may be a war at any moment.....I was amazed to see great excitement and worry in the United States about the prospects for a forthcoming conflict."

The days passed and commentary on the peace conference subsided and then eventually disappeared from the papers altogether. Soon it was to all intents and purposes forgotten. The cold war continued, tempered somewhat by the lifting of the Russian blockade of Berlin and the Paris conferences. The delegate, whom the Americans knew only as "the only British delegate granted a visa", and of his background that he was a "British philosopher", had come, spoken and left, scarcely leaving an impression on them, and withal everyone completely oblivious to the group of fantasy enthusiasts who were the only ones who really knew who Stapledon was, why he rated as an important man, and the potentialities for progress he represented. All they could do was read of him in the papers, a few listen to him speak in the halls and sadly watch him alternately used and smeared, in the sense that all connected with the peace rally were smeared, and wonder what he might have said if really given the chance.

Somewhere there is a moral in this.

BRADBURY ME NOT

There are plenty of stars in the heavens,
There are planets that circle them too,
But the place I love best,
That will stand any test,
Is an asteroid called Nokandu.

Schizophrencis here find hearts' desire,
Pyromaniacs keep it aglow,
You recline in spiked nooks,
With the comfort of books,
(Most especially Lovecraft and Poe.)

Do you care for sweet pleasures sadistic?
Are you happiest torn into bits?
Are you morbid and deep?
Are you lulled best to sleep
By the sound of a maniac's fits?

Oh I'd give up my roving forever;
And be happy to spend my decline,
With a ninety-year lease
In this Haven of peace,
Sipping succulent Bradbury wine.

--Lee Budoff

WHO ONLY STAND

by E. Everett Evans

Professor Captain Eugene Galloway stood on the rostrum for the last time, while this latest class of Cadet Pilots assembled to march to Graduation. How glad he was that at long last he'd reached sixty-five, and could retire.

Thirty-five years of teaching, he thought, and it seemed an eternity in retrospect. Thirty-five years of growing older and older and older, while always in front of him was a never-ending, never-changing sea of fresh, young, eighteen-year-old faces.

The Cadet Captain reported, "All present and accounted for, Sir."

Professor Galloway looked at his watch. "We've nearly ten minutes. Is there, perhaps, some final question?"

No one spoke for a moment, then from the rear came an exaggerated simper:

"Please, Professor Sir, just how do our rockets work out in the vacuum of space where there's no air?"

Oh, Lord, not again? That silly question was almost a tradition for graduates in Astrogation. At the crescendo of laughter, Galloway made his face smile, but his heart was bitter. He was supposed to have made men out of these Cadets, but they were still thoughtless boys with a childish sense of humor. This time his tired nerves just couldn't take it.

What's the use of it all, his brain wanted to scream? If each new generation can't show some advancement over the one before, why continue the race? You would think there'd be some basic improvement in man's brain. Yet each year's crop seems dumber.

That young Jacobs, for instance; son of the greatest spatial computer in the Patrol. Surely the boy should've inherited some math ability. Or at least absorbed a little just by being around his father. But, from his marks, if even the simplest theorem ever penetrated it's now lying back in some undusted corner covered with lint.

Thank God I'm retiring before I grow into an old fogey. Or have I, already?

Without answering the question, he stalked from the room and away from the building. Almost blindly he walked along one of the old ways, not noting where he went.

His mind searched back over the span of forty-seven years to his own student days. Had he been that callow? Had asking stupid questions seemed "smart" to him then? He couldn't remember. But he hoped not.

Becoming a Space Pilot had been his boyhood dream. The romance of it lured,

but the actuality seemed an unattainable goal. Yet he made it, and following his schooling had been in space until, at thirty, he had to retire from active duty. For Space Pilots must be young. It takes fast-thinking, agile minds and the fine dexterity of youthful muscular co-ordination to pilot space vessels.

Then when, at his grounding, he was offered a post as instructor here at the Academy, he felt a vast enthusiasm and exaltation at thought of molding fresh, young minds.

"Fresh young minds, phooey!" he growled. "I certainly am glad I'm retiring before what little mind I have left mildews and sloughs off around the edges!"

The entire race must be going downhill. Must've reached zenith before I was born, and been steadily regressing since. Are our memory cells dying on the vine, and this the beginning of the end of man's vaunted greatness?

What a fool ever to want to be a teacher. If I'd realized how dumb boys can be, I'd've become a plumber or something useful.

Funny what life does to one, isn't it? Funny hell, it's tragic! .....

He became conscious of his surroundings slowly, noting he'd reached the edge of the New Campus, facing the quadrangle of splendid new buildings for the greatly enlarged Academy. For the Patrol was expanding the Fleet, and more officers were needed.

For some moments he gazed at the new school, then turned and retraced his steps. There were some good-byes he wanted to say, and his desk to clean out.

In the faculty room professors were busy closing their semester's work, or planning for the new one starting next week.

Galloway went up to one he'd known many years, and held out his hand. "So long, Sam. Take it easy."

"Why the good-bye? I'll see you Monday, won't I?"

"No. Don't you remember? I'm retiring. Sixty-five, you know."

"Oh, yes, that's right. Too bad. Well, have a good time." He shook hands briefly and turned away, leaving Galloway standing there with a foolish feeling.

He made no more efforts to say farewells. That once was enough. He'd half-expected some joshing, perhaps, to cover up their deeper feelings at losing him. Perhaps a farewell gift, and the gang cheering him, or singing "Old Lang Syne". But that brusk brush-off! So that's all it meant, then, growing old, old, here. Wasting his life, trying to pound some sense into thick, eighteen-year-old skulls full of fluff ... and no one caring. Well, the hell with it!

As he started down the hall an orderly met him. "The Commandant wants to see you, Captain Galloway."

"Oh, Gal, glad you came in. I'm rushed, but wanted to tell you you're still

to be Senior of the new school. Here's your new five-year contract. Read it and sign it when convenient. You'll notice a nice little raise is included."

"But .. but Admiral, I'm retiring. Sixty-five a couple of weeks ago, remember?"

"You? Retiring?. Poppycock! An out-moded custom from days when men had a life-expectancy of seventy. You've at least fifty good, useful years left. Forget that silly retirement business. We need you." He shook hands briefly, then turned back to his work.

Galloway slowly walked out. He'd be damned if he'd teach any more. He was old, and tired. Thirty-five years was all they had a right to ask of a man.

Besides, he had such wonderful plans for the immediate future. Five years in the Martian deserts, looking at the ancient ruins. Another five in the jungle-swamps of Venus, studying those strange marine growths. Then to Sirius IV, to climb those stupendous mountains. Wear himself out teaching another five years? Not him! Not for brainless pups who thought only of playing silly tricks and asking stupid questions.

The balance of the afternoon he wandered aimlessly, or sat despondently in his quarters, thinking ... thinking .....

He'd not intended going to the Annual Banquet that night, but habit took him there. The huge crowd surprised him until he remembered the dedication of the new school tomorrow. Hundreds of officers who seldom bothered to come back were here for that.

He found an inconspicuous place near the rear. He gave desultory greetings to those at his table, but was in no mood for light banter. Yet hardly was he seated when a Junior Lieutenant rushed over from a nearby table.

"Professor Galloway!" he shook his hand exuberantly. "It's wonderful to see you again, Sir!"

Galloway recognized a student from last year's class. "Ah, Trevarthon, glad to see you."

A moment later a Captain spied him and came over. "Galloway, you've no idea how much I appreciate your patience when I was a cub. It's men like you, Sir, who make our Patrol great!"

"Oh, you exaggerate, I'm sure," but Galloway couldn't help feeling pleased.

And it went like that all evening. An almost steady stream of former students now become Senior Lieutenants, Commodores, Captains, Admirals, all genuinely glad to see their one-time teacher. Each so patently sincere in his respect , his admiration; all expressing thanks for his many kindnesses and patience with their youthful stupidities and exuberances.

Galloway was moved in spite of himself. Maybe ... possibly ... it had been

of some use, after all. But he was still glad it was over. Now for a life without strain. That fool Commandant, having the nerve to ask him to keep on and on. Fifty more good years, indeed!

The merriment was at its height when a tall, grizzled, broad-shouldered man at the Honor table stood up. At first glance his uniform seemed all gold lace and medals. In a stentorian voice he called, "Ten-shun!"

There was instant silence, and a quick hiding of bottles. For there was only one voice like that in the Galaxy. It was "Bull" Clapham -- Grand Fleet Admiral Clapham, tactical genius, hero of the Jovian and Sirian wars, martinet, strict disciplinarian, ogre. Galloway, however, remembered him best as a brash, high-spirited, gold-bricking Cadet in his very first class.

"I'd like to ask the Senior Instructor in Astrogation a question."

The Commandant struggled to his feet. "Galloway! Captain Galloway! Stand up!"

At his far-corner table the surprised educator rose hesitantly. What could the Admiral possibly wish to ask?

"Why, it's my old teacher, the man who tried so hard to teach me some astrogation." But the Admiral's smile was brief and cold, indeed.

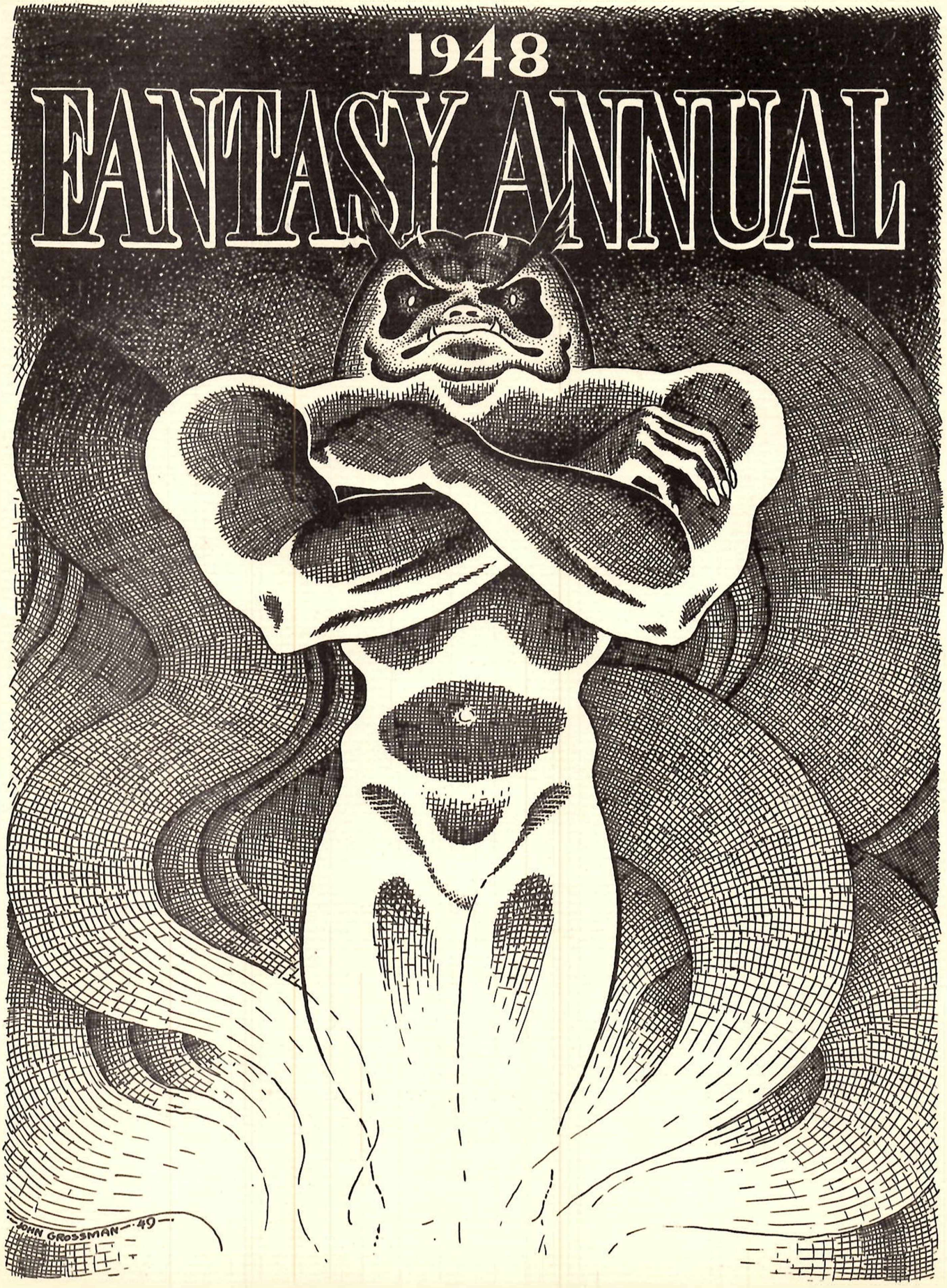
There was tense silence in the great room. All eyes swivelled between the hapless instructor and the feared Admiral, who stood there, glaring again with that look which made men of all ranks quail. But Galloway was not afraid. He'd retired. There was nothing the Admiral, or any other brass-hat, could do to him now.

Suddenly that stern face cracked into a broad grin, and in a squeaking voice Grand Fleet Admiral Clapham asked,"Please, Professor Sir, just how <u>do</u> our rockets work in the vacuum of ..... ?"*

A roar of laughter and a storm of applause drowned out the rest.

But Professor Captain Eugene Galloway did not seem to notice. With a quiet smile of complete understanding, he took that new contract from his pocket, and signed it with a bold, proud flourish.

*One of those coincidences in real life that no writer could get away with in a story: Evans' yarn was written and the stencils cut before the Aug TWS, containing van Vogt's PROJECT SPACESHIP, came on the stands. Both stories more or less revolve around the same question. The coincidence gets even greater, tho, when one learns that vV helped Ev with criticism and suggestions, and has since stated that he had entirely forgotten using that question in his own story, which had been written more than a year and a half previously.....


1948
FANTASY ANNUAL
JOHN GROSSMAN—49—

THE CASE OF THE BAROQUE BABY-KILLER

A TEENAGE CHUM (Forry Ackerman)
RATTLES SOME SKELETONS IN THE CLOSET OF: /RAY BRADBURY/

When Raymond Douglas Bradbury was a little boy, an author in whose genre he was to follow was busy writing stories about babies. That was Dr David H. Keller, of whom it was once said that he wrote about more babies per square story than any other fantasy author. A comparison of the works of Bradbury and Keller might now offer a challenge to that statement. I have a sneaking suspicion that for every baby born in a Keller tale, one of the brats has met a sticky end in a Bradburyarn!

And yet Ray Bradbury has a living brother, mother, father, is married, and momentarily expects to become a parent!

Bradbury is now close to 29. When he was 17, I gave him first publication in fandom. This was of a "short scientale" of less than 500 words called "Hollerbochen's Dilemma", in the Jan '38 (#4) issue of the mimeograft magazine, Imagination!. I hang my head to confess that I had no idea at that time that I was stenciling genius in the chrysalis. But in my defense I offer these first 3 paragraphs of the storiette:

> Hollerbochen faced a crisis. He could tell what would happen in the future. He could see when he would die--and it was very distressing, as you well may imagine. Every branch of his life lay before him. He knew he would die the next day. He saw himself being blown to bits by a tremendous explosion.
>
> Hollerbochen had another marvelous feature about his person: He had the unique power to be able to stand still in time for a few minutes. But only for a pitifully short few minutes.
>
> He faced death and was terribly afraid.

Do you blame me for my blindness? Incidentally, anyone wishing to find out how Hollerbochen solved his dilemma, I have a couple copies of this collector's item available at $5 per copy. What's that? Sorry, I'll have to cancel the offer--Bradbury has just offered me $10 to burn them.

WHAT RAY Bradbury was like as a child I have no way of knowing except thru some of his revelations in an article about himself in the Winter 1949 of The Fanscient. But as a teen-ager he was well-nigh "impossible". I say this without malice, as one who loves him, and without reflection on him today, for many irresponsible youths become model men in their maturity. I find it only humorous, now, to look back on Ray when he was a pesky kid and a raggamuffin selling newspapers on a street corner a mile from where I live, and see what a considerate, cultured individual he has blossomed into.

I do not wish to dwell too intimately on the late adolescent years of Bradbury, as they seem to be a source of embarrassment to him today: His broad, belching humor; his imitations of the great WCFields and the late Adolf Hitler; his crazy antics at "the club" (Los Angeles Science Fiction League) when he used to exasperate Old Man Ackerman (all of 3 years his senior) and other more staid and reserved members of the society. But during that time, unknown to most of us--or perhaps we just didn't pay any attention--he was turning out reams every day on his typewriter. (He incinerated a couple million of them the day before he married Maggie.) As faithfully as a Paderewski practicing, he never let a day go by but what he wrote. Fragments, impressions, plots, dialog, scenes and sequences--always he wrote. Then he began to take what he wrote to professionals--to Bob and Leslyn Heinlein, to Leigh Brackett, to Jack Williamson and Edmond Hamilton, to Henry Kuttner and Henry Hasse. This is no secret--he freely admits these friends helped him immeasurably in the early days, and today Ray repays his debt by encouraging other embryonic writers who are seriously striving to become authors.

THE YOUTH OF "BRAT"BURY

Ray claims to recall a minor operation performed on him on 24 Aug 1920. This is remarkable because he was born just 2 days before. And, altho the medical profession considers it doubtful, he also vividly recollects numberless days during the first 24 months of his life. This andthe following information on Bradbury's boyhood is condensed, thru the courtesy of editor Don Day, from the previously mentioned article in The Fanscient.

Ray reports that his first essay with paper and a crayola was a nice red skeleton. (I drew a boat in the form of a duck, in case anyone is interested.) When the little girl next door wouldn't be frightened by his bone-man, he knocked her down for her lack of artistic appreciation. I used to have much the same habits. If one of the naborhood kids wouldn't play with me, I would throw rocks at them to make them cooperate.

"When I was 8 years old," Ray continues, "a large, pimply boxcar of a girl, aged 18, whose main occupation was staring at a copy of a strange magazine, moved into my Grandmother's upstairs room (yes, the same room where The Man Upstairs moved later.) She gave me one of the magazines to read. It was a copy of Amazing or Wonder, and I have never forgotten the thrill of seeing the Paul illustrations and reading the incredible stories.

"My mind was open to such things, of course, because I had been nurtured at the gentle breast of the Oz books. Tarzan, too, had not been neglected--in fact, I read the complete Burroughs."

When he was 12, Ray moved from Illinois to Arizona. There he met a fan with a big collection of the stf mags of the day, and became an avid borrower. To the consternation of his teachers, in art class he constantly drew men from Mars and scaly creatures from old castles. Privately, he created his own rocket-filled comic strips. At that time he was enamored of Tarzan and Buck Rogers in the "funnies", and religiously excerpted and saved same till 1937 when the quality of the cartoons suffered a decline.

BRADBURY seems to have been an average student, his best subject being English. His literary bent is not unusual when it is considered that his grandfather and great grandfather were publishers of magazines, books and newspapers. His father's family came to America around 1630; his mother is Swedish, was born in Stockholm.

"When I was 13, I wrote several sequels to the Burroughs Martian series on a toy dial typewriter. It was the depression, and we had little money to buy books. The simplest solution seemed to be to write them myself. They were illustrated and very good, if I can believe several notes in an old diary of mine."

This penchant for drawing continues to this day, and Ray invariably favors his friends at Yuletide with a card of remembrance personally designed--if the word "design" can be applied to a kind of glorified doodling that is at once amusingly juvenile and yet typically Bradbury. To digress for a moment and jump ahead of chronological order a couple years, I'll never forget the genial hoax Ray pulled on me and the rest of the Local fans about 1938, when he drew a picture, signed it Jack Binder, put a phoney title on the back of it and a date a couple months in the future, and told us it was an illustration sent him by Campbell for a story coming up a couple issues hence in Astounding. I believe I still have it among my souvenirs, and wouldn't sell it for love or money. I also own a 1948 venture into art by Bradbury, a large mood indigo painting 22"x30" of a stormy, supernatural scene. When I bought this from Bradbury it was on the basis of a gentlemen's agreement that if I should ever sell it, half the profit should be his, and that this arrangement should continue in perpetuity. "It's griped me for years how Lovecraft died in poverty, almost, and other people have profited on him," he told me. "I don't intend to let that happen to me or others. I don't look forward to any great fame in my day, and probably never, don't get me wrong; but I just want to insure myself of not going insane later when I see people in distant places profiting off something I let go." Bradbury intends this principle to apply also to any mss. of his, should they change hands for cash: 50% of the profit to himself, his wife, or his offspring.

FROM FAN TO PRO

Brad moved to Los Angeles in '34. I don't believe I was here myself at the time, but in university up north. Anyway, 3 years later I was back home in LA, and Ray discovered the LASFL and we got acquainted. He turned out quantities of corn for the club organ, including an especially a-maize-ing series inspired by John Russell Fearn's "Mathematica Plus" called "Mathematica Minus", "Mathematica Menace" and "The Mathematicon". I don't know whether I should admit it or not, but I actually was a silent collaborator on these, for as I dummied the scripts I threw in all the extra puns and quips that they sug-jested to me, and Brad would laff like a madman in a Bradburyarn when he later read his Ack-corn-tribution in print.

In the summer of '39, Ray issued Futuria Fantasia, his very own fanmag which was to last 4 issues. A Science Circle Publication, the first issue featured a cover by Bok, who at that time signed himself Hans instead of Hannes (in any

event, his real name is Wayne Woodard). Mimeod in green on 8½"x11" sheets, the issue contained 8 pages of reading matter, including a story by Ray (under the pseudonym Ron Reynolds) entitled "Don't Get Technatal" (he was interested in the Technocracy movement at the time) and "The Record", by myself, revised by Ray in a sort of tit-for-tat-titude now that he held the editorial reins.

The Fall '39 "FuFa", as Ray affectionately called his mag, boasted another Bok cover and 18 pages of reading matter. Hans V. Bok contributed a one-page whatzis entitled "The Galapurred Forsendyke"; sample sentence: "Edris oozed out of the shadows to him, longlike and snaky, with fearthy fettles adorning her foresome, and a blaze in her eyes like the hurmwurst of Whidby. 'Island, island,' he repeated to himself, thrusting a negatory hand thru the farthing of her wrabdy." Henry Kuttner, Henry Hasse and Frederick Shroyer were also among the contributors. As 'Doug Rogers', Ray published a poem, "Satan's Mistress"; and here was the original, solo-script of "The Pendulum" which, with the collaborative assistance of Henry Hasse, was to be Bradbury's first professional appearance 2 years later in Super Science, Nov '41.

Ray's principal contribution to his 3d issue, the Winter '40 number, was "The Flight of the Good Ship Clarissa". Henry Hasse, Hans Bok, Ross Rocklynne and Emil Petaja also present. Also the pseudonymous 'Anthony Corvais', who appeared a couple times in FuFa--I knew once whether this was Bok or Bradbury, but have now forgotten.

And on the final issue was a litho of a water color by Bok; "Hell!" by Lyle (Heinlein) Monroe; "Thoughts on the World State" by Henry Kuttner; and material by Jos. "Rust" Kelleam, J. Harvey Haggard, damon knight, and Bok. Ray's story for the issue: "The Piper". I notice he had a story of the same name eventually in Thrilling Wonder (Feb '43)--probably a later version.

Can you imagine if Merritt had put out a fanzine when he was a young man? Or Catherine Moore? Or AE van Vogt? There never were many copies of Futuria Fantasia in the first place--I advise whoever still has any to hang onto them like precious porcelain! I treasure mine along with the amateur Science Fiction once issued by Siegel & Schuster, who were to gain world renown as the creators of Superman.

During his first pro year, Ray sold about 3 stories; doubled his sales in '42; sold a dozen in '43; and 24 in '44. This would suggest that in 1949 something in the naborhood of 768 stories should be bought by Bradbury. The figure is no doubt slightly optimistic, but sitting on the sidelines it does seem to me that everything Ray writes these days turns to gold. A couple years ago he sold "The Last in Line" for $500 to a new magazine which was to appear called USA. When the project failed to materialize, his story was returned to him (see his Arkham collection, "Dark Carnival") but he was not required to return the check. Later he sold the story to a radio program, Suspense, at that time a half-hour broadcast. When they decided to make their plays hour long, the story was discarded--but once again the fancy check was Ray's. Last Thanksgiving on Suspense Margaret O'Brien was starred in his "The Screaming Woman", and he has also had "The Meadow", "Summer Night", and others on the air. There is talk of his "Home-

coming" for television, and in the fullness of time we shall probably see a film adapted from a Bradburyarn. Let us hope that, like Merritt with "7 Footprints to Satan", he will not be movedto tears at the Follywood butchery of his brainchild.

Besides the fantasy magazines Ray has been featured in many mundane magazines, notably with "The Big Black and White Game" in American Mercury, "The Electrocution" in The Californian, "I See You Never" in The New Yorker, "One Timeless Spring" in Collier's, "Powerhouse" in Charm and "End of Summer" in Script, plus appearances in Harper's, Epoch, Mademoiselle and Touchstone.

In the detective field he has had over a dozen stories printed (Dime Mystery, New Detective, et autres). He has once used the pseudonym DRBanat ("Corpse Carnival" in July '45 Dime Mystery) and TWS applied the house name of Brett Sterling to his "Referent" in the Oct '48 issue.

His stories have appeared in the 1946 and '48 editions of The Best American Short Stories, and the 1947 and '48 editions of the O. Henry Memorial Awards Prize Stories. He has been anthologized in "Rue Morgue No. 1", "The Sleeping and the Dead", "The Night Side", "Who Knocks?", "Strange Ports of Call" and others. Two of his stories are in the pocketbook collection of interplanetaryarns compiled by Orson Welles. His "Pillar of Fire" and "The Earth Men" are included in Derleth's "Other Side of the Moon". Doubleday will do his "Martian Chronicles" and (an enlargement of "The Creatures that Time Forgot") "Frost & Fire". Half a dozen of his stories are being reprinted in English Argosy, a couple being translated into Swedish, 3 or 4 have already been translated South of the Border, and far away South Africa is his latest conquest.

So--that's about the size of The Bradbury Story...to date! It may be that this is "only the beginning", and the best is yet to come. Ray says every nite he prays "Not tonite, oh Lord", fearful that he will die before he gets the really fine things out of his system and onto paper. Speaking of system--if such it can be called--Ray's way of writing is a unique one in my experience of writers. He has about 20 stories in progress all the time. He works (off and on) from 7:30 in the morning till 5:30 at nite. When he starts the day, he flips thru his sheaves of uncompleted mss. till he hits a tale that suits his mood at the moment, and picks that one to work on. If he tires of it, he drops it and turns to another. If he doesn't feel like producing anything new, he goes over an old yarn, revising. Ray does most of his revision with a pair of scissors (figuratively speaking) cutting and cutting and cutting. What was originally deathless prose, not a word of which could stand sacrificing, he often after 6 months considers prolixity, verbosity, padding. Some day I think Ray will condense a story to these 6 words, and then he will be thoroly satisfied:

Baby meets girl
Baby gets girl.

The End

SCIENCE FICTION'S HORIZONS -by- FREDDIE HERSHEY

WE are all more than aware that our ever increasing scientific knowledge has but made us more conscious of the mysteriousness of the universe. While our awareness of natural phenomena is leaping with incredible bounds, the vast sum of contradicting theories and evidences, the indeterminate and radical concepts over which scientific wars are daily fought, merely prove that man's imagination has scarcely been tapped.

The great philosopher and mathematician, Leibnitz, once said: "The more knowledge advances the more it becomes impossible to condense it into little books!" As the scope of our knowledge increases and we take more and more for granted—the discoveries of our chemists, physicists, mathematicians, biologists, etc.—it becomes increasingly evident that we can't enumerate every wondrous new discovery, theory and hope of our scientists.

In the never ending search for knowledge, science fiction has played a part of which it can never cease being proud. Hardly a phase of the problems of tomorrow has not been touched upon by the promoters of scientific fiction. As our horizons expand, we have followed the endeavors of our rapidly growing list of authors and have expanded our visions—to the world of tommarrow and beyond.

With our copies of Astounding, Startling, Wonder, Super Science, etc., we keep in step with the march of our scientists. In fact we lead them a merry chase. From the first question of the structure and duration of the universe to the still unsolved problem of space travel is a mighty leap, but the bridge leading over the gap has been kept in rapt view. It was as long a sweep from the ironclad Euclidean geometries thru Einstein to the acceptance of the more elastic laws of Riemann's geometry.

Within the less restricted bounds of this glorified spherical geometry, our mathematicians have built up new concepts to deal with our questions of time and space. These problems and their possible divergent solutions have been grasped avidly by the sf writers to carry us out into time and space.

The fascinating story of the Evolution of Man has also come in for its just share in our interests. From the first primitive man to the possible mutants of an atomic cataclysm, science fiction has given reign to as fresh an imagination as could be hoped for. The ascent of Man, his possible paths of descent and renaissances, have had full coverage. Unfortunately, the lessons to be learned from this coverage reach too few as yet. Man struggles to civilize himself. Our scientific knowledge—prodigious and almost fantastic in its recent progress—has found Man the social animal not nearly ready. The average citizen of any present so-called civilized country is pathetically unaware of the dangerous forces with which we so grandly tamper. Only in science fiction, with the imagination of those dedicated to its precepts, are the patterns laid down for us more and more coherently and frighteningly.

Yet we struggle upwards. The study of the science of the mind has of late absorbed us also. The fight between the various schools of thought rages merrily on. On every hand we

hear the layman discussing his complexes, neuroses, subconscious and the Freudian theories. As yet it is a new game, but the vistas beyond give us hope that the Man of tomorrow will be able to live with and control sensibly the Machines of tomorrow.

In this fascinating new world of psychoanalysis, the writers of science fiction have kept apace. It is not unusual to pick up a current issue of some sf magazine or book and find the hero winning his laurels (and occasionally his heroine) not by the might of his sword or ray gun—but by his knowledge of general semantics. So, we dream of living and thinking "on a higher level".

One could go on indefinitely. That is not the purpose of this article. It is merely the musings of one, who aware of the changing world we live in, finds delight in reading of the world of yesterday, today and possible tomorrows thru the medium of Science Fiction's Horizons.

MUTATION

DEEP in the bodies of our children, and their children, stirs the change:
Softly, like tiny mice slow-stepping in a furtive waltz,
Move chromosomes and genes in time to harsher music
Than ever yet has piped the race of man
Aboard an unknown vessel. Destination--whither?
The stars? The mire?
The children of our childrens' children--they may be
A proud race, fair to see; sentient and brave and kind;
With all perceptions tuned and ordered by the cosmic swing
Of spinning stars, out-rushing galaxies; with inborn knowledge
Of deep space, light-years beyond the reach of man today.
And yet--and yet. . .
The balance wavers. God have mercy!--will the hell let loose
By blasting Nature's secrets prematurely from her womb
Breed beasts instead of men--misshapen spawn,
Conceived in terror, bred in desolation, lost to all hope?
Oh men of science--softly!--lest we hear a wrecked world cry
"Too late! Too late!"

—Dorothea M. Faulkner

SOME COMMENTS TO THE READERS OF Shangri-La
CONCERNING SOME RECENT INTERPRETATIONS OF
GENERAL SEMANTICS MADE IN THAT MAGAZINE.

An Article By Arthur J. Cox

A great deal has been said the past few years in the field of science-fiction writing about "semantics" and "general semantics." Most of what has been said was in my estimation either unaccurate or without sufficient connection to the orientational background of the story--that is, used as a "gimmick". Many science-fiction readers have become bored with the subject;an easy attitude to fall into when others talk in what seem to be meaningless terms or pretentious platitudes. It is my belief that this attitude was the major factor behind the approval expressed by at least two persons of my acquaintance towards the article, "And This Goes On--" by Bryce Walton, which appeared in the twelfth issue of Shangri-La.

It is that article which I wish to discuss.

Few people would deny that you, the reader, have to evaluate the subject for yourself (though there are many who'd prefer to do that evaluating for you); the question is whether you will do your evaluating from first hand materials or whether it will come to you already strained, like a baby food that doesn't need to be chewed.

Due to the limitations of space, I can state little here of a positive nature concerning the general semantic methodologies; therefore, I will limit myself to remarks concerning Bryce Walton's basic assumptions in relation to the subject, as well as a few asides. I do not say that what is written here will give you a greater understanding of general semantics, but I do hope that I can give you a greater will to understand.

For purposes of brevity, I shall assume that you are familar with the three connected articles (by Jack Catherine, A. E. van Vogt and Bryce Walton) which appeared in the last issue of S-La.

"---semantics, semanticists": One of the most easily-recognized indicators to a pseudo-understanding of general semantics is "semantics". Now, there is a field of semantics, the major school being the Ogden and Richards branch, but it has little connection with Non-Aristotelian-Korzybskian "general semantics". Semantics is largely concerned with "semantics"--meanings--of words. Besides "semantics", there are also the fields of "significs", "simiotics", "linguistics", and "philology"; all differing from the others in several important respects.

"---that general semantics deals with words.": This is a superficial attitude. A general semanticist is concerned with words in

about the same sense that a mathematician is concerned with numbers. We might loosely define G.S. as being the study of evaluational systems and methods of evaluating. (An oversimplified definition, of course.) Many students in the field have regarded the term "general semantics" as being a poor selection as a label for the field, with which I agree. A much better term, for example, might be evaluics.

"---that general semantics studies the meaning of meaning.": Another superficiality. Nearly any evaluation system, or epistemology, might be said to be concerned with meaning, though only the fields of "semantics" and "significs", as far as I know, are concerned with the study of meaning, specifically, or with "the meaning of meaning" --a phrase usually used by those with a naive or "party chatter" understanding of "semantics". Korzybski, himself, suspects that an adequate formulation concerning the nature of "meaning" may be impossible. Contrast this attitude with Walton's interpretation of the attitude.

"---that general semanticists believe that all problems are merely verbal.": This is a belief which Barrows Dunhams, among others, tried rather successfully to foster. To revert to an earlier analogy, this is like stating that a mathematician believes that all problems are merely numerical. As far as I know, no student in the field has stated that all problems are merely verbal. Even Stuart Chase--I use the word even advisedly; see later remarks about this author--didn't subscribe to this "theory". Do you honestly believe that anyone states that hunger--or a bullet--in one's belly or cancer of one's breast are merely verbal problems. But most researchers would agree that evaluational difficulties may have led to them.

Walton would have you believe that "semanticists" would stand around arguing so long as to whether a man were a Nazi that he would have them in the crematorium while they were also still in the abstract realms. Not so! Operationalism forms a major keystone of the A methodologies. A general semanticist is concerned with what is happening; What is going on inside this man? What is he doing? What will he do? Not: Is he evil or good? Is he a Nazi or Communist?

"---that Non-Aristotelianism is Anti-Aristotelianism.": "Don't sell Aristotle short," is the anguished cry raised by some, and Dunham calls the ancient philosopher, "the villain of this little drama (of general semantics)." Let me say this: Savages of remote desert isles who never saw a Westerner, let alone read a book on philosophy, have evaluational difficulties and pathologies. Aristotle did not invent the "three laws of logic", he merely described them, just as Korzybski did not invent the components of the methodology he synthesized....One of the fondest axioms often voiced by the student is that if Aristotle were alive today he would be a non-Aristotelian.

"---that Mach did his work in 1938": We can assume that Walton believes this, if that "'38" was not a typographical error. Mach's

work was done in the latter part of the nineteenth century and gained momentum in the earlier parts of this century. I believe that the error is important inasmuch as it shows Walton's belief that general semantics is something which has risen spectacularly into the limelight in the last few years; again, this is important inasmuch as it shows that he does not understand the relationship between it and work done in other fields for the past fifty years. General semantics has never been in the limelight outside the science-fiction field. It is being and has been quietly accepted by thousands of workers in technical fields. Korzybski read the first draft of Science and Sanity before the American Congress of Mathematicians in 1924, at which it was well received. After publication of the book in 1933, it was acclaimed by technicians in the fields of psychiatry, biology, medicine, physics, mathematics, chemistry, etc.

I will devote some space to reccomending source material for your studies.

First, a few remarks about Stuart Chase: Don't read him. Although well-intentioned, he has done more harm to the field than nearly anyone for, unfortunately, he wrote his book, Tyranny of Words, when he had more enthusiasm than knowledge. Ask yourself, why is it that critics of the field do not attack the works of Hayakawa, Lee, Johnson, Reid, and Rappoport? A friend once said to me, "When a person reads Hayakawa's book he wants to go onto the source; when he reads Chase's book he thinks he knows it all." Which I believe adequately states the case. A synonym for "popularization" is "vulgarization".

Once you start studying general semantics you will find a seemingly-inexhaustible supply of background material. Read P. W. Bridgeman's The Logic of Modern Physics, Cassius J. Keyser's Mathematics as a Culture Clue, C. J. Herrick's A Neurologist Makes Up His Mind, Ruth Benedict's Patterns Of Culture, Karen Horney's The Neurotic Personality of Our Times, Beideman's Art as Visual Evolution, E. T. Bell's little book, Debunking Science, Norbert Weiner's Cybernetics, Lieber and Lieber's The Education of T.C. Mits; parts of the works of Susanne K. Langer, Bertrand Russell, A. N. Whitehead, and others, as is The Journal of the Philosophy of Science. Out of the books which popularize general semantics, I would personally suggest Wendell Johnson's People In Quandaries, published by Harpers at $4.00.

As you read these books you will begin to pereceive a general underlying thread; a basic formulation concerning the structure of the universe; that subject which we call general semantics represents an attempt to formalize that formulation into a workable discipline and methodology.

There is but one technical-and-semi-technical journal devoted to the field: This is the excellent ETC.:, edited by S. I. Hayakawa. Obtainable for 1356 Hyde Park Blvd., Chicago,

Illinois. $1.00 per copy; $3.00 per year.

Which brings us to Science and Sanity... I have several friends who have always meant to read this book but, somehow, never got around to it. I have other friends who started but were so paralyzed in fright by the thickness of the volume that they never got through the introductions. An attitude so devastating is worth discussing.

The structure of Science and Sanity is a unique one: Like the dynamic process of the human nervous system, it is cyclic. The beginning is best understood when one has read the end, and vice versa. The reason for this becomes apparent once you have read the book. So, the first rule goes as follows: Read it through twice, easily, without effort or frowning; never labor over a point--it'll come to you.

Secondly, read it aloud: For one thing, the book was dictated and the meaning of the sentence structure gets across easier to you that way. Also, you remember better when you read aloud for the neural patterns are then formed in oral and audial regions as well as visual.

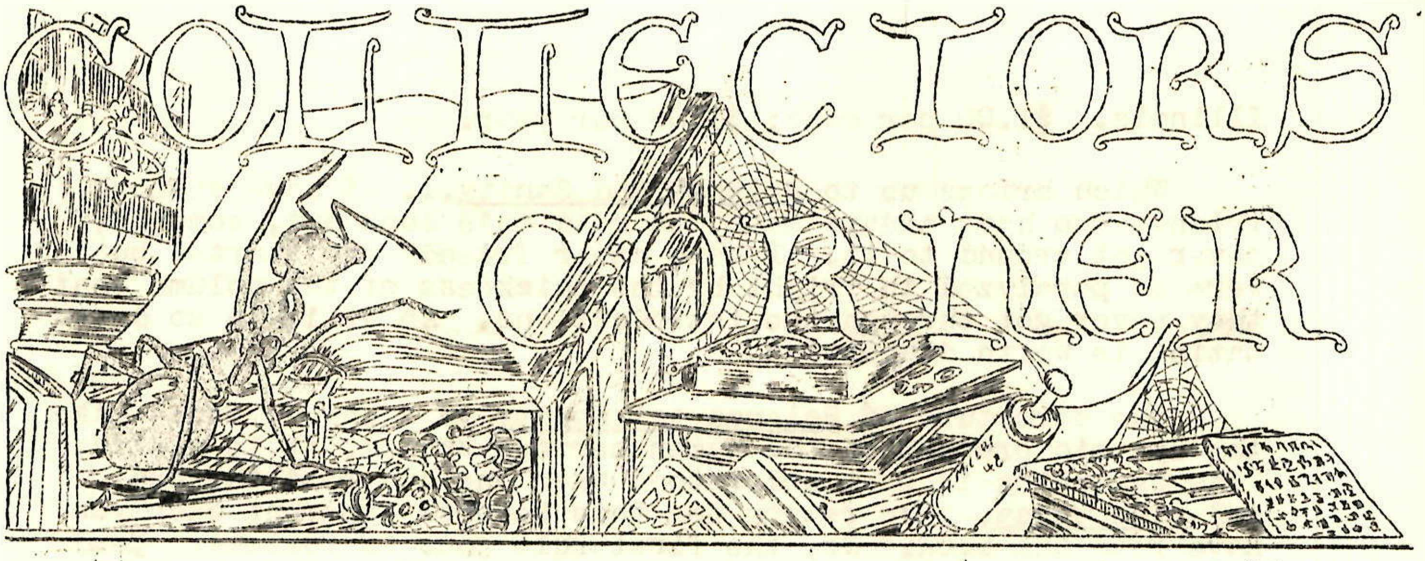
And don't expect any Cosmic Truths to be suddenly revealed to you. If what is written, seems naive, wait. If it seems overly-complex, wait, also. It'll grow on you. 'One day', you'll find yourself seeing relationships you've never seen before and realizing things on an "emotional" level that have been but words before.

Science and Sanity, now out in its third edition, is published by the Non-Aristotelian Press, Chicago, at $8.50. An abridged edition, paper-backed, is sometimes obtainable for $5.00. Out in a second edition soon will be Korzybski's Manhood of Humanity--first published in early twenties. This book is much easier to read than S&S and is better written from a literary standpoint than his later book.

In closing, let me say that I'm sorry to be closing. There is much more that I would like to say. I would like to tell you how the army used it in psychotherapy of fatigue cases in the European theatre during the last war with remarkable results; how the Department of Agriculture adopted it as means of arriving at decisions; how it is now being taught in the navy; the relationship between general semantics and logical empiricism; the marxistic attitude towards general semantics. I would like to tell you how general semantics is being used in dentistry and neurology, in arts and architecture, in literary criticism and in law, in counseling and in teaching.

But that would take, not four, but forty pages.

The End.



THE WORM OUROBOROS, by E. R. Eddison. New York: Albert & Charles Boni, 1926. 445 pp. Illustrated by Keith Henderson.

For thirty years E. R. Eddison dreamed of a far-away and long-ago land divided into great empires, ruled in splendor by nobility, constantly at war. Finally these dreams of three decades crystalized and were printed under the title The Worm Ouroboros, the American edition being dated 1926. It carries an introduction by James Stephens and a letter from James Branch Cabell. In spite of their high praise and the unquestioned merits of the novel, it sold poorly in America. Few attempted to read it and of these not many recognized its transcendent beauty. This indifference to a masterpiece is recognized by Cabell who writes: "A reader finds perforce in this book exceeding joy or else nothing at all -- in either case, quite unpredictable."

The tale is located on the planet Mercury. In the first chapter an Englishman, Lessingham, is taken to that distant world in a chariot drawn by a hippograph with a martlet as a guide. After the second chapter Lessingham fades from the picture and the remainder of the tale narrates the wars between Demonland and Witchland for the domination of Mercury. This conflict is one of ideations; it is the familiar and time-old struggle between light and darkness, good and evil. Eddison follows the accepted plot pattern; good and evil alternately win, but neither completely conquers. Even at the end, when it appears that Witchland is destroyed, it resurges, eager for a continuance of the struggle.

Eddison is an artist who paints with words, beautifully colored. His descriptions of castles, mountains and oceans show that he simply wrote of pictures that he first dreamed of. This is the same technique used by Mervyn Peake in Titus Groan and Stanley Mullen in Moon

Reviews By KELLER•SPENCER•

Foam and Sorceries. Thus a brilliant artist would find no difficulty in painting a series of illustrations for a deluxe edition; the only thing necessary would be to follow the descriptions. Unfortunately the black and white illustrations in the American edition add little to the worth of the format and the book would not have been harmed by their omission.

This fantasy shows that Eddison is as familiar with the tactics of war as with the technique of an artist. Several of his sea battles are reminiscent of the Punic Wars. The final battle of the war resulting in the capture of Carce, capital of Witchland, is undoubtedly based on the Battle of the Mons, where the French, defeated on the right and left flanks, won by striking at the center of the German line. The student of the American Revolution will recognize the repetition of a familiar principle of war: namely, that a war is not won by battles or campaigns or conquests of cities, but only by the destruction of the opposing army.

Those who love mountains will thrill to the description of lofty ranges far excelling the Himalayas in height and grandeur. These peaks are climbed with danger, not only from cold and altitude, but also from the mantichors. Finally one is reached that cannot be climbed and only by flying to its crest on the back of a hippograph can Lord Juss reach and rescue Lord Goldry Bluszco from the death-like sleep imposed on him by the magic of the King of Witchland.

Magic, both white and black, fills the book. As ever, when black legerdemaine is carried too far it destroys the worshipper. King Gorce XII in a last desperate effort to overcome the triumphant Demons by necromancy succeeds only in destroying himself and the Iron Tower where he seeks aid of the Gods from the Beyond.

The artist uses colors and paints with brushes; the sculptor carves the marble block seeing in the rough stone a completed Moses. But the author has to depend on a vocabulary. In doing so Eddison has used a language form that is unique in literature. It is uncertain where he found his sources but they certainly stem from heroic forms of expression and appear to be Irish and Welsh, both of which ultimately stem from the ancient Pictic culture, which some believe was brought to Europe by the survivors of lost Atlantis. Whatever the explanation, it is certain that the words and sentence construction are as much outside the modern world as his characters and geography.

There is an interesting feature to be found in an analysis of the sex relations detailed in this book. The powers of evil love vastly; only one, Lord Corund, husband of the beautiful Lady Prezmyra, loves cleanly. Conversely, the leading heroes on the side of the good, chivalrous and beautiful, love distantly and purely to such an extent that all of them remain bachelors. Kipling wrote, "He rideth the fastest who rideth alone." Kitchener favored single officers, feeling that a soldier could serve Mars best if he served Venus not at all. It is evident that, in this conflict between forces of good and evil, the Demons spent so much time fighting that they had neither time nor in-

clination for loving, while repeatedly the Witches lost the battle because they were intoxicated with wine and women.

The tale ends with the arrival of an ambassador from Witchland, who will presumably demand the complete surrender of Demonland. Thus the war will once again be waged and Lord Juss and his friends will be happy because of the return to the battlefield. The worm has again completed the circle, and we find that, as in earth life, one war only gives birth to another, without any benefit to the little people crawling confusedly on the earth. Certainly there is a final note of futility to all except the happy warrior. If the student of sociology wants a clear concept of the cross-currents of present diplomacy, I would advise a careful study of this fantasy.

-- DAVID H. KELLER, M. D.

METROPOLIS, by Thea Von Harbou. London: The Readers Library Publishing Co., Ltd., 1927. 250 pp.

General Information: This is an English translation of a story originally published in Germany, probably under the title Neubabelsburg. A film based upon this novel, produced by Ufa and directed by the author's husband, Fritz Lang, was one of the most important films of the "silent" period.

Review:

This book is not of today or of the future.
It tells of no place.
It serves no tendency, party or class.
It has a moral which grows on the pillar of understanding:
"The mediator between brain and muscle must be the Heart."

Thus begins this strange and powerful novel, the inspiration of one of the greatest motion pictures ever filmed, and a striking achievement in its own right. In other words, Metropolis is a fable -- if you like, a tale of one of the "worlds of if" -- a parable of the dangers that lie on the road of increasing mechanization. The basic idea is strongly reminiscent of H. G. Wells' When the Sleeper Wakes: a vision of a city of mechanization gone mad, of toiling workers enslaved by gigantic machines and ruled by a luxurious and decadant master-class. Wells himself in his later years abandoned this concept as a plausible picture of man's future, and attacked the film version of Metropolis with great vigor (see his book The Way the World is Going). However, as the above quotation indicates, Frdulein Von Harbou did not offer her story as prophecy, but as allegory. She does not say, "This is where our civilization will wind up," but "Let's make sure this never happens."

Wells' book, though still tremendously powerful, has "dated" sadly; Metropolis perhaps will never be overtaken by the march of science. This is because Wells fell into a pitfall which is carefully avoided in Metropolis: he filled When the Sleeper Wakes with descriptions of mechanical gadgets which have either "come true" or have become ludicrous as reality has surpassed them. In Metropolis there are no de-

tailed descriptions of the colossal city or its scientific wonders; just a general impression of overwhelming vastness, of mechanical marvels, of moral decay. At the same time, it suggests scene after scene which I should love to see filmed or interpreted in drawings -- scenes of tremendous dramatic power and symbolic beauty, whose details must be filled in by the reader's imagination.

The story revolves around Freder, the son of Joh Fredersen, Master of Metropolis. Freder's father rules the entire vast city from his office in the "New Tower of Babel"; but Freder takes pity on the masses who tend the vast machines which support the ruling class in luxury. Maria, a beautiful working-class girl who leads a movement to end the mechanical tyranny, rouses both Freder's conscience and his love. To thwart Freder's revolutionary tendencies, Joh Fredersen enlists the aid of the deformed scientist Rotwang. As Maria counsels the disgruntled workers to find a mediator between themselves and the Master of Metropolis, Rotwang creates a woman of metal and glass, to whom he gives the appearance of Maria. The robot-woman takes Maria's place as leader of the workers, crying for blood instead of justice. The story mounts to a dizzying climax as the workers revolt against the ruler of the city, and in the ensuing battle the city's machines run wild in a frantic mechanical Armageddon.

This curious tale is superbly told. It is full of breathless suspense and surprising developments, and it has the power to hold the reader fascinated from beginning to end. Furthermore, it is not just a science fiction thriller, but a thoughtful story whose sentences are pregnant with philosophical meaning; an adult, thought-provoking example of science fiction on a sociological plane.

At the same time, it suffers from a haziness in its ideas. "The mediator between brain and muscle must be the Heart" is a good sample of its rather mystical generalizations. The general tenor of the story is emotional rather than intellectual. Yet behind the haze lies, I think, a real and pertinent meaning. It is not difficult for modern man to see that scientific "progress" may lead to the destruction of humanity unless its development is controlled by some system of ethics. And that, essentially, is the message of Metropolis. Unfortunately, when Metropolis lies in ruins, none of the characters is very clear as to just what sort of city will take its place.

Stylistically, the story is powerful, and somewhat reminiscent of Victor Hugo. Passages of heady rhetoric are alternated with short, staccato sentences of great dramatic power. Repetition is used in the manner of a poetic refrain or musical theme. Of course, the style, too, has its weaknesses: the rhetoric is laid on a trifle too thick -- much of the book is regrettably over-written, passing into the realm of melodrama.

All in all, however, Metropolis is a brilliant achievement, both in its imaginative scope and in its warm humanity. The total effect is one of overwhelming power. I have not been privileged to see the film, hence cannot offer any comment on it; but I recommend the book as a fine example of science fiction at its best.

-- PAUL SPENCER.

JUST A MINUTE

JEAN COX

June 23rd; 627th Consecutive Meeting:

Forrest had some interesting news about the writing-activities of various club-members: 1) Canada will present the third publication of E. Everett Evan's Blurb, this time under the title of Hell Wouldn't Have Him. 2) Another kid around the club, A. E. van Vogt, had joined company with "Super Science" again; this time with a story called Automaton. 3) Eph Koenigsberg had just sold a science-fiction story (or, rather, the Ackerman Authors' Agency had) to "Tavern Digest". The title of the story was The Case of the Barroom Flaw; what is so remarkable is that TD usually doesn't accept fiction.

Hal Curtis, a fascist spy from the Pacific Reaction Society, had a little propaganda to disperse. He told us that it was very probable that that society will have a fifteen-minute-a-wee discussion series starting this August over KFI. This series will feature discussions about the latest interplanetary conditions.

In the new business department there were the nominations for Director. Being very important, we gave it all of four seconds: "I nominate Alan U. Hershey for re-election." "I second the nomination." "I move that nominations be closed." (We deny rumors emanating from somewhere in the vincinity of the United States that the LASFS uses the Russian electoral system. That is untrue; the Society's electoral system has no paralelle anywhere.)

June 30th; 628th Consecutive Meeting:

Forrest told us that he and some other fans stopped into see Edgar Rice Burroughs the other day and learned that that vernerable author had completely stopped writing. He has three or four manuscripts yet to be published but after that, nothing. We also leanred that some of Burrough's books are again being translated into German from the original ape-talk.

One of the club's debtors, Ray Bradbury, was present and was froced into giving an account of his recent visit to New York where he conversed with editors and lesser mortals. One of the editors was Walter Bradbury, headitor of Doubleday Doran Company, who is going to commit "literary incest" by publishing three of Bradbury's novels. The first one is entitled "The Martian Chronicles" and is a novel embodying all his numerous Martian stories. The second one will be entitled "Frost and Fire" and will be a novelization of his Planet novelette, "The Creatures That Time Forgot" and the third will tell of the disintegration of a marriage in Mexico. It is based on his story, "The Next In Line".

Goodthinker Eph Koenigsberg duckspeaked of doubleplusgood Nineteen Eighty-Four by George Orwell. In 1984, the book and the year, life is dominated by the philosophy of Ingsoc and by a watchful individual known affectionately as Big Brother. Eph was very appreciative, comparing it to Arthur Koestler's Darkness at Noon.

July 7th; 629th Consecutive Meeting:

Forrest told us that--apparently--there were going to be several additions to the science-fantasy field. He had some inside information that came to him from August Derleth to the effect that 1) there are going to be some sweeping changes in Weird Tales; and 2) that one publisher who already puts out one science-fiction magazine is going to issue another--most likely, this refers to POPULAR with the new magazine being Astonishing Stories; and 3) that a publisher of mysteries will soon issue a fantasy magazine with a well-known mystery author as its editor. This sounds like it could be AMERICAN MERCURY and Anthony Boucher.

July 14th; 630th Consecutive Meeting:

The stellar attraction of the evening was L. Sprague De Camp, the well-known science-fiction and fantasy writer, who spoke on "The Fourth Dimension". Mr. DeCamp, "The Walking Encyclopedia", paid special attention to "the cult of the pseudo-scientific fourth dimension", whose ideas were so prevalent in the science-fiction of fifteen years ago. Besides the fourth-dimension, he mentioned briefly time-travel, alternate time-tracks, Dunne's time-dream theories, and so on. His talk was disappointing only in its shortness. To loud requests to give still another talk, this time on Atlantis, he advised that we read his article on "Lost Continents" which appeared in the March 1947 issue of Nature.

July 21st; 631st Consecutive Meeting:

Forrest announced that the AMERICAN MERCURY would publish "The Magazine of Fantasy", edited by Anthony Boucher; it will publish both fantasy and science-fiction of a literary quality. It will be a quarterly and the first issue will be out September 10th. He also revealed that Dutton and Company were to publish Fredric Brown's Startling novel, "What Mad Universe." Also, van Vogt's "Voyage of the Spaceship Beagle" will be the next book from Simon and Schuster.

July 28th; 632nd Consecutive Meeting:

Walt "Mickey Cohen" Daugherty demanded that the club's officers be present on a certain Sunday evening for a shooting--camera, that is, not gun. Movie camera. Walt revealed that the LASFS, in co-operation with MGM (sic!), is to make a non-documentary film entitled "Can Such People Be". Forrest asked if we should come wearing fanchromatic make-up.

The End.

OUT, DAMNED BLIND SPOT!

EARLE PRINCETON

Somehow, fantasy fans seem to have developed perverted judgment about the fantasy field. Hardly a week goes by without some self-styled critic of the genre complaining that a particular story is either a low grade space opera, or else is far too vague, diffuse and esoteric for his tastes. On the one hand, there is all too frequently the attempt to impress the audience that the writer is one of the cognoscenti, and above such things as a good, rollicking, adventure yarn, and on the other (hand), he is trying to compensate for his evident lack ofintellect by pointing out to his few readers that it is not he who fails to understnading the story, but that it is the author who fails, because of (reasons enumerated) inadequacies in the "style" and "treatment" of the story.

Again, some few fan editors, and some fans who haven't the guts to expose their puerile minds in print, persist in pointing out how an author could improve his style. Frequently, such criticism is on the banal level of, say, "John Doe isn't writing nearly as well as he was umph years ago." Specific imstances are rarely mentioned, of course. When they are mentioned, they frequently allude to some masterpiece of the past and compare it to a potboiler of the present. Past potboilers and present masterpieces are conveniently ignored. At times, when criticism goes into an analysis of a particular story, a thorough reading of the critique reveals the fact that, in essence, the reviewer just plain didn't like the story.

This short article does not cavil against genuine criticism. On the contrary, this author is eager to read and listen to well thought out analyses. But we should recognize that familiarity with a field, and the posession of genuine personal likes and dislikes does not now, and never will constitute the intellectual capacity to criticize a work of art. (When a story is, incidentally, not a work of art, ewen with a crude interpretation of that concept, it shouldn't be analyzed. Waste of time.)

This, to me, is the blind spot of fantasy fandom. If we read to enjoy, we should confine ourselves to that function. If we dislike some works, we should hold our opinions, to be sure, but we should restrain ourselves from puffing those l. and disl. into pretentious "criticism." And, if we must evaluate a story in terms of other than enjoyment, a working familiarity with literature in other fields should be a requisite to the amateur critic.

I might add, the way things are going, that there are great employment opportunities extant in the comic book review and criticism field. Are there any well qualified aspirants? Bring your fan mags along when you arrive for your interview. They may help.

THE WESTERCON

(ANNUAL WEST COAST CONFERENCE)

KNIGHTS OF PYTHIAS HALL

VENICE AND FIGUEROA

LOS ANGELES

OCTOBER SECOND

1949