

SIMPSON '62

*Speleobem 29*





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MC'S ON 72

# THE CABAL LADDER

DEADWOOD SAP 3 (Toskey) Go away, Toskey, or get interested again. We already have enough deadwood on the roster, without having some more that complains about the organization too.

RATATOSK, or, perhaps more properly, Ratatoskr, was the squirrel in Norse mythology who ran up and down the world-tree Yggdrasil, carrying rumours between the eagle at the top and Nidhogg the dragon at the bottom. It seemed an appropriate name for a newszine, besides paying a small tribute to Ron Ellick, whose work on STARSPIKLE got me into the newszine field in the first place.

Girl-watching is always fun, but inability to carry one's activity beyond this stage indicates a certain lack, either of interest, or of talent.

RESIN 22 (Metcalf) Tiresome Norm, this time you ain't so. A very amusing tour de farce, this treatment of Burroughs's Tarzan books as African anthropology books -- damn sight more interesting than other anthro books, I'd say.

POT POURRI 40 (Berry) Nice to see you in some other rakete than fingerprints.

WILD COLONIAL BOY 13 (Foyster) My, you were in a foul mood when you wrote this, weren't you? Been eating spoiled kangaroo meat again? Or rotten platypus eggs?

You are probably right that a bad OE might do a good deal towards reviving interest in SAPS in some quarters of the membership. I gather you are filing for the office?

You will find that Dian had her own membership from mailing 61 (October 1962) on. We were married in February 1964. Just how does this jibe with your comment that she "only just missed out on the Instant SAP appellation"? For your information, or anyone else's who is interested, Nan Rapp is entitled to her own membership, should she want it. Jim Webbert is not. Nan worked her way up through the WL, and Jim did not. A quick check of the roster from Mailing 61, by the way, indicates that Dian beat you into membership by one mailing. You're evidently just picking on your SAPSish elders, as is usual with the latecomers, so I guess we'll have to wait till you grow out of it.

EXCELSIOR 4 (Katz) The West Coast is willing to take Lerner back, on condition that you take back Demmon and (since Calvin really hasn't been too active out here recently) Lichtman too. In fact, maybe we could work out a trade for several members of the different Coastal fandoms. As long as you don't try sending us Boardman. Who would we have to take to get rid of Blackbeard?

Assuming that the Virginvention Committee isn't bidding for '67, I'll back New York -- or is this somewhat akin to being liked by GMCarr?



Your comment that Rich Brown has a "razor keen" mind reminds me of the time that Eney, in the Cult, suggested that Dave Rike had razor blades between his ears. Not, he hastened to assure the Cult, that he thought Rike was Sharp -- just that he had Schick for brains. No application to Rich intended, but I've always been fond of the line.

Too bad you think LeeH is too old for you -- she looks great in a nun's habit. ...Hmph, all I can seem to come up with are Cult jokes.

SAPRISE 3 (Van Arnam) I've no particular reason for listing the WL columnzines separate on the SPECTATOR. I do have a vague reason or two: there aren't enough SAPSazines to take up the entire page; Rich Mann tends to have a larger zine than I do, and thus takes over my zine if he isn't listed separately; I'm not running for re-election, and don't care too much what I do with the SPECTATOR as long as I follow my general outline of rules.

F. Lee Baldwin (writer of "Crime Stalks the Fan World," etc) is still alive; I passed his address on to TCarr a few months ago -- or at least I hope I did, because I don't know where it is in my files.

If you're rereading Thorne Smith, try Glorious Pool and Rain In the Doorway first -- they have more upbeat endings than the others of his Best. Dian particularly recommends the last line of Pool. I agree.

I assume you characters realize that, if you get the 1966 con, anything that goes wrong whatsoever will finish NYcons off completely? (Of course, that's what was said about NYCons after II.)

SPY RAY (Eney) The point I wish to make about your numbering (or lack thereof) on your fanzines is that use of OpCrif numbers only does not give a handle for the individual issues. Coming across a copy of SPY RAY or TARGET: FAPA in a stack of fanzines, it is impossible to decide which mailing it goes in without having the 00s immediately at hand. With others, the subseries numbering permits a good guess, at least.

CROSS-EYED GOAT (Chalker) You are making the same mistake that Tricon did when it got started: speiding too much time tearing down the opposition, New York, on the other hand, mostly boosts its own bid and doesn't try to attack others. The result is, although there are a lot of people out here who don't particularly like (1) New York as a site, or (2) New York fans in general, we will probably vote for them next year.

I'll be glad to entertain a motion to censure the OE for franking. Send it in, signed by ten SAPS members, and it will be acted upon immediately.

DINKY BIRD (Ruth Berman) I once used one of Bradbury's stories for a "Reading," as you tried to do with "Usher II." This was a solo project, though, for an Interpretative contest at the University of Florida. I used "There Will Come Soft Rains," and took a second with it somehow. Bradbury's stories generally read aloud quite well, though I dunno about group-reading "Usher II."

I don't think C.S. Lewis tried hard enough. Though I'm really not much of a TS Eliot enthusiast, I have seen evenings "spread out against the sky like a patient etherised upon a table." They are those grey evenings, totally devoid of any brightness and color; they are flat and very quiet, but you get the impression that they are masking something which should be visible if you could cut away the outer maskings. (We will now here it from the Real TS Eliot Buffs.)

Hopefully, the compilation of the first Shalar annal will be ready by the end of the year; earlier I can't promise -- it'll be about 70pp.



DIE WIS (Dick Schultz) Regretfully, I must disagree with the idea that Poul Anderson's Star Fox is Hugo material. I enjoyed reading the book, and I think a couple of his characters are excellent, but the book isn't a book, it's three novellas, and the attempt at synthesis of a novel doesn't come off. For that matter, the plot leaves things to be desired, too: no attempt has been made to describe the fight in "Admiralty," which could have been one of the best scenes. The characters, excellent in idea and description, and in the early delineation, become more cardboard as the book goes on, especially Gunnar Heim, the protagonist (which doesn't bother me too much, as my favorites were the antagonist and the second lead anyway.)

COLLECTOR (Howard Devore) I am buying a "pig in a poke" more or less, when it comes to the Fanzine Foundation. I simply have to trust you and Alan J as to what is in the collection and what is not. If the two items you say you want (some issues of FANTASY MAGAZINE and a Lovecraft piece) are from your personal collection which has been housed with the FF I wouldn't consider suggesting you should leave them. For that matter, even if they were part of the FF, certainly storage of the collection for these past years is worth a few old zines. (Though in the latter case I'd haggle with Al about his assuming the "fee.")

Our present plans call for purchase, around March, of a VW Microbus with which to travel to Tricon, taking several weeks to get there and seeing part of the country (plus Canada) on the way. We should be able to get to Detroit either just before or just after the con, whichever is more convenient for you (after would probably be best for us.) Most of the stuff would be shipped to UCLA Library for my picking up when we return, though we could take some of it with us. I don't think it would be a good idea to try getting over the Rockies with a loaded-down Microbeast, two pooped fans, and a bratling; a close estimate of the complete cubic footage, though, if you have time to do as you suggested you might in July.

As for their availability: My collection even now is available for reference, as most of the LAreans know. As long as I'm going to be home and not too busy, they are welcome to come over and check things in it. I've even offered to get things xeroxed at UCLA if necessary, for cost and handling. I see no reason to change this policy when the FF is added to my collection, and much more reason to continue it. So you have your assurance.

I hate to sound like a vulture, but what has happened to Don Ford's collection? The last I heard, Tabakow and a couple others were going to help Margaret put it in order and put it on the market. Anything come of this?

SPACEWARP (Art Rapp) Sorry to cross you up in your comments about white space by actually running SWARP on white paper, but that was all I had available at the time, so I used it.

CHARLOTTAN (Len Bailes) Explaining "Iolanthe" to the usual clod requires an excellent command of the language -- to the point where you can refer to the characters as "fay," "peri," and the like, and eschew the use of the term "Fairy." It can be done, but it is not always worth the effort.

The feeling that you have missed out on things by a year or so probably hits everyone when he gets involved with a hobby that has been going for a while -- there are always things that would have been fun a year or two before he got into the works. Rather a useless thing to worry about, though -- just latch onto whatever comes in the future.



#### THE CABAL LADDER...4 \_ \_ \_ \_ \_

BLACK CAT MONTHLY (Ed Meskys) If you insist on using that microelite for your entire zine, you are going to get damn few comments. I'd rather talk to your cowbird:

WHEN WILL DUPREE BE A SAP (E-I-E-I-O) (Tom Dupree) I hope it isn't until he gets a better title -- this one is worse than Rich Mann's WLzine column title.

How's MAPA? I wonder how long before we reach the point where the fringe-fandoms take over completely? There's Burroughs fandom, Comic Fandom, Monster Fandom, Tolkien Fandom, and a couple others -- all of them are getting around to publishing fanzines, and most of them to starting APAs. They draw members (though not all of their members) from SF fandom, and spread the activity of the SF fan even further than the 7-10 SF APAs, Cinvensions, and genzines have already done. Actually, I think we may have reached the point already, so I regret that I can't wish you too much success with MAPA, Tom. (And I suppose you knew there was another MAPA a few years ago -- the Modern Amateur Press Assn.?)

GEWURZTRAMINER (Don Fitch) Sometimes I think you stay in SAPS just to bug me, Don Fitch -- and to get the mailings, of course. I understand that there are several cubic feet of space in your garage that are not yet insulated with fanzines. I keep hoping you will eventually do more writing for some APA... .

YOPGM (Rich Mann) Actifandom and college simply do not mix very well. I got into fandom between my junior and senior years at college, with the result that I damn near didn't graduate -- got tossed out, petitioned back in for a summer session, and finally graduated. The wording on the petition acceptance was a jewel: I must take three prescribed courses (worked out beforehand, and, happily, including Chorus, so I could be in "Red Mill"), I must get grades of at least so much; I must not get in any difficulties with the disciplinary committee, the fuzz, or anyone else...etc. Good thing I didn't need a regular semester's worth of credits!

Anyway, I gather others have their Fandom-vs.-College problems, too. (Or, How Are You, Tom Gilbert?) Everyone has to decide for himself whether one or the other is more important, and then decide how much time he can spare for the unimportant one.

I could probably fill the next stencil and a half describing, as you did, the scene in which I type SAPS stencils. Suffice it to say that we moved into a 2-bedroom apartment in August, and one of the bedrooms has been converted to a fan room with 5 filing cabinets, a bookcase and one shelf on a second bookcase full of bound fanzines, the mimeo, 2 typers, the lightscope, etc. The table with the two typers (this one we have on loan from LeeJay plus Knight Ronald, my Cyrillic) also has the lightbox and about five volumes of APA L to get ready for binding (I've given up on ever getting indexes from Gilbert).

It occurs to me I never commented on Weber's test of motivations. My ranking of them would be: Security, money, sex, honesty, and morals.

The crediting of TTT(R)2#3 to "JaHuCo" has its precedent in a FAPA publication of quite a few years ago. It was called JAWIBUCO, the title coming from the first two letters of the last names of the contributors: Lee JAcobs, Don WIlson, Charles BUrbee, and Ed COx.

MISTILY MEANDERING (Fred Patten) I think that panel at the Westercon on "1964: SF in retrospect" was a good idea, and I hope that the next Westercon does continue it. I might even be willing to be suckered in again to report on fanzines. I do wish, tho,



that someone had taped the panel so we could go over what was said later and maybe condense the remarks into an article (assuming we actually said anything, which is not too easy to determine when you are behind the mikes.)

You are being unfair in comparing the costumes at Westercon 18 with those "at past balls." The only valid comparison would be with those present at Westercon 16 (1963) in Burlingame. The Westercons before that did not have masquerades, and in 1964 there was no Westercon per se, so there was no Westercon Masquerade. And I think, in comparison with the 1963 costumes, there were at least as many, and they were as good or better.

The lack of a huckster room is a bad thing, maybe. Not necessarily. It depends a lot on where you put the thing in relation to the rest of the communal convention rooms like the auditorium, art show, etc. If, as at Pacificon, the huckster room is quite a bit out of the way of the others, it may be virtually ignored except for the "brief run-through" you mention. If it is near the others, it will become a gathering-place for fans with no place in particular to go -- and a good one, too. The art show room also serves as a gathering-place, and the further away you put the huckster room, the more the art show takes away from its use as a gathering spot. So, since I understand that the place available for a huckster room at the Edgewater Inn this past Westercon would have involved going down a flight of stairs from the other rooms, going across a courtyard, and up another flight of stairs, I think it is probably a very good thing they didn't have it.

Memo to future con committees for Worldcons (and maybe even for Westercons): Don't forget about the Group Picture at the banquet -- it is an almost traditional souvenir-type thing, and it is annoying to me (as well as to others I've talked to on the subject) that several of the Worldcons have either forgotten the thing entirely (Pacificon II) or had Bad Ones. I've been to 6 Worldcons, and have only 3 Group Pix. Couldn't a Westercon afford a Banquet Picture?

NIFLHEIM (Dave Hulan) As the 1968 Los Angeles Convention Committee-hopefuls are vigorously putting down the idea of their con being another "South Gate," thus ruling out the SoLACon II, and since they can't very well use Pacificon III for obvious reasons, just what are they/you planning to call the 1968 con if it is in LA? How about the oft-suggested LACon? Of course, if it is Southern Calif. but not in LA, there are all sorts of possibilities, I guess -- Disneycon, anyone? Beachcon? AnaCon (der) from Anaheim?

HOBGOBLIN (Terry Carr) "The Last One" was very enjoyable

I am lately falling prey to a feeling Donaho expressed: too many people are becoming rabidly interested in things I like. This goes for Tolkien and G&S in particular. Half a dozen fanzines yammer Lord of the Rings stuff at me; Len Bailes in Person and Meskys in print constantly yak about G&S. I am beginning to feel like I did at the last (and I mean last) BSI meeting I went to, 1962 or thereabouts: I like the subject to a fair amount of depth, but this is ridiculous! Bailes is threatening to take up Don Marquis next. I should warn rich.

SPECTATOR (OE) I've met everyone on the Royster but Foster. I'll have to get him over here -- or drop him. Anyway, 32 out of 33 or 97.0% isn't bad. I've also met the invitee, plus 10 of the 29 WLers, for 36.7% on the Non-members and 68.3% overall. Have to meet a few more WLers, I guess.



# THE DISTANT SIDE

PART 11

-- Madeleine Willis

Sunday, 16 September 1962 --

We awoke to yet another bright and sunny day, a fact to which I was rapidly accustoming myself. There was no hesitation in dressing, no doubtful looking out of the window and then going out the back door to get a wider view of the sky. Grey skies presaging rain and colder weather hold no part in my memories of San Francisco. There was no time either for sadness at our imminent departure, we just got up and started packing. Miriam came down a little later, then Calvin; Jerry slept late. Miriam and Calvin drove us to the bus station; we were a subdued quartet. The only excitement on the journey was when there was a loud report. We stopped to check that the tyres were okay, and Calvin told us we had merely run over an empty wine bottle. At the station we stood around for a few minutes, saying all the words that people the world over say on these occasions. Suddenly I was overcome with the feeling that these words we were saying, because of their utter familiarity and inevitability, were quite meaningless, parrot words. It seemed utterly ridiculous that I should be saying these things to two such good friends, whom I should very probably never see again. There should be other words, I felt, than the usual "sorry to be leaving, it was wonderful having you, I hope we'll meet again soon" formula. I said those parrot words, parrot fashion. Then I realised what I had done. No one else could read my mind, no one could see what I was feeling. The others looked at me, and Walter said "Madeleine!" in a shocked voice. I felt trapped, what could I say now? How could I explain, in the minute or two before we left? I just said, "I'm sorry, I'm being stupid, it's been wonderful meeting you, and I do hope we'll meet again some time, give my love to Jerry and say good-bye to him for me."

And so for the last time we looked across San Francisco Bay, across the blue sparkling water, letting our eyes linger on the marble-white buildings rising in tiers to the gentle green slopes of the hills beyond. San Francisco is a beautiful city.

We were travelling the Coast Highway route, but on studying the map we found that this route was nowhere near the coast for most of the way. It was a pleasant enough journey, nothing remarkable to see, just hills shimmering in the heat haze, and nearer at hand, the sun-scorched grass.

It was very late in the day, at about seven in the evening, when we saw what we had been looking for ever since we had arrived in Seattle, a week and a thousand miles away: the breakers rolling in from the open Pacific onto a stretch of golden sand. Here at last was the Pacific coast as we had imagined it. This was at Pismo Beach. The road ran alongside the beach for a few miles and then turned up into the hills again. It was almost dark when we reached Santa Barbara. Here we found evidence of the fannish equivalent of the "old school tie network," in that a friend of Andy Main (bem), namely Bob West, was there at the bus station to meet us as well as the fully accredited Goon representative Steve Schultheis. We were welcomed to Santa Barbara and whisked away up winding narrow roads to a bungalow hidden



away amongst greenery.

We said hello to Virginia, and were instantly made at home in the Spanish-type living-room. This was the only home we visited in America that seemed foreign to us, yet it had echoes of the primitive farmhouse interiors I was used to in the south of Ireland in that the walls were uneven and white-washed. But the resemblance ended there, for the room was very large, as there was no need here in sunny California to huddle around the fireplace. There were beautifully-shaped arches at either end of the room, and further evidence of cat fandom in the two scratching posts set up in a corner of the room. I think that, of all the fans we met in America, the Busbys were the only ones who didn't cherish the feline tribe. I had read of cat scratching posts, but these were the only ones I had seen. Their presence, I think, was further evidence of the care which Steve lavished on everything which pertained to him. James White, in HYPHEN, had already described the care and attention Steve expended on his sartorial appearance, and here was evidence that he cared for the appearance of his furniture -- very nice it was, too. We were shown his den and his fanzine collection. I was not a bit surprised to find that it was housed in a steel filing cabinet, properly filed in alphabetical order. I think Steve is hideously miscast as a Goon operative; he would be much more at home as Lord Peter Wimsey.

Monday, 17 September \_ \_

We slept late, and made our own breakfasts in the neat kitchen. We had been shown the night before where everything was, but I think even if we hadn't we would have been able to manage all right. We just had to look in the most logical place, and there we would find what we were looking for.

We went out into the garden to sunbathe, and there at last was evidence of the dichotomy in Steve's character: it was a Goon garden. Everywhere we looked greenery rioted unchecked, and the dividing line between Steve's and the next-door neighbour's garden could only be extrapolated. Down one side of the garden was a no-man's-land of plants and trees and overgrown vegetation. We looked for a spot to lie down, and found no soft grassy place such as there would be in a garden at home. There was grass, but the California sun had made it tough and brown and scratchy. We went inside again for rugs, lay down beside the lemon tree, and read magazines until Steve could come back for us at lunch-time. I was surprised that there was a lemon tree, with ripe lemons on it, for we had had canned lemon juice at breakfast. But then Virginia was a career girl as well as housewife, and it must be much simpler to collect your lemon juice already prepared.

Steve drove us to a rendezvous with Virginia and Thelma Evans, widow of E.E. Evans. Virginia had brought hamburgers along for a picnic, and we asked where she had bought them. They were Broomeburgers, which had been recommended to us by Andy Main. It was unanimously agreed that these gurgers were Good, like those of Calais. Thelma had been to the local bakery, and had brought some chocolate eclairs, filled with confectioners' custard. This was the first time I had encountered this particular substitute for whipped cream. I thought it a better substitute than the "mock cream" made from white fat which is commonly sold here in baker's pastries, but it was typically American in that it could only be in common use in conjunction with refrigerators, as it became slightly liquid at normal temperatures. We chatted for a while, then said good-bye to Virginia and Thelma.



We went down to the beach and took a stroll. It seemed somehow unfair that just then a cool breeze sprang up, but it was still much warmer than at home, and we were comfortable in shorts and sleeveless tops. Here again was evidence of the American tradition that summer ended on Labour Day, for we had the beach almost to ourselves. The only other people about were a couple who were probably foreigners like us, or possibly the man was an overworked executive who had been ordered to take a holiday, for, as I watched, fascinated, he went through a long and varied repertoire of exercises. If he had to spend part of his time on a sandy beach, well by God he was going to make some use of it. There was an air of grim determination about his corpulent figure.

The beach ended abruptly inland at a steep bank topped with green. We found a place to climb up, and found the green wasn't grass, it was a plant I had never seen before. An ice-plant, I think it was, and it grew thickly, ankle-deep in places. This was apparently the Californian substitute for grass. It didn't need watering or mowing, it was coolly green under the hot sun, but it wasn't good for sitting on. But then in California, as in most other parts of America, the ubiquitous wooden bench was usually not far away.

The perfectionist in Steve came briefly to the fore again. His logical mind couldn't accept the immaculate sartorial elegance of Robert Heinlein as he had appeared at the banquet at Chicago. He knew what behind-the-scenes work went into that beautiful white jacket and immaculately creased trousers. He had a theory worked out to account for this which he shared with us. It seems that Heinlein has a valet (his former batman from wartime days) whose devotion, paralleled only by the little dedicated band of Hugo voters, is such that he shares all those hazards of Heinlein's breakneck dash across the mountains, plains, and swamps that combine to make Heinlein late, stands guard with his little clothes brush to banish any least little speck of dust, mud, snow, hail, or fall-out from the Water Brothers' ceremony before it can settle on his master's person.

Steve drove us round part of Montecito and we admired the traditional Spanish style of architecture. Those are nice old Spanish buildings, we said. Those are new old Spanish buildings, corrected Steve.

We passed the Valley Country Club and saw what we had previously seen only on television: buggies being used by golfers to save walking. We had been rather amazed at the popularity of these, and a little scornful of the golfers who would use them. Here in California I took it all back. When the cool breeze wasn't blowing, it would indeed be an effort to walk round a golf course in the heat, let alone swing a golf club. I had been so completely acclimatised by now to the American style of unfenced gardens, that when we came upon one that was completely surrounded by a fence of impenetrable greenery I was quite surprised. "What have they got to hide?" was the way I put it.

We left Santa Barbara shortly after 5 p.m. on the express bus for Hollywood. It was a very short journey, a mere two hours.

Time, the great healer, has mercifully erased from my mind the terrifying conglomerations of traffic as we neared Los Angeles. There were five or more lanes in each direction with cars pouring in from all directions. I had seen some pretty complicated intersections near Chicago, but here were mobius strips gone wild, cloverleaves gone rampant,



and horrendous hordes of signs. I should hate to have to find my way to anywhere in Los Angeles and District. One would first have to know how to get to the entrance to the freeway or expressway required, fight through the traffic (and even the slowest lane seemed fast to me) and watch out for the signs for the various exits. There were four-level interchanges, and a different lot of exits and entrances depending on whether you were going north, south, east, or west. All you can see on the freeways converging on Los Angeles are the palm trees, the signs, and the land sloping up on either side of the road. The restricted view one gets on many freeways and turnpikes is like nothing so much as travelling certain railway cuttings here in Ireland.

Forry met us at the bus station, and drove us to his home on Sherbourne Drive. On the house wall, where the house name would normally be, were his own initials painted in red, about two feet high. I think the prominence given his own initials is part of the charming simplicity that makes up Forry's character. You know where you are where Forry is concerned, but it also makes one fearful for him. He needs protection from his own lack of deviousness; when he is so open-hearted himself it is hard for him to realise that others sometimes wear a mask. This can also lead to his friends being a little secretive about things that they don't wish to become common knowledge -- not that Forry is a common gossip, but that he is so soft-hearted that he finds it difficult to refuse requests, whether it be for information or something material.

I cannot visualise Forry's house at all, as it was hidden from view by trees and shrubs. In a way this was reminiscent of the castle of the sleeping princess, only that this house was dedicated, not to times gone by, but to the future. The trees made the house dark inside, as the sun couldn't shine into any of the rooms. This was in complete contrast with what would be desirable in this sun-starved island, but here in Los Angeles it made the house pleasurably cool and restful after the heat and glare of the streets outside. There must have been furniture inside, but it too seems nonexistent to me now. What I do remember are the walls covered with all sorts of pictures having a source in any one of Forry's three main interests -- science fiction, horror, and sex. Up to and beyond picture level there were shelves of books and magazines, and every room was thus filled.

I had heard of the famed three garages filled with books, and how the car had to stand in the driveway, but when we were there this latter-day Augean stables had been so tidied up by Walt Daugherty and his two young helpers that at one point Forry could have driven his car in. It would have made a historic picture, but unfortunately Forry had been away at the time, and since then more shelves had been put up and more books added to the collection.

In the kitchen a refrigerator was humming away, busy at its self-appointed task of covering its mortal coils with several inches of frost. Inside, two trays of ice cubes huddled together for company in the vast empty wastes. When staying in other American homes we had been taken out to meals occasionally, but this one was the first where there was absolutely no provision for eating at home. I was a little disappointed at being done out of queening it in the kitchen, being a firm believer in the old proverb that "the hand which readies the crocks rules the world." That night, when we started thinking about going to bed, Forry asked us if we wanted anything, and we said we were used to



having cocoa or hot chocolate last thing at night. Forry took out the car and drove us to the nearest snackbar. At 3 am.

That evening we sat around and talked, bringing each other up to date on what had been happening since we saw each other last in Chicago. We told Forry about our mountain climb and other adventures in Seattle, and about the wild Berkeley party where the young fans returned from a shopping expedition with fresh supplies of drink and three traffic blinkers. These last were greeted with glad cries of "Get one for me!" The young fans promptly went out for more. I hated to think of the hazards left facing unsuspecting motorists on the roads round El Cerrito; but, as we told Miriam in a letter a few days later, we might disapprove of their actions, but we would visit the criminals in gaol. Berkeley Fandom had always been noted for its open minds; now, as I told Forry, we could call them "The Free Blinkers' Society."

Forry entertained us on the piano, singing to his own accompaniment. I think he has this rather idealised picture of Home Life, friends gathering round the piano of an evening and singing together. Neither Walter nor I can sing, but on Forry's urging I gave it a try. After one duet, Forry closed the piano lid. As he said regretfully to Walter, "She's all heart; there's no room left for a voice."

We were shown up to the main bedroom, which was to be ours during our stay. Forry hadn't been content to give up his bedroom that first night -- he slept downstairs on a couch even though there was another bedroom upstairs, leaving us a whole floor to ourselves. He knew we'd been sleeping in Greyhound buses and other confined and semi-public places, and presumably he felt we might like to whoop it up a little all over his top storey. I suspect that even the bedroom was thoughtfully set up for us, too. At any rate, from the bed we could see ourselves in two large mirrors, one on the dressing table and the other inside a closet door. It was a type of hospitality which doesn't yet seem to have occurred even to the editors of Good Housekeeping.

The last peculiarity we noticed was an intercom set over the bed. While making sure it was switched off, I accidentally touched the burglar alarm, waking up half of Southern California. It took Forry a few moments to turn it off, but fortunately the police didn't turn up. Maybe they didn't want to get involved.

Madeleine Willis

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Ye Editor apologises to Madeleine for not passing along her note last mailing to the effect that moving and its myriad problems had made it impossible to get a chapter of her report in for the 72nd mailing. I was last-minute man again with my zine, so I forgot. And I/he wishes to assure his highly-valued columnist-reporter that he will be glad to get whatever length report she can manage during a quarter, and will publish as much of it as he can, no matter how late it comes in, if he can get it under the deadline. Also, I/he/we sympathize with her current problem and even more with her recent one (house guests). The word of Ben Franklin is appropriate, even with Fan House Guests, much as one may like them: "Guests are like fish, they go bad after three days. Throw them out." . . . B.E.P., who wonders where he put his blinker...



Wednesday, November 6, 1963

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# int

## *H. P. Lovecraft: Gen*

By K. S. KYNELL

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## H. P. Lovecraft: Genius of the Macabre

By K. S. KYNELL

Someone once suggested that we take a perverse type of Freudian delight in being alarmed, a curious and atavistic excitement which can be both titillating and fearful at the same time. The current rash of alleged horror films in motion pictures and television is a case in point, although these constitute at best only hasty and ill-conceived adaptations of Poe and Hawthorne. Their revival, however, reflects a unique perspective on American culture, the conspicuous absence of truly malevolent themes as a significant facet of our literature. Somehow the genre of the bizarre never really caught on in the headlong technological crush of Yankee pragmatism. To be sure, we had trapdoors and pendulums, and odd people staring moodily down from church steeples, but domestic writers never progressed beyond the ingenuous stage. Perhaps Ambrose Bierce came the closest to exquisite terror in a few notable short stories, but the mystical, the malignant, and the esoteric have simply never thrived, in this country, conceivably the reason for the relative obscurity of the late, great Howard Phillips Lovecraft.

American perceptions have been balanced between a kind of saccharine transcendentalism and the bloodless prose of Henry James, but never has there developed a more sophisticated leavening of essential evil as is evidenced in such European authors as Arthur Machen, Blackwood, and perhaps Lord Dunsany. Whole schools of Continental literature have developed the concept of evil in all its most subtle and proliferatingly hideous forms, psychologically ruinous material of such potency that even today, one must ferret it out in rare book rooms or dusty stalls along the Seine. Consequently, the minor threads of this genre, like a tenuous and imagined line of fragile perceptions, are woven into the thousand year heritage of medieval lore and speculation that constitutes its European backdrop, but until the advent of H. P. Lovecraft in the 1920's America could produce no parallel.

Lovecraft himself was a gaunt, spare man of enormous erudition in astronomy, Egyptology, medieval philosophy, and cabalism; a quiet and sensitive philosophical atheist who prowled the streets of Providence, Rhode Island, in the wee hours, speculating on man and his relation to the universe. His researches into the recesses of the mind responsible for such rituals as the Black Mass and other whispered and semi-documented aberrations of human history resulted ultimately in a small but exceedingly potent collection of short stories and novellas only now coming to light, and published in limited editions by the Arkham House publishers of Sauk City, Wisconsin. He lived only to his forty-seventh year, this gifted and agonizingly acute dissector of cosmic horror, but at his death in 1937 he left a legacy of rather uncomfortable rhetorical questions on the nature of man and the mores and virtues he professes to live by, on the theological and philosophical flummery of civilization, and indeed, on the very stuff of the cosmos itself.

August Derleth stated with respect to one of Lovecraft's tales entitled *The Outsider*, that had the manuscript originally been put forward as a newly discovered Poe creation, no one would have challenged the claim. But Poe's ultimate development of the weird, both in form and substance, direct or implied, merely marks the point of departure, so to speak, for Lovecraft's yarns. The lean and ascetic Lovecraft who had to wring out an existence as a revisionist and ghost writer for his less talented contemporaries, the sombre and richly verbal figure who grieved for the loss of eighteenth century manners, who loved darkness and possessed an almost hysterical, atavistic

fear of the sea, developed into something of far more portentous stature than just another Gothic style writer. Even his earlier stories such as the immeasurably macabre masterpiece *The Rats in the Walls* transcends the best of even such masters of spectral literature as Montague Rhodes James. If one can bring a sufficient degree of background knowledge and sophisticated powers of conceptualization to bear on such a tale, it is difficult to forget the picture of Walter de la Poer reverting to old English sibilants and ultimately to a grunting rage as he devours the remains of his country squire friend under the grinning inscriptions of the ancient and forbidden *Magna Mater* in what had been just another contemporary English country mansion until the terrifying atavism occurred.

Although Lovecraft was undoubtedly influenced by certain thematic material from other writers of the genre, the bodily dissolution theme



H. P. LOVECRAFT

from Poe, and the ghoulish-satyr material of Machen, to mention two of the more prominent he brought to this kind of thing a richness of imagery, an almost savagely astute descriptive power, so to speak, which can disturb even the most jaded and intellectual reader. Because H.P.L. was himself a pre-eminent intellectual, the tragedy being that such individuals don't widely indulge in weird fiction, and the import of his tales is simply beyond the average or untutored mind. Even his lesser stories, such as *Pickman's Model*, involving the posing of unearthly creatures, or say, *The Picture in the House*, with its obscene implications of cannibalism, bear references to Cotton Mather's writings and various scientific allusions assuming a much better than average erudition on the part of the reader.

But these tales, quite unbelievable though they are, are still only apertifs to the cosmic horrors of Lovecraft's last and greatest period in which he explored the fundamental dichotomy of good and evil in relation to the universe and physical laws. Though an atheist, H.P.L. rejected organized religion on purely philosophical rather than moral terms. He felt strongly that both the Christian and Judaic traditions in theology were weak and inane, extolling passive virtues and utterly lacking in vitality or life. He could not and would not reduce his knowledge of interstellar space to the confines of one dust speck

planet where man dresses up in costumes to mumble some anthropomorphic ritual to the inflation of his own ego. There is a great deal of Khayyam in Lovecraft, but it is tinged with un-nameable fear; there is also something of Roger Bacon in those final, great stories which sweep into the unplumbed depths of space and back in time to a terrible antiquity when grotesque living things dragged themselves out of the mud. As a common denominator to the tales of space and time such as *The Whisperer in Darkness*, Lovecraft developed a definite philosophy of evil as a palpable entity in its own right. He rejected as naive the religious idea that evil is simply the absence of good as darkness is the absence of light. To Lovecraft there were both powers of light and powers of darkness, and some aura of evil, of infinite malice lurks always around and about man, ready to permeate his body, his mind, and his universe.

This dualistic philosophy which recognizes evil as a separate and powerful force has never been popular in western culture or religion, notwithstanding its development by such thinkers as Descartes and Malebranche, but to Lovecraft the dichotomy was basic to all his stories. Indeed, he stated explicitly that:

"All my stories . . . are based on the fundamental lore or legend that this world was inhabited at one time by another race who, in practicing black magic, lost their foothold and were expelled, yet live on outside ever ready to take possession of this earth again."

One reads Lovecraft, or Charles Fort in his controversial *Book of the Damned*, and wonders perhaps, whether this dualism of good and evil is not more consistent with the natural scheme of things, with the laws of balance in the physical universe. Does there exist some vague aura of evil per se, some entity say, which permeates the universe, an impersonal, amorphous thing of destructive power which sits and watches man intently, quietly, patiently biding its time? If so, what is it? Satan? Perhaps, but maybe it remains latent within each individual's mind also, the worm which is within us all, the Pandora's box of completely uninhibited, atavistic impulses dating back to a strange and hideous antiquity when this planet was very young.

Lovecraft believes strongly in such dualism and orients his chronologies of space and time with it. But there are curious parallels of scriptural and historical lore in the weird plots conceived by this scholar in his humble yet determined atheism which make one shiver involuntarily. One thinks of the Mandeans, for example, or the vast amount of apocryphal literature stricken from the Bible. Consider that some of the forbidden books dealt expressly with dualism and the strength of evil. Why did the Rabbinical scholars expurgate much of the teachings of the Essenes, and why did the Christians at Nicea expressly ban the claim of Bishop Tertullian that Jesus of Nazareth possessed a mortal origin before subsequent immortality? Could it be that the ancient Essenes developed the lost *Book of Enoch*, that of *Jubilees* and others which pointed to dualism and the existence of life from elsewhere? Did Tertullian in his prognosis unwittingly give credence to the ancient Greek pantheism in which there existed "mighty men of old" such as Achilles or Ajax who had been sired by a union of immortal beings with humans? Again, it is rife for speculation just what Lovecraft might have done had he lived to profit by the excavations of the misnamed *Dead Sea Scrolls* in which almost an entire manuscript of the *Book of Enoch* has allegedly been recovered. Needless to say, most of the material found at Qumran has not been made available to the public, unless one labors through the French

(Continued on Page 4)





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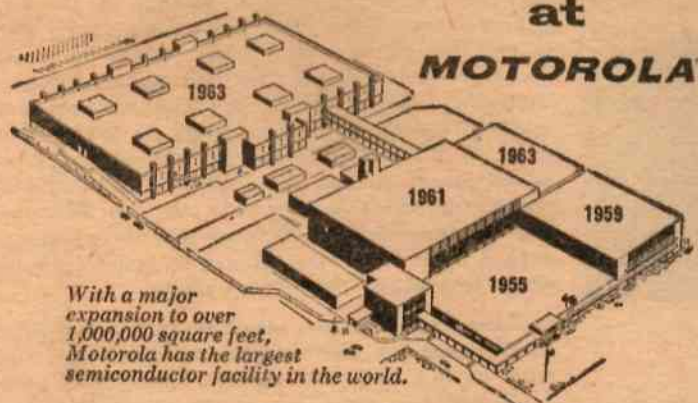
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# Lovecraft Analyzed . . .

(Continued from Page 3)

text of Dupont-Sommers' New Studies of the Dead Sea Manuscripts, edited by Adrien-Maisonneuve in 1953.

To his unparalleled genius for the macabre, therefore, Lovecraft brought the vast insight of his philosophical understanding of dualism, and created a strange and overpowering literature which men are going to read for a long time, assuming the intelligence and the fortitude to stay with it. Needless to state, H.P.L. selected the dark, or evil side of the universe for his tales of horror, and there is really no way to prepare for such a shattering story as *The Dunwich Horror* in which the Lovecraftian mythology of ancient evil beings slowly permeate certain retarded farmers in a remote area of billy, north central Massachusetts. The denouement combines elements of blasphemy and science, of witchcraft culled from ancient books of demonology, plausible biological mutations, and some wondrous speculation on certain facts of physical anthropology perhaps unknown to us as yet. The horror is palpable.

Lovecraft's powers of darkness center around an incredible and malignant god-like creature called *Cthulhu*, impervious to human conceptions of time and space, called from the Old Ones from the far reaches of the stellar void beyond Andromeda. There is the Daemon-Sultan *Azathoth* who sits and bubbles with unmentionable gibberish in



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chaotic space at the center of the universe, surrounded by his blind, idiot flute players. One is also struck by the leprous, subterranean entity *Yog-Sothoth* in H.P.L.'s scheme of things, in which much actual research was accomplished in occult libraries over the world. His conception of evil immortality was so profound, in fact, that other, lesser writers built many of their tales upon the Lovecraftian gods which became ultimately the center of a *Cthulhu* cult common to other books and stories. Lovecraft encouraged this idea, and bit by bit, writers of some stature such as Robert Bloch, August Derleth, and Howard Wandrei utilized the *Cthulhu* mythos and added to it.

Perhaps one of the most fascinating adjuncts of Lovecraft's macabre and immensely complicated tales is the amount of largely plausible scholarly references to demonological texts contained within the later stories. Within the scope of H.P.L.'s output a whole minor reference library has grown up, books within his stories, cross references, titles, and publishing houses and dates which give the perceptive reader an education in the literature of witchcraft and hideous aspects of ancient occultism. This sub-literature contained within such novellas as *The Shadow Out of Time* is extensive and partially accurate historically. In other words, Lovecraft supported his amazing penchant for plausible horror by references to a very real scholarship in arcane textbooks of alchemy, witchcraft, black magic, and suppressed historical cults. Other references are purely imaginary, of course, such as the legendary *Unaussprechlichen Kulten* mentioned prominently in the *Cthulhu* mythos,

and which two wealthy buyers once insisted on having a Boston bookstore order for them, presumably to practice the black arts.

Other texts on witchcraft and demonology which Lovecraft mentions in his elaborate tales actually exist, and some of them have historically been banned at various times and places as being inconsistent with the psychological health and mental equilibrium of the general public. Among the very real references used by H.P.L. and to which he refers with unusual impact are: *Ars Magna et Ultima*, written by the medieval scholar and alchemist Raymond Lully, *The Book of Dzyan*, a Theosophist reprint of a Sanskrit document, and published last by the Hermetic Publishing Co. of San Diego in 1915, the authenticated and extremely provocative *Clavis Philosophiae et Alchimiae* published at Frankfurt in 1633 in a two volume edition by Robert Fludd who also dabbled in Rosierucian theories.

In such unbelievable novellas as *The Shadow Over Innsmouth*, moreover, H.P.L. wove together elements of historical witchcraft gleaned by Nicholas Remy, the notorious sixteenth century French jurist who condemned over nine hundred accused witches to death, fragments from the Salem trials, and certain repulsive biological reversions involving human beings. The motif of reptilian or batrachian features within cults of especially degenerate individuals receives elaborate scientific treatment in the *Innsmouth* masterpiece, and again, Lovecraft's prodigious erudition shows up. We know, for example, that certain ancient pantheisms utilized joint human-animal sensuality in their fertility rites and that the erotic Pan cults indulged in liaisons never mentioned in traditional history books, but which are, nevertheless, not without certain historical foundation. Coupled with the shadowy but persistent tales of human sacrifice during the Black Masses of medieval times is some evidence that the Satan-worshippers may have been the last remnants of a once flourishing and ancient religion of the pre-Hellenic era. Until Lovecraft sensitively plumbed the misty world of Kabbalism, arcane wisdom, and antiquarianism, however, no American writer had the erudition and imagination to string all these diverse elements together in a peculiar and staggering type of horror. But when to such a combination is added the additional dimension of infinite time, interstellar space and the screaming blackness of a black and pitiless void beyond the reaches of the galaxies themselves, we arrive finally at a conceptualization of malevolence so powerful that it assails the mind.

The enormity of Lovecraft's visualizations of pure evil cannot simply be described in so many words or words about words. They must be sensed, intuitively felt and absorbed by the perceptive reader in such peerless and glitteringly evil conceptions as *The Shadow Out of Time*, a shocker of such vast and complex proportions that one wonders whether it came from an altogether human brain. Attempts to explain this masterwork would be tantamount to whistling a Mahler symphony.

It is perhaps significant that within ninety years after Edgar Allen Poe's death, a writer of the macabre should appear who, like Poe, may be destined to achieve lasting literary recognition in Europe prior to discovery in his own land. His work is even now available in Spanish, Italian, French, and Danish translations. There is even an inexplicable allusion to Roderick Usher in Lovecraft's short but penetratingly hideous conception in *The Hauler in the Dark*, but the haggard and melancholy prowler of the New England hills who died before his full promise was realized, transcends in great measure the Poes, the Machens, the Arlens, the Blackwoods, even the Hawthornes.

His books, with one exception, were all published posthumously. There exist in addition a few novellas, a handful of short stories, and some poems. That is all, except for some correspondence currently preserved at Brown University in Providence. Within the specialized medium in which he wrote, Howard Phillips Lovecraft surpasses all others in the transcendental horror of his plots, the subtlety of his structures, and the richness of his prose. He wrote little, but it was all pure gold. His material deserves greater exposure in the universities, for he must eventually be regarded as one of the few great writers America has yet produced.



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