



THE TWILIGHT ZINE



## Number 9

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So long as unlimited multiplication goes on, no social organization that has ever been devised, or is likely to be devised, no fiddle-faddling with the distribution of wealth, will deliver society from the tendency to be destroyed by the reproduction within itself, in its intensest form, of that struggle for existence, the limitation of which is the object of society.

from Selected Essays of T.H.Huxley

{ It certainly is a wonderful thing... }

# FIT THE FIRST

by yed

## A Few Explanations

about some of the material in this. The de Gaulle letters are real. In one of our wilder moods, the noble Society's that is, a motion was made to include one of ARL's pro-SAO songs in the letter. The motion was seconded and ignored.

The Iliad parody and the EC article may give you the impression that we are comic book fans. We are not! All comics are trash, but the old EC's were good. Applying doublethink to this problem we arrive at the brilliant conclusion that EC did not really publish comics, they may have looked like comics, felt like comics, and tasted like comics, but they definately were not.

ARLewis' thing is but his verbal blatherings put down on paper, he threatened some horrible doom if I didn't print it. Rough.

While the Benevolent Institute may be "polarized" around science, there are a few chinks in its armor where an interesting course can occasionally slip through. So is the case of 21.13 and 21.85. What are these, you ask. Ahahahaha, everything but everything in this place is numbered (I am fondly known to the 7090 computer as 601020) and these numeros veuler dire "The Epic" and "Cosmology, old and new problems". The articles on Tolkien and HPL in this are the term papers of myself and M. Olsen in these courses, proving that even ~~love~~ ~~love~~ the Institute has a soft spot in its ~~head~~ heart for trufans.

Axe time, sword time,      shields are sundered.  
Wind time, wolf time,      ere the world falls.

And here are some of the swords and axes that will be at Vigrd;

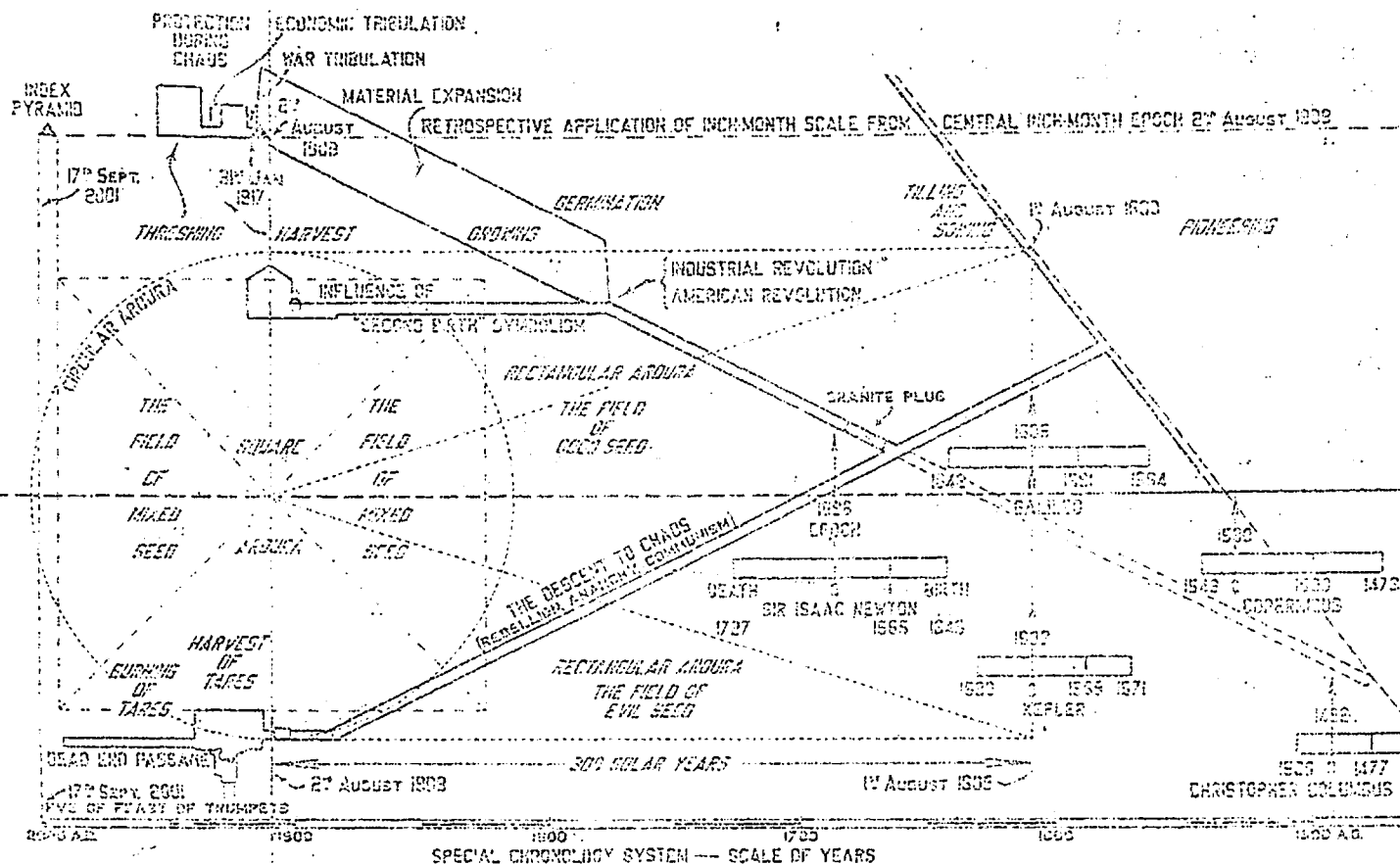
Arondight	Lancelot
Excalibur	Arthur
Cortana	Ogier
Durandal	Roland
Flamberge	Charlemagne
Haute-Claire	Oliver
Almace	Turpin
Ascalon	St. George
Balisarda	Rogero
Balmuns	Sigfried
Gram	Sigmund
Gram (reforged)	Sigurd
Hrunting	Beowulf
Gugner (spear)	Odin
Mjolnir (hammer)	Thor
Colada & Tizona	The Cid



# The GREAT PYRAMID'S PROPHECY concerning THE BRITISH EMPIRE and AMERICA

Delineating GOD' PURPOSE and FOREKNOWLEDGE in the history of modern Industrial Development and Decline.

Quite a mouthful. The above, all of it, is the title of a large pamphlet by David Davidson which I dug out of the AIUR stacks in the library basement. (This is an official dept. of the MIT library system known as the Department of Archives and Useless Research, AIUR. If a certain prozine editor ever looked through the place he would probably die of sheer joy). The good Mr. Davidson summarizes his work better than I could ever hope to: "This work identifies the British race with the building race of the Great Pyramid's prophecy, and outlines the course of the joint destiny of the two modern branches of the race respectively in the British Empire and in the United States of America. This joint destiny, revealed by the Great Pyramid's prophecy, and confirmed in detail by Scriptural prophecy, relates to the spiritual tuition of the race by economic tribulation following a period of unprecented development and achievement."





As the diagram shows, he has made up a convenient scale and plotted on it all the past events he likes (on the top) and all those he doesn't like (on the bottom). Note that the world comes to an end on Sept. 17, 2001. Another diagram, called "The ministry and mystical passion of the building race" shows the end of the present era, whatever that is, on August 20, 1953. (The book was written in 1932). It also shows how the decending passage goes back to the creation of the Universe in 4004 BC! Hmmm. Of course there is a chapter titled "Errors of the Builders" which fixes mistakes in his calculations by the simple method of putting his own plan for the pyramid as the "Master Plan" which the ignorant builders disregarded.

By repeating it until he believes it, he convinces himself that the British are the decendents of the Isrealites. A perusal of any good sociology book will tell you that all simple people claim to be decended from or favored by God/ the gods.

His 20-20 hindsight is interesting but his attempts at prediction are farcial. The work as a whole is fairly amusing, if you can stomach his Upper Class-British-Protestant-White Supremecy attitude.

Once again

the list of free-loaders is getting too long, so if a check mark happens to be in this space \_\_\_\_\_ you had better respond in one of the many ways suggested on the first page.

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History...is the story of a 'rational animal' who thereby lacks the sureness of instinct, is a prey to irrational desires, and of all animals leads the least sensible life; who alone to choose and aspire, and so is forever torn by doubt and discontent, from which spring at once his loftiest values and his ugliest hates and fears; who alone can know truth and virtue, and by the same token is prone to evil and error, capable of folly and brutality unknown to dumb brutes. In a time of troubles, it is a story of how the best is apt to become the worst, as high, fixed principles lead to the use of unprincipled means, and an uncompromising sincerity ends as a terrible falsity that inspires the old proverb, May God protect us from the lies of honset men. At all times it is the story of the inescapable hazards that man brought upon himself when he took to playing with fire and then, without forethought, set out on the extraordinarily bold adventure of making over his world; while ever since he began to reflect he has been seeking a repose that he can only find in the death he fears.

from The Uses of the Past by Herbert Muller

Never to be born would be best for mortal men, but this happens only to a very few.

Freud

Man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble.

Job; XIV, 1

{ Morbid today, aren't we }

# THE Superiad

-Chez Dorr

Sing to me, Muse, the anger of Superman, Man of Steel;  
 Sing too of the sorrowful weeping he caused in the world of crime;  
 Of that hero, born in an hour of joy of a woman of Krypton,  
 Who, sent through the reaches of space, so was saved for the  
     saving of Right  
 And the slaying of evil; forever protector of righteous men.  
 Sing, Goddess, the virtue of him; a man who, on Earth called Super;  
 Could easily leap, and did leap, lofty buildings with but one bound;  
 Who, racing, could race with the swiftness outspeeding the speed  
     of a bullet;  
 Whose power was measured far greater than that of the engines of men;  
 And the aid of whose arm was always aligned to maintaining the Good.  
 With X-Ray vision he saw far more than was ever shown  
 To Earthly eyes such as you or I must use to see;  
 And far more than those Earthly heroes (Dick Tracy, Mike Hammer,  
     and Anne  
 The Orphan), he could find the  
 Fatal foul flaw from whence comes, in men,  
 Their greed, their lust for power, for gold, for glory and fame,  
 And ill-omened gains, the desire for which leads the pure heart  
     astray;  
 This Superman then with winged cape and with powers possessed,  
 Did pursue those men of wrong doing, those criminals, those  
     minions of crime,  
 And after a hundred harsh contests, those battles against them fought,  
 They now must all bow to his will, and serve then their time behind  
 The strong walls of hard stone which prisons indeed they have found  
     do make  
 And some of them sit upon chairs of voltage which death do bring  
 To such criminals whose crimes must conclude with that punishment  
     proper and meet.  
 Sing to me, Muse, of that Man of Steel whose powers so great  
 Hath brought many a nasty crook to the Law to obtain his just fate.

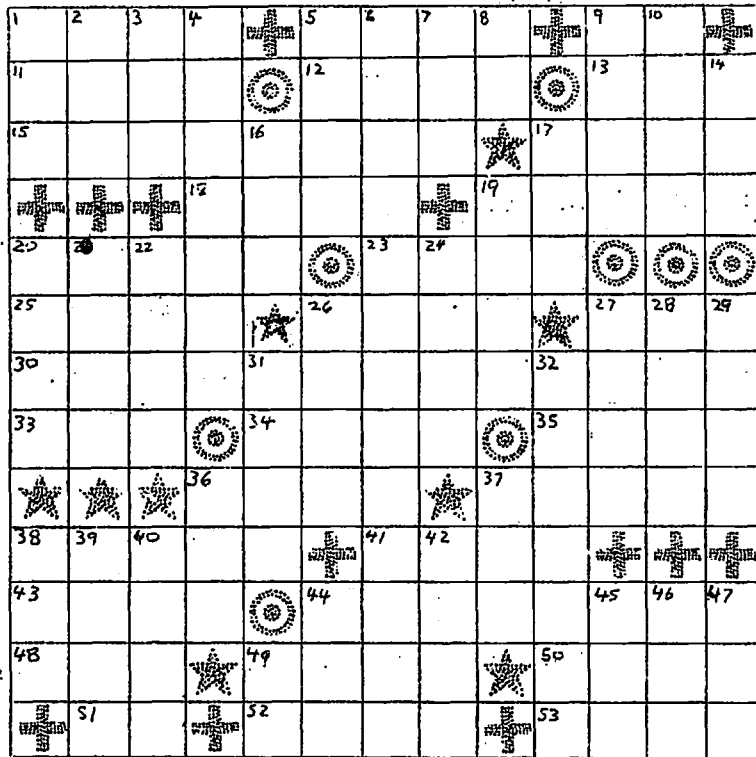
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"What the hell are you getting so upset about?" he asked her  
 bewilderedly in a tone of contrite amusement. "I thought you didn't  
 believe in God."

"I don't," she sobbed, bursting violently into tears. "But the  
 God I don't believe in is a good God, a just God, a merciful God.  
 He's not the mean and stupid God you make Him out to be."

# crossword puzzle

-Doug Hoylman



This is an ordinary garden-variety crossword puzzle, except that about half the words are specific references to science fiction and/or fandom. I've tried to make the definitions both witty and sneaky, so watch out for tricks, puns, and far-fetched references. A blank like so:        represents the word to go in the puzzle. This is the first in a series, and it may be the last unless I stay on campus next Christmas vacation.

Solutions are on page 22. I hope.

## Across

1. Sour stuff used for booze
5. Author of "44-Down and Superman"
9. Erle Stanley Gardner character
11. Migratory worker
12. A pained expression
13. Theme of infinite sf stories: abbr.
15. Creator of "John Carter of 36-Across": sing. form
17. A major or a minor constellation
18. Half a duet
19. Literary device; or, ferrous
20. Unpopular type of throat
23. Author of "The Joy Makers"
25. Author of "Slave Ship"
26. Phil Klass
27. Implement for a real cool sport
30. Author of "Ring Around The Sun": 2 wds.
33. To put two and two together
34. First stop enroute to Out There: poetic or Russian
35. This accounts for half the sex in sf.
36. Home of more bems than anywhere else
37. "Weird"
38. Author of "Mr. Tomkins in Wonderland"
41. What Eliot says the world does not end with
43. Semitic anti-Semite
44. Popular liquid fuel: pl.



48. When sf stories haven't happened
49. Least important part of fantasy (and some sf); sing.
50. 2nd most overused word in female language (1st is cute)
51. Venus minus X
52. You need more than paper to publish an sf mag; you need
53. Dueling sword (sans accents graves)

Down

1. Judicial body in southern U.S.
2. Heyerdahl book, with redundancies removed
3. A male madam
4. What she did it by
5. A hard item to sell; only one damn buyer
6. The guy who started this whole mess (TZ of sf, y<sup>r</sup> choice)
7. German exclamation
8. Most questions start this way
9. Villain from the underground
10. Organization: abbr.
14. People do this through the nose
16. Comic-strip time traveler
17. Vessel which Keats owed on
19. Hostelry
20. When man bites dog its news; report it here: abbr.
21. "Twice-\_\_\_\_ 37-Across", Hawthorne
22. Thank Ghod he lleft; we're \_\_\_\_ of him! (They can't all be good)
24. Antonym of ova
26. Cooks can give you one
27. Smaller than small
28. Obscure vegetables used in soup and crosswords
29. Asimov and Eisenhower
31. Hamlet had a tragic one
32. Fundamental verb for fantasy readers
36. Synonym, homonym, and homograph of 1-down
37. Trinitrotoluene, to its friends
38. Happy; carefree; not cognizant of the world situation
39. Pseudonym for 36-Across
40. Climax of two popular indoor sports, one of which is chess
42. Found around colleges; often liberal
44. Self-appointed lord of the Universe
45. A small portion of 1-Across, 44-Across, or the like
46. "World", by H.C.Stubbs
47. To make eyetracks on
49. enizagam fs lanoitcnujnoC

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Last Night I Had The Strangest Dream  
or

Whatever Happened to Bertrand Russell

"For how we live is so far removed from how we ought to live, that he who abandons what is done for what ought to be done, will rather learn to bring about his own ruin than his preservation. A man who wishes to make a profession of goodness in everything must necessarily come to grief among the many who are not so good".

Machiavelli; The Prince, chapter 15

# EC To See

-Mike Deckinger

My first exposure to E.C. Comics came during an unpleasant bout with a persistent virus that was making life miserable for me, about nine years ago. I had been confined to bed, and amid a never-ending profusion of drugs, aspirins, and a reassuring advice, I sought some reading matter. Knowing that I was an ultra-ultra comic book fan at the time, my father went out to the nearest store, plucked about a dozen different magazines off the racks, and brought them home to me. Half of them were EC comics, and by the time I had finished the third one I was hooked.

I still am hooked today, despite the fact that EC has slipped into the misty limbo where all good publishing houses eventually go to, dispatching in its wake a monthly MAD, which has become an over-commercialized children's magazine, a far cry from its former status when it led the satire comic book field.

At the time that EC first became known to me, its monthly output totalled at least a dozen comics, including WEIRD SCIENCE, WEIRD FANTASY (later combined as WEIRD SCIENCE-FANTASY), CRYPT OF TERROR, HAUNT OF FEAR, MAD, PANIC (a short-lived imitation of MAD which had the dubious distinction of being banned once because of an irreverent parody of "The Night Before Christmas"), FRONTLINE COMBAT, TWO-FISTED TALES, SHOCK SUSPENSTORIES and CRIME SUSPENSTORIES. Comic book competition at this time, among the weird/fantasy line, was at a much higher ebb than it is now, and as a result EC's biggest competitors were Harvey's WITCHES TALES, the numerous Atlas comics, and THE WEB OF FATE. Outside of that, the remainder of the horror/sf group consisted of low-grade sadism and outright plagiarisms which only served to alienate that non-reading public against all comics, instead of merely these few.

EC comics were definitely the highest level of comic book publishing at this time. They were competently illustrated, tastefully handled (though some of the lurid horror covers tended to repel instead of attract readers), and had stories that, unbelievable as it may seem, were written for an adult, intelligent audience, as opposed to the indiscriminating juveniles who hypothetically were the only ones who bought them. A surprisingly large percentage of the stories proved to be stimulating and exciting reading fare, which, much to their astonishment, captivated the casual adult browsers.

To further point out EC's determination, I can mention the incident when Bradbury's KALEIDOSCOPE was adapted for comic book format, excellently printed, though with no credit line to the author. Bradbury heard of it, made ready to sue for outright plagiarism, but upon seeing the adaptation was so taken by it that he immediately granted permission for EC to use other stories of his, as well as from time to

time sending letters of commendation to the publishers for some particular story he enjoyed. Other Bradbury reprints (credited to him) included KING OF THE GREY SPACES, THERE WILL COME SOFT RAINS, etc.etc. Eando Binder was also represented on EC with several adaptations of his\* Adam Link stories. These received the same careful, well handled attention that the Bradbury stories got, and further attested to the conviction many readers had developed that EC was definitely aware of talent, and sought to present it. Instead of relying on a staff of untalented and untrained hacks, as many comic book publishers did, EC sought to augment the very competent work of its own staff with that of accomplished writers in the field. This was one of the many features that contributed to EC's domination of the field.

In addition to presenting credible science fiction, EC did not shun controversy, unlike many of the magazines of that day. SHOCK SUSPENSTORIES, a comic devoted to what might be described as "typical Alfred Hitchcock shockers" utilized a number of stories on themes that would be considered untouchable, and clearly presented the editorial stand that EC took. Racism was a frequent topic, and, in one tale called "Blood Brother", a fervent condemnation of anti-Negro violence was told in the tale of a bigot who discovers that as a child he received a vital blood transfusion from a Negro, whom he has directed most of his hate against. This theme was carried over to one of the most commented stories ever presented in EC: "judgement Day", which appeared in WEIRD SCIENCE, and was reprinted several years later. In it, a spacesuit clad figure from Earth visits a world containing just blue and orange robots, who practice acute segregation against one another. The Earthman warns the alien world that they will not be able to join the Galaxy until they cast aside their ridiculous prejudices, as Earth has finally done. When the spaceman leaves the world, headed back to Earth, he removes his helmet and is revealed to be a Negro, standing firm and proud, in his knowledge that his people are at last an accepted race on Earth, having elevated themselves from the deplorable condition that the alien world is now in. It was this story, and others like them, which fully demonstrated the thoughtfulness that motivated these publications. EC was not afraid of experimentation either. Wally Wood, one of the finest sf artists (who was to WEIRD SCIENCE and WEIRD FANTASY what Bill Elder was to MAD and PANIC) authored a bit of whimsy titled MY WORLD. It was a plotless conglomeration of what the sf artist had at his beck and call; of the beasts he could portray and the civilizations he could depict. It represented a much needed, and very skillful, avant-garde element in comics.

Just as WEIRD SCIENCE and WEIRD FANTASY seemed to be built around Wally Wood and Al Williamson, their finest artists, and MAN and PANIC were elevated by Bill Elder, the three EC horror comics had a definite asset in the morbid artwork of Ghastly Graham Ingels who was invariably on hand to draw the most horribly detailed stories. He was unmatched when it came to producing revenge-seeking corpses and panic-stricken people with fear-contorted features, as well as an occasional dismembered individual. Ingels occasionally went to regrettable extremes in emphasizing the horror elements of the stories he illustrated, but he was responsible for one masterpiece: "Shoe-Button Eyes", a tender, touching story of a young blind boy, which contained warm sentimentality mixed with restrained horror to produce a unique and

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\*-Don't bother to write in to tell us that E. and O. Binder are two people. We know.--DJH

extremely effective mood-piece. Reader acclaim on this piece ran high, though in answer to or congratulatory note, the editor stated that Ingels would prefer money.

EC slowly began to die out in '55 and '56. The notorious Dr. Wertham had launched his misguided crusade against the mind-destroying qualities comics had on juveniles and as a result most of the horror and sf comics folded. EC briefly fought to maintain its position by introducing what was termed "New Direction" comics. These were six 15¢ publications: IMPACT, VALOR, PIRACY, PSYCHOANALYSIS, MD, and INCREDIBLE SCIENCE FICTION. IMPACT was a successor to SHOCK and featured a number of similar tales. VALOR and PIRACY were adventure magazines, above the level of the typical comic but undistinguished. PSYCHOANALYSIS was one of the most outrageous comic book innovations ever brought into the field; it read like a Psychiatric Journal, delving into true cases. It was adult but uninteresting. MD was a forerunner to the Doctor craze that exists today, and very competently handled. And INCREDIBLE SCIENCE FICTION was straight science fiction, highly competent but unable to survive. The final issue featured a reprint of the classic "Judgement Day". Another New Direction comic was EXTRA featuring stories in a newspaper background. All seven comics folded shortly after they began. Probably the biggest single factor to their immediate downfall was the 15¢ price tag, which readers (at that time) were not accustomed to paying.

MAD was the only publication that managed to survive the devastation. Early in '56 an announcement appeared that MAD, which had henceforth been a 10¢ comic, would be converted to a 25¢ magazine. The change took place, and with it a gradual, but steady drop in quality to a juvenile level. The excellent satire and truly funny parodies that were so much a part of the comic book MAD disappeared from the magazine MAD. They were replaced by phony ads, long-winded satirical articles, and a decline in humor.

Nowadays the only way to obtain EC comics is from back issue stores or collectors, though those who have any prize them greatly. It's doubtful that there will ever be a resurgence in comic book publishing, and that EC, or a firm similarly motivated, will appear with the same material that they utilized. In an era of juvenile and childish comic book publishing they pioneered adult, stimulating, enjoyable reading, designed to be read by those above the pre-school level. Because of this factor, they earned the gratitude of thousands of satisfied readers.

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Nurse Sue Ann Duckett was a tall, spare, mature, straight-backed woman with a prominent, well-rounded ass, small breasts, and angular, ascetic New England features that came equally close to being very plain and very lovely. Her skin was white and pink, her eyes small, her nose and chin slender and sharp. She was able, prompt, strict and intelligent. She welcomed responsibility and kept her head in every crisis. She was adult and self-reliant, and there was nothing she needed from anyone. Yossarian took pity and decided to help her.

from Catch-22

# REACTION

-ARLewis

I promised Bernie that I'd write him a column, so here it is. I also have committed myself to write an article on the Quantum Theory of Sex. I'm working on it now (ah, there Morris) and have some text plus two pages of ~~many~~ equations. Whether or not it makes this issue of the Twilight Zine is still up to God and/or the Institvte. This is the first long rambling I have done in a while for TZ and those of you who read the badly typoed\* REACTION previously written may have wondered why I have not written anything else in the meantime. Those of you with any taste may wonder why I bother to write at all and how can we (i.e. you) stop him (i.e. me). I have been writing, but not for TZ. Little of this writing has been in English but rather in an eldritch arcane tongue yclept mathematics. Besides the ubiquitous Institvte I have been smitten with spelunking, but I shall say no more of this here. (No, Bernie: I am not Gimli.)

Everybody else (at least two) seems to be thinking up New Names for Science- Fiction as inspired by D. Hoylman's wonderful article (plug: 5¢) so I might as well plunge in. First, it is necessary to determine what sf is so that a truly descriptive name can be synthesized.

SCIENCE\*FICTION: science-fiction is that which is considered (by ARL) to be science-fiction.

Quite a rigorous definition as I am steadfast in my aggrandizing nature. I may often accept some work now that I would not have considered in the past, but I never will cast out anything. The new name must cover this definition thoroughly by ((but? DJH)) yet still must not be so esoteric as to frighten off the great ~~divided~~ mass of mankind. Therefore, I now propose a New Name (flourish of hautboys and trumpets) THAT-STUFF. This is already widely used by ins and outs as in the classic phrase: "You mean, you really read THAT-STUFF?" Gentlemen, I rest my case.

Please, put your books, notebooks, and tables away as we are going to have a short quiz. The proctors will pass out paper to you. Everyone ready? Now then: Who said, "What do I care for principles of science?" Pass your papers up to the front. What did you say? JWCampbell, Jr.? Palmer? Bradbury? Sorry, those are incorrect. The gentleman who uttered those words was none other than (shudder) Tom Swift in Tom Swift and his Photo-Telephone (pg. 4). It tends to destroy

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\*-The temptation to comment on these ramblings while typing them is fantastic, but I shall confine myself to this one footnote and whatever else is absolutely necessary. The typist, or typoographer, was an ex-coolie whose name I shall not mention because one does not criticize three-time Society presidents or grad students. He also botched my article mentioned in Par. 2. I now type all my own stencils, and as you see, I do a great job. --DJH

one's faith in life. Is there nothing to which we can hold fast?  
That's your problem, mine--I have Schrödinger's Equation.

We shall leave the hallowed halls of Science for a moment to present the following as a tribute to certain states better left unmentioned.

Treason against the United States shall consist only in levying war against them, or in adhering to their enemies, giving them aid and comfort.

Article III, Section 3, Paragraph 1  
Constitution of the United States

I have some interesting (to me) quotes from Technology Review, our alumni (and alumnae) fanzine, which will give some of you on the outside some inkling of what goes on here. The first is from an article on the dedication of the Cambridge Electron Accelerator. The speaker is Leland J. Haworth, one of the Commissioners of the Atomic Energy Commission.

"...Now the size and cost of such tools ((accelerators --ARL)) for research in high-energy physics have made it imperative, he ((Haworth--ARL)) continued, that a better rapport be developed between government administrators and university scientists. (Harvard and M.I.T., he suggested jocularly, may have solved this problem temporarily by taking over the government.) Nov.1962 pg.29

He said 'jocularly'--I didn't. Three minutes out for pondering.  
OK onward.

The next shows the singular up-to-the-minute-ness (ghastly phrase) of the Institute in the field of foreign relations and inner-natural ((sic)) politics.

"...the Office of the Registrar even in 1962-63, under Registrar Robert E. Hewes, '43, persists in its refusal to recognize that in 1707 Scotland merged with England to form the United Kingdom." Nov.1962 pg.54

It's all very well for the Institute to maintain tradition in the face of scurrilous attacks but it should get the facts straight. Scotland did not merge with England; Scotland annexed England. (Freedom and Independence for Wales)

This does not seem to be a column but, rather, a heap of disconnected slabs of splintered thoughts. I'm doing it gratis, Bernie, so let's not hear any petty carpings. ((Same to you, Tony--DJH))

As long as I'm on the subject of Science and the like, I might as well pass on some stories (reputed to be true) of physics doctorate orals.

Examiner: In inelastic nucleon-nucleon scattering where does the kinetic energy loss show up. (This is easy question)

Examinee: Uh uh friction.

Next story:

Examiner(looking up from paper): Your name?

Examinee:

Next story:

A theoretischer (theoretical physicist) who had done a General Relativity Thesis was up before his thesis defence board (not his orals). He had derived an expression for the radius of curvature



of the universe in terms of various cosmological and physical constants. He was asked what the numerical value was but being a Theoretischer he was forced to admit that he hadn't plugged in the values. He was told to do so and he did so. The value was 3.6 cm. As this is extremely good for General Relativity he was awarded his doctorate. This is one of the secrets of Science. This should make JWCJr very happy.

I can't reveal too many secrets of the trade whilst only a Journeyman or I shall never reach the rank of Mastercraftsman (PhD/ScD). However, from time to time, I shall smuggle out bits of information which I shall sell for outrageous prices. I shall now discuss 8.421, my statistical mechanics course. Typical problem:

14. Estimate the probability that a 7¢ airmail stamp (mass=0.1 gram) resting on a desk top at room temperature ( $300^{\circ}\text{K}$ ) will spontaneously fly up to a height of  $10^{-8}$  cm above the desk top.

HINT: The answer is independent of the denomination of the stamp.

We also get bits of Oriental Philosophy during lectures.

In physics there are two types of truths: simple truths and deep truths. The opposite of a simple truth is a lie; the opposite of a deep truth is a deep truth.

KH: The fluctuation of the distribution function about its most probable value, that is the Maxwell-Boltzmann, accounts for the scattering of sunlight making the sky blue rather than gray.

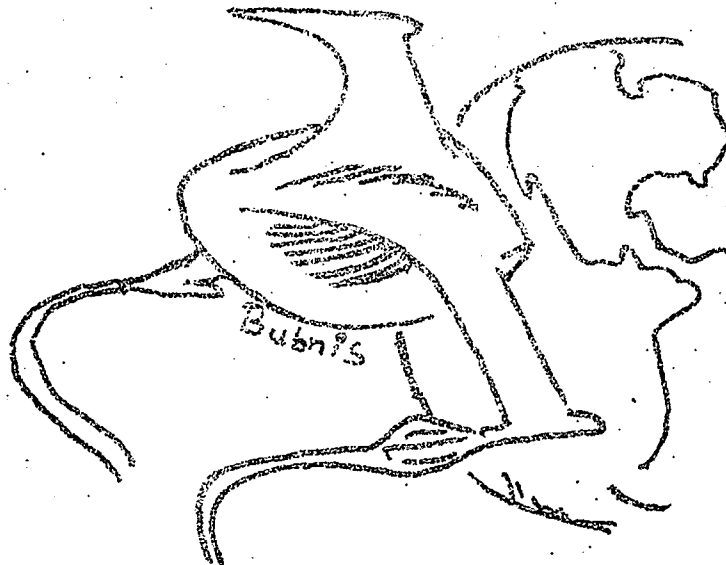
Student: But Sir, the sky is gray. (And so it is, for it is a typical Cambridge day)

KH: The laws of Thermodynamics are statistical and should hold save on a set of measure zero; Cambridge is a set of measure zero.

APPLAUSE

And on that note I shall close this meandering missive. If you enjoy it (or hate it) write to Bernie and let him know so he can let me know. If you don't write I will.

ARLewis aka The Evil Atomic Scientist aka  
Charlane of Eddore



# ...on a wind-rocked Tree

## LORD OF THE RINGS

### AND THE EPIC

-Bernie Morris

The creation of a new world, complete with individuals, races, myths, and most important of all, an internally consistent history into whose framework all actions--past and present--fit, is a tremendous feat. While all other epics have as a basis fact or at least some well known "historical" legend, Lord of the Rings does not appear to. I say "appear" for a reason, for the story takes place in Middle-earth, a location removed from our planet in both space and time. The War of the Ring cannot be as easily identified as the wars of the Iliad, the Aeneid, or the Mahabharata, yet many things in the work are reminiscent of older mythologies and epics. The characters, the races, the cronology of Middle-earth have all been influenced by Tolkien's knowledge of these older works. While there is no outright lifting of ideas, some of the similarities (especially with Norse mythology) are very close.

In this paper I will bring out the major subjects of the Trilogy and show what may have inspired Tolkien to treat each of them as he did.

The most important and interesting character in Lord of the Rings is Gandalf, whose name, according to the Elder Edda, means magic elf. Since he is found in the Norse book, it is natural to look for someone in the Norse mythology with his characteristics. He is a wanderer, always roaming as a simple traveler to gain knowledge. He is a magician with many names, "Mithrandir among Elves, Tharkûn to the dwarves; Olórin I was in my youth in the West that is forgotten, in the South Incanus, in the North Gandalf." His appearance is that of an old, bearded man in a long, gray cloak.

One of the strangest passages in the book is Gandalf's fight with the Balrog. It attacks the Company as they are fleeing the Mines of Moria, catching Gandalf and pulling him into the depths. As far as the rest of the Company and the reader know, that is the end of him; however, he returns and tells of the battle. Through ancient tunnels, older than anything in Middle-earth, they went. At last they came out on a peak, where amid thunder and smoke, "I threw down my enemy, and he fell from the high place and broke the mountain-side where he smote it in his ruin. Then darkness took me, and I strayed out of thought and time, and I wandered far on roads that I will not tell." When he returns he is transfigured--he has become the White Rider. He died and was reborn, for only thus could he gain the knowledge that he needs.

Who in the Norse can be compared to this but Odin. He is also a wanderer, ever trying to gain knowledge and power.

Much have I fared,            much have I found,  
 Much have I got of the gods.

His need is the same as Gandalf's, to have enough power to with-

stand the coming battle with the Giants. He is known by many names: Valfather, the Wanderer, Hor the High One, Heerfather, and Gagnarth are a few. He is also a magician, "Othin thou art, the enchanter old." His appearance is much like Gandalf's--an old man in a gray or blue cloak, with a great beard and slouched hat.

To gain runic knowledge he hangs himself on the world-tree, Yggdrasil, wounded with his own spear. He suffers terribly, but finally

I took up the runes,        shrieking I took them  
And forthwith back I fell.

Odin is not the only mythological figure to gain knowledge at great cost, for Prometheus gave fire to man and paid the price of eternal torment; however, Odin's sacrifice is the only one that can liken itself to Gandalf's. It should be noted that their rebirths are not the same as those of the year kings who die every year and are reborn or are replaced by a younger man. These last are cyclic, predetermined occurrences whereas their transformations are unique.

As great as the similarity may be, the difference is greater still. This difference concerns power and the use each makes of it. The best examples of this are in the actions of each toward the respective Rings of power, Alberich's and Sauron's. In Das Rheingold, Odin and Loki trick Alberich into giving up his hoarded gold and his Ring of power. They need this wealth to ransom the goddess Freia from two giants to whom she was promised for building the Valhall. But when Odin has the Ring, he puts it on saying, "'Tis mine now, the spell of might that makes me lord of the world!" He cannot, indeed he does not want to, resist the lure of absolute power. Not only he, all the gods and giants present think it were well if they had the Ring for themselves.

How different is the situation with Gandalf. When it is suggested that he or Elrond take and wield the Ring against the Dark Power, they answer, "Alas, no...its strength is too great for anyone to wield it at will, save only those who have already great power of their own. But for them it holds an even deadlier peril. Its very desire corrupts the heart...as long as it is in the world it will be a danger even to the Wise. I fear to take the Ring to hide it. I will not take the Ring to wield it."

The gap is unbridgeable. While Odin is certainly not evil, he is ruthless, thinking only of the day of doom--sacrificing all, from his sister-in-law to his right eye, to put off that day. He would risk using the Ring for this end, though he knows that it is cursed and will be the owner's bane. Gandalf cannot do an evil deed even if it will give a great blow to the Enemy. He cannot use Sauron's methods to fight him.

Opposing Gandalf is Saruman. These two are the most powerful of the Istari, who "were sent to contest the power of Sauron, and to unite all those who had the will to resist him; but were forbidden to match his power with power, or to seek to dominate Elves or Men by force or fear." While Gandalf obeys this injunction, Saruman is corrupted by the thought of gaining the Ring, and the mastery which goes with it.

His chief weapon is his tongue; even after his treason is discovered and he is a prisoner, Aragorn warns that "there are not many in Middle-earth that I should say were safe, if they were left to talk with him." Because of his former greatness, it is decided to let him go free, though he swears vengeance as he departs. And

vengeance he gets, turning the peaceful Shire into a horrible imitation of Mordor. When he finally dies, his evil work is slowly undone, but it is plain that the Shire will never be the same again. Since we compared Gandalf to Odin, let's compare Saruman to Odin's blood brother, Asa-Loki.

Remember, Othin,        In olden days  
That we both our blood have mixed;  
Then did thou promise       no ale to pour,  
Unless it were brought for us both.

Odin, Loki, and Hoener were the three creating gods. Loki lived with the Asa in friendship, though he got them into, and out of, many tight positions with his slick tongue. He went from bad to worse, begetting hideous monsters: the Fenris wolf, the Midgard serpent, and the hag Hel. After the death of Balder, which he was responsible for, he was chained in a cave in which he waits for Ragnarok.

Here, unlike the Gandalf-Odin relationship, there is no fundamental difference between the characters. While the Norse attitude of gloom and ultimate destruction precludes anyone as great as Gandalf from being a "nice guy," it has nothing in it that rules out a louse like Saruman. There is nothing lower than a fallen god. Loki is held to be more despicable than the giants, who were created with their evil nature, while he was Odin's brother, and fell through his own faults.

The theme of the sleeping hero returned is an old one in mythology. It can be taken literally, as with Ogier le Danois, who stays in Avalon with Morgan le Fay but returns when France is in need; but more often he is represented as the son or lineal descendent of a great hero of old. This hero's death will be avenged by his son or descendent. Aragorn is the lineal descendent of Elindil the Tall, who fought Sauron in the battle that ended the Second Age, "the last combat on the slopes of Orodruin, where Gil-galad died, and Elindil fell, and Narsil broke beneath him." For many years his line lay dormant while there was peace in the world, but when evil again started to stir, the blade was re-forged and taken up by Aragorn, son of Arathorn, Elindil's heir. This is reminiscent of the Sigmund-Sigurd story in the Volsunga Saga. Sigmund is given a magic sword which only he can pull out of a tree, he uses it throughout his life, but in his last battle "there came a man into the fight clad in a blue cloak, and with a slouched hat on his head, one-eyed he was, and bare a bill in his hand; and he came against Sigmund the King, and have up his bill against him, and as Sigmund smote fiercely with his sword it fell upon the bill and burst asunder in the midst...for the good-hap of King Sigmund had departed from him...and in this fight he fell." Later, when his son Sigurd was in need of a sword to fight the dragon Fafnir, only the one that is made from the shards of Gram, Sigmund's sword, has enough strength to suit the hero. With this same sword he is also avenged on his father's slayers.

Another important attribute of the epic hero is that he works not for his own good, but for that of his people. Sigurd wants to avenge his kin and keep his people happy; King Arthur's most bitter loss is not Guinevere, but the breaking of the Round Table which upheld honor and peace in the land; Roland thinks only of France though he knows it will be his doom; Beowulf dies defending his people from a dragon. Does Aragorn live up to these standards? Indeed he does; he and the rest of the Dunedain constantly

protect the people, "And yet less thanks have we than you. Travellers scowl at us, and countrymen give us scornful names...Yet we would not have it otherwise. If simple folk are free from care and fear, simple they will be, and we must be secret to keep them so." The other heroes at least had the gratitude of those they serve; Aragorn and his kin have nothing.

In search of knowledge and aid, many epic heroes have called on the dead. Gilgamesh, Odysseus, and Aeneas went down into the underworld, Aragorn too goes down the Paths of the Dead. Only he, as Elindil's heir, can command the dead, and only his kin among all mortal men can follow him on this dread mission.

The ability to command the dead, his constant fight against the Enemy, and his right as a hero's heir to reforge the sword makes Aragorn, more than anyone else in the Trilogy, an epic hero.

The one responsible for the whole mess, you might say, is Gollum. He was once a hobbit, he is now a Ring-creature. To summarize his career briefly; he took the Ring from his friend who found it in the

river, killing him in the process. He then left the fields and open sky loved by hobbits and abode under the Misty Mountains, living on raw fish and an occasional goblin, and gloating to himself over the Ring. When Bilbo Baggins came through these mountains he ran into Gollum, almost became his dinner, but finally managed to get away with the Ring. After some fancy cursing, Gollum leaves his hole and goes off in search of his Precious, as he calls the thing. He follows Frodo into Mordor, and just as Frodo decides not to destroy the Ring but to wear it, he takes it --finger and all--and falls into the fire, ending everything.

The hobbit, or dwarf, whose actions match Gollum's is obviously Andvari, Alberich in Wagner's cycle. A wonderful description of his mountain exile is in the Volsunga Saga:

There is a desert of dread in the utmost part of the world,  
Where over a wall of mountains is a mighty water hurled,  
Whose hidden head none knoweth, nor where it meeteth the sea;  
And that force is the force of Andvari, and an Elf of the  
Dark is he.

In the Wagnerian story, Alberich is spurned by the Rhinemaidens,



and in revenge he takes their gold and forces Mime to forge it into a ring of power. The Ring changes him in the same way it changes Gollum, making him into a force of darkness, a slave of the power he covets. In the end, as with Gollum, it is his bane.

The last real Ring-bearer is Frodo Baggins. While there is no character in any mythology with his attributes, an analogy can be made between Frodo-Gandalf and Gollum-Saruman. When Gandalf refuses to take the Ring, Frodo reluctantly agrees to be the bearer. It causes him much pain, but it cannot really corrupt him because he does not want its power for himself. He uses it only to help bring about its destruction, but even these few times are enough to change him. In the end, while he is not a Ring-creature, he is not a hobbit. In his own words: "There is no real going back. Though I may come to the Shire, it will not be the same; for I shall not be the same. I am wounded with knife, sting, and tooth, and a long burden. Where shall I find rest?" He finally passes from Middle-earth along with Gandalf and the Elves of the High Kindred. Here we have a hobbit like Gollum, who possesses a Power and is changed by it, but unlike Gollum he does not wish power. While Saruman never actually gets the Ring, the mere thought of its power turns him into a shadow of the Enemy. Gandalf, who would be in more danger than Frodo from the desire to use the Ring, refuses to have anything to do with it. But in the end, though the Ring has no direct power over him, its destruction and the long struggle which he has endured toward this end force him to leave Middle-earth.

Though elves appear in most mythologies including the Norse, they usually have the characteristics which Tolkien gives to the dwarves. Indeed, in Norse mythology there is very little difference between elves and dwarves. The latter are called dark elves, but both are thought of as being mournful and harmless, aside from the theft of a baby now and then. To find a model for the High Elves, then, we must leave the Norse and look to the Celtic Tuatha De Danann.

The Irish Book of Invasions tells this story: The Danaans came to Ireland from over the sea. They fought the Fírlbogs, darkness demons who were rulers of the land, and at the battle of Moytura (Mag-Tured) overcame them. In the succeeding years their king, Bres, foolishly wasted their power until they had to pay tribute to the Fomorians, another kind of demon. They finally rose, and led by Lugh of the Long Arm, defeated the Fomorians and killed their sorcerer king Balor. After living in peace for many years they were invaded by the Gaels, mortals who defeated them and forced their withdrawal into the fairy mounds of Tir-na-nog.

They were naturally immortal yet could be killed in battle. Beautiful to look upon, they sometimes loved and married humans. These two characteristics, and the history of their coming and passing, make them perfect models for the High Elves, the Eldar. Nowhere else is there a race of gods or near-gods who are immortal by nature but can be slain by earthly weapons. The Norse gods were certainly mortal, but they would die at Vigrid and not before, so that doesn't really count. The Greek gods never went to battle; I don't think that coward Ares would dare go up against any of the Asa. Though both Odin and Zeus made a habit of seducing mortal women, there are no instances of their followers, gods that is, not minor nymphs, settling down to a normal life with an earthly bride.

The description of the fairy mounds in which the Danaans live is reminiscent of the Elvish Valinor, "Where the human eye can see but green mounds and ramparts, the relics of ruined fortresses



or sepulchres, there rise fairy palaces...there they hold their revels in eternal sunshine...and thence they come forth in times to mingle with mortal men in love or in war." The Eldar lived in the Far West but came back to Middle-earth for the Great Battle "in which the Host of Valinor broke Thangorodrim and overthrew Morgoth." Morgoth was the Great Enemy, "of whom Sauron was only a servant." The battle of Moytura corresponds to the Great Battle of the Eldar, Bres' wasting of his people's strength matches the Elves' laxness in letting Sauron regain power, and the overthrow of Balor and the Formorians is the Last Alliance of Men and Elves where Sauron was defeated and the One Ring taken from him. The final defeat of the Danaans and their passing into the fairy mounds is harder to place, but taking into account the basic differences between Tolkien's cyclic pattern and that of most other mythologies, which I will explain later, I compare it to the War of the Ring, whose victorious ending forces the Eldar to return to the fairyland of Valinor.

The dwarves came straight from the Norse, indeed the names of most of Tolkien's dwarves came from the Voluspo in the Elder Edda. They live in a great age but are not immortal like the Elves, they delight in mining gold and precious metals and generally stay in their caves. While they are not evil, neither are they overly quick in forming friendships with mortals or gods. This description of the Norse dwarves is also a perfect one of Durin's Folk in Lord of the Rings.

In a discussion of the races of the Trilogy, it would be unfair to omit the hobbits. After all, while they do not have much power; all the action centers around them. They are like no people in any ancient mythology that I know of; peaceful, but stout fighters at need, jovial rather than beautiful, farmers and homebodies but occasionally mischevius, "and could survive rough handling by grief, foe, or weather in a way that astonished those who did not know them well and looked no further than their bellies and their well-fed faces." In a word, they are prosaic.

I believe that they were modeled after "that race of shopkeepers," the English middle class, whose well known "mythological" characteristics match the hobbits'. This is the modern type of mythology which exists side by side with reality without either disturbing the other.

The cyclic quality of Middle-earth is very much like that of the Norse. The Golden Age that occurred after the overthrow of Morgoth is like the one that the gods enjoyed after Ymir was slain. The coming of evil, Sauron, is shown in the Norse as the coming of the three norns who ended the carefree life of the gods and forced them to create men and dwarves, whose fate these same norns would determine. The Last Alliance is Ragnarok, where all perish, where "Gil-galad died, and Elindil fell, and Narsil broke beneath him; but Sauron himself was overthrown."

But here the resemblance ends. After Ragnarok the earth is renewed, the good are rewarded and the evil are punished, eternally.

Now do I see            the earth anew  
Rise all green            from the waves again.

So sings the Volva, a wise-woman whom Odin has raised from the dead to help him in his eternal search for knowledge. In this respect it is like the Judgement Day, after which the Good will live in eternal bliss. I say that the resemblance ends because in Lord of the Rings the Last Alliance defeats Sauron, but only temporarily.

Elrond, who was there, reminds the assembled Eldar that "I have seen three ages in the West of the world, and many defeats, and many fruitless victories." After each battle evil is diminished, but not destroyed, while the Forces of Good are also lessened after each age. So Sauron returns, and is once again defeated in the War of the Ring.

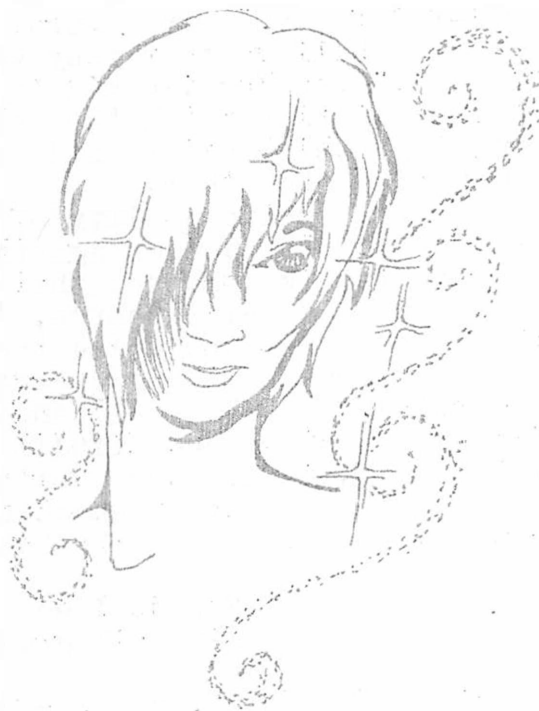
Tolkien does not have the naive hope that there will ever be eternal peace and happiness; evil will always return, for men are apes who forget that which is not constantly before them.

Otherwise Ragnarok is surprisingly like both the Last Alliance and the War of the Ring. Of the former we know little, save that the leaders of the Host of Elves and Men died and that Sauron was overthrown. Here is a true Ragnarok, a conflict between the chaotic powers and the established order of creation. The gods and their enemies meet in a universal, world-embracing wrestle and duel, and mutually destroy each other.

In the War of the Ring, though Evil is destroyed, almost all of the Good Guys remain alive and well, though the Elves that remain must pass through the Grey Havens and return to Valinor. Why are they different from the ill-fated Host of Gil-galad and Elendil? I think that Tolkien just didn't have the heart to kill them off. For three volumes we see their strength, their beauty, and the necessity of their war. So they are given a "and they lived happily ever after" ending. Since the story of the second Age isn't really part of Lord of the Rings but is only referred to occasionally to explain the current situation, we feel no such emotions about the Last Alliance, and are not overwhelmed by its fate.

The victorious ending of the War forces the remaining Elves to return to Valinor. I stated before that this was the equivalent of the defeat of the Tuatha De Danaan by the Gaels, which forced them to leave the world of men and retreat into their fairy mounds. Taking into account that the Elves should have been broken in the War, as they were at the end of the Second Age, their passing to the Far West is the same as the Danaan's retreat to Tir-na-nog.

Thus seen as a whole, Tolkien is both harsher and kinder than the creators of the Ragnarok story. While he deprives men of an eternally peaceful existence, he does not make them all die to attain this hoped-for state. He is more human in the treatment of individuals, but more pessimistic as regards man as a group.



Three Rings for the Elven-Kings under the sky,  
 Seven for the Dwarf-lords in their halls of stone,  
 Nine for the Mortal Men doomed to die,  
 One for the Dark Lord on his dark throne  
 In the land of Mordor where the Shadows lie.  
 One Ring to rule them all, One Ring to find them  
 One Ring to bring them all and in the darkness bind them  
 In the land of Mordor where the Shadows lie.

So starts each volume of Lord of the Rings. The Rings are seldom seen, but like the one in Ring of the Nibelung, they are the pivots around which the whole work revolves. Each Ring or group of Rings has very definite qualities which are characteristic of its owner. I will go through these characteristics, showing how they reflect the way of life of their possessors, and comparing them to the analogous Rings in the Norse.

"The three were not made by Sauron, nor did he ever touch them. But they were not made as weapons of war or conquest; that is not their power. Those who made them did not desire strength or domination or hoarded wealth, but understanding, making, and healing, to preserve all things unstained." This is an excellent summation of the Elves' philosophy. Because they were never used for anything base and Sauron had no part in their making, they are the only Rings that are not under his power. They are symbols of all that is fair and grows beneath the sun. Odin had a ring called Draupner. It was made by a light dwarf, Sindre, who had to fight Loki to keep it from being spoiled. Its unique property was that similar rings dropped from it every ninth night. When Balder is slain, Odin puts this ring on his funeral pyre, but "Balder sends the ring back as a memento of the fair time when he and his father (Odin) worked together, and reminds the father-of-all that he must continue to bless the earth and make it fruitful." Odin's ring symbolizes the fertility of the mind as well as the usual kind. Remember that it was Odin who brought the bardic mead and runes of wisdom to men and gods.

The Seven of the dwarves have all been taken or destroyed. Like the Elves, they did not use the Rings as weapons, but only for the gain of gold and other precious metals. The sole power that the Rings had over them was to make them ever greedier for these things, which finally brought about their downfall. Otherwise they could not be corrupted. "They were made from their beginning of a kind to resist most steadfastly any domination. Though they could be slain or broken, they could not be reduced to shadows enslaved to another will." They are like the worshippers of Thor, sturdy peasants, not beautiful or brilliant, who fight with a bitter determination. The guile of Loki has less effect on Thor than on any other of the Asa, while Odin was most often influenced by his deceit. In the same manner Gandalf and the Eldar were tricked by Saruman, whose goblin allies fought the dwarves he could not deceive.

Sauron's greatest captains are the Nazgûl--the Ringwraiths. They are the possessors of the Nine, and are utterly dominated by them. Their chief is the Black Captain, once sorcerer king of the ancient realm of Angmar, who willingly became a servant of Sauron to increase his own power. Of the other Nazgûl nothing is said but that they were proud men who thought they had the strength to wield the Rings, and too late found out that their lust for power made them pawns of a mightier Power.

During the Second Age Sauron commanded the One. In the final battle with the Last Alliance of elves and Men, it was taken from

him by Elindil's son Isildur, but he was shot by orcs and the Ring fell into the Anduin. It was recovered by Gollum whose story I have previously told, and finally comes to the Company through Bilbo and Gandalf. But Gandalf and the Eldar cannot use it, since it will bring evil as long as it exists, for it was so cursed by its maker.

"As it gave me measureless might, let each who holds it die, slain by its spell! To none on earth joy shall it give, in its radiant luster shall none delight! Care shall consume its wretched possessor, and envy him who owneth it not! Each shall lust after its delights, yet none shall know pleasure who winneth it! His doom ever knowing, racked shall be his soul with fear: while life shall last, daily wasting away, the Ring's great Lord to the Ring shall be a slave, till once more to my hand the ravished treasure returneth." Thus Andvari curses his Ring as he is forced to yield it up to Odin. And the curse is carried out; Fafner kills his brother Fasolt, Sigfried kills Fafner, Hagen kills Sigfried and his brother Gunther, Brynhilde throws herself on Sigfried's pyre, which reaches to the Walhall and brings on the twilight of the gods. Brynhilde's last act is to return the Ring to the Rhinemaidens, thus ending its cursed power forever.

This is the story that Wagner created out of the Volsunga Saga, where the Ring doesn't play a very important part, but here the power of the Ring over gods and mortals is immense. The story of Odin's temptation is the same as Hagen's. The Ring's curse can only be ended at its source, and that is where it is finally taken under the same circumstances as the One, when all seems lost. Of course Wagner's idea of ultimate victory is different from Tolkien's, redemption by love as opposed to physical triumph, but in both cases it is the destruction of the Ring that brings it about.

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Footnote in a English History book:

"The importation of coffee was criticized in 1680 as being 'most useless since it serves neither for nourishment nor debauchery'".  
(They sure were practical in those days)

From Medical World News:

The snail is both male and female but cannot benefit from it.

To stop a nosebleed, stand on your head and stay there until your heart stops beating.

Alcohol makes a man mad, idiotic, and ecclesiastic.

There is no difference between a medical thermometer and an atmospheric barometer, but the medical thermometer has no small board attached, since it wouldn't be practical.

The duodenum is a liturgical song in use among the Trappists.

# MON CHER VIEUX

M. Charles de Gaulle  
Président, République Française  
L'Elysée  
Paris, France

Mon cher vieux:

Nous nous signalons qu'à la réunion du 12 octobre, 1962, la Société de Fiction Scientifique du Massachusetts Institute of Technology vous a donné un vote de commendation et de confiance.

Tout à vous,



Gordon S. Wasserman  
Président du Comité d'Affaires  
Etrangères pour les Pays de  
Langue Française, Société de  
Fiction Scientifique, Massachusetts  
Institute of Technology

Le Président  
de la  
République

Secrétariat Particulier

Monsieur,

Le témoignage que vous lui avez exprimé, au nom de la Société que vous presidez, a touché le Général de Gaulle.

Le Président de la République m'a chargé de vous remercier de cette attention, ainsi que tous ceux dont vous avez été l'interprète.

Veuillez agréer, Monsieur, l'expression de mes sentiments distingués.



M. de Beauljourt

---

At last I heard a voice upon the slope  
Cry to the summit, 'Is there any hope?'  
To which an answer pealed from that high land,  
But in a tongue no man could understand.

Alfred, Lord Tennyson

## book reviews



--Doug Hoylman

CATCH-22, by Joseph Heller

Paul Krassner: Has Catch-22 been banned anywhere?

Joseph Heller: No.

P.K.: Are you disappointed?

J.H.: Not any more.

--The Realist, November 1962

Major premise: I do not like World War II novels. Minor premise: Catch-22 is a World War II novel. Conclusion: I think Catch-22 is a damn fine book. Reason: This is no more like the typical war story than The Realist is like The Reader's Digest. It is a wildly farcical and deeply philosophical novel that does violence to all the cliches and traditions associated with that war.

The main character (I hesitate to say "the hero") is Yossarian, a captain and lead bombardier stationed on Pianosa, an island off Italy. He has an irreverent and bizarre approach to everything (when first seen he is developing the censorship of letters into an art form) but beneath his wackiness lies a strong moral sense and an obsessive fear of death. His only goal is "to live forever or die in the attempt", and his chances of doing so are lessened each time he is sent on a combat mission. So all his efforts are directed towards getting away from it all, but he is continually thwarted by Colonel Cathcart, who keeps raising the number of required missions before his men are eligible for rotation. Yossarian protests by marching backwards, attending a friend's funeral naked, and staying in the hospital as much as he can.

In contrast is the other principal sympathetic character, the chaplain, who is bullied by his orderly, manipulated by his superiors, frightened by the war, confused by military procedure, worried sick for his wife and children back in the States, fearful for the safety of Yossarian and the other fliers, beset by theological dilemmas, charged with fantastic offenses, given the third degree by strangers. Yossarian has a positive attitude, while the chaplain's is negative. Yossarian protests actively while the chaplain turns the other cheek. Both men are stranded in a sea of madness with which they cannot cope, and the futility of it all is that neither of their approaches seems to work.

There are many petty villains, men exploiting each other for their private ends, but the real villain of the piece is the mysterious Catch-22, the quintessence of all army regulations, a nebulous statute which says completely different things at various times. For example, it states that anyone who is not sane can be excused from combat, but that anyone who wants to get out of combat is obviously sane. Yossarian



ultimately doubts that it even exists; but, just as both sides fight on in the name of a "truth" whether it is true or not, so Catch-22, tangible or not, goes on shafting the innocent.

Don't get the idea that this is a gloomy philosophical- drag. It effervesces (hey, that's a great word, isn't it?) with improbable dialogue and improbable characters. A choice example of the former:

"Now where were we? Read me back the last line." (said the colonel)  
 "'Read me back the last line,'" read back the corporal, who could take shorthand.  
 "Not my last line, stupid!" the colonel shouted.. "Somebody else's."  
 "'Read me back the last line,'" read back the corporal.  
 "That's my last line again!" shrieked the colonel, turning purple with anger.  
 "\$h, no, sir," corrected the corporal. "That's my last line. I read it to you just a moment ago. Don't you remember, sir?"

The number of characters is staggering, and as I said, many are incredible. But even the wierdest are only caricatures, not fabrications. There is Appleby, who had flies in his eyes, a fair-haired boy from Iowa who believed in God, Motherhood and the American Way of Life, without ever thinking about any of them; Orr, who walks around with crab apples in his cheeks, and crash-lands every mission, for practice; (practice for what? I ain't tellin'); General Peckem, who knows the circumference of the equator and always writes "enhanced" when he means "increased"; ex-P.F.C. Wintergreen, mail clerk at headquarters, the real man in charge of the 27th Air Force; Doc Daneeka, who can't convince anybody he isn't dead; Chief White Halfoat, who hates racial prejudice and thinks it's a terrible thing to treat a decent, loyal Indian like a n-----, kike, wop or spic; Captain flume, who lives in the woods ever since chief White Halfoat threatened to slit his throat from ear to ear; Lieutenant Scheisskopf (Ger:: Shithead), a ROTC grad who knows nothing about anything except parades, and makes general within a few month's; Major Major Major Major, who only admits people to his office when he isn't there; Captain Black, who proved Major Major was a Commu- nist by not letting him sign any loyalty oaths; Milo Minderbinder, who bombed his own squadron, and tried to sell chocolate-covered cotton; Major ----- deCoverly, whose duties consist of pitching horseshoes, kidnaping Italian laborers, and renting apartments for the men to use on leaves; Mudd, the dead man in Yossarian's tent; Giuseppe, who saw everything twice, and his family, who came too late to watch their son die, so they watched Yossarian; Corporal Whitcomb, the chaplain's orderly, an atheist who was after the chaplain's job; General Dreedle, who took his son-in-law into the business; Major Danby, who was almost taken out and shot for moaning; Nately, whose mother was a Daughter of the American Revolution and whose father was a Son of a Bitch; Major San- derson, the psychiatrist, who reached puberty late; and of course Colonel Cathcart, who sent out the ultimate form letter: "Dear Mrs., Mr., Miss, or Mr. and Mrs.: Words cannot express the deep personal grief I experienced when your husband, son, father or brother was killed, wounded or reported missing in action..."

What's that you say? Female characters? Sure there are. There's Nately's whore, and Nately's whore's kid sister, and Orr's whore, and the bald-headed whore, and the maid in the lime-colored panties, and— well, you get the idea.

I have only one criticism to make of this book: it is impossible to keep track of the time or place, so that characters reappear who were killed earlier, and Snowden dies at least five times. Not that it matters, since there's no real plot, but it is irritating. Maybe the idea was to increase the impression of general insanity, but it doesn't hit me that way.

I close with one particularly inspiring and memorable phrase from a speech by Colonel Cargill:

"Men, you're American officers. The officers of no other army in the world can make that statement. Think about it."

#### THE CIRCUS OF DR. LAO, by Charles G Finney

(So it's an old book. I'll start reviewing all new books when the publishers start sending me free copies.)

Gee whiz! The circus is coming to town! The population of Abalone, Arizona, is all set for the usual lions, elephants and clowns. But they are disappointed. Dr. Lao's circus has nothing but a unicorn, a satyr, a sphinx and stuff like that. Abalone says (if you'll pardon the worst pun since this month's Feghoot) "Ah, baloney!"

This book is a commentary on human nature, a farcical fantasy, and a catalogue of all the fantastic creatures Finney could think of. In addition to those above, the circus features a medusa, a chimera, a sea serpent, a roc, a mermaid, a werewolf, the golden ass, the hound of the hedges, a faun, some nymphs, Mumbo Jumbo, Lord of the Congo, one of the Gadarene Swine, Satan Mekatrig, and Apollonius of Tyana, plus something that's either a bear or a Russian. (Everybody through looking up names?) About the only critters he missed were a centaur, a Cyclops and the Jabberwock. But, after all, it's a short book.

Various townspeople are singled out for study as they react to the four stages of the circus: the ad in the local paper, the parade, the sideshows, and the performance. (Some of his names are real cool: there's the proofreader, Mr. Etaoin--from the Greek, "Etaoin shrdlu", a linotype machine--the schoolteacher, Miss Agnes Birdsong, and two members of Sigma Omicron Beta.) The ad generates excitement, with its amazing claims. But the parade is disappointing: just a horse with a phony horn stuck on his head, an old guy with goat horns stuck on his head, a dog painted green, a donkey painted yellow, and like that. (I am sure this is exactly the way the small, unimaginative Western town I come from would react just like that.) All through this book one attitude is prominent which may be characteristic of this age of extravagant phoniness--a sort of inverted gullibility, an eagerness to disbelieve in the authenticity of anything. Dr. Lao points out carefully to the crowd that in every city someone insists on looking directly at the medusa despite his warnings and is turned to stone. But sure enough, Kate forces her way in and gets petrified.

In the sideshows all sorts of things happen. Miss Birdsong is seduced by the satyr, Mr. Etaoin has a long talk with the sea serpent, Apollonius creates a two-headed turtle, and why am I going through all these things anyway, when everybody can read the book for--themselves? himself? yourself? one'sself? You know what I mean.

My favorite part of this book is the appendix. Here the author throws caution to the winds and just has fun, mostly mocking his own style. He gives notes on each of the characters, classified by male, female, children, animals, gods and goddesses, etc., including even those casually mentioned or implied in the dialogue, and the less significant the more commentary. (Crowd of Mexicans Larry Kamper shouldered his way through: Peons, agrarians, hacendados, padrones, prizefighters, bullfighters, laborers.) Then a list of questions (What did Mumbo Jumbo do with the fair-haired Nordic girl? Was it a bear or a Russian or what?) posed by the text, and not answered here. Finally a list of foodstuffs mentioned in the text (Hay. Soda pop. Duck eggs. Garlic. Little fat brown boy.). To appreciate the appendix you have to read the book. It's worth it.

#### LOOKING BACKWARD, by Edward Bellamy

This is one of the umpteen most famous Utopian novels of history, and one of the last happy utopias before Orwell, Huxley, et al. made the perfect society something evil. (There are still a few such, however. See Ayn Rand's Atlas Shrugged for, of all things, a happy capitalist utopia.) Looking Backward was one of the most popular books of its time--1888, when success lasted longer than a month, and socialism was not instantly equated with evil incarnate. For, there is no disputing it, the setup in this book is a socialist one, with government control of industry and all that, but it should not be confused with either the philosophical fantasies of Marx or the dictatorship reached from the other direction by Stalin and Khrushchev. The closest analogues are Plato's Republic and More's original Utopia. Bellamy, having more history to draw upon than either, as well as a vastly increased technology to work with, should be able to improve on their ideas, and I happen to think he does, even though his plan is far from workable.

Let's go into the plot for a while. Julian West, a proper Bostonian (i.e., a capitalist pig who feeds on the toil of the hard-working proletariat), is an insomniac, and frequently has himself put to sleep by a local hypnotist, whereupon he has to be awakened the next morning. One day in 1887 he is put to sleep in this manner; the house burns down, and he is forgotten until he is found by accident in the year 2000, and is aroused by the occupants of the house now on the site. (This isn't too far from the current sf device, the deep freeze.) From here on the plot becomes negligible, as his host, Dr. Leete, who just happens to be an expert on the sociology of the 1880's, explains to him the differences between American society then and now. Oh, to be sure, West woos and marries the doctor's daughter, who just happens to be the great-granddaughter of his fiancée back in 1887, but that's just to keep things moving.

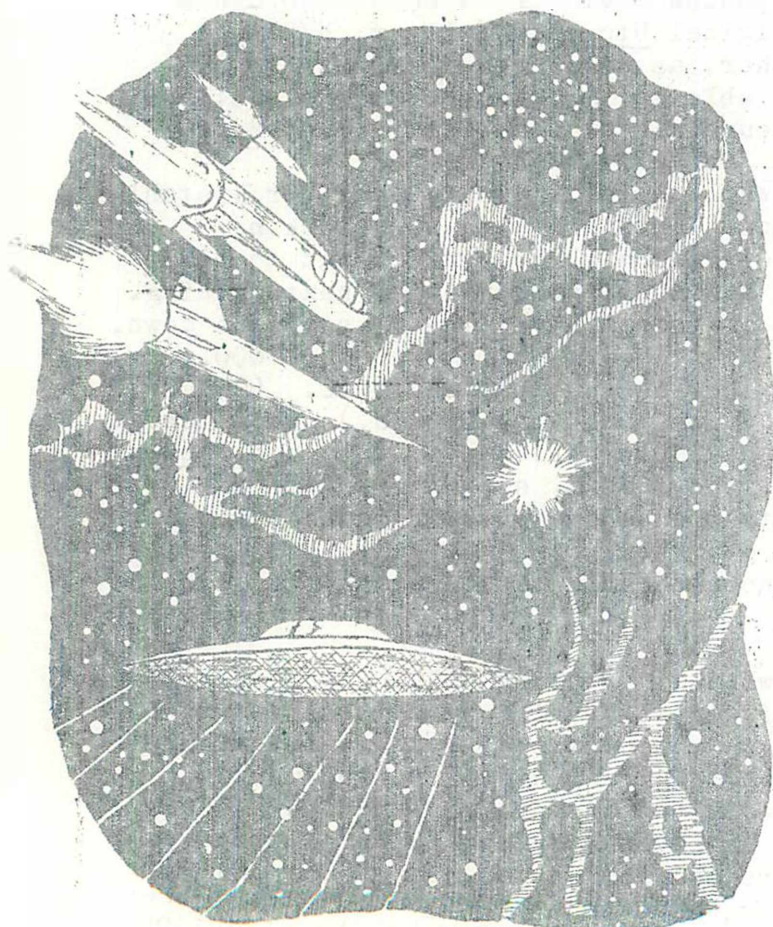
In the United States of the twentieth century (2000 being in the twentieth century probably confuses a lot of readers, but it is; the 21st starts Jan. 1, 2001) the government owns all busniess. Education is compulsory until twenty-one, whereupon each person works three years at common labor, then works at the profession of his choice until forty-five, when he retires. Everyone working receives exactly the same salary; unpleasant jobs are modified by shorter hours and excellent working conditions. Money, as such, no longer exists, except as a bookkeeping device. All goods can be obtained from the ubiquitous government stores; prices are fixed, there is no competition and hence



no advertising. With all this government control, still individual freedom is the highest in history; all that is required is the period of education and work specified above. Natch, there is no war, virtually no crime nor insanity, and everybody is healthy and deliriously happy.

Sounds nice. But, regardless of how many times Dr. Leete specifically denies it, human nature would have to change quite a bit to make such a system go. As my favorite philosopher, H. Allen Smith, puts it, "I've never admired communists because they operate on the theory that human beings are nice people. And I dislike reactionaries because they wear garters and go to the bathroom to pick their teeth." The first part applies just as well to the utopian socialists. If in all these thousands of years men haven't learned to cooperate for mutual benefit on a large scale, they won't start tomorrow. The only way a system can change for the better, according to history, the best authority, is by revolution, and revolutionaries tend to lose their idealism once they get in power--need I mention any names? As far as I know, no new book comparable to Bellamy's or More's novels has been successful in America or Western Europe since the Bolshevik Revolution.

Anyhow, this is an interesting, maybe even enjoyable book, provided it is read a) as predictive science fiction and b) as a book written in 1887.



#### Still more from The Devil's Dictionary

**Brain;** An apparatus which we think we think. In our civilization, and under our republican form of government, brain is so highly honored that it is rewarded by exemption from the cares of office.

**Meekness:** Uncommon patience in planning a revenge that is worthwhile.

**Projectile:** The final arbitrator in international disputes.

**Rabble:** In a republic, those who exercise a supreme authority, tempered by fraudulent elections. The rabble is like the sacred Simurgh of Arabian fable--omnipotent on condition that it does nothing.

**Senate:** A body of elderly gentlemen charged with high crimes and misdemeanors.

# The Nemesis of

## J. P. Lovecraft

-Ed Olsen

Due to popular demand (letters from ~~illiterate~~ ~~clods~~ fans and pointed remarks by our ~~pink~~ ~~of a dictator~~ editor) I shall not write any more exposés. Actually, even ARB complained--he said that it made him look too goody goody. Bernie personally destroyed my splendid and revealing article, The Real Fuzzy Pink, so I must substitute in its stead a theme of mine (boiled down) written for a humanities course at the Institute. Here it is, and I won't even charge \$4.98 for it.

For Lovecraft the swiftly developing sciences, led by that eldest--queen astronomy--reveal a terrifyingly vast and mysterious universe. Aeons of light years stretch forth, engulfing innumerable blazing suns. Earth need not be unique in its possession of life, and these other suns may be attended by planets supporting weird and even hostile life-forms. Lovecraft shifts the focal point of supernatural dread from man, his dust mote of a world; and his gods to these alien forms which may obey higher laws than those of our own immediate space-time continuum. The line of thought he developed concerning man's place in the universal scheme is clearly given in the opening paragraph of The Call of Cthulhu, the first story of the series which soon became called the Cthulhu Mythos.

The most merciful thing in the world, I think, is the inability of the human mind to correlate all its contents. We live on a placid island of ignorance in the midst of black seas of infinity, and it was not meant that we should voyage far. The sciences, each straining in its own direction, have hitherto harmed us little; but some day the piecing together of dissociated knowledge will open up such terrifying vistas of reality, and of our frightful position therein, that we shall either go mad from the revelation or flee from the deadly light into the peace and safety of a new dark age.

In all of his mythologies, man has closely entwined himself with his gods and the universe. The supreme and benign gods were envisioned in the form of man, and they were vitally concerned in the affairs of men. Although the world was conceived as formed out of Chaos, Night, and the Abyss, it soon became an enclosed and self-sufficient system, surrounded by other worlds or confined by father-sky and mother-earth. Modern science had pierced that shell, and Lovecraft felt that mankind could hardly bear the realization that

the blind cosmos grinds aimlessly on from nothing to something and from something back to nothing again, neither heeding nor knowing the wishes or existence of the minds that flicker for a second now and then in the darkness.

Lovecraft takes the purposeless, soulless universe and molds its impersonal forces into malignant, leering impersonations of the gods of the ancients, leaning heavily toward the Norse and Greek traditions. Most of the entities in the Cthulhu Mythos are actively malevolent, or cruelly indifferent at best, to mankind. There are four distinct groups of gods in the pantheon presented: the Earth Gods, the Great Race of Yith, the Great Old Ones, and the mysterious Elder Gods.

Lovecraft's thesis is that this world, in a time far removed from our present-day world, was inhabited and ruled by these groups of demon-gods and more benignant entities. Other worlds also harbored supernatural (using the word in its denotative sense--above nature, i.e., not bound by the physical laws of nature as mankind is) life, in particular Cykranoch (Saturn), Yuggoth (Pluto), and the worlds circling the stars in the neighborhood of Betelgeuse. The Great Race of Yith were mental entities, having no bodies of their own but existing as parasites in borrowed bodies. These seem to have been the primal rulers of earth. The Great Old Ones first plunged to this sphere from Cykranoch, Yuggoth, and the stars beyond. These were not composed altogether of flesh and blood; they had shape, but that shape was not made of matter as we know it. Some were so powerful as to defy all the laws of matter by which we are bound; whereas others fell under now one, then another, physical law, until the lesser ones were for the most part "natural." The Elder Ones were the first inhabitants of stellar space and actually created the Great Old Ones and the Great Race. The Earth Gods were very minor gods, with almost no power compared to the others. Perhaps Lovecraft used them to ridicule the presumption of man, for they were of human form, with long narrow eyes, long lobed ears, thin noses, and pointed chins. Their only attribute was selfishness--a sweet revenge indeed upon mankind, who would conceive of gods in its own image. It is a blow to egocentric and selfish man, who thought himself and his world so unique that he placed them in the center of Creation.



In those elder times, the Great Race and the Great Old Ones fell out of agreement with one another, and they both turned against the Elder Gods. The Great Race relinquished earth and fled through time and space, occupying first one planet and then another. Their plight is outlined in the story, The Shadow Out of Space. Lovecraft situates them on a dead planet which circles a dying star. Occupying the bodies of the dominant life form, a rugose cone, they are building a great library, "filling the archives with the history of life in all times and all places." This is accomplished by exchanging bodies with inhabitants of other worlds; the other being would be set to work writing an account of his life and times, while the member of the Great Race who had displaced him would search his world for traces of the Great Old Ones and their minions. Always longing to return to earth, they keep close watch on it. They will finally return to inhabit the bodies of the beetle race which will



be the dominant life form after humanity has perished. The Great Race always strove for solitude and peace, and they are more closely akin to the Elder Gods than to the Great Old Ones.

The Great Old Ones, now ruling earth and the solar system unchallenged, rose in rebellion against the Elder Gods, and stole a collection of siglis and hieroglyphically-inscribed tablets. The Elder Gods punished their defiance with great severity. We learn in The Lurker what happened to one of them in a quote from the Necronomicon (written by the mad arab Abdul Alhazred).

'Twas done then as it had been promis'd aforetime, that He was tak'n by Those Whom He Defy'd, and thrust into ye Neth'rmost Deeps und'r ye Sea, and placed within ye barnacl'd Tower that is said to rise amidst ye great ruin that is ye Sunken City (R'lyeh), and seal'd within by ye Elder Sign, and rag'd at Those who had imprison'd Him, He furth'r incurr'd Their anger, and They, descend'g upon Him for ye second time, did impose upon Him ye semblance of Death, but left Him dream'g in that place under ye great waters, and return'd to that place from whence they had come...

Thus Cthulhu, the chief of the water-elementals, is punished for the part he played in the uprising. He is bound by most physical laws, possessing only great powers of telepathy (which only water can shield against) and what may be described as an un-material body. Once, when he was accidentally released for a short time, a fear-crazed sailor rammed his ship into the creature. Cthulhu just burst asunder into a blinding green cloud--to recombine in the wake of the ship. One cannot really blame the sailor for his unfriendly attitude, for Cthulhu is described as having an octopoid head, a face which is a mass of writhing feelers, a scaly rubbery body, great claws on his four feet, and long narrow wings. The Madusae themselves pale into insignificance before such a creature.

Lovecraft made use of the old Greek idea of the universe by making his gods fire-, air-, water-, and earth-elementals. However, to indicate the purposelessness of the universe he made them strive against one another, uniting only in common cause against the Elder Gods. Thus Cthugha, a fire-elemental imprisoned on Fomalhaut, could be successfully evoked against earth-elementals; he even had power over Nyarlathotep.

After their unsuccessful rebellion against the Elder Gods, the Great Old Ones were exiled singly or in groups to other parts of the universe or were imprisoned under signs of power upon the earth. Azathoth, the leader of the rebellion, was exiled beyond this space-time continuum into Chaos and (once again portraying the objectlessness of the universe) was deprived of mind and will. Yog-Sothoth, another earth-elemental and among the most powerful, was imprisoned in Lake Hali on a dark planet near Aldebaran. Shub-Niggurath, a powerful earth-elemental and blasphemous goddess of fertility, was also imprisoned. Numerous other gods were similarly punished--even the Earth Gods were exiled to the mighty onyx castle on Kadath in the Cold Waste, in its extension into earth's dream-world. Only one is fetterless, the enigmatic Nyarlathotep.

Nyarlathotep was Lovecraft's prize creation, and he stands as the central symbol of the mythos--Nyarlathotep, the Crawling Chaos, the Demon Messenger, the Blind Faceless one, the Dark One. He is a servant and messenger of the Great Old Ones, and at the same time he is as powerful as the greatest among them. He is capable of assuming a thousand different shapes. Throughout the mythos he has

appeared as a three-lobed burning eye, a black faceless sphinx, a tall and regal pharaoh, and in the likeness of man. In essence, he is the spirit of the Great Old Ones, symbolizing the kaleidoscopic and mechanistic nature of the material universe. Lovecraft may have chosen Loke, the dual deity of the Norse mythology, as his model of this warped skeleton of Hermes. At times Nyarlathotep exhibits all the hideousness of Utgard-Loke, and at other times the shrewd, deceitful, and treacherous malice of Asa-Loke. The Dark One is dual also. Utgard-Nyarlathotep is the mindless grinding universe, bent only on the Ragnarok which will bring it crushing down upon man; whereas Asa-Nyarlathotep is man's own insidious self-destructive intellect--his ability to see the universe for what it is and thereby kill in himself all his simple and beautiful dreams.

Asa-Loke is chained, and Utgard-Loke's horde is warded off by the great barrier made of Ymir's brow. So too is man's intellect hindered, and the universe is distant; but there will come a day of doom, and Surt shall scatter his flames over the earth. The fabulous Necronomicon also forecasts a day of doom in The Lurker:

Then shal They return & on this great Return'g shal ye Great Cthulhu be fre'd from R'lyeh beneath ye Sea & Him Who Is Not To Be Nam'd shal come from His City which is Carcosa near ye Lake of Hali, and Shub-Niggurath shal come forth & multiply in her Hideousness, & Nyarlathotep shal carry ye word to all the Gr. Old Ones & their Minions, & Cthugha shal lay His Hand upon all that oppose Him & Destroy, & ye blind idiot, ye noxious Azathoth shal arise from ye middle of ye World where all is Chaos & Destruction where He hath bubbled & blasphem'd at Ye centre which is of All Things, which is to say Infinity, & Yog-Sothoth, who is ye All-in-One & One-in-All, shal bring his globes, & Ithaqua shal walk again, & from ye black-litt'n caverns within ye Earth shal come Tsathoggua, & togeth'r shal take possession of Earth and all things that live upon it, & shal prepare to do battle with ye Elder Gods when ye Lord of ye Great Abyss is apprised of their return'g & shal come with His Brothers to disperse ye Evil.

The day of doom shall come when the Elder Signs have lost their power through age or are inadvertently removed by careless, probing mankind. The Great Old Ones will again rise up to challenge the Elder Gods for the mastery of the universe. The Elder Gods, warned by Nodens, Lord of the Great Abyss, will gather their powers and come to destroy them. It will be too late for man, however, for the Great Old Ones and their evil spawn will have overrun the earth and made it their stronghold.

The origin of The Dream Quest of Unknown Kadath can be traced to Lovecraft's childhood fascination with the Greek myths. In his early years he actually believed them, and in the Dream Quest he has combined the Odyssey with Hades to form the exotic and horrifying dreamworld of earth. Here we find Cerberus in the form of dog-faced, leathery-skinned travesties of humans--the ghouls of the upper dreamworld--who guard the cemetery passageways which afford entrance into the realm. The Elysian Fields are combined with the strange ports of call of Odysseus in the great and beautiful cities of the men of the dreamworld. Dark Tartaros and the monsters which Odysseus met are embodied in the nightmare entities which haunt the dreamworld. Randolph Carter, the protagonist (and Lovecraft-image) who searches out the Earth Gods to plead for the beautiful city of his dreams, and

finds something more than he bargained for, symbolizes his regret and wish to escape the materialistic universe. The last few pages recount his near-fatal confrontation with Nyarlathotep, who informs him that his dream city is the Boston of his childhood. Here is shown the great pain; man's quest leads him to kill the only beautiful thing in the world, his dreams. And these dreams rise up to haunt and taunt him with their lost loveliness.

# LAEVROTATION

John Baxter  
Box 39, King St. PO  
Sydney, N.S.W.  
Australia

Thanks for TZ 7. I seem to recall that you sent me one or two other issues earlier in the year, but unfortunately, things being how they were, I didn't get around to commenting. Blame it on a combination of marriage, house-hunting, pro writing and gafia and pass on to the following. //I envy you your retrospective season of Bergman films - things like that are few and far between in Australia. I've been lucky enough to see all the films named in your list, although I don't share your enthusiasm for THE SEVENTH SEAL. Undoubtedly it was a fine film, but the message and the blunt technique turned me off it a little. I far preferred WILD STRAWBERRIES and THE DEVIL'S EYE, both of which were a little less obviously sermons. After seeing that much Bergman, I wonder if you think, as I do, that fans who say there are no good fantasy films being made are talking through their hats?// CRABGRASS GROWING was overlong, but amusing. I don't think Suburbia is quite as bad as the poem paints it. I know a lot of smart hip young guys who have city apartments and glossy mistresses, not to mention two sports cars, who are as dull, witless and unimaginative as the very keenest of the Saturday morning suburban lawn-mowers. On the other hand, I have been to some pretty far-out gatherings in housing developments. Worth is more a matter of attitude than situation.// I was glad to see the loads of Bierce quotes throughout this issue. You have taste.// Through a Ring, Darkly had some good sense in it, but it was too short to do justice to its subject. Anything as sweeping as this needs documentation, development, purpose. It would have been worth expanding along the lines of "Where are the new writers to come from?" You must have some ideas on the subject, and I suspect they are good ones. I agree with your comment that the best new writers are coming from England, though I might have left out Bülmer (he's no chicken, you know - he's been writing for at least ten years, and Brian Aldiss is not far behind him). James White is reasonably new, but he still has more than five years experience. The new writers worth watching are Jim Ballard, Lee Harding, Robert Presslie and Steve Hall, all men with only 10 or 12 years behind them and a lot of new ideas. Aldis is the best of the British writers, but I couldn't count him as "new". Already he's running rings around all the American writers - did you read SHARDS in F&Sf earlier this year? That yarn is better than you know.// I don't dig

folk/filk songs. I don't even like Joan Baez very much. Mea culpa  
{Philistine!}///

Harry Warner, Jr.      The article on Kurt Vonnegut interested me  
423 Summit Ave.      for both negative and positive reasons.  
Hagerstown, Maryland      Negative, because it was not another of those  
interminable rehashings of the endless series  
of book reviews on Stranger in a Strange Land; positive because it's  
quite well done and concerns one book that I've read, permitting a  
comparison of notes, and describes another in such enticing manner  
that I'll but a copy the first chance I get. I believe that Von-  
negut is one of the few writers of science fiction with successful  
books behind him who isn't known to fandom in person. The name  
sounds like a pseudonym and there are certain qualities in Canary in  
a Cat House, the volume I read, that make me suspect that this is a  
fairly well known mainstream writer who isn't sure of his ability  
to handle science fiction and is plying around with and on the edges  
of the field.

There isn't a great probability that I'll become a freshman  
at MIT, but the reprint of propaganda sheet was good to read. It  
helps a little with my fan history notes and it also might serve as  
a good model for any fan organization that is trying to convey the  
nature and spirit of fandom to outsiders via the printed page. Most  
such attempts make the hobby sound like either the Elks lodge or a  
discipline that will take eternities to learn to enjoy.

John Trimble is wrong when he calls Silverlock "quite unique"  
because Virginia Woolf beat John Myers Myers to the punch by many  
years with Orlando. I liked the Myers novels that appeared in  
Argosy but I've shied away from Silverlock because much of its  
appeal seems to lie in the puzzle angle and I just don't have time  
for that, any more than I have the time to figure out for myself or  
read a glossary to the word juggling of the later James Joyce.

I was glad to see Gary Deindorfer's bravery in suggesting  
that the big recording companies sometimes produce something that  
was worth creating. The non-conformist urge that percolates through-  
out fandom can be overdone. I didn't come right out and trumpet the  
action to the four corners of the world, but I stealthily joined the  
Columbia Record Club and I'm quite satisfied with the results: I find  
things to buy despite my rather large collection of classical music,  
and various bonus and special offers make the cost slightly less than  
you'd pay at discount houses, with absolute assurance that your disc  
is unplayed and unhandled by store customers. {I was a member of the  
Columbia record club for a few years. Most of my classical collection  
is Columbia, Victor, &etc, but looking through my fairly large  
collection of folk music the only artists on these or any other "Big  
Name" labels are Burl Ives, the Limelighters, and Belefonte. The  
last two are only marginally "fbk" entertainers, popular singers  
would be a better designation.}

Bob Jennings      Your editorial was interesting, naturally. I'm  
3819 Chambers Dr.      afraid even Oniffan, or bther great Bradbury/  
Nashville 11, Tenn.      Olvecraft buffs will find their enthusiasm for  
records of their favorite author's work ebbing  
a bit when they have to put out \$498.00 for each record...I mean,  
this is a trifle expensive...{A horrid goof. It should have been  
\$4.98}

I wish you and all the other fans would kinda of stop recom-





My favorite modern artist, though, is Jackson Pollack. Klee comes close behind. (Of course, Goya is not a modern artist.

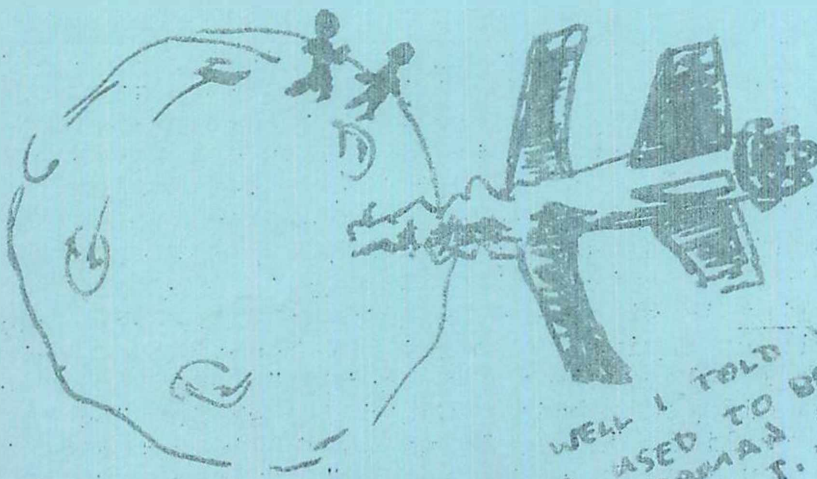
As my kindly and deformed old gardener once said, "The only thing wrong with rock and roll is that it is crap." So there, Mister Bob "Jennings." Actually, I do not have a gardener, even a deformed one, but if I had, he would not have said that. (I dig writing double-take things like that, so mind it not, please.)

The trouble with most of the "action" science fiction writers of Old is that action is all they delivered. Such current things as Sheckley's "the Journey of Joenes" and Terry Carr's beautiful short story, "Hop Friend" are as good science fiction as one might hope for. Edmond Hamilton has "sweep," and "scope," but his writing style always bothered me and anything of his I have read has been read in spite of that. And he was one of the best of the action science fiction writers. I mean, there were plenty of others who not only were style deaf but did not have anything else in their stories to redeem them. I speak of such non-worthies as Henry Hasse and Otis Adelbert Kline (phoog to him, especially).

Enough of this idle chatter. My gaud, here I am, supposedly a faaanish fan and all of that, discussing science fiction. To redeem myself, I shall in my next letter of comment to you discuss Charles Burbee's suede shoes..

Your mag is an acquired taste. I'm getting to like it more and more.

We Also Heard From: Isaac Asimov who volunteered to be our second in the upcoming duel with JW Ghod Jr. F. Baker Wilkes-Kensington, president of the Anglo-American Society of Literates, ahahahahaha. And Bill Plott who should listen to the Burl Ives recording of "Riders in the Sky."



WELL I TOLD YOU  
I USED TO BE A  
MOTORMAN FOR  
THE M. T. D.