

VOM

#49

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PACIFICON





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(Jack Wiedenbeck)

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VOICE of the IMAGI-NATION, aka Vom, #49 - July 1946. Due to atoms and germs, its editor expects to be taking a worm's-eye view of what's left of the world early in 1950, but in the meantime will print optimistic prognostications of the future. 15c a copy, \$1 a "year" (7 issues)--no 5 year subscriptions accepted. Address cash or communications to Forrest J Ackerman, Box 6151 Metro Station, Los Angeles 55, Cal.

Cover: Rosaleen Norton

Harry E. Mongold of 1500 Silverleaf Ave, Burlington, Iowa, opens his first Vomissive with Mongolden praise: I've just read the Oct & Nov issues of VOM and want to report that they were knockouts. I had no idea the fanmags were so good these days. The artwork is all inspiring and lively--just like the ltrs printed. I'm in love with the fairy-queen nude insert, Nov ish.

The Ft McArthur paper insert gave me a lot of info that I hadn't had before. I certainly didn't know E Mayne Hull is Van Vogt's wife, nor who John Taine is. Being an Astounding reader, I agree with the expressed opinion of Amazing ordinarily, but recently I've been curious about the Lemurian hoax, which is presented in a most definite manner, as tho the editor had turned either insane or a charlatan. The remarks about the Great Pyramid in a couple of issues are astonishingly inaccurate. I find that the Rosicrucians have books on both Lemuria and the "prophecies" of the Great Pyramid. Do you suppose they are the inspiration?

I want to read Korzybski's book ("Science & Sanity"), but I can't wax as enthusiastic about Van Vogt's comprehension of semantics as Bratton does in your November ish. Any writer who uses the word "solipsist" as ridiculously as VV does hasn't studied his lessons very well. Also, some of his sentence structures are atrocious. However, I did like "World of A" very much.

I'm not a "mathematically inclined atheist," but I'm an atheist, and I'm trying to get together a book that deals with the problem of the probability of the existence of the Christian gods. It's interesting, if pointless.

To say that the pleasure-pain principle has been "modified in recent years" (Widner) is to arouse my immediate wrath. (Spelled "rrrrrrrath") I know Prof. Wiggins writes that in his newspaper column, but then he doesn't know everything. Curiosity--for instance--is quite as definitely a matter of pleasure as eating ice cream. What senses? Well, the same senses register in the attitude of curiosity as register when one is delightedly solving a mystery, attentively listening to a lecture, or struggling to thread a needle. Kinesthetic sense organs are pleasure-giving, and any pursuit of a goal involves a general muscular tension (including viscera). Besides, it is impossible to say other than, "I'm doing something because he wants to do it--or else he wouldn't do it, of course." One is driven to do some things by his own concept of disaster if he must. Other things he does because it is fun or promises fun. If the words "pleasure" and "pain" are obnoxious, then the words may be replaced, of course, but certainly the old concept of "disinterested goodness" is impossible to hold. Obviously, however, there is no intelligence in condemning altruism or justifying anti-social selfishness, as Widner suggests. To help others to happiness is to help oneself.

I've never read VV's Slam!, but since it seems to be some sort of superman story, I don't think I'd like it anyway. The Weapon Shop (short that preceded Trailmakers) is about my favorite VV.

Bob Bloch did a swell satire about Fan City.

Speer's ltr in the Oct issue moves me to comment--he has the wrong idea about socialism. He says he's not so interested in security--but socialism is not a system of security. It is a system of getting things done efficiently and as people want them done. That is, a good variety of socialism is. The picture of an all-powerful Government that is to take care of us from cradle to grave is exactly what we do not want. We want democracy--in our economic life as well as in our political life. And democracy means Participation, or in other words, Hard Work. The cartoonist's man-with-his-sleeves-rolled-up should be a picture of thousands of men and women with their sleeves rolled up, all cooperating, all knowing what they want out of life and intending to get it. That is true socialism. Talk about Govt-owned industry always irks me, because I know that the speaker forgets that in our New World we are the government--supposedly. Any "socialism" that turns out to be a dictatorship is not socialism at all. So much for the USSR.

I swear, I have no admiration for the capitalist-produced "tough-minded man" who wants to work alone--and for himself alone. I believe in people who think and work together, openly, frankly, intelligently. Admittedly this is an ideal that requires much education of our people first, but some day it will work. #

HARRY WARNER JR, the Mastermind of Maryland, speaks from his citadel at 303 Bryan Pl, Hagerstown: There's no sense in the existence of fandom at all, if we aren't to talk about the science-fiction and fantasy which brought us together in the first place; if we want cultural atmosphere like Ron Lane mentions ((Vom #44)), there are a dozen places to find it or encourage it, and only a small portion of fandom is really interested in the subconscious motivations of Dali or the influence of the 96th symphony of Haydn on the Spanish Dances of Moritz Moszkowski. Not that I object to a magazine such as Ron wants to see published, but I don't think it would work out. VOM, as it is now, is about as far away as you can get from the basic things of stf. and fantasy.

Very good to see Alan Roberts ((voluble sporadic contributor from Australia)) winding up. Chris Youd's letter is another most sensible oasis in an otherwise in- for VOM, although his remarks on this country and Russia suggest that he (a) doesn't know what has been happening to the two nations during the last ten years or (b) is in possession of information that no one else possesses. To claim that this country is set in "an uncompromisingly capitalist path" went out of fashion in , and it is also very probable that Russia is veering away from the principles of communism and even socialism almost as rapidly as we are forgetting principles of capitalism. The letter also seems to indicate that the next war will be

flict that results from clashing ideologies of government; I refuse to believe that war can come about solely from this cause, or even primarily it. Speer mentions a film "fandom": it exists to a limited degree. There are people who make movie-going a hobby ((your editor's secondary hobby)), who keep record books listing the movies they've seen ((I did for a number of years--tops was 356 feature-length films one year, each with rating)), who buy all the film magazines and trade them back and forth, who form clubs in honor of a particular actor or actress, and who even put out little magazines raving over their heroes and heroines. There is also an almost microscopically small group who are interested in the motion picture as an art form, who collect the rare first efforts, and who make the revival theaters in New York and a few other large cities possible.

In 45, Fran seems a little too harsh on the "classics", a field into which I've been delving very systematically for the last six months. I agree on one thing which he suggests but doesn't state: that no extra merit attaches itself to a story or poem or essay or other piece of literature simply because it introduces a new technique or opens up a new field. Poe is the most completely over-rated American writer, simply because he was the first to write the tales of horror in a literate manner in this country, and because he practically created the deductive detective story. Sir Walter Scott is another dud, whose adventure stories were the best thing obtainable in their day, but have been surpassed by a thousand writers in the last century. And so it goes; but I can't agree that only the latest books are as a rule important because of changing conditions in the world. Conditions and human nature don't change that fast; the former may alter rapidly enough to make a classic outdated inside of centuries, but Plato wasn't writing about Neanderthals. Unless you have some sort of phobia against anything that happened prior to 1944, you can enjoy Laurence Sterne as much as his contemporaries--probably more, because some of his remarks must have seemed pretty dreadful to them.

There is some reason to complain about the Doc Smith epics, although the fault is mainly that they have been over-praised so much that everyone expects a cross between Joyce, Steinbeck, Tolstoy, and Hemingway. However, the earlier stories don't stand up today, in the light of advances in science-fiction, and the publication of "The Skylark of Space" in book form is a huge mistake--it just isn't the kind of story that belongs between hard science today.

The Mirror of Fandom now reflects the views of an Anglofan, DENNIS TUCKER of "Wicklow", 87 Oakridge Rd, High Wycombe, Bucks, England: In the November 1945 Vol I note the delicious damsels are still about and that Tigrina has returned. Widner wrote an interesting letter. Amongst

other things he asks: 'Why should the fact that millions in Europe are starving condone the starvation of a single individual in the U.S.?' A very natural question and one that would spring to any intelligent mind. (Pardon me; I didn't mean that as a pat on the back.) Of course, one's viewpoint must be formed according to the end of the stick -- or, if you wish, the side of the Atlantic,-- from which one looks at the position. It is reasonable to assume - (I should say it's a downright certainty) - that that would be the majority view in any country in the world that had plenty of food; I know if that were the position here I should be the first to advocate plenty for my fellow-countrymen before anyone else was served. Unfortunately, my attitude, together with all the millions of others who hold the same view, is surely the basis of what's wrong with the world to-day. We just aren't ready for World Government or honest-to-goodness internationalism. I have an unpleasant conviction that Campbell's prophecies won't be so far off the mark. Russia seems determined to sabotage UNO one way or another. (I hate to say that, but every indication seems to point that way.) And UNO is the only hope we have for a world continuing along the present lines for any length of time.

To get back to the food position, one thing that Britains resent is the continuous flood of reports in our press emanating from various parts of the Continent to the effect that there is plenty of everything we cannot buy to be found in the shops over there. We hear from our Servicemen stationed on the Continent that there is plenty of this to be had here, plenty of that to be had there and so on. What are we to believe? I am willing to believe that there are localised areas of plenty, others of famine. If this is the case why can't a fairer distribution be made?

I understand there was some bad feeling over there when we failed to return Churchill at the last election. 'Sheer ingratitude'! Those interested should acquaint themselves with a record of the Tory party, its broken promises, its inability to correct numberless social injustices, etc., etc., etc. I am pleased that Labour at last has its chance; whether they do any better is yet to be seen. I hope they will. At any rate, we have a plan, and we know where we're going! Churchill was our greatest war leader: his speeches absolutely kept us going in 1940, but Churchill, I regret to say, is a war-monger, he excels in war.

I see that Major-General Curtis LeMay wants \$300,000,000 for atom research, including space-ships and man-made 'planets' as bases for same. Also news of a forthcoming film ('The Lost Continent?') featuring a trip to the moon. If the title is correct it doesn't seem to fit. ((Only lunaroocket film I know of on schedule is "Man in the Moon"))

"World of Hull A" seems to have caused a great deal of discussion. I, among others it seems, "Didn't see it".

JACK "STEFNEWS" SPEER spiels from 4518 - 16 NE, Seattle 5, Wash: Widner: Maybe you don't need to inquire whether the things the American gets done are

worthwhile. Maybe getting things done is worthwhile per se. On condition that it's not anti-survival. Ofcourse, a lot of the things the tough-minded individuals do, do contribute to catastrophe. But if mankind were faced with any threat from nature (just as a given nation is faced with a threat from another nation), these get-things-done boys would come in very handy. Insofar as their energies are directed to defensive or constructive (anti-disease, anti-flood, land reclamation, interplanetary colonization) ends, however materialistic, they give the species more chance of survival. Insofar as they bring down fire from heaven and fail to adapt to it, they're dangerous.

The fact that millions are starving in Europe doesn't condone the starvation of any American. But the experience of other countries helps somewhat to tell us what conditions are damnable and precarious, and what conditions are damnable but nothing to be nervous about. And since the exact point of compromise between security and economic irresponsibility (others would say "freedom") is a matter of opinion, the prevention of even one case of starvation within our borders is not an aim to which all other considerations should be sacrificed.

Inre NAM credo, the idleness I referred to was not complete involuntary unemployment. I was thinking of the demands for a working week as short as the lousy French have (when we lack the resources of the French for using our present leisure time), and the early-retirement dream of Technocracy. I'm not overly anxious to see everyone get so much idle time on his hands. There is plenty of work that should be done, beyond mere production to meet needs.

Perhaps the pleasure-value of music is farther-reaching than the flat esthetic statement implies. It's a sure-fire source of pleasure that may be retreated to in time of need, or shared as a social experience; and may be one of the things that makes life worth living, even living actively, when animal wants are so well supplied that Homo starts asking himself unanswerable questions.

Perry: "condition of the will" is determined by what goes on in the world, as is every phenomenon in the human cave. Nevertheless the division between what goes on inside us and what goes on outside us is one of the sharpest and farthest-reaching that we can make for practical purposes. The apparent laws governing the two worlds must be worked out separately.

The worth that one obtains out of involuntary reading is doubtful, true. But it need not be. Teachers and parents so often say to us while we're in a belligerent mood, "You could make it a pleasure if you'd just go at it willingly", that we reject the suggestion in the particular cases, and eventually harden our hearts against it in any guise. Nevertheless we'll confess to ourselves that it's true. Fortunately, most of my school work has been pretty enjoyable, and the fact that it was required didn't spoil it for me; nay, I was grateful for the new knowledge I was forcibly introduced to, and for years took no responsibility myself for reading anything not required save steff and fanzines, which was comfortably lazy. #

The last time he saw Paris, HILTON ROTHMAN, now returned to 2113 N Franklin, Phila-22-Penna, send (literally) the following: This is quite a solid issue of VoM ((#47)), and Speer's letter is the spinal column of it.

First point upon which my mind catches is Speer's division of the mind into abilities and "will." I fail to visualize exactly what constitutes "will." We speak of a "strong-willed person" as one who will exert a great deal of effort to accomplish a result, or carry thru a series of actions, or who will persist in an opinion against the efforts of others to change it. But all this is un-behavioristic jargon to describe something which has not been precisely explained. So when Speer says: "Idealism is a condition of the will, a wholly separate thing, and therefore immune to disillusionment," I fail to see what he is talking about, and I hereby ask for clarification of what sounds like it might be interesting.

Now we have the spectacle of Speer saying: "That there will be fascism in our loosejointed country I think is very unlikely." And Laney saying: "I believe it safe to say that America has stronger seeds of fascism at this moment than did Germany in 1925." It indicates nicely the difference in the concepts of fascism held by these two people. I'm more inclined to agree with Laney, adding the quote: "When fascism comes it will be under the name of Americanism," and also adding that there is too much prosperity and too many dissenting groups in America for fascism to take the extreme form that it did in Germany.

It's safe to say that at this time there are seeds in America for almost any kind of movement in any direction. Which way we go is a function of many variables. So far we have made several moves in the wrong direction: (1) The defeat of Henry Wallace and subsequent rise of Truman which led directly to (2) the ruinous atomic policy and (3) the wishy-washy domestic policy which is resulting in havoc among labor, price control, and general reconversion.

Furthermore, ((wrote Rothman, on 25 Nov 45)) I see few indications of a turning in the right direction, unless it is in the Truman-Atlee statement that atomic theory will be freely dissipated among the United Nations, and that it is only the "know how" of atomic bomb manufacture which will be held "secret."

Furthermore it is historical inevitability that Russia must change in some direction or other now that conditions outside of Russia and attitudes toward Russia are changed from what were before the war. That will be an important factor in any of our changes. If Russia becomes more liberal, it will be good for us. If Russia remains dictatorial, it will foster antipathy toward socialistic movements in America, and that will

be bad. For those will be the first line of defense against the fascist movement.

Emotions: Chew on this bit from Spinoza for a while: "By emotion I understand the modifications of the body by which the power of action in the body is increased or diminished, aided or restrained, and at the same time the ideas of these modifications." This means physiological (chemical) changes in the body with corresponding mental pictures or feelings.

Laney asks where he got the idea of motivation being selfish. Again Spinoza comes to the rescue, and we quote from his Ethics: "Since reason demands nothing against nature, it concedes that each man must love himself, and seek what is useful to him, and desire whatever leads him truly to a greater state of perfection; and that each man should endeavor to preserve his being so far as in him lies."

Will Durant, in "The Story of Philosophy" (from which the above quote is taken) goes on to say: "So he (Spinoza) builds his ethic not on altruism and the natural goodness of man, like utopian reformers; nor on selfishness and the natural wickedness of man, like cynical conservatives, but on what he considers to be an inevitable and justifiable egoism."



This man Spinoza interests me for many reasons. Here is a person who studied the Jewish religion extensively and was excommunicated because he asked questions and at that time the Jewish church felt it necessary to maintain a rigorous unanimity due to its precarious position. His idea of God is that God is the entire universe in its ultimate aspect, "By the help of God I mean the fixed and unchangeable order of nature, or the chain of natural events." This is an attractive religion for a behaviorist for: (quote Will Durant) "The will of God and the laws of nature being one and the same reality diversely phrased, it follows that all events are the mechanical operation of invariable laws, and not the whim of an irresponsible autocrat seated in the stars."

It now remains for me to determine why, since these are my beliefs, it is necessary to apply to them the words "religion" and "God" in place of "set of beliefs" and "nature." I suppose I've built up semantic objections by this time to the first set of terms. #

C.S. YOUNG, with the Central Mediterranean Force: Although I haven't seen any subsequent VOMs that might contain replies to the little prophecy of mine, I know that Jack Speer at least has written one -- he told me so. But instead of waiting until VOMs with letters from him or other dissenters have made the long trek from Los Angeles to Caserta, via Leeds, I think I ought to write to you again now, and explain that events have thrown my little prediction right out, so I won't stand by it.

By "events", of course, I mean the atomic bomb which burst on the world while I was week-ending in London with Michael Rosenblum, Joyce Fairbairn and others last August. This, even more in its potential than in the reality, makes the unconditional pacifist the real patriot and the man who is willing to risk war for any cause an absolute menace to his country. So naturally the prospect of another war, even to make the world safe for socialism, is a completely pessimistic one, since it is now doubtful whether any victor could emerge from an atomic war holocaust.

The power balance I outlined remains the same. Until the East stabilises, there are two major power-blocs. One is the federation of socialist republics under the hegemony of Russia. The other is the American continent. It still seems to me that the Russian system of organisation is preferable to the much publicised American Way of Life, but both seem clearly inferior to the middle path of democratic socialism which is at its best in Gt. Britain but is in the ascendant in Scandinavia, the Low Countries, France, Western Germany, Austria, New Zealand and Australia as well. I think that during the next ten years those countries will form a federation, in reality if not in name, and will thus constitute a third though minor power bloc in this bloc-ridden world of ours.

The eventual conflict also remains the same. Although the result of the Attlee-Truman atom conversations is far from clear, it looks as though Truman and King have whittled away Attlee's original proposals until they are just another collection of vague platitudes from a bunch of hypocritical politicians. That, I think, is the way Russia will see them. And as there is no figure on the American scene outstanding enough to get the 1948 Presidency who is at the same time of the calibre of Roosevelt or Willkie, I think it likely that the present state of mutual suspicion existing between the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R. will continue until at some future date the top blows off. Since MacArthur looks to be as likely a successor to Truman at the moment as anyone, the blow off may not be too long delayed, with consequently less taxation of our nervous systems.

When it does happen I hope the statesmen in power in England will have enough sense to stay out. I think they will, because out of such a war there would be no gain for us, and quite a lot of loss. Whichever side Gt. Britain joined her elimination as a jump-off board would be of paramount importance to the "enemy". If the Western Bloc stays neutral on the other hand, and the atomic explosions occasioned in Russia and America are fairly limited ones, it will be there to pull things together when the Russo-American conflict turns into atomic chaos. Who knows - at the price of a 100 million dead in each of the two "powers", we may yet achieve world democracy.

This, like my previous prediction, is obviously based on present facts and trends. And it is not intended as a counsel of despair for the readers of VOM. As so many science-fiction authors have pointed out, the future is not immutable. I believe the 200 million dead need not happen; the initiative rests with America.

VICKY



"IT'S H.G. WELLS COMING UP!"

H.G. Wells, in his last book, "Mind at the End of its Tether", expresses views of complete despair. "The end of everything we call life is close at hand," he says.

that just as everything was all set and ready to go to the printer, I had a telephone call from North Carolina. Dr. Bailey it was, and he said to me, "Hold everything". He said it in capital letters like this: "HOLD EVERYTHING". On account of the war was ended and on account of the atomic bomb, he wants to re-write the preface and chapter six and chapter 11 of Pilgrims Through Space and Time.

"That the hell", I said to myself. (When I am talking to myself, I frequently use profanity). "That the hell. For years obstructions have reared their ugly heads, so why shouldn't one more obstruction rear its ugly head? Only this time it isn't an ugly head. It is a beautiful head, and a little more time won't make any difference".

I'm giving your fiscal matters to Ossie, because I can't be disturbed by such matters. My thoughts must be free to fly as eagles fly and to soar as swallows soar, and that is how our association should be, unimpaired by material circumstances and full of palpable passion. ((Now U've read everything.)) #

To convert from the ridiculous to the extremely serious, here is a letter now from W. W. WESSLER, known to charter Vom subscribers as a science fiction fan and Esperantist. A German, he has been an American prisoner-of-war for over a year, wrote the following from France in the middle of May: A very great surprise was your letter of Febr. 26. Later on I got letters from former Esperantofriends, one who was and is still again a reverend at a church near Phila, an other by an old Swedish friend, with whom I corresponded for nearly ten years '29 till '39. Yesterday, I got, very surprisingly, a card from a unknown (for me) american Esperantist. His name I can't read but on this card is a stamp of the National Institute of Esperanto, Philadelphia. He writes, that he red my name and address in the last edition of Esperantist.

Pardon my writing in English, not that I shouldn't be able to go on and write any more letter in our language Esperanto but, at this moment I for some reasons think it more convenient to use English.

I got drafted into the Army in June '40 and went to Poland as well as to France to take part in the occupation, but for the greater part to get the training there. In '41 we went to Russia and I was in the combat till the beginning of December. Because of illness in my left hand and my frozen feet I was transferred to the hospital and stayed in some of them more than two years, leaving it in May '44. For combatservice I was no longer eligible (I wasn't sorry for this) and got to be a payclerk. At this I got captured one Sunday noon in the little bavarian town Dillingen on the Danube. I rose only to the rank of a Pfc during five years. The long stay in the hospital I needed, because I got not fixed up any sooner. I lost four toes on my left foot and I'm hindered a little by walking. I can't endure to keep staying for a long time or walk as I used to do.

But if you vote for Mac-Arthur in 1948 -- well, I warned you.

I might add as an addendum to the above that for me, I'm studying geopolitics after the Army lets me go. So I shall be able to chart the course of the next little bit of stupidity in advance. And then I'm heading for the smallest, remotest island in the opposite direction --- just in case our statesmen don't do the sensible thing and stay neutral. Anybody coming with me? #

By way of contrast with the several sober, somewhat somber letters preceding, I insert a selection from my personal correspondence which has nothing whatsoever to do with Vom but which nevertheless is so wacky that I thot U might enjoy its inclusion. It was sent to me last November by that gentleman with the pixilated sensayuma, BEN ABRAMSON of Argus Book Shop, New York: Dear Jack Erman and Forest Ackerman: I write, my dear Jackson to you, because I guess you and Forest Ackerman are in conjuncto, which is a latin word which doesn't exist. I invented it yesterday. I will uninvent it tomorrow. What a pity that a word should have so brief a life.

I have turned over to Ossie, who sits on a high stool and wears a green eyeshade and takes care of everything, your queries. He will write to you and adjust things. Life will be beautiful, and you and Forest will be adjusted.

That reminds me that you will be interested to know

Now I am in a workcamp for german prisoners here in northern France. When will we go home? I don't know. Hope this will be soon. My home is situated what is now the russian zone of occupation. As I mentioned before I still have no news from my wife, except the card when she wrote that she still lives and is going well. My little son Wolfgang died last February of pneumonia at the age of 7½ years.

I am very glad that this worldwide war is finished. I hate wars and the masskilling of soldiers and civilians alike.

We live here good, the food is too good and enough now, if also we had very scarce times.

I want to return home to my wife, to get a job and go on working in peace and for peaceful purposes. I lost my father in World War I and never was for a dictatorship. Knowing so many friends of the different nations and countries through my correspondence in Esperanto I heartily want the peoples to come to an understanding one with the other. Why should it be impossible to live in harmony and peace together. I see no reason, why this couldn't be done.

This letter is written in a great hurry, but I hope that the next time I can write some more details.

May I wish you good luck and hope that in the next future I can clear also the remaining doubts, if there are any, and I allow to send you my best greetings. Sincerely Yours. # (What's the verdict, readers? How do you feel about this fan? We should all, I dare say, be intensely interested to learn the reaction of fan Georges Gallet, formerly of the French Army.)

Henry Geo Weiss, better known as FRANCIS FLAGG, author of "The Machine Man of Ardathia", "The Dancer in the Crystal" &c, elaborates on Gen. Sherman's famous declaration: "War is a terrible thing. It takes the young, it has become the devourer of mankind. If we are to survive, as Man, clearly war must be conquered. The danger of igniting the oxygen, in excessive atomic bombing, and burning up the world, and man with it, is very great. It is also very near, in the sense that unscrupulous, greedy, power and imperialistic-minded men in our State Department and our Army are deliberately plotting World War III, even before World War II (this letter dated 22 Nov 45) is actually finished,--plotting and maneuvering for it by way of China. This isn't for what millions of boys and men the world over, and millions of people, suffered and bled for, and grieved for. We fought to destroy fascism, to make life worth living, to bring about a democratic era of peace and prosperity, not to enthrone imperialism, to wave an atomic bomb as a big stick, to permit a handful of stupid and imperialistic-minded men lead us helter-skelter into another conflict that can well destroy our nation, and perhaps the world. It mustn't be all for nothing but-- more war; and more war to promote and entrench the very thing we have just waged one to defeat. Those wilful, stupid men who would make of the United States another Germany, an aggressor nation-- and I call them stupid advisedly, because no one not stupid would gamble on war these days-- must be told by the American people that there is going to be no World War III; that we want this mockery of using lend-lease without labels to crush democratic peoples' attempts to be free and democratic, to cease; that, in short, we want some of our ideals and promises lived up to. We, the peoples, hold the reins of power in America; no more than the German people today, can we escape bearing the guilt, if we allow our war-mongers, our pro-totypes of Hitler, incite us into another ghastly conflict.

Well, enough of that. I had to write it because one must do his duty as he sees it, and God knows, everyone one of us owes his fellowman a solemn duty to promote democracy and freedom and to speak up for world peace-- before it is too late. #

That SPEER is here again: Tucker's remarks about the powerlessness of the common man are interesting, and significant. But does he really have a cause for complaint here? Isn't relative unimportance of the commoner necessarily implied in the gathering together of people into millions? It would be very strange indeed if every ordinary man who believed he had the solution to the problem of unemployment, or world peace, were able to put his plan into execution--a wonderful and weird world would result. But on the same scale where common man used to be important--the unit of village size--any average guy who takes a notion can influence things a lot, and greatly change the forces that impinge upon him most directly. True, the inverse-squares rule is weaker than it used to be, when the government 'way off in Washington or Springfield seldom had anything to do with your daily life, but the increase of outside influence is a necessary consequence of drawing upon distant places for mimeos, clothes, vitamins, fellow fen, magazines, movies, medicine, and furniture.

I'm sure Kepner knows more about the history of thought than to believe, as his remarks on classics seem to imply, that the present world-outlook is the only true one. With social change accelerating, we can afford less than ever to base our education on the writings of the last thirty years. We'd become hopelessly outdated by middle age if we had no classical background to provide perspective and correctives. This is aside from the practical consideration that writers and speakers do constantly allude to classical material that we must be familiar with to understand

Elsner should be referred to the terrific letter in Spaceways where I demolished for all time the heterodoxy that science-fiction should be called scientific fiction.

Yah, Reinsberg and Korshak were part of the barbarian invasion (and Al As- best example of the result), but he has the date 1936 two years ago.

's latest parody could be continued. "Give us this month our monthly fan;

and lead us not into Ackermanese, but deliver us from wordplay.
 thing is the Bulletin, the garage, and the Foundation forever and aye."

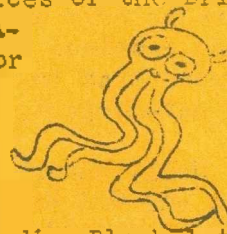
Who

Now, perhaps we can discuss a science-fiction story in Vom. Here's my tuppence on A: Words have a tremendous effect on the way people think. A whole system of logic, on which most of the old metaphysics were based, has been built up on certain concepts which do not correspond to conditions in the real, but persisted because names had been given to them. I refer to the Aristotelian system. Physical science has largely broken away from these bonds, perhaps (I don't know much about the subject) because it was able to work in mathematical language. But in such fields as the social sciences, where uncertain abstractions are necessary, the old terminology continues to work its old mischief. Widespread understanding of the principles of general semantics might work a profound change in the characteristics of society. Of course the Fourth Dimension is easier to understand, Greenleaf. There are lots tougher things than that that have to be thought about. (How you like my spelling of relative pronoun "that", in which, if I'm not mistaken, the vowel is always pronounced obscurely?)

Laney needn't have worried so much about where he read that all motivation is selfish. I doubt not it's an idea that (that) occurs to anyone who thinks much about motivation. And perhaps the proposition is true, but if so, it's meaningless (semanticists will now hop down my neck). Of course people do what they want to do, when they have a choice. Anyone who says he doesn't want to do what he has decided to do, merely means that part of him, the weaker part, rebels at it. The important question is, what kind of things does the man want to do? A martyr may enjoy, or think he will enjoy, selling Watchtower on the street corner till he catches pneumonia. Chan Davis may enjoy simplifying an equation. Tripoli may get a lift out of giving a bum a supper. Bob Tucker may enjoy-- we'll skip that. Hitler may enjoy expanding German power. My neighbor may enjoy listening to symphonies. The governor may get more satisfaction out of seeing thru a disagreeable job than giving up under fire. Every man follows his bent. The important question is how often that bent is socially desirable.

As for the sense of duty which Francis cries down, it's often a very desirable thing in making this confusing world a little more predictable, and keeping momentary inclinations in line with a long-term policy. There are some actions, such as soldiering, that most people can't be trained (in a limited time) to enjoy, and perhaps shouldn't be if they could.

John L. M. M. M. with the Royal Canadian Air Force overseas wrote from England the last month of last year: In issue # page 6. the letter by Robert Bloch-- An extremely interesting letter on Fantasy Music. I have you any more in the same line. I have taken a great interest in Classical Music since I arrived in this country. I have been to a good many Orchestral Concerts. I see Mr Bloch mentions Gustav Holst's "The Planets". That bit of music is very intriguing. I have a complete recording. Newly recorded during the summer of 1945. Recorded under the auspices of the British Council. With the B.B.C. Symphony Orchestra conducted by Sir Adrian Boult. Neptune-"The Mystic" I enjoy very much. Mainly for the unusual use of the human voice. During the last 3/4 of the recording, you hear like tone of a soprano, which carries right to the end of the recording. This gives the record a wonderful sense of fantasy. I am wondering why Tchaikovsky's - Romeo & Juliet fantasy-overture, was left out. It's one of my favorites - I only wish could play it now. All in all I enjoyed reading Mr. Bloch letter. Lets have some more in the same vein ((sic)). #



Vicki Calvert A first letter from a new fanne, of 79 Devine St, San Jose Cal: Your magazine is really unusual. I didn't know exactly what to expect when I sent for it, but it certainly surprised me.

From the two issues as a whole it appears that there is a national organization of science fiction "fans". (Is that what you call yourselves?) There are also fascinating glimpses of a "history" in Mr. Reinsberg's letter.

Concerning that--I found many of these mysterious references rather irritating. Why don't you have a department for newcomers like myself, explaining such things as "Act"--"Nylon"--"old guard"--"F.A.P.A"--"N.F.F.F" and "Pacifoon?" ((Vicki has been sent the N3F Welcom Booklet in an attempt to slake her thirst. Now she knows the wirst--the dread significance of "X-Lax", "Nylon", "old gourd", "P.A.P.A", &c.))

Would you tell me which are the "top ten" fan magazines? I would like to get them. ((Offhand & without preparation, I would name Scientifictionist, Shangri-L'Affaires, Star Rover, Vampire, Chanticleer, Acolyte & Time-Binder as the outstanding contemporary publications. Addresses will be found in the Fanmag Dept of most any issue of Startling Stories.))

I found the letters by Laney, Speer, Rothman, and Widner very interesting. I have often thought that science-fiction should lead to this type of speculation about the future of mankind, but I never see many letters of this kind in the letter columns of the newsstand magazines.

I think I prefer the realism of Jack Speer to the escapism of Laney or the far more pessimistic position of Widner. Mr. Rothman also appears rather pessimistic. However, Mr. Speer writes with such earnestness and air of authority that I sometimes have an uncomfortable feeling that he is the realist after all.

I agree with Rothman that

Samuel Grafton is the best columnist in the country.

I found Mr. Bratton's explanation of "The World of A" highly interesting, but I didn't care a great deal for it when I read it, as I found it more "confoozin' than amoozin'" if I may steal a line from L'il Abner. Perhaps I should read it again.

Rick Sneary's epistle was "amoozin'". Who was he satirizing? ((Dick S. Neary)) His masterful misspelling and subtly disjointed sentences were put together with a fine touch. He could easily have overdone it.

Well, I have written an awful lot and really said nothing, so I suppose I deserve it if you regard me as just another chattering female and ignore me altogether, but I shall continue to subscribe to "Vom" anyway. I want to see what Widner and Speer will say next.

I would like to belong to the circle, but I'm afraid I can't qualify, as I don't have the writing ability of your leading contributors, and very little knowledge of science-fiction, as I only read ASTOUND-1 & S-F (the others fail to interest me unless time is really hanging heavy on my hands which it seldom is) and I've only read A.S.F. for the last two or three years.

P.S. Don't you think your gruesome covers would scare away customers? I didn't read 47 and 48 for some time because of that. #

Well, Vicki, here's what I can't agree that World of A is anything but a miserable hashed-up narrative that did not achieve its purpose whatever that might have been. If I had not already heard of Science & Sanity it is certain that I would not have been moved to read it as a result of reading WMA. In fact, I might've died away from it, supposing it to be (judging from WMA) merely another crack-pot theory of some sort. A straight book review or factual account would have been much better.

As for exciting interest in multi-valued cores, Faggett, with his Fairy Chessmen & Baldy series, plus Mimsy type stories, does it more effectively. I don't think van Vogt assimilates what he reads well enough to attempt to present it to other people in a sugar-coated or any other manner.

For engrossing stf yarns The Hule & N-Day are far out in front of WMA.

In the recent FAPA ((Fantasy Amateur Press Assn)) mailing (Spring), Chan Davis, author of Nightmare, gives his reactions to atomic energy, or more particularly, atomic destruction. My reactions are the same as his -- alarm & a sense of urgency. He also tells what he has done about it. He has written to Congressmen, newspapers, & wrote Nightmare. Also spread the warning by word of mouth.

He says that it is little enough, & probably won't do much good -- BUT WE'VE GOT TO TRY!

I agree. We are drifting slowly, but with increasing speed, toward that maelstrom of events Heinlein called the "Crazy Years." The time is not far off when it will no longer be possible to change our course & avoid the current. My fellow fen -- are you interested only in possible futures? How about the very probable future? Have you done any thinking about the direction of recent events? Have you acted in whatever small capacity you could to alter that direction in the way you want to go? It's time you did.

Do you want to live thru The Crazy Years -- or die in them? Heinlein is an astute observer & his predictions are probably correct, but that is no reason we shouldn't try to avert them if we can. Being fatalistic is bad enough, but being complacent & ignorant is worse.

Controlling atomic energy is only one phase of the problem, however. There are many other things which will lead to that dreadful Atomic War. Foreign relations, particularly with Russia....unemployment....the advertising-controlled press....racial discrimination....unions....price control....

These things sound like a far cry from science-fiction -- but are they? They are the gram weights, and upon which side they are placed will determine how the scales of the future tip. One world....or no world....

Many of us are fond of bragging that we can see into the future just a little farther than the average home sap who doesn't have our futuristic viewpoint. Fine; I think we can -- but what's the point of having that futuristic outlook if we don't use it to attain an acceptable future?

Besides those Chan mentions, there are other things we can do. We can join (being great joiners, I think you'll agree) various organizations that are working for that one world & a future free from fear. For dogfen & vetfen there is the AVC -- American Veterans Committee. Veterans are being listened to right now. Join up where the right lines are being spoken for that listening. For others there are various PACs, Americans United for World Organization, the NAACP, and many others. Read the newspapers.

Another thing of immediate interest. I don't think it's too early for we fen to begin planning now the selection of a meeting place we could try to reach, with the aim of organizing & helping to start organization up the long, long trail again.....When The Rockets Come.....

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