

# THE HUMAN TERRAIN



# T H E P H A N T A G R A P H

(fantasy fandom's oldest existing fanzine)

Combined with SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW, SCIENCE FICTION WEEKLY, LE VOMBITEUR, MIND OF MAN, FUTURIAN NEWS, FANTASY FICTION DIGEST, etc.

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## OIL FOR THE LAMPS OF FUTURIA

--Deadline for Civilization--

By Braxton Wells

During the past year we have been deluged with a regular epidemic of science-fiction ad writing. I mean those ads that keep turning up in all the big magazines and daily newspapers showing what things are going to be like after the war. You know, the super-airplanes, the helicopter in every prehabitated garage, the 100 m.p.h. teardrop flivver, the stuff we fans have been reading about for fifteen years. Well, it all sounds very swell. But we've been thinking.

And what we've been thinking about is this: where are we going to get the oil for all these things? You see, various officials have told us, the people, that this is going to be a long war and a tough one. And consulting our own crystal ball, we are inclined to agree with the gentlemen. Now it so happens that the total oil reserve of the U.S. is good for something like only 25 years more at the present rate of expenditure. And our rate of burning oil

is rising plenty--new weapons of war, better and faster airplanes--all that means more and more gas being consumed in shorter and shorter times.

Now we do have such a thing as synthetic oils and vegetable oils. But for many uses they simply cannot take the place of the natural heavy oil. The Nazis found that out; they've still got to have the real McCoy for the results, though they've been squeezing juice out of everything including peasants and babies. And they are just about at their oil line's end today.

So we go on and fight our way through to victory. And we find that we've maybe got ten years' supply of oil left for all these super super projects the rest of this century and a thousand after it. Then what? Back to the horse and buggy?

But of course that's not the real answer. The real answer is that humanity now has maybe fifteen years at most to get the problem of atomic power and transmutation of elements licked, in harness, and producing. We can no longer take our time--we've got a new deadline. It's solve that problem or....or else.

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## OUR LANGUAGE AND HISS

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By D. A. Wollheim

At first the writer was inclined to feel that H. Koenig was justified in his attack on the use of the verb "to hiss" for the meaning "to speak with whispered sinister intent." It was not in any dictionary with such a definition--and taking it with its given definition, it was most definitely impossible to sibilate the sentences given. However Koenig has now massed so much evidence of hissing that it is necessary to re-examine the premise.

From the vast data Koenig has assembled of the use of the term "to hiss" in the meaning given in the first sentence, it becomes clear that the fault lies not with the authors and editors, but with the compilers of dictionaries. English is a living tongue and meanings change as words are put to new uses. Koenig has amassed definite proof that dozens of different writers, writing for different types and qualities of markets, have found it necessary to use the term hiss. Undoubtedly in the course of writing, it came naturally. In the course of reading, the editor found it proper. And almost all the readers, save only HCK, understood it.

The fact is that people understand exactly what is meant when a character hisses something. In context, it is proper and clear. And it is understood as I have described--to speak with whispered sinister intent. In the cases that Koenig has collected, let him try to substitute other terms and yet retain the meaning implied by the protested verb. It cannot be done satisfactorily.



Koenig's evidence has now reached the point where his original thesis is refuted. What is proven is that "hiss" has a meaning in accepted current usage not yet noticed by the lexicographers. What Mr. Koenig should do is to present his data to these persons and bring it to their attention. In that way he can perform a service to the accountants of our national tongue. An attitude of opposition to the term has simply become senseless and somewhat childish.

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### GLANCE INTO THE FUTURE

The Year of Grace 1942 -- I am standing on Shaksper's Cliff, or what remains of it, wondering at the ruins of the railroad, and waiting for the daily post from Australasia. I see a speck in the clouds, and hail the harbinger of news. The postman alights for half-a-second (his regulation breathing time), folds his caoutchouc wings, sucks in a concentrated lozenge the virtues of a quart of London porter, blows his nose with an asbestos pocket handkerchief, and is off again like a rocket, before I have seen whether my letters have the postmark of Adelaide or of Sydney.

--Ainsworth's Magazine  
(Britain, 1842)

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FOR SALE: A copy in excellent condition of Clark Ashton Smith's first volume of poetry, THE STAR-TREADER (1912), 100 pages of magnificent fantasy. \$4.00. D.A.Wollheim