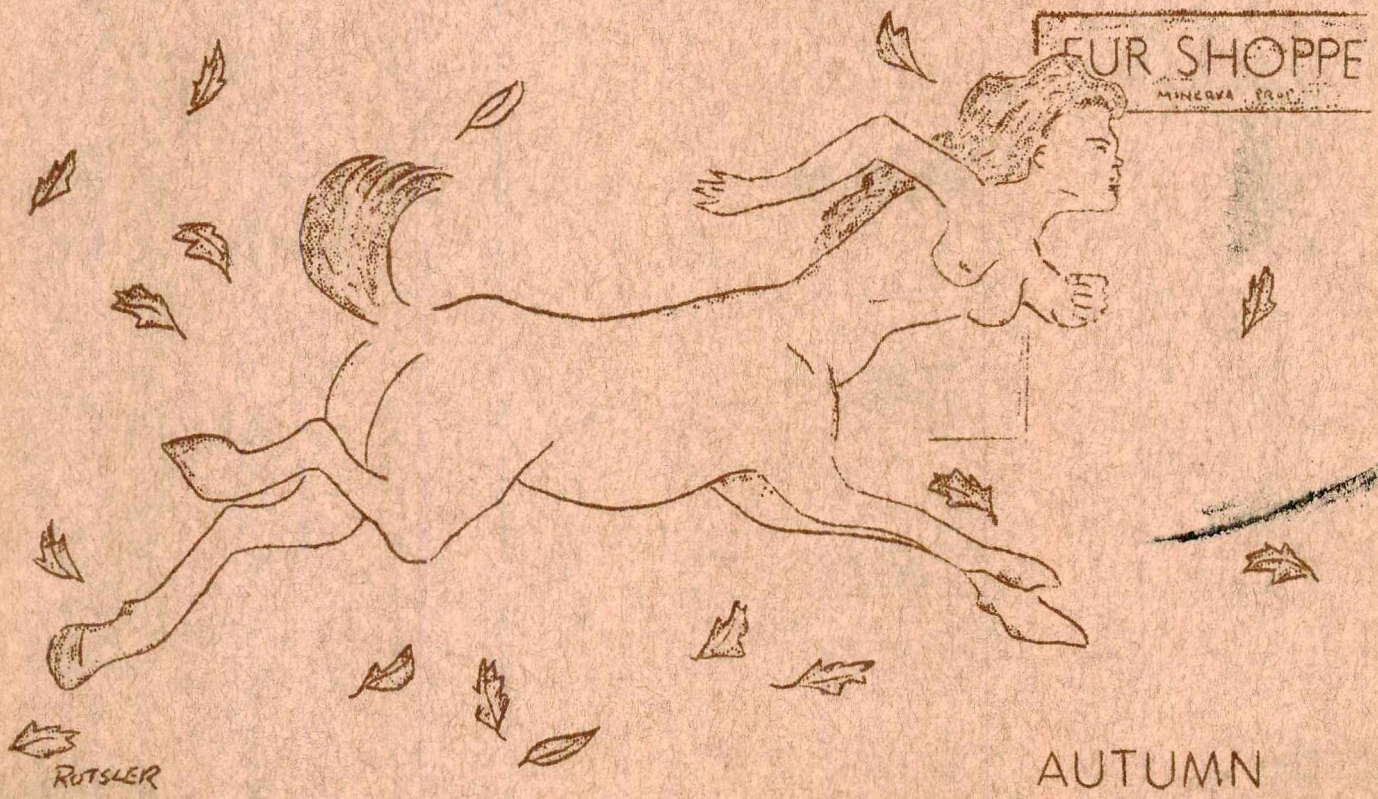
SKY HOOK

NUMBER 15



AUTUMN
1952

SKY HOOK

SKY HOOK, combined with Chronoscope, is edited and published quarterly for the Fantasy Amateur Press Association by Redd Boggs, 2215 Benjamin street N. E., Minneapolis 18, Minnesota. Fifth year of publication. This issue, whole number 15, is intended for the sixty-first FAPA mailing (autumn 1952), and is available for general circulation at 15¢ per copy. Opinions expressed by contributors are not necessarily those of the editor; however, all unsigned material is editorially written and reflects the viewpoints and opinions of the editor1952. A Gafia Press publication.

TWIPPLEDOP

THE GREAT PRO-PHILE

With this issue William Atheling Jr becomes a member of the Sky Hook staff, as author of the "Pro-Phile" review department. Of course SkHk doesn't have a staff, but I hope Mr Atheling will be with us regularly enough from now on to be a charter member of the staff in case Sky Hook ever grows pretentious enough to require one.

Unfortunately, I cannot formally introduce Mr Atheling to you, nor cite his excellent qualifications as a critic of magazine science fiction. However, his work speaks for itself on the latter point, and please take my word for it that William Atheling Jr really needs no introduction.

I hope for considerable comment on the new "Pro-Phile," both in your own FAPA mailing reviews and in letters of criticism. The letter column is always open to any reasoned commentary on "Pro-Phile" or any other Sky Hook feature. Writers and editors whose work is discussed by Mr Atheling are welcome to reply, either in letters to be published in "Quote -- Unquote" or in letters to be forwarded to Mr Atheling.

Let us hear from you.

...SO GOES THE NATION

About 45 or 46 of you fapans were pleased at the outcome of the presidential election November fourth. I make this prediction fairly confidently because it's November fifth as I stencil this, and the Gafia poll in the sixtieth mailing showed me that Eisenhower was FAPA's choice, two to one. However, despite the inevitable title I gave to the poll information sheet, As FAPA Goes...?, I did not expect the poll to predict the outcome of the election. The poll results did not convince me that Ike would win.

I did have confidence that the poll accurately reflected the fapate's choice, because Ike built up an imposing lead that did not appear threatened, once he'd hit his stride. I've little doubt that if everyone had participated in the poll he still would have won handily. Ike received 24 votes, Stevenson 12. There were no votes for third-party candidates. One lone attempt at humor was received.

The first two ballots received were for Adlai, the next four for Ike, the next five for Adlai, putting the latter in what appeared to be a good lead. But the trend reversed again, with five votes in a row for Eisenhower, after which his opponent never got more than one vote at a stretch and Ike piled up his lead. Most votes were received before the Nixon case broke; I don't know how that incident might have changed the balloting.

An analysis of the straw vote on a geographical basis showed Ike about equally strong everywhere -- midwest, west coast, New England, and the south. One prediction based on poll results I almost felt justified in making was that Ike had a chance to crack the solid south. Nobody outside of the United States cast a straw ballot, but one non-American declared that, if given a chance, most oversea

fans would vote for the left-wing candidate.

From several notes scribbled on the pollcards I infer that this election cut some of us loose from old loyalties. One straw-voter for Stevenson remarked, "My family would disown me for this!," while another, voting for Ike, admitted, "For the first time in 15 years or more I'm a Republican." Another Eisenhower backer declared, "I'm a Democrat by conviction, but believe D.D.E. can do the best job." A less-confident fapan reported, "Call it humor if you will, but I actually think that Pogo would make a better prexy than either of the candidates. I merely indicate Ike as the lesser of two evils."

Incidentally, Pogo didn't even get the humorous ballot mentioned above, and ended up with no votes at all.

Sidelights: seven persons mailed their pollcards without removing the staple that had fastened the card to the information sheet. Only three members took advantage of my offer to return their pollcards for their files. (I'll hold all pollcards till 1 December; if you decide you want yours back, let me know before then.) Aside from these three, 16 others signed their ballots or otherwise identified themselves.

Thanks to all of you who participated in the poll. The results proved little except that FAPA's choice paralleled the nation's choice, but it was fun, and I'll take another straw ballot in 1956.

Neighbor, how stands the Union now?

TRILLING WONDER STORY

I don't generally have much use for stories told by musical illiterates making fun of serious music, but I got a chuckle out of Victor Borge's anecdote telling how he became a comedian.

He was a serious pianist, giving a concert at Copenhagen. The concerto he was playing required him to hold a trill on the piano while the orchestra worked in a spirited passage behind. As he rippled off the trill, he glanced idly over the orchestra. His fascinated eye dwelt thoughtfully on the section of white-haired violinists furiously scraping away while he lounged indolently, fingering the trill. At length the sight was too much for him. He turned to the audience and winked. The concert broke up as the audience burst into delighted laughter.

He became a comedian.

OLD WAR MEMORIES

The way I remember it, the first time I ever heard of Claude Degler and the Cosmic Circle was when I read an article by Joe Kennedy in Scientifictionist around the end of 1946. I was in the air force and away from fandom when Clod was organizing the star-misbegotten.

But sometimes the ghost of a recollection won't be exorcised by the facts. I begin to imagine that I had a close brush with Deglerism when I was stationed at Alamogordo air base around 1943. It almost seems to me that Doro tried to contact me there, perhaps on one of his endless tours around the fanation. Did he write me or phone me at the base, making an appointment he never kept? My name and Alamogordo address appeared in Le Zombie and other fanzines, and he could have tried to look me up. I can find no evidence that Degler ever visited Alamogordo, but maybe he meant to. Am I dreaming, or do I really have a memory of some such tentative contact with Superfan?

Another minor mystery that puzzles me sometimes is how I found out that Forrest J Ackerman was editing the reception center page of the Fort MacArthur Alert. When I was co-editing the Alamogordo base newspaper, the Blockbuster, I started sending exchange copies of our paper to the Alert office because I'd heard about Acky's part in that newspaper. This was around Christmas 1943, if I remember rightly. Yet, by that time I'd stopped buying the prozines for the duration, had not seen a fanzine for a year. I was corresponding with no fan.

I do not believe Ackerman himself ever saw the copies of the Blockbuster we sent the Alert; if he did, he probably had no idea why they'd been sent. But I read and enjoyed the fannish references Forry worked into his columns. Reading them was about the only fannish reading I did between 1943 and 1946.

Forry wouldn't have enjoyed the Blockbuster anyway, because we didn't mention sf or fandom not even once.

ASSUMPTION JUSTIFIED

The quotation from "Freud and Literature" on this issue's back cover may inspire you merely with the thought that I could have chosen a better quote to illustrate the point, or a better point to illustrate. However, this quotation is unique in a way that may not be readily apparent, though it is visible.

I have published dozens of fanzines in the past six years, and most of them had justified righthand margins. But the last full line of the quotation in question is the first one I ever remember dummying that needed to be adjusted for eight spaces. Two or three spaces is the average; five spaces is the usual maximum -- occurring once a page, perhaps. Six spaces happens once an issue or so, and seven once a year. Since most words, at least those I use, are less than eight letters long, an occasion where eight spaces must be compensated for does not happen often, and I don't expect it to happen again till 1958.

NOTES THAT MISSED MY WASTEBASKET

While science fiction fandom is all agog over "The Lovers," the Startling novel by Philip Jose Farmer, a wider audience is probably all agog over another story by the same title: The Lovers, by Kathleen Winsor. Even if you didn't add Forever Amber and Star Money to your bookshelves because they weren't fantasy, you must be sure to add The Lovers. In it an adulteress is slain by her husband, and goes to Hell to meet a Satan who, as Miss Winsor portrays him, should be enough to make spinsters take arsenic hopefully....

Imagine a spaceship containing 29 men, no women, four years and three months out of Terra, which is called the Lucky Pierre! That's what Jerome Bixby calls the spaceship in "Zen." I wonder what Laney will say about this?....

Time magazine rose several notches in my estimation when they ran that full-page writeup on George Santayana the week after his death. The daily newspapers seemed to think Santayana's fame rested on his minor novel, The Last Puritan....

1952 has been a sad year for modern philosophy, what with both John Dewey and George Santayana dying this year. Bertrand Russell balanced off these losses, however, by making a TV appearance that was applauded even by loutsiders....

Noel Loomis, whose most recent appearance in science fiction was with "Big Top on Jupiter" in Space Stories, has hit the jackpot with his western, Rim of the Caprock. Published in April by Macmillan, the novel appeared in Great Britain this autumn, from W. Collins, and will be reprinted soon in a Fiction House magazine, followed by a Bantam paperback next year. To top it all, the movie rights have been snapped up by Universal-International....

After reading "The Veiled Woman" by Mickey Spillane in the November-December Fantastic, I'm not sure which is the greater humorist: Spillane, for tagging his hero -- who kills seven people in very chill blood indeed -- "almost a pacifist"; or editor Howard Browne for labeling this a "science-fiction story." All the stefnal aspects of this story appear in retrospect, and as much of the action as we see might have been the result of a situation much more mundane than the discovery of a lost-race colony....

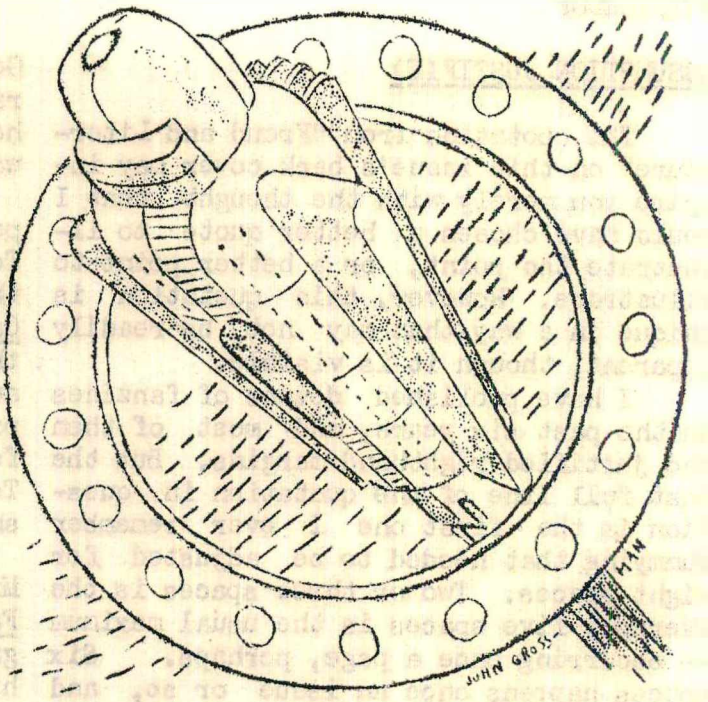
Discovered: a new natural law, which shows that the prozine editors who deprecate most emphatically fandom's influence on science fiction are the ones to scream loudest at any fan criticism of their magazines....

I was surprised at Anthony Boucher's dubious review of Timeless Stories for Today and Tomorrow, the Bantam anthology edited by Ray Bradbury, on the grounds that "Bradbury has selected many stories whose fantasy content is, to say the least, debatable." When I read the book I immediately characterized most of the fantasies therein as "typical F&SF stuff" and once again bemoaned the rise of the "slick"-type fantasy, domestic drama in which one futuristic or supernatural element has been inserted. I wish all these little whitehaired ladies and cuddly-cute homemakers would get back into the Ladies Home Journal. I yearn for the good old days when dealing with e-t invaders was not left to near-sighted old couples but was the business of rugged heroes with hair on their chests and rocket pistols in each fist!...

Coming: Sky Hook's fifth ann-ish!

THE OKIES -AND OTHERS

by JAMES BLISH



ACCORDING TO ADVANCE ANNOUNCEMENTS, Fletcher Pratt is scheduled to discuss the Gavagan's Bar series at this convention *; that makes two people on the program who have been asked to talk about the writing of series stories. The coincidence makes me wonder why it is that stories-in-chains have become so popular lately with writers and editors, and, sometimes, even with readers.

Series stories are certainly nothing new to science fiction. In the old days, the master hands in the field wrote whole novels in series. The Skylark stories are an obvious example; so are the Arcot-Morey-Wade-Fuller yarns. There was also Laurence Manning's "When the Sleeper Wakes" series, and a number of others that will occur to you without much effort. In those days, however, science fiction series were all much alike in essence. The only change which occurred in a given series, from story to story, was technological. In "The Skylark of Space" Richard Seaton discovered how to liberate the atomic energy of copper. By the time of "The Skylark of Valeron" he had also discovered how to rotate himself into the fourth dimension and how to use telepathy just like radio. But Seaton himself never changed, nor did Blackie Duquesne, nor did anybody else in the series. Nothing changed or grew in the Skylark stories but the gadgetry.

This, too, is what happened in the famous Campbell series, as John Campbell himself admits. That series was discontinued because Arcot, Morey, Wade, and Fuller had become so highpowered as scientists and engineers that Campbell could no longer invent an enemy powerful enough to oppose them.

It would be hasty to say that this kind of series is now dead in science fiction. I think it is, but I admit my opinion is nothing more than an opinion. I do

---

* This article is the revised text of a talk given by James Blish at the Little Monsters of America convention, Caravan hall, New York, N. Y., 13 July 1952.

think, however, that recent attempts to revive this kind of series show pretty clearly that readers will no longer accept it. Campbell himself, for instance, tried to revive it in a novel called "The Mightiest Machine," and he had plans to write more stories about Aarn Munro and his confreres. He gave up the plan; Munro -- re-christened "Iron" Munro -- made a brief appearance as the hero of a Street and Smith comic book, and then died. We hope the death was painless. At any event, after the death of Munro, Campbell's writings took a significant turn from the exploration of the frontiers of straight engineering to the frontiers of emotion, of sociology, and of other fields where believable enemies can always be found. His success in tackling these new problems is a legend by now.

Two other attempts to revive the straight technological series came to bad ends. One of these was E. E. Smith's second series, the Gray Lensman stories. I'd be ready to agree at once that these novels were better, for the most part, than the Skylark novels. Essentially, however, they were the same: they began with simple technical resources, and proceeded to a dead end of absolute technical invincibility. George O. Smith's "Venus Equilateral" stories also made up essentially this kind of series: the writer begins with a simple method of communicating between Venus and Earth, and winds up with a method of duplicating human beings which is simply beyond the control of any writer but a very great master.

This is not to say that the growth of technology from story to story within a series is fatal. Far from it. It is absolutely necessary. Human beings do learn, and probably they learn faster in technical fields than they do in any other. Science fiction writers were among the first people to recognize that, and the discovery was exciting enough to justify completely the stories of Campbell and the two Smiths, where technological growth rode up the curve right off the graph. This still has to happen in science fiction. Nowadays, however, the process has become a bit more sophisticated -- and a lot harder for the writer to control, as I can testify.

Series stories today divide rather easily into two fundamental types. The kind of series a writer turns out depends entirely on his preference, for, at least thus far, editors have yet to develop a preference between the two.

The first of these two types is written by what I like to think of as the template process, which is the method of repeated duplication from an unchanging model. The writer fashions an interesting idea or central character, or a combination of both, and writes a story around it. Then he writes another story around it, leaving the original nucleus unchanged. Then he writes another story, still preserving the original template's integrity. This procedure, like the multiplication of virus particles inside a cell, can go on and on until the host cell -- which is a magazine in this case -- can't tolerate it any more.

This is the method which produced the Sherlock Holmes stories, the Doc Savage stories, the Nero Wolfe stories, the Ole Doc Methuselah stories. If you take any individual story in any one of these or similar series, you'll find that it's a good story. When you look at such a series as a whole, however, you find that it isn't going anyplace; the original template is just being duplicated under a long chain of different conditions.

The opposite method is more difficult to label, but it would be fair to call it an evolutionary method. A series written by this method does <u>not</u> bother to preserve the integrity of the original idea; on the contrary, it makes a point of changing it. The idea evolves and changes -- and in keeping with the evolutionary analogy, it doesn't go on forever, but comes to a definite end, a logical end which might have been forecast from the data in the first story in the series. Henry Kuttner's

"Venusian Keep" series is going through this evolution, and so was his "Baldy" series, though both of them seem to have been interrupted by the author before the ultimate story. Isaac Asimov's "Foundation" and "Robot" series fit the definition perfectly, and show the process in each stage.

Evolutionary series are not necessarily better than template series. The sole difference between them, as far as the reader is concerned, is that the template series creates no sense of progress from story to story. The evolutionary series, on the other hand, gives the definite impression of going someplace, of developing toward some goal. The reader may not be able to figure out what the goal is, but he can sense that it is there, somewhere in the future. If the reader enjoys that feeling, he may try to guess the goal in advance, as many of Asimov's readers tried to figure out where he had hidden the Second Foundation before Asimov published the story containing that secret.

It's pretty plain that the template type of series evolved out of the old technical series, like the Skylark series. Smith's templates were his characters; they held his series together by virtue of the fact that they never changed. (Incidentally, another old-timer, Ray Cummings, fathered no less than two similar techniques: the gadget-template and the plot-template. Some of you may remember that many otherwise unrelated Cummings stories contained references to the same gadgets, the Banning gun, the Benson curve-light, and so on. The plot-template is probably better left undefined.) The modern writer of a template series is more likely to be aware that characters change, and that gadgets change too -- and that he'd damned well better change his plots now and then if he expects to go on selling. Ordinarily, therefore, his initial idea is chosen as a template. The Gavagan's Bar series is an example of this type.

By the same token, I suppose that the evolutionary series evolved mostly out of the better plotting workmanship that John Campbell encouraged. Once you begin to think of one story as an organized whole, rather than as a chain of episodes, it's only one step farther to thinking about a series of stories in the same way. This is why I said before that which way a writer chooses to handle a series is a matter of preference. If you feel, as I do, that a series should have an overall plot, just like an individual story does, then you will write an evolutionary series. If you don't much care one way or the other, then you'll probably write a template series. About the same amount of hard work is involved, but usually you'll get more stories out of the template method, and hence more money. I can speak from experience, for I've written both kinds: a template series of detective stories, and an evolutionary series of science fiction stories.

The "Okie" yarns are of course the science fiction pieces. While they were incubating, I got a letter from Campbell which ran on for four single-spaced pages, outlining what might be done with the Okie idea if I really wanted to go all-out with it, and in a later letter Campbell told me flatly that he saw no reason why the Okie series should not go on forever, if I handled it properly. He was right; there is enough juice in the original Okie idea to make it possible for me to go on squeezing it for at least the next 50 years.

But by that time I think I'd be tired of it. And I'm dead sure that the readers would be tired of it. My own feeling is that squeezing the same orange over and over again soon becomes a waste of energy; once you've extracted the flavor, the vitamins, and the essential oils, it isn't much fun to continue wringing the pulp. There are too many other interesting ideas waiting to be written about.

For this reason -- this personal preference -- I laid out the Okie stories as an evolutionary series, with a definite beginning, middle, and end. The first story -- though it was the third, actually, to be written -- would show how the pre-conditions were laid down, how a situation arose which made the Okie cities possible; that story was "Bridge," in a moderately recent Astounding Science Fiction. The second, "Okie" itself, was to show a typical Okie in operation -- not only an Okie city, but also a typical Okie starman. Then came "Bindlestiff," dealing with the obvious problem of the Okie city which turns criminal; and then a fourth story, a very long novelette, about what happens when Okies no longer can find work.

This fourth story, by the way, was sold to Malcolm Reiss of Planet Stories, so I have no idea what the title of it will be when it appears -- something like "Utopian Goddess of the Satanic Star-Pack," no doubt. My own title was "Jungle Story." A fifth story, "Earthman, Come Home," dealing with what happens to the Okies when they are on the verge of becoming extinct, has been written and sold to Campbell; so these two pieces will probably appear within a few months of each other. One more story remains to be written. It will probably be very brief, and will suggest that no social custom ever quite dies and may go on living among people who never suspect it.

That seems to me to be quite enough. It does justice to the main points of the idea without running it into the ground, and it involves a total of just six stories. It takes quite a while to fit individual stories together so that as a group they have an overall plot -- the new Okie yarn sold to Mal Reiss, for instance, took almost a full year of my writing time -- but I think it's worth it. When I'm through I hope to have one single, solid structure, without loose ends or unfilled chinks or water backing up in the cellar. From the point of view of the editors and the readers, it doesn't seem to make much difference whether I do this or I don't, so I have to fall back on the only other reason I know: It makes a difference to me.

And after 11 years in this business, I'm beginning to find that that's the reason that counts.

* * * * *

The Okie series to date:

"Bridge"	Astounding Science Fiction, February 1950
"Okie"	Astounding Science Fiction, April 1950
"Bindlestiff"	Astounding Science Fiction, December 1950
"Jungle Story"	Planet Stories or TCSAB (forthcoming)
"Earthman, Come Home"	Astounding Science Fiction (forthcoming)

Predestination Moon

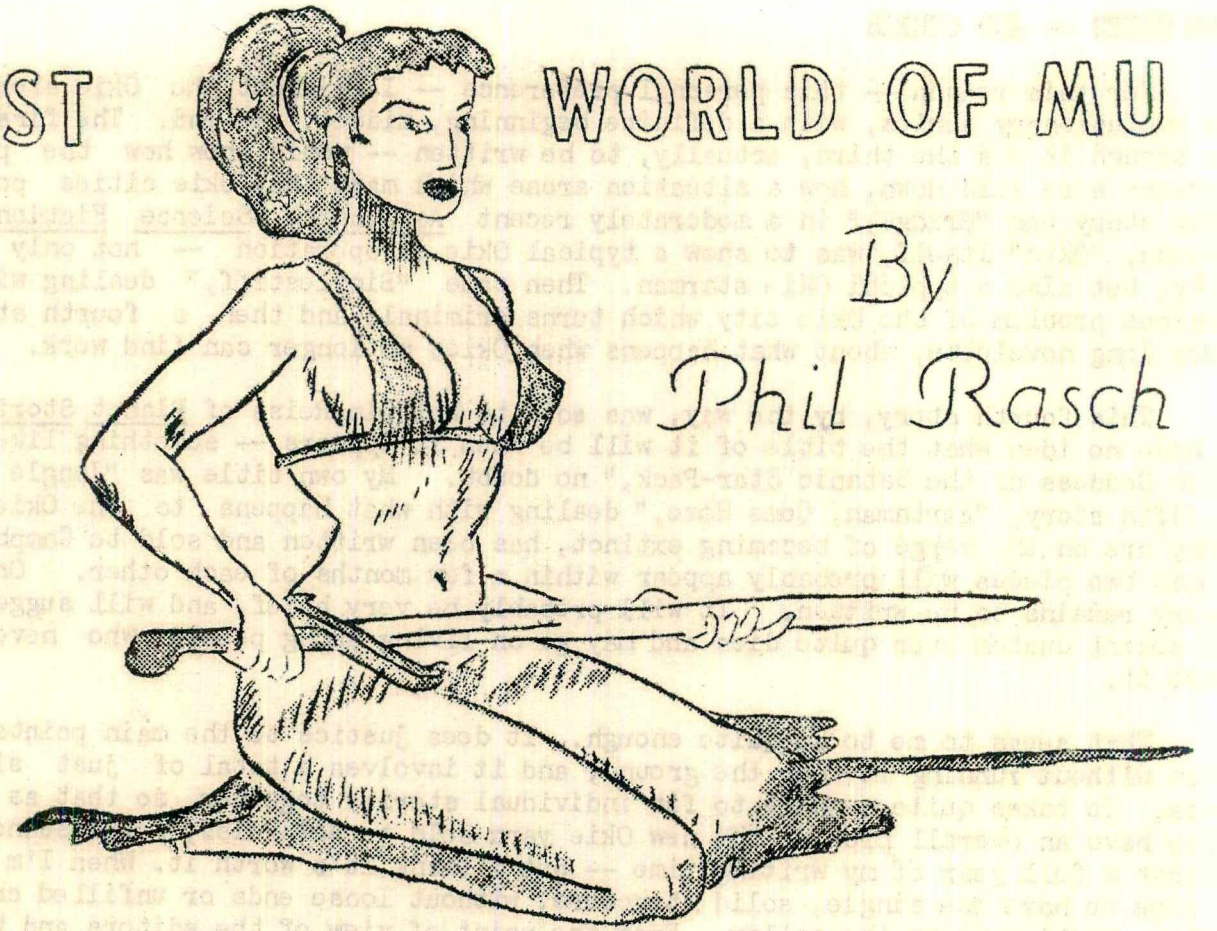
DEPARTMENT OF CAUTIOUS CALCULATIONS

He asked, "Which way you think they're heading?"

"From the size of the drive and the crew, and by the direction they're takin', I'd say this stuff is headed up north."

-- Trial by Gunsmoke,
by Jim O'Mara.

LOST WORLD OF MU



By Phil Rasch

IN OUR PREVIOUS DISCUSSIONS of Atlantis and Lemuria we have concerned ourselves with what proved to be structures composed of words and based of nothing more stable than the shifting sands of myth and tradition. It is only fair to warn the reader in advance that not even this dubious foundation exists for James Churchward's theories of Mu. L. Sprague de Camp says The Lost Continent of Mu contains "perhaps the greatest mass of drivel to be found in modern literature." Lewis Spence says, "Colonel Churchward's statements, at least the more dogmatic of them, are scarcely worthy of refutation. In the melange of his works mythology, symbolism, and tradition are not only hopelessly mingled, but so coloured and distorted by his own peculiar notions as to constitute an almost hopeless jumble from which the logical reader will turn in despair." The head of the department of anthropology at one of our large state universities assured the writer that Churchward had no standing whatsoever among recognized anthropologists and archaeologists. What follows, then, is to be read only for its curiosity value. Churchward's books have no other.

The basic work is The Lost Continent of Mu, published in 1931. In it Churchward states that he discovered some long forgotten sacred tablets in a temple in India. These told of Mu, a continent now submerged in the Pacific, which existed some 50,000 years ago and had 64 million inhabitants. Neither then nor later does he tell when or where this discovery took place, nor has any archaeologist ever seen his so-called "Naacal tablets."

Perhaps the best way to illustrate Churchward's scholarship -- if the word may be properly used at all in connection with him -- would be to quote a typical sent-

ence, with its accompanying footnotes: "It was a 'beautiful'[3] tropical country with 'vast plains.'[4] ...The 'low rolling hill-lands'[5] were shaded by luxuriant growths of tropical vegetation.

3 Easter Island Tablet.
4 Greek Record.
5 Troano Manuscript."

Such footnotes are a "travesty upon the scientific method" and in themselves render the author suspect. However, if you are interested in fairy tales, read on.

Mu was divided into ten tribes and had seven principal cities. The dominant race was white. Civilization and its arts were at a high level. About 12,000 years ago the whole continent was shaken by earthquakes. Pillars of flame three miles in diameter shot skyward. During the night great waves rolled over the motherland and it now rested beneath the Pacific ocean. The earthquakes were caused by the explosion of volcanic gases in the cavities of the granite formation underlying Mu. So violent was this explosion that the diameter of the earth was reduced somewhere between 17 and 21 miles. To all of this geologists dissent, saying that such vast gas-filled cavities in the earth would violate the laws of physics. Nor is it likely that an explosion so severe as to reduce the diameter of the earth would have left any living thing behind it.

In any event, Churchward says civilization was destroyed and the survivors reverted to savagery. Above the Pacific arose the tops of the mountains raised by this earthquake. These include the islands of Hawaii, Easter, Tahiti, Mangaia, Tonga-Tabu, Fiji, Ponape, and the Marianas. How does Churchward know all this? Well, he read it on the tablets in India, the surviving codices of the Mayas, the Easter island tablets, carvings on the walls of Nan-Matal, etc. The skeptical reader will find these sources highly dubious. No one but Churchward and a few Indian priests are admitted to have seen the Naacal tablets. Archaeologists claim to read only a few Mayan hieroglyphs, principally those connected with the calendar, numbers, certain astronomical data, and the signs for a few gods and ceremonies. No single place name or personal name has been definitely translated. We do not even know the real name of some great cities, Copan and Palenque, for instance. Churchward's alleged translations of the Mayan hieroglyphs produce only gibberish when an attempt is made to apply them to other undeciphered glyphs. The Easter island tablets have never been deciphered, although one or two unverifiable translations have been obtained from old natives. Of the builders of Nan-Matal we know almost nothing.

Churchward identifies Mu with the Garden of Eden and other similar localities ascribed as the original place of man's creation. Man, he says, was created civilized. This is special creation with a vengeance. Neanderthal, Piltdown, Heidelberg, and other prehistoric skeletons are simply the remains of "idiots and degenerates," which, he claims, is "obvious from the abnormal shapes of their skulls. Doubtless they were outcasts from civilized communities." North Americans were highly civilized "tens of thousands of years before these idiots and degenerates of Europe existed."

These claims come under the heading of "Interesting if True." There is no evidence that the shape of the skulls of these early Europeans indicates that they were "idiots and degenerates." The Mayas and certain other Indian tribes grotesquely deformed the skulls of their children without apparently affecting their intellect. Neanderthal man had a brain capacity larger than that of the average present-day European. The oldest evidence of man's existence in North America are camp-sites discovered in Nebraska in 1947. These are estimated to be between 20,000 and 35,000

years old. Heidelberg man is estimated to have lived around 500,000 years ago; Piltdown man approximately half that long ago; Neanderthal man between 25,000 and 50,000 years ago.

The great stone structures of Yucatan, says Churchward, were built by a race of white Mayas 15,000 or more years ago. They were wrecked and their builders wiped out in the cataclysm which destroyed Mu. Brown races speaking the Maya tongue took possession of the land when it again became habitable and these were in turn conquered by the Nahuatls and Aztecs, who came up from the south. All this will be illuminating to the orthodox archaeologists, who believe the Maya cities were built between 600 B. C. and 600 A. D. and that the Aztecs came down from the north. Perhaps they can find some comfort in the fact that Churchward agrees that "When the Cliff Dwellers entered America, the mountains probably had been raised, for we find their houses in the cliffs of the mountains." Elementary, my dear Watson!

In The Children of Mu (1931) Churchward purports to show how all the world was populated from Mu, the motherland. North America, being the closest, was settled possibly more than 100,000 years ago. Says Churchward, "Immense cities built of concrete and stone, beautiful pottery, gorgeous jewelry and wonderful fresco paintings." Presumably he means these things existed in North America 100,000 years ago, but sentences without verbs are always somewhat confusing. South America was populated perhaps 70,000 years ago. At that time all the world was flat. Where the Amazon now flows was a great inland sea, providing a convenient route for settlers emigrating east. The mountains which now compose the Andes, as well as our own Rockies, the Alps, the Pyrenees, the Himalayas, etc., were not raised until less than 15,000 years ago. That's what the man says!

Naturally, the first settlers in Atlantis were also from Mu. Just when this took place Churchward does not venture to say, but states that Atlantis was a kingdom 25,000 years ago, reached its greatest height approximately 16,000 years ago, and sank 11,000 years ago. Lower Egypt was settled from Atlantis about 16,000 years ago.

At the same time colonists were going westward from Mu. Burma was first settled about 70,000 years ago; India something over 50,000 years ago. Even 15,000 to 20,000 years ago the Indians had bombs and airplanes which generated their own power! The people continued to drift westward, settling Babylonia approximately 18,000 years ago and Upper Egypt about 15,000 years ago.

It is probably useless to attempt to argue rationally with anyone who claims the great mountain ranges were raised less than 15,000 years ago. If Churchward is right, the only sensible thing to do would be to throw away all scientific treatises on geology, anthropology, archaeology, and related sciences and to start over. The books of Charles Fort, of course, are full of incidents wherein the scientists were in error, but it seems unlikely that they could be so far wrong in the particular cases under discussion, especially when the quality of the arguments arrayed against them is considered.

The probable antiquity of certain manlike species has been discussed above. However, Heidelberg man, Piltdown man, and Neanderthal man are not considered to be man's direct ancestors; that is, none of them are classified as homo sapiens. So far the fossil forms which may be directly in line of our own evolution -- Cro-Magnon, Grimaldi, and perhaps Brunn man -- have been traced back only 25,000 years approximately. The oldest cities of which we have knowledge are Heliopolis, Egypt, which was destroyed by war about 5000 B. C.; Kish, near Babylon, Iraq, which is about the same age; and a site near Hassuna, Iraq (about 250 miles from Babylon), which may be

8000 years old. These are far cries indeed from a North America, Burma, and India inhabited 50,000 to 100,000 years ago.

To the last of the trilogy, The Sacred Symbols of Mu (1933), we need devote but little attention. In this volume Churchward develops the thesis that religion arose in Mu something over 70.000 years ago, and from there dispersed out to the rest of the world. His "proof" is to depict certain symbols which he claims were sacred to Mu and then show that more or less similar symbols can be found in religious usages throughout most of the known world. Again we are confronted by the fact that only Churchward can translate such symbols.

Considering all of the evidence as fairly as possible, it would be difficult to improve upon the criticism made by A. C. Wilgas in the Historical Outlook for November 1931:

> ...His theories are so fantastic, the presentation so disjointed and sophomoric in composition with innumerable repetitions, and the statements so dogmatic that instead of carrying conviction his book proves distressingly disconcerting and tends to make the reader, before many pages are turned, an opponent of his views.

Throughout this Atlantis-Lemuria-Mu series we have tacitly accepted the evolutionary theory and have predicated many of our remarks as to the age of man, etc., upon the statements of scientists working in the fields of archaeology and anthropology. In all fairness it should be mentioned that the views of orthodox theologians are quite different. Because they arrive at a very different figure for the age of man, these views will, if accepted, have tremendous bearing upon our willingness to accept the quondam existence of these "lost worlds." The orthodox Jews interpret the Old Testament as indicating the creation of man took place in 3761 B. C. and most Christian fundamentalists, "Bible colleges," etc., accept a date reasonably close to this figure. However, the Hebrew text of the Old Testament and the Greek translation (made by Jews in Egypt starting about 280 B. C.) do not agree. Hugon states that the Greek version reckons the age of man between 8000 and 10,000 years. A third version of the Old Testament, the Samaritan, gives still a different figure.

The more sophisticated priest or minister insists upon the validity of philosophical questions. He argues that the human is composed of body and soul fused into one essence. No animal other than man has ever given any indication of possessing a spiritual nature. It is absurd, he says, to think that an animal form could through evolutionary processes suddenly develop a spiritual soul. Therefore, either (1) the first man was the result of an act of direct creation, not of evolution; or (2) the soul, the result of an act of direct creation, was at some period fused with the body of man. In this latter instance the new combination was a totally different being and pre-Adamite forms cannot be classified as men.

In either case it would seem that such of our readers as are orthodox Jews or Christians and accept the biblical chronology as a reasonably correct one must of theological necessity deny the possibility of the existence of these "lost worlds."

(This is the third and last article in the "lost worlds" series.)

ARTWORK CREDITS. Cover by William Rotsler. Interior pix: page 6 by John Grossman; page 10 by William Rotsler; page 17 by William Rotsler; and page 20 again by William Rotsler. Note: a cover for next issue has been accepted.

PRO-PHILE

William Atheling Jr

TO BE AN AVOWED PRO-PHILE amid fans these days can be a hazardous position, and I'm not sure that I can qualify for it. After dealing with the newsstand magazines professionally over several decades, one is likely to wind up as at least a 50 per cent pro-phobe. Dealing with them now, when most of them claim that they're seeking maturity (and one that it has attained it), is doubly hard on the patience.

If science fiction is really growing up (a proposition that could use some defining), however, it is going to need a lot more criticism than it's been getting. The nature of that criticism will be determined by just how far science fiction readers would like to see the idiom grow. If, for instance, you're satisfied that it's come of age already, then it already has the kind of criticism it deserves: (a) book reviews in general newspapers, usually segregated under a common head as detective novel reviews are, so as to warn the prospective buyer that none of the books mentioned in these little concentration camps are to be taken seriously; and, (b) occasional promag reviews in letter columns and fan magazines, usually lists of likes and dislikes, the rationales of which are seldom stated even in the rare instances where they exist.

If you'd like to see science fiction move out of the detective story kind of specialty classification, and become at least as well established in the literary mainstream as straight fantasy has been for at least two centuries, then science fiction criticism will necessarily have to be more ambitious. Remember that the detective story has never lacked for praise from public figures of all sorts, and admiring the genre has been the particular hobby of the Grade B, or Christopher Morley type of literary figure. It's even been remarked that to be able to say "I never read anything but detective stories" is one of the unfailing signs of a successful man. Despite all these things in their favor, detective story reviews are still confined in most papers to the usual ghetto, and the form never has worked itself to stay into the category of an art-form; I doubt that it ever will.

Science fiction is at this stage now. It has a ghetto of its own in most major newspapers; public figures have been photographed with science fiction magazines before their faces; to be a confessed reader of science fiction still makes one an eccentric, but no longer a complete outcast. Even the slick magazines now print science fiction stories at least as willingly as they do detective or western stories, and three years ago the circle was completed by the founding of an all-science-fiction magazine devoted to importing slick standards into the realm of the aficionadoes. Recently, too, a book publisher was paraphrased as saying, "Give us a science fiction novel that is written like a good mystery, preferably hard-boiled and sexy, and we'll print it and be glad to get it." Is this the millenium?

Or, if we'd like to go farther, how do we go about it?

Before we say that the answer is, "ask for it," we have to be sure that we know what we're asking for. This is where criticism comes in. The function of the critic

in this field, as it is in others, is two-fold: first of all, he must ask that editors and writers be conscious of the minimum standards of competence which apply to the writing of all fiction; secondly, he must make reasonably clear to his non-professional readers what those standards of competence are. Primarily this double job is destructive, because its effect is to undermine editors' confidence in many writers, and to lower the level of tolerance toward sloppy work in the readers. It has its constructive side, however, for it's also aimed at wider appreciation, and hence wider publication, for writers who show reasonable craftsmanship.

Technical competence in story-telling is of course not the sole factor which turns a fiction piece into a work of art. Freshness of idea, acuity of observation, depth of emotional penetration are all crucial. But technical competence is the one completely indispensable ingredient; the use of an old idea, for instance, is seldom fatal in itself, but clumsy craftsmanship invariably is.

This, then, ought to be the first thing we ask for. The major science fiction magazines, by laying claim to a "maturity" either already attained or else attainable by a good boarding-house grab, have also laid themselves open to critical examination of the same severity as that applied to other mature works of fiction. In this light we'll have to dismiss as irrelevant Horace Gold's recent plea that we ignore what poor stories he prints on the grounds that most of his readers like such stories; criticism and public-opinion polling have nothing to do with each other -- the setting-up of a scale of competence in any field is inherently anti-democratic, simply because it always reveals that in ability all men were created unequal, and because the only people capable of setting up such scales are those who already have technical competence, a question which cannot be settled ever by majority vote.

These are the propositions we offer, as a beginning in serious criticism, to the writers and the editors of science fiction:

(1) We know that there is a huge body of available technique in fiction writing, and that the competence of a writer -- entirely aside from the degree of his talent -- is determined by how much of this body of technique he can use.

(2) We know (from study, from our own practice, or from both) the essential features of good narrative practice; we expect writers and editors to know no less than we do.

(a) We also know that at least half of the science fiction writers being published today are, from the point of view of technical competence, taking up our time unnecessarily; this being true,

(b) we also know that, from this same point of view, every science fiction editor operating today is flying by the seat of his pants -- if this were not so, the authors mentioned in point (a) above would never have been published, but would have been sent back to school instead.

In saying this much -- and in saying it repeatedly -- the critic is exercising his first function: to "ask that editors and writers be conscious of the minimum standards of competence which apply to the writing of all fiction." This is the easiest of his jobs, since it requires nothing of him but the knowledge that such standards exist (a notion which nevertheless will come as a shock to most professionals in science fiction today). For the few penicillin-resistant cases who insist that science fiction is too aberrant a medium to be judged by the standards of other kinds of fiction, we can reply flatly and without much attempt to be polite that we are not interested in any form of fiction which cuts itself off from human

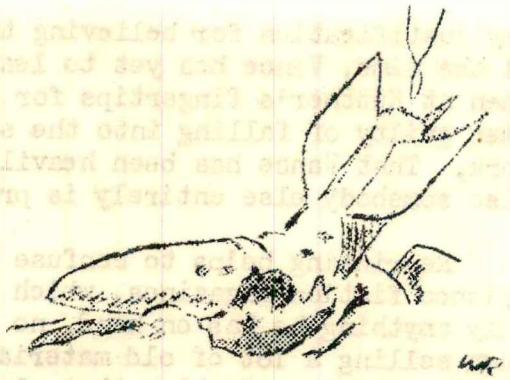
life and human values -- and those are the only values we propose to apply in criticism. For this purpose we can apply Theodore Sturgeon's definition of science fiction, which puts the matter in succinct and unbetterable form:

"A science fiction story is a story built around human beings, with a human problem, and a human solution, which would not have happened at all without its scientific content." (From a talk by Sturgeon; quoted from memory.)

This still leaves the critic with the second task of making "reasonably clear to his non-professional readers what those standards of competence are." It is in this department that the critic's arrogance is tested, since in doing this he is also answering the doubts of professionals as to whether or not he knows what he is talking about. Both these tasks have to be carried out in detail, and for the most part by example -- with the examples being taken from current magazines, for there is absolutely no sense to analyzing the "tension-curve" of "The Fall of the House of Usher" if it is modern science fiction we hope to improve.

For the most part, this column will be devoted to the major science fiction magazines which have appeared during the quarter immediately preceding Sky Hook's date of issue. By "the major science fiction magazines" I mean Galaxy, Astounding Science Fiction, and The Magazine of F & SF; I also mean to exclude such neolithic publications as Planet and Amazing Stories, except for an occasional dip. The present sampling is from the July-August-September quarter.

...One would think, for instance, that no writer should need to be told that a story cannot get along without at least one believable person in it; and that no editor would buy a story that lacked such a person. If you think both these points self-evident, then turn to "Night Talk," signed Charles E. Fritch, in the September Startling Stories (p. 129). There will probably be a great deal of talk over whether this story was or was not written by Ray Bradbury; certainly if it was not, Mr Bradbury has a plain case of plagiarism on his hands. Internal evidence ("jet-controlled sardine-cans") makes it most likely that Fritch is Bradbury, but that isn't the point at issue. The basic point is that there is nobody in the story. The man from whose point of view the piece is told has no name; he is referred to only as "the traveller." Also, he has no appearance; the sole clue we are given to help us visualize him is that he is wearing boots...and, on the second page of the piece, "clothing." The illustrator has given him fur cuffs, collar and hat, but this is a completely creative gesture on the illustrator's part, and gives the author more aid in reaching his readers than he has earned. Toward the end of the piece, it is more or less clumsily suggested that the anonymity of the two main characters (there are no others on stage) is deliberate: they are supposed to represent two different kinds of reactions toward the second coming of Christ, and thus to be representative of mankind as a whole. Since both of them are ciphers, the total effect is to make the second coming of Christ into an event about as important as the annual Mrs America contest. Certainly there can be no objection to the use of the science fiction idiom as the vehicle for a parable; very profound and moving effects have been obtained by such means in other idioms; but to expect the parable by itself to carry the reader, without any observance of such elementary requirements of fiction as characterization, is to expect the impossible. Both Mr Fritch and the author of "The Man" had better spend a little time over Anatole France's "The Procurator of Judea" before tackling this kind of task again. Granted that the France story is fantasy, not science fiction, or it is realism pure and simple. Whatever "The Man" and "Night Talk" are, they are not science fiction either; v. the Sturgeon definition, or just the name of our idiom itself.



This may seem to be heavy artillery to bring to bear upon a story which can be little over a thousand words long, but I can't see why a story should be excused for being bad because it is short. Editorially I suppose Mines would plead that yarns of this length are extremely handy for plugging chinks, and that good ones are extremely rare. This is true, and it is the main reason why a writer like Bradbury, who seldom works in any other length, can attain an extraordinary popularity among editors. Good short-shorts, however, continue to remain as scarce as ever.

Mines is a self-styled middle-of-the-road editor, who has said that he is interested primarily in a good story, rather than in sociological documents, wiring diagrams or works of art. The bulk of the issue under discussion is taken up with Jack Vance's "Big Planet," a good story by anybody's standards; Vance himself is a fascinating study in the technical development of a science fiction writer. He began with three apparently natural gifts: a free, witty, unmannered style; an almost frighteningly fertile imagination; and a special talent for the visualization of physical detail and color. Any one of these gifts in excess in a young writer can prove fatal, since they can be and often have been used to mask or substitute for the essential construction problems of story-telling. Exactly this happened to Vance in his early work: he tossed off ideas, wisecracks, splashes of exotic colors and proper names like a Catherine wheel, while his plotting remained rudimentary or non-existent. His Hillman novel, The Dying Earth, is a typical sample, exuberant, chaotic, colorful, and shapeless.

But he is learning fast. In the present novel he has gone back to basics, as he was going to have to do sooner or later. "Big Planet" has the simplest possible construction a long story can have -- it is a saga, the primary narrative form of all cultures in the first stages of development. Its sole trace of narrative sophistication is in the circularity of its plot, that is, its return at the crisis to the essential situation from which the story began. But it is still only a beginning, a shade or two of awareness above Beowulf, but not advanced as far as is a saga like the Odyssey, where the essential starting situation emerges only gradually by implication and the poem proper begins "in the middle." By taking himself back to this primitive a narrative form Vance has found, entirely temporarily, a story structure suitable to his talents and one which he can control. The result is quite striking and completely satisfying, where earlier long stories of Vance's were not, because for once the technique and the material are wedded to each other. The efflorescence of color, strongly reminiscent of C. L. Moore (I said "like a Catherine wheel," didn't I?) but lacking her control, this time didn't flood out the story proper because Vance has made structural provision for it. He is learning fast -- what will he be able to accomplish when he knows as much technique as, say, Kuttner, offers plenty of material for speculation. I at least predict prodigies.

Incidentally, both the important writers we have been talking about above have been the object of the absurd pen-name detecting bee which has become popular in the past few years, and both offer interesting evidence that most science fiction readers are still completely uncritical. It should have been immediately evident that the "Brett Sterling" of "Referent" was Bradbury; one would have to have been style-deaf to have missed it, since Bradbury's style is so determinedly mannered that he can be spotted within two paragraphs, and can just as easily be told from his imitators, who usually mistake the mannerisms for the style. Similarly there was never

any justification for believing that Vance was Kuttner. As damon knight pointed out at the time, Vance has yet to learn basic elements of narrative technique which have been at Kuttner's fingertips for years; it has been over a decade since Kuttner has been guilty of falling into the story-telling traps strewn all through Vance's early work. That Vance has been heavily influenced by Kuttner is obvious, but that he is also somebody else entirely is proboscis-plain.

Reprinting helps to confuse the issue; so does the existence of more than 30 science fiction magazines, which makes it possible for a known writer to sell virtually anything he has on hand, no matter how old or how bad. Recently Kuttner has been selling a lot of old material as "C. H. Liddell," in which he may be seen committing the same fumbles that plague Vance; one might be justified in guessing that Vance was Liddell if one didn't know better. The Kuttner novel reprinted in Fantastic Story Magazine for this period, a ten-year-old job, certainly also reads like current Vance.

ASF for August contains an extremely skilful piece by Walter M. Miller, Jr., called "Cold Awakening," and a gluily overwritten novelette called "The Face of the Enemy," by Thomas Wilson, which between them manage to summarize and to continue two trends in Campbell's editing which I suspect are going to lead to Schrecklichkeit before very long. Both trends seem to have emerged as a direct result of the competitive pressure of Galaxy, and both actually are the same trend in different lights. They are:

(1) Phony realism. This is a kind of writing which we have all had to suffer through in the detective story field, and now, apparently, science fiction is to go through it also. It consists, in essence, of the minute description of the entirely irrelevant. In detective stories it can most often be found in descriptions of smoking. The character takes out a match pack, tucks the cover back, yanks a match off, scratches it, lights his cigarette, chucks the match into an ash tray... and so on. All this has nothing to do with the story, illuminates no side of anybody's character, fails to advance the plot an inch, tells nothing about the situation; nevertheless the ritual is repeated over and over again. This is only one of several conventions of current, mechanized "private eye" stories which are now leaking over into science fiction, mostly in Campbell's magazine. In one recent story, whose title, mercifully, I have forgotten (male character tries to fake examinations leading to qualification for spaceflight -- yes, that one), the manipulation of cigarettes occupied about 20 per cent of the total wordage, to the total exclusion of characterization. Almost the whole "private eye" canon was imported in one dose in Frank M. Robinson's "Untitled Story"; and in the Miller piece -- otherwise as smooth and competent a job as anyone could ask -- the story problem is again essentially a detective story problem, solved not by human but by mechanical detective methods. I at least am as tired of reading detective stories as I am of writing them, and I doubt that science fiction is going to benefit by inflicting upon it the cliches of another and now completely fossilized medium.

(2) Deep purple. The phony realism began to creep into science fiction shortly after the advent of Galaxy, under the hands of writers who were unable to provide Gold with the slick, Ladies Home Journal kind of copy which he seems to prefer, and who therefore had to seek substitutes from other fields of successful commercial fiction. The deep purple patches of "fine writing" are coming in by the same back door -- patches of souped-up adolescent emotion and imperfectly visualized color, to say nothing of the so-genannt "irony" characteristic of most fan fiction; young men trying to crack Gold's citadel, and incapable, at least thus far, of distinguishing between the artistic and the arty, are producing most of it. Gold buys very little

of it, but Campbell, who unfortunately is almost as style-deaf as his readers, seems to love it. As a result we have had to suffer through the recent aSF writings of Chad Oliver -- who probably will write a very good story once he learns to keep his voice down -- and this Wilson novelette, which deserves incorporation in any writing manual as an example of what not to do. I call particular attention to Wilson's account of the alien symphony, beginning on page 33. It is, of course, in imitation of many brief passages in Sturgeon's writing, where Ted attempts -- never successfully, but at least with commendable reticence -- to describe the effect of music. But this sample is incredibly overblown, depending mainly on a device called synaesthesia which died with Swinburne, and showing among other things that the author knows nothing about the music we have at home -- let alone being capable of describing an alien symphony. He thinks all music is program-music, both in Chicago and on Kelane. I cite this particular passage because it is Deep Purple in practically pure culture, but the whole story is soggy with such overwriting.

One of the tip-offs to the purple writer is his dependence upon metaphor, particularly of the "concrete-is-abstract" kind: "Hands outstretched, she was love. She was first love, last love, all love...She was love...She was an elusive quality of race...She was ache and anguish and doubt, fusing now into anger because she was love." Obviously this kind of guff has to be done in metaphor because the alternative trope, similie, demands "concrete-to-concrete" relationship; one cannot say "She was <u>like</u> love" and expect to be taken seriously; one has to say "She was like a dancer" or make some other reference to concrete things. Race, ache, anguish, doubt, love, all these are just counters which can be pushed about in any order without communicating anything of interest. Mr Wilson might go to Shakespeare, who would teach him that the only successful metaphor takes the form "abstract-is-concrete" -- as in "Patience on a monument, smiling at grief" -- the exact opposite of the way Mr Wilson is handling the trope. To be sure, Mr Wilson's practice has the sanction of writers like Tennyson ("a sea of peace"), but Tennyson deliberately sought fogginess and imprecision and nobody loves him for it now. It seems particularly inappropriate to imbed a science fiction story in this kind of simple syrup.

Not a very good crop, on the whole. There was, of course, "Gravy Planet," for which thank God -- otherwise we should have fallen asleep entirely.

"The world is <u>not</u> infinite in time."

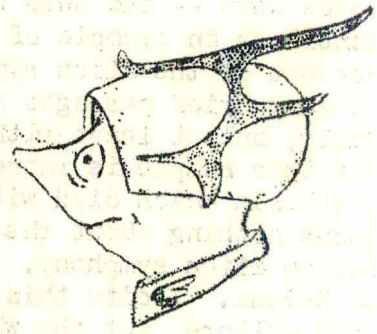
WHIMSY

Nuts and raisins,
Not round reasons
But whimsical things,
Fleeting as seasons.
Sprightly as springtime,
Like a pigeon's wings,
A fluttering rhyme
Not reasons but raisins.

— LEE HOFFMAN

"But you said every event has a cause."

EYE TO THE PAST



Lark. In your reference to "the new R-J enclosure," what does R-J stand for? The same thing it stands for on the label of a bottle of Hires root beer? # You guys who talk about vintage automobiles must be a bunch of old foofs who use a car for transportation. I never heard of a girl who'd prefer to run around with a guy in a 1930 Nash when she could ride in a Golden Airflyte Nash Ambassador.

Irusaben. Trudy Kuslan once published several Gilbert and Sullivan issues of The Nucleus, in which she slightly altered various G&S arias to fit fannish individuals and situations. She also published an article called "Gilbert and Sullivan Fantasies," by Paul Spencer, and in the same issue remarked, "You should be thankful that a lack of time and stencils have prevented us from inflicting our favorite G&S quotations upon you." You probably published many of them she wanted to publish. Most of them were new to me, except for "When you're lying awake," which was in my high school literature book. "Crossing Salisbury plain on a bicycle..." I crossed parts of it often enough, with a full-field pack dragging behind, and I'd have preferred a bike, though some of those hills were steep. # Was it Anthony Boucher who wrote book reviews for Unknown as "J. Wellington Wells"? # Leeh used "Quish" as an alternate nickname for the Quannish before Fanspeak was published. "Mapa" I thought a rather common term, but I'll admit "illio" is rare. # Oh no, I used colored inks and paper in Sky Hook as far back as autumn 1948.

Horizons. Admittedly my paragraphs about Soldiers' Pay didn't display the whole complex of that novel, but surely the fin de siecle element is dominant in that book. A glance at a critical work like Frederick J. Hoffman's The Modern Novel in America will show that I'm not alone in that opinion. Says Hoffman: "There was nothing in this product of the 1920s that suggested that he would be more than (a) postwar romantic and sophisticate." # Was "goshwowboyoboy" actually used in a TWS letter? I thought Time invented the letter it pretended to quote. # Your local station that allows 30-second silences on the air may be unique among U. S. radio stations. In the case you mention, where the station refuses to broadcast commercials on a baseball broadcast because it gets no revenue from that sponsor, most stations would insert "public service" announcements about donating blood or buying defense bonds. (Incidentally, the blood-for-Korea drive seems to have created a new verb. Have you heard the remark, "So-and-so doned blood yesterday"?) # Don't kid us, Harry: you haven't had that typewriter "nearly ten years" -- at least you haven't cut Horizons stencils with it that long. Macbeth cut your stencils till some time after I joined FAPA in 1947. # "Plain Possum" is the best article on "Pogo" I've seen anywhere -- and it came from an unexpected source, since you haven't been among the beanie brigade that swoons over Kelly's creation as if he were another Sinatra/1943/. It seems to me Disney's influence on cartoon art is unfortunate; I don't see much reason for movie cartoons always to feature "talking animals," except that Mickey Mouse made movie cartoons famous and everybody got into the act with imitations. Before Disney such movie cartoons as Mutt

and Jeff were standard, but in recent times the only non-talking-animal cartoons I've seen were the Mr Magoo ones. "Pogo" is one of the few cartoons to transcend the Disney formula and gain a vitality of its own, and I wonder how "Pogo" would go in the movies? There would probably be objection to the Negro dialect, and I would object if "Pogo" were turned into a predictable head-bopping, firecracker-exploding, steamrollered movie cartoon. # "Circulation Department" was lovely.

Light. I'm not so sure that Erskine Caldwell hasn't done his "typewriting on a cash register," and after reading The Wayward Bus (I haven't read his latest book) I'm not sure John Steinbeck isn't guilty also. # Probably there aren't more crooks in radio repair than in carpentry, plumbing, etc., but it's easier to cheat in radio repairing than in many other trades. You can fatten a bill by replacing a couple radio tubes that are still good, and nobody is the wiser, whereas a plumber who comes to unplug the kitchen sink can't easily add the cost of repairing the faucets. Furthermore, the radio repair industry seems to have no apprenticeship system that would weed out incompetents and crooks, as unionized trades like carpentry do. At any rate, you're still struggling along with "repairman" for your title where most trades that aspire to guild-like status adopt fancy names like "realtor" and "mortician."

The Rambling Fap! A most unlikely title, but a very likely fapazine. Speaking of names, if you're Gregg Calkins, why did you sign your first letters to FFM and FN "Bill Calkins"? Are you any kin of Dick Calkins? And is Lamont Jensen the old-time letterhack who wrote many excellent Brass Tacks critiques around 1942? I often wonder what happened to guys like Jensen, Bill Stoy, and so on. # Why, sure, I read non-sf books; I read much more non-sf than sf. Don't you? I suppose all of us do, counting the daily paper, dentist's office magazines, etc.

Djinn (and Soma). I haven't seen a review yet of "The Man in the White Suit" that pointed out that the supposedly miraculous cloth wasn't quite as good as our hero thought it would be. But I guess the nature of the material and technique of cutting it, etc., kept the film in the sf category. # I remember Joe Gilbert of the Columbia Camp, but I thought he was in the navy, not the army. # I doubt that British publications castigate Americans any more than many American publications flay the British for being "stupid, undiplomatic, trite, money-mad, bungling, wastrel." The man who receives the dig is more sensitive to the pain than the man who delivers it. Our newspapers are always howling about Russia's "hate America" tactics, while in adjacent columns they print reams of "hate Russia" stuff. # George Ebey's poems (reprinted from Ichor) are the best things in Soma.

C-9432. Ach, another fanzine using a number title. Are 9432 the last four numbers of your serial number, Ed? Rusty Hevelin once edited a similarly titled fapazine and he refused to explain the significance of the numbers even when I asked him about it at the Torcon. But I think his title too was composed of his initial and the last four numbers of his serial number. # "This Strange War" was a most enjoyable and informative article. Even the fans who want everything in FAPA to be about fantasy should enjoy it: you mention a "hex-tent" pitched on the hill.

Elfin. 'Fraid Irvin S. Cobb didn't have any "inborn taste," if he'd try to foist crude dime novels onto his 14-year-old son. While it may be true that the dime novel's style couldn't "be any worse than the stilted and artificial style" of a school reader, surely a library consisting of Moby Dick, Huckleberry Finn, The Red Badge of Courage, The Sea Wolf, Treasure Island, A Tale of Two Cities, etc., would contain significantly more "brisk and stirring movement" and teach him a million more things about a good writing style than "Frank Merriwell." # I was surprised to learn that "The Crowning Victory" in Popular was a reprint of Love and Mr Lewi-

sham. # Nearly everything in Sky Hook's "....." department is stuff I run across in my reading, though once in a while I go hunting for a quotation that expresses some idea I want to bring to FAPA's attention. I have a sheaf of usable quotes, and, judging from the past, some of them won't get squeezed into the department till 1956. The quotes generally express an idea that interests me, something that I agree with, disagree with, or find controversial. A few are chosen for topical interest; one quote usually reflects the season. # I disagree. A mailing number is just as much of a date as a designation like "autumn 1952" is, for the mailing number places the publication in a certain quarter of a certain year; for instance "mailing #41" as the date of a publication places it in autumn 1947.

Astra's Tower Leaflet. Very nice cover by Keasler. # I wonder how many will understand the symbolism utilized in "Love As An Ideal"? My most respected critic objected to the reliance in this poem upon traditional forms, but I believe that the deliberately chosen medium plays a functional part in the poem. # The episodes were smoothly written and presenting them in trimmed form perhaps gave them a tailored appearance that is lacking from the originals. At least I can't imagine such romantic fiction burgeoning naturally in so concise a pattern.

Pottery Leaflet. Used.

Oblast. I burn to discover which of the gaglines I'm supposed to have originated. I concede that I may have repeated some of them, but I recognize none of them as mine own braintyke. # Gosh yes, F. Towner Laney really did have a fit over "the frightful threat to FAPA implicit in the proposed merger" with SAPS. Of course he was appointed to the merger committee without his knowledge, but he soon proved himself so speechless with fury about the merger that it took a formal request and a private letter to persuade him even to write the letter to the committee printed by Lee Hoffman some months later. Towner remained so angry about it that his letter to the committee was the first and last time he's mentioned the matter, either in print or in private correspondence with me. No doubt he would have ignored the "danger" if I, as committee chairman, hadn't asked for his opinion. # I had a chuckle over "SAPS...voted (the merger) down overwhelmingly." Out of 35 members, 17 voted, and of these five were for the merger. Landslide! # Tsk, Eney, if you had a gramophone that played only cylinder records, would you expect the "big companies" to issue new cylinders for you? In the classical field 78rpm disks aren't much less out of date than cylinders. You can, however, buy an inexpensive attachment to play modern LPs on your antique $250 phonograph. # The only fantasy pictures I've seen more than once are "Destination Moon," which I've seen five or six times, and the "Things to Come"-"Man Who Could Work Miracles" doublebill, which I viewed either three or four times. I'd gladly see them all again if they returned to the local theaters. I saw "The Red Shoes" three times, "The Bicycle Thief" and "Caesar and Cleopatra" twice each, but I seldom care to see movies more than once. # You foot the bill and I'll eagerly dress Sky Hook in covers lithoed in color. Otherwise I'll stick to color mimeography, which is cheap and a lot simpler to produce than you imply. Since I use color mostly for headings or mere line drawings, colored ink goes a long way. A can of red ink which came with my first mimeo back in March 1947 has lasted to the present day. Stencils for the "extra" colors are usually ones I fouled up stencilling textual material, which I salvage through the liberal application of obliterine or scotch tape. Again, since the color area is generally small and concentrated, it's easy to control the intensity of the ink even while running the machine at top speed. Runs using colored inks require only a third of the time necessary to run off a page like this one. # As you point out, I occasionally succumb to the forbidden pleasure of using portmanteau words and other grammatical practices common in fandom. But I don't often

allow myself to indulge in simplified spelling ("thru" and "tho"), a practice that would more easily show up inadvertently to taint my more mundane writings. Even if portmanteau words are habit-forming, I reiterate, with new emphasis, that I "don't like to get into the habit of using spellings not in good repute." # Certainly I agree with you that "scientific conveniences" are a "necessity of modern democracy." But modern democracy is merely another bribe that keeps us from embracing anti-science. There's no reason to doubt that a post-Vader culture could maintain some form of democracy. I've a firm notion that an idea like democracy will die hard; there will always be the democratic tradition for men to remember, and if they want it hard enough, man can have democracy despite the Waveries. And if democracy would operate under a handicap in such a situation, so would that scourge of the scientific age, the modern dictatorship.

Unasked Opinion. Noted.

Bait Box. I too received a bargain offer from F&SF, a subscription for $3 instead of $4, but when I accepted it, I received an invoice in which $3 was heavily overinked into "$4." I think I'll send them $3 and see what they say. # In my consumers union facet, I'd like to say a word of caution about Royale LPs, which you say are "very good." Last spring I took advantage of the low price (12" records for $1.89 each) to add some Strauss waltzes to my library, figuring that even if their quality matched their price, it wouldn't interfere too much with my enjoyment of such semiclassics. I also took a chance on Schubert's third symphony and Verdi's "Opera House," containing arias from Traviata and Aida. None of these records is technically acceptable; all but one have surface noise as bad as a 78rpm, and several do not track properly. Musically, the arrangements are unbelievably bad and the performances are poor. "Opera House" (Royale 1206) is not too bad in performance, but the only record in the five I own that is halfway acceptable both technically and musically is "An Hour of Viennese Waltzes" (Royale 1249).

Letters to the Editor. "King James, editor, The Bible. Dear Jim: Since when has H O L Y W R I T been spelled 'gruesome'? I just read the Old Testament and almost all the stories depend on death, Insanity, or Sadism. Only the opening paragraphs of 'Genesis' were straight fantasy...."

PHOOIE. Good title for it. Page 13. Noted.

Matter of No Moment. Fake fan! You faced a choice between getting rid of your wife and getting rid of your fanzines, and you kept your wife! Apostasy, that's what it is.

Hear! Hear! Everybody listened.

Chooog.... (Oh, that title!) After rereading Pogo (the book) I'm a bit chagrined to discover how much of this is Walt-Kelly inspired stuff and not pure Hoffman, but even subtracting the Pogoish stuff, this is a fine fapazine. There's a fine spontaneity about it that makes it Hoffanthropomorphic at the core. Even gags I know for certain were thought up well in advance ("Starling Stories: a prozine for the birds") read like blithe comments composed on the stencil. "For the birds": I wonder if G. M. Carr, who was slightly shocked at the use of the term "crud," is similarly shocked at the movie title "Something for the Birds" or at that singing commercial that proclaims "Clotheslines are for the birds"? # "The lady doth protest too much methinks" is from "Hamlet" methinks. # Yak, the comment on Paul's "Letter to Jesus" -- "What does Hal Curtis plan to do if he gets a reply" --

(Concluded at the bottom of page 24)

QUOTE—UNQUOTE

WILLIAM ROTSLER types: I MUST thank you for FAPA Nonesuch. First time a fanzine was ever dedicated to me. Whee for me. As a sidelight you might like to know that since I stencilled that unicorn she drew, Marilyn Danielsen was on a billboard ad for Acme Beer, got married, and moved to Iowa or someplace. # Sky Hook slipped a little this time from its usual fantastic heights. (6255 Hollymont drive, Hollywood 28, California.

VIRGINIA BLISH declares (in re Compact of Fire): If you derive from John Peale Bishop's poems as well as his name, you have an attitude both marvelous and rare; if you are more restrained -- which is a pity -- you balance that with a sharper eye for loveliness. # "Glass birds at a mirror" is perfect. It works in all directions, backwards and forward in the poem, and ramifies far beyond the poem. "The stars are rough as gravel on the introverted eye" is equally right and almost as rich a formulation. # I wish I didn't tend to sound as if I spoke ex cathedra, but it makes me feel immensely old to see you make some kinds of mistakes that I think are beginner's errors and that simple commission will enable you to outgrow without my working them over, but I also know I will mention every last one...I'm a voluminous type (when I get around to it). In any event, it pleases me to suspect that you will rather soon be making me feel unpleasantly young as I watch you get on with the business of rendering experience through technique. (Apt 6-E, 14-01 Thirty-sixth avenue, Long Island City 6, N. Y.)

I should be kicked for publishing this letter (and perhaps Virginia will do the kicking), but any comment on the Gafia Poetry Leaflet series is so welcome that I cannot resist publishing even private correspondence like this that contains a few words of praise or criticism.

* * *

A FAPAN who does not wish to be quoted protests my Twippledop item in last issue, "The Flypaper of Fandom," as an insult to those NFFF members who voted me laureate awards over the years. This person implies that the NFFF laureate award consists of a free membership in the club. If this is so, the award is conditioned on silent acceptance of membership in an organization one may not believe in, and thus the honor is a dubious one. However, my remarks were based on the assumption that the free membership was a dividend that went along with the laureate award. I did appreciate the laureate awards; I did not appreciate the free memberships. Even if I wanted to, I could not prevent people from voting for me on a poll, but I should be able to prevent my name from appearing on the NFFF roster. I should be able to resign from the NFFF if I inadvertently become a member. But evidently the sovereignty of the mighty NFFF has gained ascendancy over the right of the individual fan to do as he pleases about joining that club.

"Why, I remember one night in Darjeeling..."

EYE... was perfect, but nobody else thought of it. Just another reason why I've a high opinion of Chooog. # After looking at the pix you stencilled so beautifully with a crochet hook (#10), I must admit there seems to be an advantage to being a girl-type fan. # "Into the Scrunchfinite" was wonderful, but it ended like a perfume commercial.

To Be Concluded.

"The darkness drops again; but now I know
That twenty centuries of stony sleep
Were vexed to nightmare by a rocking cradle,
And what rough beast, its hour come round at last,
Slouches towards Bethlehem to be born?"

— William Butler Yeats,
"The Second Coming."

"When Darwin or Einstein proclaim theories which modify our ideas, it is a triumph for science. We do not go about saying that there is another defeat for science, because its old ideas have been abandoned. We know that another step of scientific insight has been gained. Religion will not regain its old power until it can face change in the same spirit as does science. Its principles may be eternal, but the expression of those principles requires continual development."

-- Alfred North Whitehead,
Science and the Modern World.

"Boys have a natural insight into the Soul of the Machine. They know that the normal state of any mechanical device is Out of Order."

-- Louis Redmond,
"What I Know About Boys."

"I love the earth who goes to battle now,
To struggle with the wintry whipping storm
And bring the glorious spring out from the night.
I see earth's muscles bared, her battle brow,
And am not sad, but feel her marvelous charm
As splendidly she plunges in the fight."

-- Edwin Curran.

"Of all mental systems, the Freudian psychology is the one which makes poetry indiginous to the very constitution of the mind. Indeed, the mind, as Freud sees it, is in the greater part of its tendency exactly a poetry-making organ. This puts the case too strongly, no doubt, for it seems to make the working of the unconscious mind and the finished poem there supervene the social intention and the formal control of the conscious mind. Yet the statement has at least the virtue of counterbalancing the belief, so commonly expressed or implied, that the very opposite is true, and that poetry is a kind of beneficent aberration of the mind's right course."

-- Lionel Trilling,
"Freud and Literature."

"In literature it is only the wild that attracts us. Dullness is but another name for tameness. It is the uncivilized free and wild thinking in 'Hamlet' and the 'Iliad,' in all the Scriptures and Mythologies, not learned in the schools, that delights us. As the wild duck is more swift and beautiful than the tame, so is the wild -- the mallard -- thought, which 'mid falling dews wings its way above the fens. A truly good book is something as natural, and as unexpectedly and unaccountably fair and perfect, as a wild flower discovered on the prairies of the West or in the jungles of the East."

-- Henry David Thoreau,
"Walking."