

Space Warp



VOLUME Two — MARCH, 1948 — NUMBER Six

FIRST BIRTHDAY

We hope you'll pardon an air of complacency in this editorial rambling. We're winding up a year of Warping with this issue, and when we compare Vol. II #6 with Vol. I #1 we feel we've accomplished quite a bit. There always have been -- and probably always will be, better fanzines than Spacewarp. We're not trying to put out the best zine in fandom -- we're trying to put out the kind of zine that we like to read. If your tastes happen to coincide with ours, that probably makes you happy; if not, well, maybe you find something to interest you in the Warp, now and then, at least.

During the past year, many fanzines have started, and still too many have faded again. One notable mag -- Tympani, has become undisputed leader in its own field, and we congratulate Redd Boggs and Bob Stein on their own first anniversary, just past. Two others 2,000 AD and Fandom Speaks, blazed forth like novae, but seemingly faded out as quickly. Of the others which we've read, only Dream Quest (Don Wilson) and Sparkx (Henry Spellman III) cause us to bite our nails in envy, and both are apparently quarterly at the moment, a lamentable circumstance. We contend that a zine must be at least bi-monthly if reader interest is to be sustained from issue to issue. Incidentally, we almost forgot Macabro, the new Toronto gang pub, which bids fair to be in top place by this time in 1949.

As for the Warp, with the change in volume (as before) comes a change in format. So far as we know, a fanzine has never appeared in exactly the form which our April issue will assume. Theoretically, the process should make the mag better than ever; whether it will work out in practice, only time can tell.

The newly-organized Michigan Science Fantasy Society has been absorbing much of our spare time lately, which accounts for the delay in getting out this issue. Anyone reading Mutant, the MSFS official organ, will immediately recognize from the sprinkling of strikeovers that we've been typing the stencils. We are happy to announce that Bill Grover, Associate Editor of the Warp, has been chosen to edit the Mutant for the remainder of this year, under the supervision of George Young, Director of Publications, and with Jerry Gordon as Assistant Editor.

Redd Boggs is now conducting the New Manuscript Bureau. Take notice, all you dancethers and fanartists! However, don't forget that it takes many a story and article to fill the Warp's pages. We are especially anxious to get the work of fans who have never before appeared in fanzines. The neophytes of today will be leading fan of tomorrow, and someday we hope to sit by our tons of prosines, stroking our long white beard, and boasting that those fan had their initial efforts at authorship published in Spacewarp....

Hope you like the second year of the Warp as well as your letters indicate you liked our first dozen issues.

Redd Boggs

Alex

SPACE TRAVELER

GENEVIEVE K. STEPHENS

"They will find -- they will
find..."

Space Traveler stops,
From his metallic wing a
shiny feather drops.

"Beyond Mars -- the sun...

None would believe...

Or follow any trail I leave."

"They are so young -- I am
so old..."

Space -- space is cold...
cold..."

Space Traveler rose and
sighed,

"There is much to be done;

Tender beyond the sun --

News to be spread --

To the Old Ones...The Never
Dead.

Earthlings prepare to ride."



Since the main arguers in the controversy about whether H.P. Lovecraft was or was not the greatest of all fantasy writers are Reid Boggs, who maintains that there is much about HPL's work which merits praise, and Wilkie Conner, who supports the opposite side, FANCLMNP's editors censored from the sidelines while the two fans threshed the matter out morosly. These articles are the result....

This pro-and-Conner discussion appeared originally in SPACEMAP for October, 1947. Long after all copies were sold, requests for the H.P. Lovecraft material continued to arrive....

Therefore, it is truly in response to a popular demand that we reprint --

LOVECRAFT? PHOOEY!

BY WILKIE CONNER

Some years ago, I received a fanzine from one Francis J. Laney. It was the second copy of his soon-to-be-famous ACOLYTE. The one thing that struck my curiosity was the notation on the title - page:

"Dedicated to the memory of the late H.P. Lovecraft!"

Who the hell was Lovecraft that someone should waste time and paper constructing a magazine in his memory? I asked myself. Until that time, I had noticed several posthumous (you sell it!) stories by Lovecraft in Laird Tales and, naturally, I remembered the name. I never remembered the stories, though, because I had never managed to get up stomach enough to read them.

I kept reading ACOLYTE and other publications praising Lovecraft and his works. From time to time I tried to read some of the stories mentioned in the various articles. To this day I have never -- repeat, never -- read one story, article or poem worthy of all of the fuss made over them -- especially by those fans who fall down at HPL's feet and worship him as some sort of pagan god.

His stories, for the most part, are morbid. They are like the hillbilly songs that sing of sorrow and tears. They have an underlying current of horror that comes, somehow, out of place. I can't find the words to express it. As one reads the stories one gets the impression the author is seeking to scare hell out of the reader, even if he has to drag a mouldy corpse across the floor. All he manages to do is to nauseate. I get a sick feeling every time I try to read one of the stories.

Then there's the chuthulu stuff. That would have been fine in ONE or even THREE stories, but of the HPL yarns I've read, only a few seem to be away from the chuthulu stuff. I have a copy of ACOLYTE someplace that lists what is called the "Lovecraft or chuthulu mythology." There's nothing great about the creation of such a mythology. Lovecraft merely took the names of some of the early Greek and Roman and Norse gods and gave them new names he obviously invented simply by running his fingers over the keys of his typewriter at random. (If he had a typewriter). He then moved them from their original settings and gave them a place "outside." Then, he let them be forces of evil, against whom nothing could be effective. (Shaver is doing the same thing with his cavemen). Nothing sensational there.

However, I have no quarrel with the subject matter of HPL's stories. It is his style of writing I don't go for. -- An out-and-out copy of Eighteenth Century writers, it is not even a good imitation. If he had written as Ray Bradbury writes, or as his nearest imitator, August Derleth, writes, he would have had something. Derleth tries to imitate HPL, and unconsciously surpasses him in all his writing.

It would be unfair to HPL to write an article such as this and not mention the truth: I have enjoyed several of his stories. One, "The Haunter of the Dark" was especially good. And while I couldn't stomach the printed version of "The Dunwich Horror," I especially enjoyed the radio dramatization. Perhaps I could learn to appreciate HPL if all his stories were thus presented. Therefore, we get around to his style again. His writing style wasn't present on the radio broadcast.

"The Haunter of the Dark" was as well-written as any literature I have ever read. Had HPL written all his stuff as simply and as directly, I, too, would be tempted to worship at the Lovecraft shrine.

However, I say, let HPL rest in peace. He wrote his stuff and placed it -- the most of it -- in some bureau drawer. Where it belonged. Whether he placed it away from the light or whether he hid it after it had been rejected, no one will ever know. His best stories seem to have been published after his death. Some of these, probably, were rewritten by able writers, who injected enough readability into them to interest the public. Then, by printing limited editions and by using clever advertising, they managed to create the great worship of HPL that has sprung up. Personally I think most of his stuff -- well, "stinks" is too harsh a word -- it isn't quite that bad. However, I have never seen anything in any of his stories that I have read that was worthy of all the fuss made over Lovecraft's work.

So help me, Yog-Lothoth!

- END -

Page FIVE

LOVECRAFT? HOORAY!

BY REDD BOOGGS

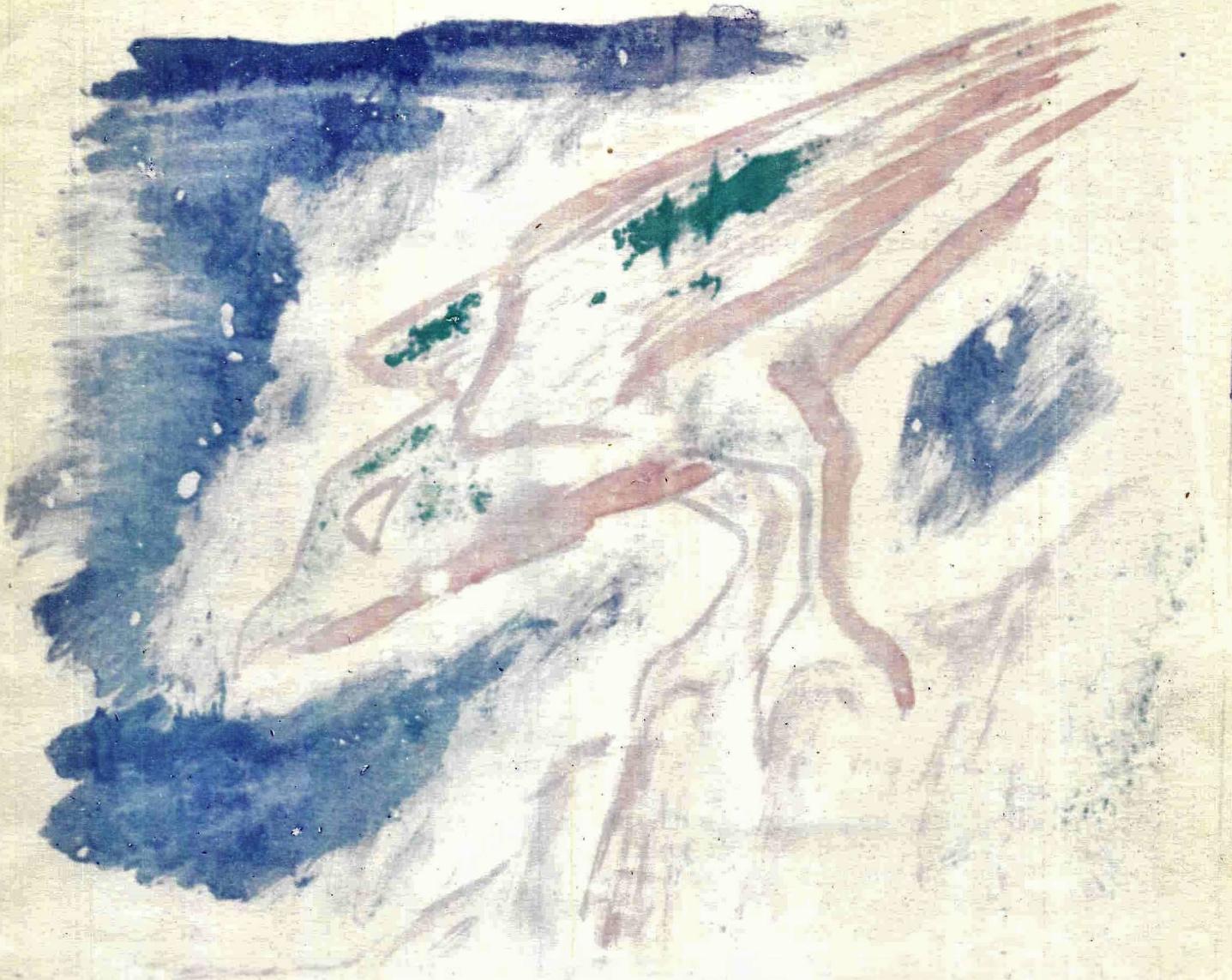
This year, 1947, is the tenth anniversary of Howard Phillips Lovecraft's death, but I did not realize that fact till I read it somewhere. That should prove that I am not a fanatic disciple, worshiping with Derleth, Mandrake and the others at HPL's shrine. But, however far I am from being an avid acolyte of the man, it still gripes me to hear someone state, as Mr. Lillian Conner has done in these pages, that Lovecraft merits no consideration whatsoever. I think he deserves high praise.

It would seem that the frequent anthologizing of Lovecraft's stories in numerous weird collections should constitute "proof positive" that his fiction is worthwhile, but apparently Mr. Conner holds that such popular acclaim has somehow been artificially fostered by the super-active followers of HPL, particularly thru the medium of Arkham House and its several volumes of Lovecraftiana. Therefore, it behoves me to answer a few of the criticisms that Mr. Conner has leveled at HPL and his work.

Perhaps the main criticism Mr. Conner has made is that Lovecraft's style makes his fiction difficult to read. Compared with the average pulp story, carefully slanted to the allegedly juvenile taste of the "average" reader, HPL's leisurely literary style is unique, and therefore difficult. HPL himself wrote: "My style is bad... full of obvious rhetorical devices and hackneyed words and rhythm patterns...." Derleth called this self-criticism "modest," but of course there is truth in it. Nevertheless, Lovecraft's works come closer to being respectable prose than those of most pulpsters, and he can be pointed out as one of the earliest writers to enhance pulp fiction with a truly distinguished style.

Mr. Conner surprises me when he selects "The Horror of the Dark" as one Lovecraft story which he enjoyed, because it was simple and direct in style. "Hunter" is a story written during the last few years of HPL's life, and although his skill improved over time, his style became more intricate year by year. I would suggest that Mr. Conner consider some early Lovecraft Dunsanian fantasy, such as "The Cats of Ulthar" or one of the first tales in the so-called Cthulhu Myths, "The Festival" for simplicity in style. He might discover that simplicity in style for Lovecraft was not a virtue, and the later, more involved style was fashioned as a fine instrument for conjuring strange scenes and moods with its unusual patterns and onomatopoeic diction.

Mr. Conner's objection to the "Cthulhu" mythos, seems to be based on the hypothesis that such an entity as "Yog-Sothoth" acts as a deus ex machina, or perhaps more accurately its anti-



thesis: a force of evil, which makes its appearance merely to set things wrong for the author's benefit. On the contrary, Lovecraft's skillful use of the "thing from Outside" theme is one of his greatest achievements. Although Dorlett also mentions HPL's "sincerity" in the depiction of alien entities, it is doubtful if Lovecraft believed to the very core he wrote about. It is possible that he felt the influences in the unknown more acutely than he does, and crystallized this sensation in the conventionalized "gods" here, et al.

Dorlett handles the "Cthulhu" theme better than HPL did -- to say so is not my opinion but that of Lovecraft himself. His answer is: Stoker's "The Whisperer in Darkness" or "The Haunter of the Dark" with Dorlett's imitations, such as "Beyond the Threshold" or "The Baldwin Compact." Where Dorlett is content to narrate an exciting story of the appearance of strange, half-limped entities, Lovecraft creates a dark and horrifying mood, in which the presence of the gods from "Outside"

move believably, yet with an authentic aura of the Unknown. Consider, too, "The Colour Out of Space," which I consider Lovecraft's masterpiece (and if you haven't read it yet, I suggest you get it as published in F&F, wonderfully illustrated by Virgil Finlay). Here, the presence of the "god" is subtly built up out of such manifestations as the scorched meadow, the uneasy swaying of the trees when no wind is blowing, the terrible insanity of the farm family living nearby. Certainly, few other writers have so successfully depicted the alien mood. It requires no patent "suspension of belief" to read, and be convinced by Lovecraft.

Mr. Conner's statement that "only a few" of Lovecraft's tales lie outside the Cthulhu Mythos is, in a measure, true. It is correct to the extent that all of his stories were "based on the fundamental lore or legend that this world was inhabited at one time by another race... who lost their foothold and were expelled, yet live on outside, ready ever to take possession of this earth again." (This is HPL's own statement.) However, there are only thirteen definite titles lying within the strict bounds of the Mythos itself. Such well-known stories as "The Outsider," "The Music of Erich Vann," "The Bhunned House," and "The Rats In The Walls" are not a part of the Cthulhu cycle.

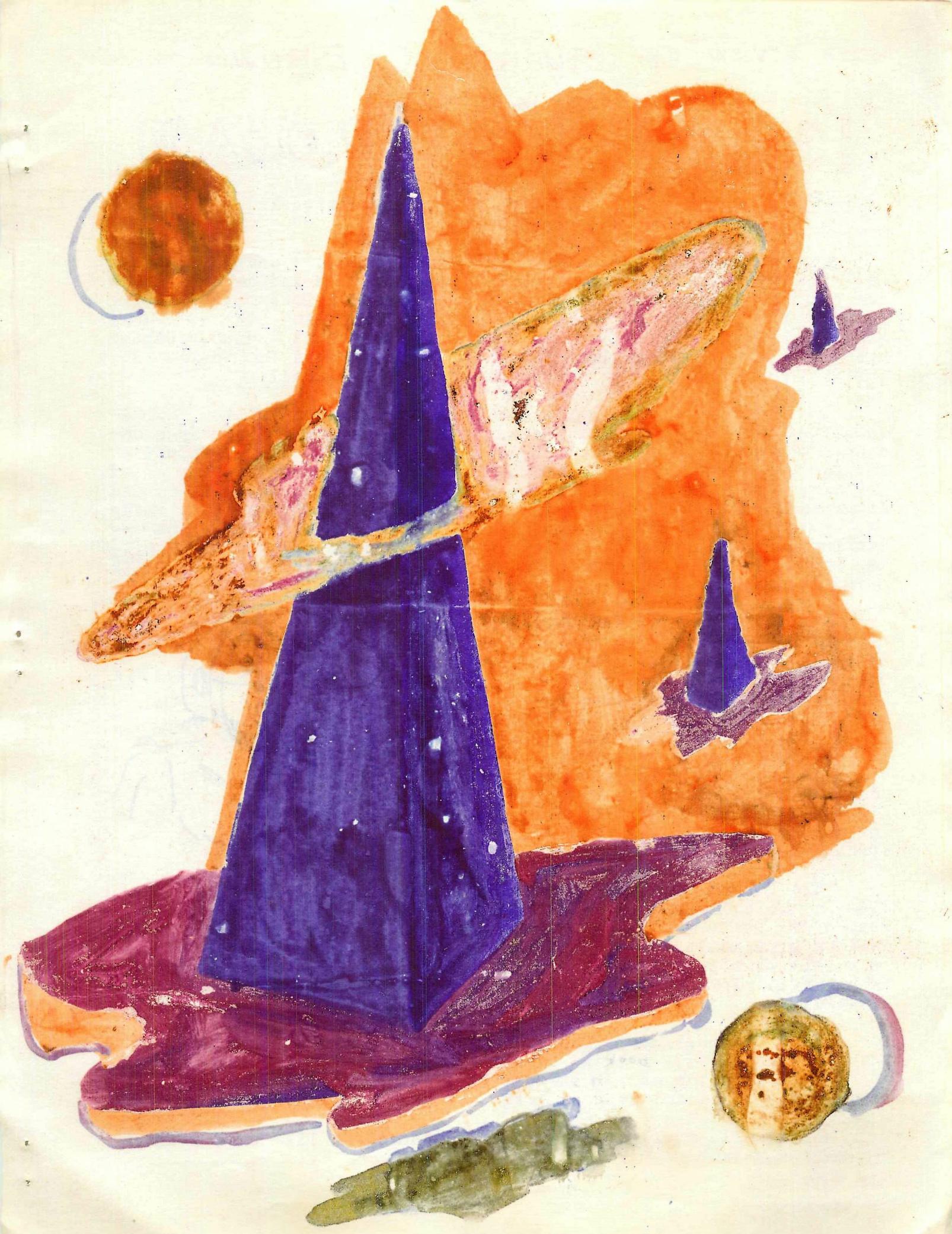
Finally, I would like to refute Mr. Conner's statement that most of HPL's work was tossed in a bureau drawer and forgotten, and saw print posthumously only when revised by some "able" writer. On the contrary, Mr. Conner: HPL's best stories were not published after his death -- at least, not for the first time. There were a few that saw print only posthumously, but these were mostly minor tales or those he never completed. About the only yarns of any stature that appeared in this manner were "The Lurker at the Threshold" (completed by Delisle) and "The Case of Charles Dexter Ward." Many Lovecraft stories did lie around for years before publication (for example: "The Outsider," written in 1921, printed in 1936), but this was probably due to the lack of a market, for after the advent of Weird Tales, very few of HPL's better-known tales were filed away for long. As a general thing, I doubt that many of his yarns suffered rejection and were banished to the bureau drawer for lack of literary merit.

It is true that occasional HPL tales were rejected, even by Weird Tales, because he submitted them in a sloppy manuscript, or because they didn't fit the slant of the magazine; however, this does not reflect on HPL as an author. He simply refused to be a hack. Lovecraft knew as well as anyone the requirements of the pulps; he had to -- much of his income was derived from his work as a revisionist and "ghost writer."

To sum up, I submit my own opinion that Lovecraft is not worthy of the "cult" that has sprouted since his death (what writer would be?), but he is certainly worthy of higher commendation than that given him by Mr. Willkie Conner. I am sure than even the writings of Mr. Conner himself merit more praise than that!

RWD

Have you bought a Bombook yet? Only 15¢ for this fascinating Technopelazion Publication, containing five science-fiction tales, including the first two stories of the famous Morgan Berke series!



BOOK REVIEW BY GUERRY C. BROWN

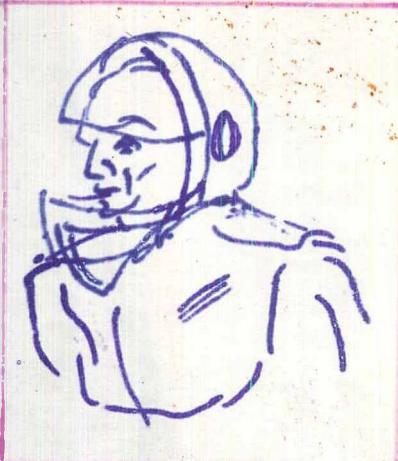
TALES OF THE UNDEAD

(Collected and Illustrated by Elinore Blaisdell
Thomas Y. Crowell, \$3.50)

This is an anthology of supernatural stories, concerning itself with the "undead," such as vampires, as the title indicates. There are stories by such famous fantasy authors as H.P. Lovecraft, Clark Ashton Smith, August Derleth, Seabury Quinn, and many others. Some of the stories are familiar, such as M.R. James' "Count Magnus." Others are quite rare. The picture for the dust jacket and the inside illustrations for each story were done by Miss Blaisdell.

The book as a whole keeps within its purpose of telling stories about the undead.... But, it seems to me, there are two or three accounts which do not fall into this classification. H.P. Lovecraft's story, "The Tomb" seemed to me more a story of possession than of anything else. It is the account of Jervas Dudly, an obscure and dreamy-minded boy who found an old tomb in a hillside one day while exploring, becomes fascinated by the tomb, and is ultimately put away in an asylum. The story is very well told in Lovecraft's familiar style, is an excellent supernatural tale, but I'd hardly call it a vampire story. I'm not sorry that Miss Blaisdell included it, tho.

August Derleth's "The Metrenome" is a story of a mother who murdered her son, and of the boy returning for revenge. "Uncanonized," by Seabury Quinn, is a werewolf story. It is laid in Germany of the Middle Ages, and is, I think, the best Quinn story I've read. "Clay-Shattered Doors" a story of a woman who was killed in an auto accident, too is very good. "Amour Dure" is a long story laid in Nineteenth Century Italy; it concerns a professor who discovers records of a Sixteenth Century lady. He becomes obsessed with her and digs up all the material he can find concerning her.



"The Quick and the Dead" seemed to me one of the few poor stories in the collection. It is the tale of a Frenchman whose mistress dies; he is greatly grieved over her departure, but then finds another girl and becomes infatuated with her. Now what point there is to all this I don't claim to see; or what connection with the supernatural. If some far wiser reader could explain, I'd be quite grateful.

There are many more fine stories to list all of them would be merely tedious. The book is bound in black cloth, with the lettering and front cover design stamped in gold. The book paper is of a high quality, and the type is large and easy to read.

All in all, really a fine book for those who like supernatural tales.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Hah, you didn't think Wilkie Conner got our alcoholic characters into an inextricable situation last month, did you? A new Warpresder named Warren didn't -- and proceeded to prove it, as you will note below. In recognition of his noble efforts, a copy of "The Ship of Ishtar" has been sent him.

THE GREAT STF BROADCAST

THIS EPISODE PERPETRATED
BY

BILL WARREN

Part Three

JOHN UPPERTHER, editor of the eminent stfzine Frankly Incredible Tales of Science, sat at his desk, busily clipping rejection slips to manuscripts and guzzling a stein of white-capped nectar. Humming contentedly, he deftly placed story after lousy story in big brown return envelopes. Upperberth really enjoyed his work.

Suddenly, his hand faltered.

He screamed.

He had chanced upon a Warren yarn.

Rushing over to the lap-legged group of beer-swilling fan surrounding Professor von Heine's time-machine, Upperberth chattered: "Professor! Send this damned bale of paper where you sent those authors! I can't stand Warren's bilge."

"Ach!" the Prof replied, "Ja. It iss verser yet den Shaver!"

The fan surrounding the time-machine crossed themselves in superstitious horror at the dread name, and piously opened another case of Budweiser. Professor von Heine took the manuscript gingerly between thumb and forefinger, holding his nose with his other plump hand.

"Vare vill I send idt?" he twanged. "To der past or der future?"

"I don't give a damn," Upperberth moaned. "Just get rid of it! Then he got a bright notion. "Send it where you sent those authors. Let them suffer!"

The German physicist pulled long and lovingly at his beer. He grinned evilly through the suds around his fat Kissler. "Neffer vas dere such a devil like you, Upperberth. I vill done it!"

Von Heine placed the manuscript in the machine. But before he could throw the switch, there was a loud crash. To everyone's horror, JaClem had succeeded in splintering the closet door.

JaClem was free!

The secretary screamed in terror and wildly turned to run. "Help me!" she cried. "Save me from the beast!"

JaClem's eyes rolled wildly. He saw the girl, and, with a bellow, rushed toward her. She, in a desperate effort to escape, tried to hide behind von Heine (there was plenty of him) and JaClem dashed madly into the fan, knocking the whole drunken bunch into the time-machine.

There was a flash and crackle of terrible power. Upperberth, von Heine, JaClem, the secretary and the fan began to fade, to disappear. There was a faint scream as JaClem clutched the transparent secretary. Just before the crowd faded into thin air, one of the fan reached out and grabbed a case of beer. Then the room was silent.

And empty.

* * * * *

UPPERBERTH SAT UP and groaned. He was lying in a grassy clearing, surrounded by huge, age-old trees. Monkeys chattered and scolded, and somewhere in the depths of the jungle an animal screamed. Upperberth shuddered. He looked at the others lying unconscious around him. Where had that damned time-machine taken them?

At that moment, von Heine sat up. "Vat iss?" he groaned. "Vat verdamter mess iss ve in now?"

Upperberth eyed the German. "That machine of yours," the editor demanded. "Where did you have it set?"

Von Heine's eyes rolled back in his head. "Ach!" he cried, "Ve are in der past. Ve are in der age of der Reptiles!"

The fan, who were also awake now, clutched wildly at the case of beer. "You mean we have only this one case of beer?" they asked, mortally frightened.

"Just twenty-four lousy bottles," Upperberth said grimly.

The fan began battling for possession of the beer.

JaClem, however, had other things on his mind. His eyes the secretary, and crouched for the attack. The girl gathered her clothes about her in pretty confusion, and fled for the forest. JaClem panted off in close pursuit.

In the meantime, Upperberth had discovered a revolting thing. There before him on the ground lay the Warren Manuscript. Retching, Upperberth grabbed von Heine and started for the forest.

"Come on!" Upperberth muttered. "There's nothing for us here. Maybe we'll fare better in the jungle!"



STEIN

THE PSYCHO LAB

GET THE IMAGINATIONS OF

REDD BOGGS

Who, me? Oh, No! You're not going to get me inside that room and start that videomati scope thing whirring and purring over me! I'll talk, only let me stand out here in the corridor.... Don't shove!

Bemidji, Minnesota, is the little town where I was born. So far they haven't made my birthplace a national shrine, so don't bother planning any pilgrimages there next summer. 1921 was the year, the day April 2nd.

About 1929 I discovered Buck Rogers and became aware of planets other than Earth. You know how it is: you ask, "Where is the end of the world?" and your mother tells you there isn't any end -- the world is round. That makes the world you know, the planet Earth, all the universe as far as you are concerned. The stars? God left the lights on.

Buck Rogers literally opened for me the gates to the spaceways, the fourth dimension, and perhaps best of all the future. In 1935 I bought my first sfmag, the ASF containing Ray Callan's "Son of Old Faithful." Also, I had no collector instinct at that time, and gave away my mags after reading them. A retired cop read them from cover to cover, then burned them in his back yard. I pause in silent mourning when passing the place, now that I have been enlightened.

ASF has always been my favorite, on its merits between 1939 and 1942, and otherwise thru sentiment, at least in part, because it is the first sfmag I read. The Standard twins are closing in on Astounding now. Unknown was a favorite during its day, and with Super Science and Astonishing, gave ASF a close race. My favorite authors are Heinlein-MacDonald-Moros, Jack Williamson, Cliff Simak, Leo Smith, van Vogt -- this could go on for pages. Favorite yarns include the Lensman series, "Beyond This Horizon," "Cosmic Engineers," "Crucible of Power," and a yarn published only last year: "The Equalizer." Books? "Strange News From Heaven," "Last and First Men," Thorne Smith....

I entered fandom early in 1941. The first fms in my life were The Parasite and Spaceways, my first fanzine appearing in the latter. My own fanpubbing began as recently as Spring 1947, with Caprice (a one-shot), and Timpone (which is still publishing). I've met a few fans -- Bob Stein, Donn Brazier, Phil Schumann, the MPS gang -- and a few authors -- and, by gum, they're all a swell bunch.

Aw right, I spilled it all -- can I go now?



Upper berth was lost.

Around him, the gnarled trunks of the trees took on menacing shapes in the gloom. He felt a vague premonition of danger. He would have been even more terrified if he knew the real situation he was in.

He was being watched by many, many eyes. He was hopelessly surrounded by beautiful, wild, half-clad women. Warrior-women!

END OF PART THREE

Come on, all you potential geniuses of the scribbling pen, dash off Part Four of THE GREAT STF BROADCAST! We want to find out what happens next!

You, too, can become a millionaire!

Yes, why sit around and moan because you haven't got money to jingle in your pockets. Look at your stf file! See all those duplicate issues, all those mags that you have to dust every few days, but will never open, because you're so busy reading the current crop?

Why not sell 'em?

What? You don't know anyone who would buy 'em?

Brother, your problems are solved.....

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An ad the size of this one could bring you ~~money~~, and it costs you only ~~gizmo~~ -- two bits, to be exact. ADVERTISE:

It's not too late to get your copy of B E M B O O K!

This sci-fiction oneshot, a TECHNOPOLARIAN Publication, (so you know it's swell!) contains such enthralling stf tales as:

"Enterprise"

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"Whiffingham's Revenge"

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Less than a dozen copies left! It costs only 15 cents!

Order your BEMBOOK from the publishers of SPACEWARP -- today!

"But vat aboudt der beer?" the scientist protested. "Ve will haff no beer!"

"You'll never get beer here," Upperberth retorted, pointing at twenty-four empty bottles, complete with foam.

"Ach," the German said sadly, "Ve will haff to set up a still und make moonschiener. Like prohibition it will be yet!" The two melted into the forest.

They hadn't gone far when they stumbled upon JaClem and the secretary. JaClem was industriously kissing her. He looked up happily.

"I caught her, Upperberth," he grinned.

Upperberth nodded. "So I see."

"I couldn't run any farther," the secretary explained.

Von Haine nodded wisely. "Many a romance haff started off mit a gallon of corn und ended up mit a full crib."

Upperberth snorted. "This one started with a case of beer."

"In der end, idt amounts to der same thing."

Suddenly they heard a crashing in the underbrush. In a moment, a group of half-naked men burst upon them. Their primitive, wild features were twisted with hate. They were armed with heavy torn-off tree branches.

"What are they?" Upperberth cried in terror.

Von Haine was staring in fascination. "Ach du lieber!" he murmured. "Vat a sensation dis will make ven I tell der Anthropological Zoosity! Imagine -- Homo Sapiens contemporary mit der Reptile Age! You are haffing der privilege to witness a group of pre-historic men," he said to Upperberth.

"I am not!" Upperberth screamed. "It's those damned authors, looking for their money!"

With this desperate cry, Upperberth plunged into the dank, foul jungle. von Haine and the authors stampeded after him. JaClem and the secretary didn't even notice.

UPPERBERTH RAN WILDLY through the jungle. He had lost von Haine and was alone. Behind him, in full cry, came the authors.

"They'll never get that money," Upperberth panted. "Come to think of it, I don't have any money to give them."

Dorlasses was closing its fist on the steaming jungle. Upperberth was walking now. He had given the authors the slip. His professional training had made that easy. But he was hungry and tired. Where was he going to sleep? Where were the others?