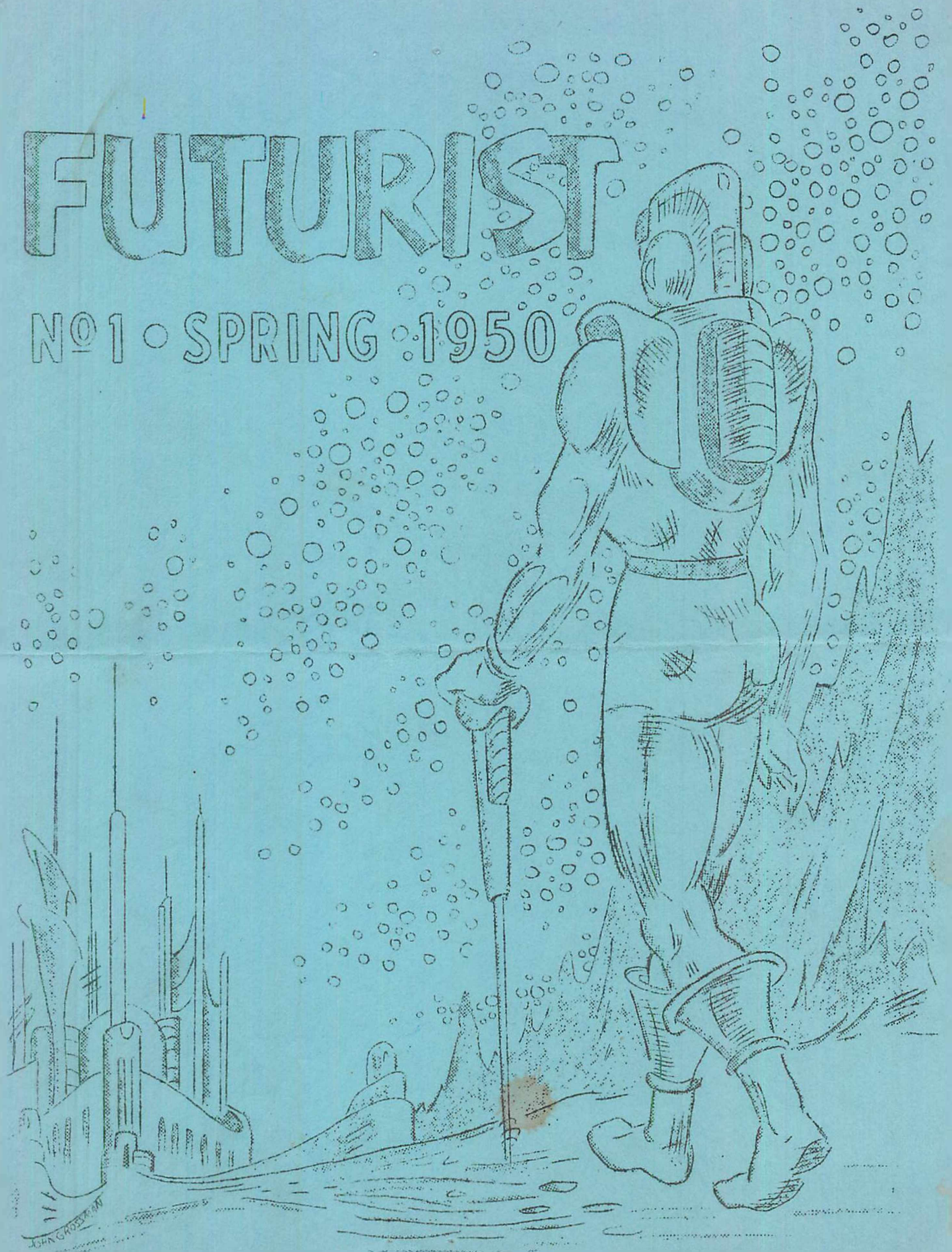


# FUTURIST

NO 1 • SPRING • 1950





Vol. 1, No. 1

# FUTURIST

Spring 1950

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NFFF President.....Rick Sneary  
NFFF Chairman, Board of Directors.....Arthur H. Rapp

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# FROM MINNEAPOLIS 18 BY THE EDITOR

THIS IS the first issue of a new fanzine, edited by Redd Boggs, published by Ray C. Higgs, and sponsored by the National Fantasy Fan Federation. The principal idea behind this collaborative effort is to give members of the NFFF something more for their money than emblem stickers for their envelopes and free stationery --- namely, a regularly appearing fanzine. that, because it is subsidized by a large organization, has a better than average chance of surviving in the uncertain field that is sf ayjay.

Though, of course, this fanzine has the weakness shared

by most others of depending upon the efforts of individual fans -- the editor and the publisher -- for its continued well-being and prosperity, it does have the advantage of the backing of more than 400 organized fans, a support that should enable Futurist to weather any financial storm that occurs. Also, since Futurist is technically the property of the NFFF, it can continue even if this editor and this publisher are, at some future time, unable to carry on.

The policy of Futurist is rather wide and is indicated to some extent by the sort of material that is presented in this first issue. Futurist is interested, first and foremost, in magazine science fiction, rather than mag fantasy and weird fiction. Magazine sf has been somewhat neglected of late, due to the rise of the semi-pro book publishers, and in this magazine I'd like to correct that state of affairs. In brief, in Futurist, we'll rave about a new "classic" while it is in pulp print, rather than waiting for months or years till it finds its way between hard covers. Book reviews are not wanted here, except those which examine the differences between pulp and hard-cover versions of the same story, or those having some relation to pulp sf.

(Concluded on page 18.)



# Stereotypes Are Dangerous

By CHANDLER DAVIS

THE SUBJECT of stereotyping has been discussed enough to be almost as dull as the stereotypes themselves. And it doesn't really matter too much. So we meet in every story the megalomaniac genius or the clean-cut, woman-chasing slipsticker. So what? It just means we are reading mediocre fiction, which after all is our prerogative.

But sometimes -- all too often -- you run into stereotypes which are of more concern. Take L. Ron Hubbard's "The Automagic Horse" in SF for October 1949. In this story appear the following: a rough-hewn, stingy r-rolling Scot; an uneducated, tough, wise-speaking Italian-American; and a Jew who peddles insurance to his uncle's employees. If I remember right, each is the only character of his population group to come on the scene. In the same story (this is so usual I need hardly mention it) we have the handsome, carefree engineer hero, who one assumes is Irish-American, and the sexy wench, apparently Yankee.

Pretty routine sort of casting, that's all -- or so you might say -- and I'll stipulate right away that it's not the kind of consciously fascist racism you find in John Buchan. I'm sure that if there was a conscious thought in Hubbard's mind while he wrote "The Automagic Horse" it has not found its way into print. It's farthest from my mind to accuse him of ill will toward anyone in writing the thing.

What I'm charging him with is his very thoughtlessness. Readers who are convinced that all Italians talk like gangsters and follow the races, will give an internal uh-huh reading Hubbard's words; readers who habitually assume that an Italian they haven't met yet is going to turn out to have those same stereotyped characteristics will be reinforced in the habit; readers who are Italians will quite possibly be insulted. All of these reactions will be below the conscious level in most readers. That doesn't matter. They are still there. They still will make it harder for Italians in this country to get the marks they deserve from nominally unprejudiced high school teachers, or to get the jobs they need from nominally unprejudiced employers. "The Automagic Horse" is one more straw on the back of an overladen camel which if this were a cartoon I would label "Democracy."

My complaint isn't only against Hubbard. If it was, it would be gratuitous and malicious for me to do my complaining publicly. But also, if he were the only offender, there would be no offense. It is exactly because reams of the stuff are written that it is dangerous. It is for the same reason that Hubbard, casting about randomly for cute characters for his story, picked a collection of stock types as the easiest to handle, and picked these particular ones as the easiest and most familiar of all. It is for the same reason again that very few readers, even those who would bristle at the word "kike", will bristle when they read "The Automagic Horse." To summarize -- it is because these characters are stereotypes that they are stereotypes.

And it is a serious matter: character-typing of this sort does a lot more harm than just detracting from the interest of a story.

What's to be done about it? Robert W. Lowndes gave part of the answer a few years back when, as editor of a Western magazine, he said he would accept no story with a Negro, Indian, or Mexican villain unless in the same story there was a member of the same group who was sympathetic and unsteretyped. That's an excellent rule of thumb for weeding out the worst cases, though I think it should be extended to weeding out a story like Hubbard's (which had no villain), or stories like A. Bertram Chandler's in which all the British enlisted men (though not villains) speak with jockney accents and limited vocabulary. It's still only a rule of thumb and only a palliative at best, and few editors follow it.

The best place to look for a remedy is to the writers. What's the trouble there? Usually, as I say, thoughtlessness. The chances are that Hubbard has Italian friends who speak the same dialect he does and Jewish friends who are neither businessmen nor nepotists. The chances are that Chandler didn't change his pronunciation of the initial "h" when he himself left the enlisted ranks. They just don't think about the effect of what they write.

Writers could, perfectly well, avoid stereotypes. Even editors who wouldn't follow the Lowndes Rule would not reject stories which avoided the stereotypes. But writers can go farther than mere avoidance. The easiest way to prevent direct offense is to name all your characters Farnsworth or Dodd, and let it go at that, but this is no good, for my money. A writer has the opportunity to do something positive: to illustrate in his stories the trivial and unobtrusive fact, still worth pointing out as often as possible, that Flannery and Sarafian can be buddies. It adds verisimilitude, too. I remember reading the works of one prolific ASF author for years before I realized how monochromatic his engineers were. When I did realize, I saw also that it had been bothering me all that time. Were this author's friends really so uniform that he cast his stories this way automatically? I've learned since that they aren't, but the stories remain the same. Myself, I've rarely been in schools or jobs where my associates didn't include Negroes, Jews, and what-have-you; when I have been, I've know why and I haven't liked it.

But leave verisimilitude aside. To the reader we are most concerned about it may not seem natural that Flannery and Sarafian drink beer together. It may even stick out like a sore thumb; the reader has after all been presented for years with even more segregation in his pulp fiction than he is likely to have seen in his daily life. That doesn't matter. Slug him with it. Let your slipsticking hero be Negro; let his buddy be Chinese or East Indian. Why not? After a while the reader will get used to it -- which is exactly the object.

What's more, don't forget that Flannery and Sarafian can be buddies even if Sarafian speaks with an accent. This is something that's often forgotten by those who would agree perfectly with the rest of what I've said. The movie "Gentleman's Agreement", for example, conveyed strong indignation at discrimination against Jews; but it considered only Jews who look, talk, and act like Yankees. Now I have

## STEREOTYPES ARE DANGEROUS

Jewish friends who "look Jewish." I have Jewish friends who speak with one accent or another. For that matter, practically all Negroes "look like Negroes," and most of the Puerto Ricans in this country are foreign-born and show it in their speech. The case against discrimination does not rest on the fiction that people are all alike. Nor does rejection of such a stereotype as the Italian fruit-vendor mean that all Italians holding fruit-stand concessions should sell them to Yankees. However, if an author needs a fruit-stand in a story I don't think he should make its proprietor a Verdi - singing Italian, even though there is nothing wrong with such a person's having such an occupation; the reader will have met the character previously in a disproportionately large number of stories.

In short, complete stereotypes are very harmful even when handled as sympathetically as in H. L. Gold's "Trouble With Water," but it may be desirable sometimes to give a non-Yankee character some t r a i t s (such as a foreign accent) which have been unfairly represented as objectionable by the stereotypers.

You may have been bothered a few paragraphs back by a suspicion that my suggestions were departing from the realm of the immediately-feasible. I'll settle that right now: They are. A Negro hero would not be tolerated by many editors, and I suppose practically all editors would prefer that you make him white. I don't know any market except for leftist magazines or arty ones where a Negro hero would be allowed to get the girl if she was white. There is an instance from my own writing experience: a (sympathetic) character in one of my stories was a Negro physicist, in manuscript; in the story as published it was not mentioned that he was Negro. In breaking this resistance down, readers as well as writers should help. Letters criticizing chauvinist stories would go a long way toward persuading editors to accept positive ones. (I should add that already aSF has had many stories with sympathetic, unsteretyped characters who were East Indians, Italians, Jews, or even Negroes. No major reform is necessary for this precedent to be followed.)

I haven't said anything yet about the specially science-fictional aspects of the question. In s-f you're not writing about the world of 1950 which, as far as inter-group harmony goes, stinks. You're writing often about the distant future, when we hope the present divisions and oppressions will be eliminated. This makes a difference. Example: In a story about the near future you should include Negro scientists, even though there are tragically few of them in fact. In your 24th-century America there should be Polynesian and Eskimo scientists as well, because you can be sure they'll be around when the 24th century arrives. Second example: Characters who you might name Iso Yukawa or Selma Hirschman in the 20th century might, if the time was more remote, be named Vassily Yukawa or Christiana Hirschman. You want to assume that all population groups will participate in future civilization, but you want also to recognize that they will not remain as separate as they have been. (The once-oppressed Welsh are still a distinct group, yet no Englishman would forbid his daughter to marry an otherwise qualified Welshman.) Third example: In the 24th century, Parker Hollister will be as likely to speak with a non-American accent as Karel Kowalewski, or almost as likely.

There is one type of stereotyping which I haven't discussed in spite of the fact that it raises problems similar to those of nationality stereotyping. I mean the Kinder-Küche-Kirche line, which is followed appallingly often in American popular literature and has occasionally appeared quite blatantly in science fiction. The reason I haven't discussed it is that here s-f -- or at least aSF -- is way ahead of most pulps, and still improving. Women in s-f are frequently educated (even the stock hero-marrying daughters of professors); they are also frequently dominant characters, important to the story as more than love-objects. It is unfortunate that, as illustrated recently in aSF, doctors of the future all are male and are assisted by female nurses. But on the whole s-f authors invent women who are people almost half as often as they invent men who are people, which is more than you can say for mystery writers.

I hope the recommendations I have made will be taken seriously -- especially by those of you who are editors and/or writers. To go along with the tradition that Negroes, Jews, and Italians can be admitted into fiction only in minor roles as stereotyped comic relief is to reinforce readers' minds in the prejudice, which I assume is abominable to all of us, that Negroes, Jews, and Italians cannot be admitted to equal positions in American life. It is not enough to refrain from expressing bias; it is necessary to counteract the bias present in practically every page now read by Americans.

The criterion of your success in the next story you write will not be your adherence to my suggestions; they are only my suggestions, and I'd like to have discussion of their correctness. The criterion will be the reactions of your readers. Write a story that will give a few bigots the jolt they need. Write a story that will open the eyes of the unconsciously bigoted. Write a story that will compensate, for some Negro reader, for the insults he has taken from white people in just the day preceding.

Remember that the large majority of your readers -- the large majority -- either discriminate or are discriminated against. Keep that in mind all the time. Then write a story that satisfies your conscience.

THE END

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# Forgotten Fantasies

BY WALTER A. GOSLET

F. F. #1:  
THE ETERNAL CONFLICT  
by Nictzin Dyalhis.

Weird Tales was still in its infancy in 1925, but had found it no longer necessary to struggle for life. In the October issue, which completed Farnsworth Wright's first year in the editorial chair, appeared Nictzin Dyalhis' "The Eternal Conflict," an unusual and entertaining tale which even today would rate high on reader polls -- something I consider almost miraculous in light of the generally low level of quality in the early Weird Tales I have read.

"The Eternal Conflict" is a fantasy novelette, told in the first person by a 20th century New York businessman who is also "a member of a great and secret Occult Order" which maintains a temple to "a high goddess" whom they consider "the goddess of Love, Beauty, Light and Truth." The story itself is preceded by an "apology" of explanation, and concludes with an "afterword."

The "high goddess," the Silver One, summons this worshipper of hers, in spirit, from Earth to her home far off in space. She wants him to spy out the headquarters of the Lord of Hate, who seems to be plotting a war against her. Although he leaves his body behind in her temple in New York City, he finds his spirit enclosed within a new body when he lands upon the planet which is his destination. Almost immediately he is set upon by strange ferocious beasts, and is rescued by barbarous Earthmen who take him before their master, the Lord of Hate himself. Strangely, the intruder is given his freedom and becomes the hateful One's personal attendant. Together they attend a high conference of other evil leaders from all over space which convenes in an immense hollow cube with no visible entrance.

At this Infernal Council he finds that the Lords of Wrong all are aware of his mission. In punishment he is imprisoned in the heart of a forming sun, and hurled far away. But his goddess, the Lady of Love, rescues him not long after the sun cools to solidity. The Lord of Hate sends his hordes to recapture his victim, but the Shining One's forces repel them. As the Lord of Hate arrives and launches a lethal bolt at her spy, the Shining One protects him (this is the scene chosen for Bronsatch's illustration) and returns such a potent blast that the Lord of Hate flees in terror back to his home planet.

Upon returning to the goddess' abode, the Earthman is praised by one of her superiors and ordered to return to the citadel of the Lord of Hate, or Lucifer, with a message. The dark Lord is furious to receive this word, but suddenly the Celestial who sent the Earthman appears, and instantly Lucifer's attitude changes to fear and he accepts the message. Immediately then, the Earthman and the Celestial are back

(Concluded on page 24.)

# The Martians Are Coming!

By DAVID RIFKIN

MAPS' FIRST AND BEST press agent was not a science fiction writer, but he had the qualifications. He was the person who translated Giovanni Schiaparelli's statement that he had seen "canali" on the surface of Mars as meaning that the astronomer had discovered the existence of Martian canals. Being Italian, Schiaparelli had used the word "canali" to mean "grooves" or "channels," rather than man-made structures like "canals," but the latter interpretation speedily became standard, and the existence of such works on Mars postulated, to those who accepted the "canal" definition, not only life on Mars, but intelligent life.

Although the existence even of "grooves" or "channels" is still a matter of hot conjecture among astronomers and laymen alike, many astute scientists, including Percival Lowell, have been convinced that intelligent beings inhabit Mars, and it is not surprising that from its earliest beginnings as a definable branch of fantasy, science fiction has depended heavily upon the "intelligent Martian" theory. Wild and woolly Martian invasions, and the perils of exploring the Red Planet, long have been a staple of most s-f magazines.

Because of the fact that, if laid end to end, all the fictional accounts of Mars and the Martians would stretch almost to Mars at aphelion, this article cannot discuss more than a tiny percentage of the Martian stories that have appeared in science fiction. Herein, I will mention or discuss only a few Mars yarns which seem to me the most intriguing and pertinent to my theme.

As he did in most areas of scientific thought, H. G. Wells may be said to have set the pattern in the Martian yarn with his War of the Worlds, which undoubtedly influenced science fiction writers as profoundly as did his Time Machine in dimensional-story development. There were earlier Martian stories, including Edward Bellamy's "The Blindman's World," in which the Martians were much more advanced than Earthlings, literally possessing foresight, but these obscure tales have influenced the present-day Martian story very little. Since War of the Worlds Martians have, for story purposes, been depicted as in-irical or at least pugnaciously imperialistic, and variations of the "Martian invasion" plot have been chased to ridiculous extremes by many writers. An example is Robert W. Lowndes' "The Martians Are Coming!" in which the invading beings, after almost frightening Earth into capitulation, are discovered by be insect-size, their expeditionary force being approximately as dangerous as a field full of beetles.

Perhaps the classic of Martian invasions in pulp s-f is Miles J. Breuer's "Mars Colonizes," in which the invasion of Earth was carried out by strictly legal means. Modern examples of Mars invasion include such tales as Ray Bradbury's "The Concrete Mixer," Arthur C. Clarke's "Loop-hole," and Eric Frank Russell's "A Present from Joe."

Inimical or friendly, however, the Martians of pulp fiction usually turn out to be humanoid beings, their females quite capable of capturing the eye of the handsome Earthman, and vice versa. The popular Martian yarn of old had two or three exotic Martian maids vying for the stout heart of the Earthman hero. The classic example of this outmoded pattern is Edgar Rice Burroughs' Carter of Mars novels, where he went so far as to depict the mating of the oviparous Martian princess with Terra-born John Carter.

Often, too, in such stories the Martian landscape is depicted as almost Earth-normal, not only having vegetation and water but sometimes vast jungles and perilous oceans. Furthermore, the political setups on Mars are portrayed in the pattern of the Balkans or other restless parts of Earth. The Martian story in such cases is merely a stock adventure plot transplanted to Mars for novelty's sake. Festus Pragnell's quaintly popular "Don Hargreaves" series, last seen in Amazing, is a typical refinement of this plot. His Martians are humanoid -- albeit giants -- and are ruled by kings and queens much like those which ruled on Earth in the near past.

The Martians more persons know about than any other breed -- the ones in the Buck Rogers comic-strip -- fit in here. Aside from faintly exotic names and tawny skin-coloring, they differ but little from terrestrials, and intermarriage between the species is possible. Here too the Martians of Edmond Hamilton's Captain Future stories should be mentioned. Interbreeding between the ruddy-skinned Martians and Earthmen, and indeed between all Solarians, is held possible. Hamilton removed the basic biological objections to this possibility by postulating a common origin for all humanoid races in the galaxy -- the Great Empire, a galactic civilization of eons-ago. Although this suggestion removes the odds against any other race, evolving separately, possessing exactly 48 chromosomes, each with its complicated pattern of genes, it seems to ignore the fact that environmental influences on the races of planets dissimilar to Earth would eventually produce physical differences which would prevent such miscengation.

Representing the Martians as alien beings, products of a different and unhuman stock, has become more popular in recent years, as the pendulum of belief swung back and science showed that humanoid beings could scarcely exist on Mars with its tenuous atmosphere, frigid climate, and lesser gravity. Of recent times the "classic" Martian maiden with gravity-defying bandeau has been seen less and less in science fiction, and the truly alien being of the fourth planet has come into prominence. Olaf Stapledon's Martians in Last and First Men, though not a pulp s-f concept and somewhat earlier in chronology than others, represents perhaps the most intriguing product of this trend. Evolving upon a Mars as present-day science describes it, these "subvital" units of radial energy, telepathically co-ordinated into one group mind, seem at once a thoroughly logical development of extra-terrestrial evolution and a believable example of "life as we do not know it."

Stanley G. Weinbaum's "A Martian Odyssey" was, of course, one of the first stories to develop the theme that alien minds may function on a psychological plane so different from ours as to render communi-

cation almost impossible. Tweel and the other peculiar inhabitants of Mars were the forerunners of all manner of weird Martians, and other extra-terrestrials, few of which have been so believably presented, however. An obvious example of a Martian yarn strongly influenced by "A Martian Odyssey," with perhaps some strains of Last and First Men, is Robert Moore Williams' "The Red Death of Mars," where the Martians are comatose, and exist as gem-like objects strewn in the dead cities of the planet until disturbed, when they pour forth as sentient vapors.

This latter tale suggests a Martian theme which is one of the most popular: the depiction of Mars as a dead or dying world, dominated only by broken cities and strange monuments. Ray Bradbury's famous "Million Year Picnic" is a prominent example, and his recent TWS stories, such as "And the Moon Be Still As Bright" and "The Lonely Ones," must also be mentioned. His tales are allegory first and science fiction second, however, and are not typical of contemporary treatments, in that they usually treat such factors as Martian temperature, air, and gravity too inaccurately.

A sub-phase of this theme is the portrayal of Mars as an incomparably more ancient Egypt, with evidences of ogygian greatness lurking in mysterious and undecipherable hieroglyphs, and the mighty powers of Martian science or witchcraft still preserving a tenuous sway over the dead planet. Clark Ashton Smith's "Vaults of Yoh-Vombis" is a particularly grim and colorful development in this vein, although in this story barbarian descendants of the once-great Martians remain on the scene to witness the doom that overtakes those who desecrate the ancient tombs.

This particular strain would seem to be particularly appealing to women writers, for both C. L. Moore and Leigh Brackett have made very striking use of it. In "Shambleau" and "Scarlet Dream" the former has presented a Martian setting, superficially little removed from the conventionalized "frontier Mars" scenes of Captain Future and similar thrillers, but transcending that pattern with suggestive effects that create an atmosphere of eeriness encircling the roaring Earth-dominated cities and spaceports. In her "Sorcerer of Rhannon," "Shadow Over Mars," and other stories, Leigh Brackett has exploited similar material to good effect.

The middle portions of Jack Williamson's "Crucible of Power" made use of similar suggestions of Mars' strange past, but provided a more technological heritage for present-day descendants of the ancients. And George O. Smith typically bore down for all he was worth on the technological angle to the exclusion of any Moore-like unrealities in his only real Mars tale, "Lost Art," the story of the discovery of a Martian power tube that eventually figured in the Venus Equilateral series.

One of the best depictions of Mars sleeping-but-not-quite dead is S. D. Gottesman's "Mars-Tube," a more or less matter-of-fact account of the first expedition to Mars and of the things they found there. In similar vein is the Machine City of the Captain Future series; both describe the amazing mechanized civilization left by the ancient Mar-

tians, but Hamilton's is more consciously a gimmick, calculatingly used for atmosphere and plot.

For the near-ultimate in this trend which has led from intelligent, near-human Martians, with their kings and countries, through malignant aliens of high culture, down to Martians whose only power or means of defense is that which exists from the dim past, one must cite such stories as Clifford D. Simak's "Hermit of Mars," where the Red Planet has no intelligent beings at all, being inhabited by strange animals and mobile vegetations, though this leads back to "A Martian Odyssey" in many respects.

Perhaps the latest dodge of s-f authors, designed to circumvent the biological objections to Martian-Earthlings matings, is to depict a Mars that has been colonized by terrestrials who, after the manner of America, eventually revolt and sever political ties with the mother planet. Such colonists thus become, for all purposes, bona fide aliens -- neatly qualified for any manner of warfare or invasion the author wishes to describe, and just as eligible for Romeo and Juliet switches in a plot as the "best Martian princess in days of old. Ross Rocklynne used such Martians in his "Matter of Length," and when A. E. van Vogt needed a Martian war in his "Hand of the Gods," such a gimmick was exactly what he was looking for.

There are other interesting byways of the Martian Story, -- one of them the problem of why the Martian civilization disappeared -- granting, of course, that there ever was one. Few s-f writers have been willing to put the blame on normal racial senescence, preferring more dramatic methods of disposing of the ancient Martians. Clifton B. Kruse's "Secret of the Canali" ascribed to the Martians the ability to escape the dying planet through the fourth dimension. In John Russell Fearn's "Red Heritage," Mars' atmosphere and water is stolen via a "funnel of force" by the Venusians, thus virtually "killing" the red planet. In a more recent yarn Fearn rewrote the same story, and the method by which the Venusians sabotaged Mars also suggests Williamson's "Non-Stop to Mars," in which the Martians tried the same trick on Earth.

Other such intriguing aspects could be taken up in a future article, but time flies, and it won't be long, perhaps, before all such speculations will be as out-of-date as fanzine articles evaluating stories on probabilities of atomic power. Some day in the near future somebody is going to rocket to Mars and, chances are, his discoveries will make all science fiction about that planet look utterly silly!

THE END

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IF THIS IS A SAMPLE COPY, and it probably is, unless it is a complimentary or review copy, maybe you'll want to subscribe. Remember, the rates are 10¢ per copy, three issues for 25¢ for NFFF members; and 15¢ per copy, or two issues for 25¢ for non-members. But whether or not you subscribe, the editor will appreciate your comments on this issue. Letters will be published next issue in "Say What You Please!"

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# Letter Hacks of the Dawn

BY ARTHUR LOUIS JOQUEL, II

LETTER SECTIONS have almost always been an integral part of science fiction magazines. To an allegedly hard-working editor the letters he received, purporting to tell him how to run his magazine, were a blessing. They were free. They took very little work to assemble into a nice fat department that took up pages which might otherwise have held a story for which -- horrors! -- the editor might have had to pay.

And how the readers loved to see their names in print! They lapped it up. They wrote more letters, ad infinitum. The practice still continues, and probably will continue as long as we have science fiction magazines.

Almost every science fiction fan of any note has had at least one letter printed in a professional magazine. What fun it is to look back on those old letters and relive the days when "Papa" Gernsback started Amazing Stories on its multicolored career.

Amazing had been running for almost a year before the first readers' column came into being. And it was some months later -- November 1927, to be exact -- that a reader who was later to become a "famous fan" wrote a letter to Amazing. The fan was "Doc" Swisher, he of the famous fanzine checklist of later years, and in collaboration he wrote:

"Editor, Amazing Stories:

No doubt we could think of a great many extremely flattering and complimentary remarks to make about your magazine but inasmuch as everyone else has made them repeatedly, we shall instead devote our letter to a few criticisms and suggestions.

To begin with, why in -- Hades -- do you insist on printing those detestable, boring, out-of-place, and otherwise obnoxious detective stories...which by no conceivable line of reason can be called up to the standard of most of the others?

Kick No. 2: And when we say 'others' we emphatically exclude painfully humorous atrocities as 'Solander's Radio Tomb,' 'Doctor Fosdick,' 'Hick's Inventions with a Kick' (a big kick), and others of their ilk.

No. 3: Our aesthetic tendencies are extremely excited -- or rather, pained by certain of your illustrations; all except those by Mr. Paul, whose pictures are for the most part excellent....

[There are some suggestions, and then a sort of apology for sounding 'so heartless.']

Paul L. Stanchfield  
Robert D. Swisher

Ann Arbor, Mich."

To which Uncle Hugo answered that "your presumably scolding letter simply radiates good humor." - 14 -

Many prominent science-fictionists of later days wrote letters: Ray Palmer, Willy Ley, Jerome Siegel -- one of "Superman's" creators; Charles Schneeman, John W. Campbell, Jr., Otto Binder, Nat Schachner, Jack Williamson, and many others.

But Gernsback had left Amazing and had started Air Wonder, Science Wonder, and Science Wonder Quarterly. And in the first Quarterly appeared a letter from a 13-year-old who was to become Terra's No. 1 fan. With the enthusiasm that characterizes him to this day, 4e Ackerman raved, in the autumn of 1929:

"Editor, Science Wonder Quarterly:

Although I am only twelve years old, I have taken a delight in reading the magazines you have published for almost the last four years.

This is my idea of Science Wonder Stories:

Take every word that means excellent out of the largest dictionary in the world; multiply those words by the number of seconds in two thousand centuries, and add to that amount the number of stars in the heavens and the answer will give you a very slight idea of what I think of your magazine.

I have read the 'Science Fiction Series' and think them great. I can assure any reader of 'our' magazine that he is missing a rare treat if he does not send for them.

I am very pleased to see you are going to publish a Quarterly...

And as for Paul's pictures. When better pictures are drawn, Paul will draw them...

Come on now readers, let's give Science Wonder Stories a big yell. HIP, HIP, HIP, HURRAYYYYYY.

Forrest Ackerman  
San Francisco, Cal."

On which Gernsback commented that Aoky's math strained his capacities somewhat!

In January of 1930, Astounding Stories of Super Science made its first appearance. And in the same month, Julius Unger, later editor of the fanewsie Fantasy Fiction Field, and present dealer in books and magazines of the old days, wrote to Air Wonder Stories:

"Editor, Air Wonder Stories:

The requisition of authors like Edgar Rice Burroughs, Stanton A. Coblentz, Ray Cummings, A. Hyatt Verrill, and A. Merritt to the ranks of your authors would greatly enhance the value of Air Wonder Stories. I am in hopes that this suggestion will receive grave consideration for, as a reader of this periodical, I am intensely interested in its welfare.

The best story in the latest edition was 'Cities in the Air' by Edmond Hamilton. Stories of insect peril are also very instructive and entertaining. How about an Air Wonder Annual or Quarterly? I'm sure that the readers will want it.

Julius Unger  
Brooklyn, N. Y."

Air Wonder combined with Science Wonder a few issues later, so Julie never got his Quarterly.

The "reprint" controversy began. Some wanted them. Some didn't. And in the November 1930 Amazing Stories, the present editor of Avon Fantasy Reader wrote:

"Editor, Amazing Stories:

Many of your readers ask for reprints. Many others object to them. You say that you feel that the magazine is to give new and original matter. Personally, I want reprints. I have devised an idea to satisfy those that want them and those that don't.

Publish an Annual in which only reprints are to be given....

Donald A. Wollheim  
New York, N. Y."

Poor Don never got his Annual, either, though Dr. Sloane promised it his consideration.

Miracle Science and Fantasy made its brief appearance. And in the October 1931 issue of Amazing, a future editor made a prediction that almost came true ten years later, and in 1950 may actually come to pass:

"Editor, Amazing Stories:

I have read Amazing Stories since the September issue, 1930, but have sent away for, and received, the January 1930 issue. I think that the 'Pioneers of Science-fiction' is a good motto, because it is true. Although Amazing Stories was the first, four companies now publish science fiction magazines. I see that a new one has just come out. Well, the more the merrier...

If you put one plant in a fertile field, it won't take long for the field to be covered with them. That's how it is with Science-Fiction. Before long the newsstands will be stocked with dozens of Science-Fiction magazines. Then, when everybody is reading them, won't the present readers of Scientifiction be proud to say 'I read the first Scientifiction magazine ever published.'

Though I am only fourteen years old, Science Fiction is my favorite dish.

Charles D. Hornig  
Elizabeth, N. J."

Little did Charlie realize that a few years later he would be editing one of the magazines himself!

A few months later an English girl, Miss Olive Robb, took "Doc" Smith to task about his use of the English language. She took an incidental swing at John W. Campbell, Jr., too. The latter more or less ignored her, but EESPd wrote an immediate answer; two months later, Miss Robb again popped in; "Doc" answered, but Miss Robb got the last word. About that time Amazing's pages received the first letter of a



fan who was to have a movement named after him. In the July 1932 issue appears:

"Editor, Amazing Stories:

For the past six years I have read your magazine. During this time the periodical kept up its extremely high standing of excellent illustrations and well-written stories. But -- during the past year, your magazine has degenerated appreciably. Where are Paul's colorful pictures and the stories? Gone are the days of fanciful imaginative fantasms. Bright and rich in imagination, let's have more "impossible" stories and less of hard fact. I think many of your readers agree with me. As for your authors, the only ones keeping up their standard are Dr. Keller, E. Hamilton, R. F. Starzl, Stanton A. Coblentz and J. W. Campbell ("bless his heart"), not forgetting that new genius, S. P. Miller.

John Michel  
Brooklyn, N. Y.

Dr. Sloane commented that having science correct led to "hard fact," and that Amazing "was already... giving too many fantastic and impossible tales." I thought that started in Palmer's regime!

In the interim the two Wonders had combined, gone small size, returned to large size again. And in the April 1933 Wonder Stories was printed a mournful missive:

"Editor, Wonder Stories:

I am sure there is such a thing as mental telepathy; and I am almost certain that I have experienced it. It seems that every time I get a great idea for a story or an invention, someone else comes out with it. Or maybe it's the other way around. When someone else thinks of a new plot or an invention I think of it also. I believe I could have come out with some of them myself....

Milton Rothman  
Philadelphia, Pa."

I wonder why Milt, of all the fans in the world, should have been so singularly involved in a vile plot to rob him of his wonderful ideas?

In the April 1933 Amazing Stories, Forrest J Ackerman set a record by having three letters in a single issue of one magazine. Time wore on, Amazing went small size. So did Wonder Stories -- again. Street & Smith took over Astounding Stories, and new editor F. Orlin Tremaine started "thought variants." In January 1934, Astounding published a letter from the "Chinese Buck Rogers":

"Dear Editor:

Well! Your second issue of Astounding Stories is everything that the first issue wasn't! It sure is getting better, no mistake! And the cover was an astounding cover, a long way from that first one. How about a swell cover portraying a space ship -- suitable for framing? And be sure

you paint space black -- not blue.

The stories were ninety percent better, Prisms of Space being the best short story, and Telegraph Plateau the best novelette.

How about a reader's department now?

Bob Tucker  
Bloomington, Ill."

Then came the deluge. With Hoy Ping Pong, the spwsstfm, and the First Staple War came a flood of new names. The novelty of letter-writing was gone. But the editors simply ran more of the guff, and everybody was happy.

THE END

/Reprinted in slightly revised form from Sun Trails #2, Summer 1941, edited and published by Arthur Louis Joquel, II./

FROM MINNEAPOLIS 18 (Concluded from page 4)

Glancing through this issue, you will discover that all the material has some connection with pulp stf. Chan Davis' article discusses the writing of magazine stories; Dave Rifkin's describes some of the ideas writers have had about Mars as a story-setting; Tom Watkins' investigates the projection of stf into slick magazines; Art Joquel's reminisces about fan-letters in stf magazines of the past; and Art Rapp's item puts a point to all the discussion by examining the relation of fandom to the professional magazines.

Futurist's policy isn't so strict that I don't want material on such subjects as fandom's affairs, as well as humor and satire of various sorts. Almost the only thing I don't want absolutely is discussion of book weird fiction. As I said above, Futurist is interested in pulp stf, most of all, and pulp fantasy only secondarily.

Of course, no fiction is wanted, and at the present time no poetry is needed.

There is one more restriction as to material: Since the NFFF is financing the thing, it seems only fair that no articles be printed here that roundly condemn the club. It is considered rather impolite in most circles to attempt to cut your host's throat after he has made you welcome in his home. I myself do not always agree with the NFFF's policies, but I do not feel that this magazine is the right place to criticize these things. There are many other places to do that.

Non-members as well as members are welcome to contribute, and all manuscripts will be considered without regard to the status of the contributor. Please send all material to the editor, not to the publisher. My address is on the contents page.

See you again in the summer.

--- THE EDITOR.

# The Tentacle Crowd

By T. E. WATKINS

WHAT EVER HAPPENED to the tentacle crowd? Time was when the stf fan could depend on meeting one or more of these hellish creatures in every issue of a science fiction magazine. Usually they came from outside the solar system and their science was far superior to that of Earth. They could always be distinguished by their tentacles. They had one or more of these appendages, perhaps as many as ten or twenty. This enabled them to do a number of things at once -- they never seemed to be right-tentacled or left-tentacled like humans are right-handed or left-handed.

For example, one tentacle could drive the spaceship; another could summon help from other members of the crowd; one tentacle could flick tobacco specks from one eye that was filled with tobacco specks blown there by our hero, George, to confuse the tentacled one; the other three or four tentacles could be used to restrain George, who was doing his best to save us. You can see the advantage that such a being would have.

In spite of this advantage, George usually won out. Few tentacled ones ever got to first base. Our boys usually came up with some gimmick that wiped them out.

Until lately, none of this horrible bunch has been near the solar system. Our boys have been fighting among themselves. The villains have been our boys gone wrong. And you can get that in Dick Tracy. I sort of miss the tentacled ones and the narrow escapes.

The big news is that this tentacled crowd has again invaded the solar system. They are disguised this time, but they are definitely back. I am not too sure that they have tentacles, but it is the same gang. The super science is there, they have odd-sounding names starting with "X", and they are as hard-hearted a lot as one would want to find anywhere. These fellows are not just cruel, they are beyond cruelty. They exist on that high plateau of scientific achievement that is willing to sacrifice an entire planet and all its inhabitants for the rest of the galaxy. That may sound noble and wonderful until you realize that we (you and I) are the ones with the galactic leprosy.

These fellows cannot be found in Startling, aSF, or Amazing. They are in the Saturday Evening Post. The December 24, 1949 issue carries a story by Graham Doar (whoever he is) titled "The Outer Limit".

Bill, flying the super X2JTO at four times the speed of sound, spots a flying saucer, no less. He gives chase; he gets caught. They take him inside the saucer and talk to him like a mother. They look -- well, Bill can't describe them, they are just "presences". (No tentacles in evidence, you notice, but it's the same crowd.) Xeglon, commander of the tentacled ones, tells Bill that he is going to scow "Catalyst X" in our stratosphere to contain us in our own backyard because

we play around with atomic bombs and that aint right, and they don't want us lousing up the galaxy. If we blow off too many bombs, "Catalyst X" will go "WissashHEHH!" and the good old Earth will be the other end of a double sun.

Bill, our hero, does not whip the tentacled ones. That would be a little raw for the Post slick-paper readers. No, the author gives Bill the unpleasant task of going back to his commanding officer at the air force field, and convincing him -- but I don't want to spoil the story. And it is a terrific story. It is well-written as only a Post story can be well-written. Don't miss it. You may not be able to get a December 24 issue of the magazine by this time, but this tale will probably be anthologized somewhere this year.

The Saturday Evening Post has published science fiction before, but this is further along the stf adventure line than they have ever gone. The major premise in this story is much more difficult to put over than in most Post stf stories. For example, in "It's Great To Be Back", by Robert Heinlein, the scientific premise was very simple -- that the gravity of the Earth is eight times greater than that of the moon, and that someday man will live on the moon, a principle that most anyone will accept. In "The Outer Limit" you have to accept the X2JTO ship that flies four times the speed of sound, a flying saucer, the tentacled ones, and finally "Catalyst X".

Other Post stories recently have involved a girl from Venus who came to Earth looking for a man because there were no men on Venus ("Morning Star"); two beings from Mars, who came down in red ships, one to Moscow and one to Washington, and failed to solve the cold war in spite of their super science. Both stories had a sort of tongue-in-cheek embarrassment as though the author was dealing in gnomes and brownies. "The Outer Limit" has none of this; it sounds like cold fact.

This invasion of science fiction in the "slicks" is very important to both authors and fans. These big publications pay as much as ten times more for stories than do "pulp" publications. The Post usually alternates a western serial with a detective serial. If this trend goes on we may expect a science fiction serial now and then. This would be a fine goal for our science fiction authors. The fans will benefit by better stories all along the line.

The invasion will not harm our prozines. For example, the Post will never publish enough science fiction to lure rabid fans away from Startling. On the other hand, flashing a science fiction story now and then before five million readers of the Post can lure fans into the field.

This growth of science fiction should be slow and sure. It will not explode like a nova into as large a business as the love story, the detective novel, or western yarn. The public is being pounded by science in the form of the atomic bomb, the guided missile and the increasing technology of our economy. There is bound to follow a broadening interest of the general public in stories having a science basis.  
(Concluded on page 24.)

# The Hell With Science Fiction!

BY ARTHUR H. RAPP

"Jimmy thought we were a bunch of crackpots....Why? sez me. What does any of that have to do with science fiction? he replies. What good is it doing? How is it furthering s-f....?" -- Ed Cox in Postwar #1.

THE FIRST ISSUE of a new fanzine is an appropriate place for a bit of soul-searching. Why is it Redd Boggs is devoting weary hours to stencil-cutting, blue-pencilling, and typer-batting, when he could be benefiting society by removing Minnesota snow from Minneapolis sidewalks, or patriotically reducing the wheat surplus by guzzling its liquid by-products at the corner tavern?

For that matter, why am I aiding and abetting this literary massacre, grimly ignoring the fact that Joan Caulfield is voluptuating across the screen down at the Wolverine, and I could get there in time for the last show if I left now?

"Anything for the sake of fandom!" I hear an adolescent voice shouting. But look. Look at the quotation that heads this article. It seems that mere fannishness is not enough to qualify an activity for approval.

And that brings us to the crucial problem: What is fandom supposed to accomplish?

To a considerable group there is but one reason for expending time, effort and money on fan activity -- and that is to act as a sort of unpaid publicity agency for the prozines. It may be direct press-agentry, such as interviews with editors, news of forthcoming issues, or reviews of newly-published books. It may be indirect, long-range assistance in the form of missionary activity in behalf of s-f. The more fans, the more readers; the more readers, the larger the circulation figures of the prozines.

Admittedly this fervor isn't altogether altruistic. Most of the fans who indulge in it are either semi-pros themselves, with a sideline of bookdealing, agenting, or publishing -- or else they have more or less nebulous ambitions to someday devise a scheme for making a living in the fantasy field.

Parenthetically, there's not a thing in the world wrong with such motives. A large part of the professional science fiction field today is made up of the fandom of ten years ago. Certainly it is more logical to expect the fan of today to become the pros of tomorrow than to expect outsiders to take over the publishing company berths without the preliminary orientation provided by fandom. It can be done, of course, but other conditions being equal the guy with a few years of actifanning experiences has quite an advantage over a newcomer to this highly complex industry.

It's only natural that the professional should eye fandom with a speculative gleam, pondering how he can manipulate all this multi-directional energy and enthusiasm for his own purposes. He wouldn't be much of a businessman if he didn't have that attitude.

But other goals have been suggested for fandom than publicizing the pros. Said Speer's Fancyyclopedia (1944):

"From time to time, people will stand up and ask what is the purpose of fandom. The Michelistic reply was that fandom should join the Leftist movement and work for a scientific-socialist world state. Other semi-Michelistic replies are along similar lines. Speer maintains that fandom as fandom should influence the world only thru its influence on the individual fans, who may be influential men someday. Some have believed that stimulation of science is our chief justification. Probably the majority believe that the pleasure derived from fan activity is justification enuf."

It seems to me that last item, "the pleasure derived from fan activity," not only is the reason for such activity but is the basic factor which explains the growth of fandom in the first place.

Superficially this seems like reasoning in circles, but nonetheless it remains valid. The only authorities competent to decide what shall be the goal of fandom are the fans themselves; the fans are fans because they derive pleasure from the publishing, writing, club-organizing, and other diversions of fandom which would seem like work to anyone else; therefore the only purpose which fandom has is to serve as the framework upon which these individual activities can be pegged, and to give them an excuse for existing.

Notice that in accordance with this formulation, it is possible to be a fan, yet have not the slightest interest in science, science-fiction, or fantasy. And thus there is room in fandom for the legendary character who never reads a prozine and wouldn't know a Finlay from a Rod Ruth.

Yet most fans are interested in the prozines, for that is how they get into fandom in the first place. I think it is safe to assume the majority of fan careers are launched via a letter to some prozine readers' column. And taking the time and effort to write a letter to a magazine implies that the reader has done more than just read the publication for "escape" or "entertainment." He has brought to bear at least a rudimentary critical apprehension; he has thought about what he has read, and come to some conclusion which he deems sufficiently important to write down and send to the editor.

At this point a platoon of cynics will r'ar back and tell me most fan letters are written to get the writer some free egoboo through seeing his name in print. True enough -- but unless the casual stfmag reader has what might be called a "fan-slanted" mind, he will regard the satisfaction of seeing his name in print as outweighed by the irksomeness of sitting down and battering the written language into semi-

coherence on a sheet of paper. He will find it simpler to get his ego-boo by running 85 yards to a touchdown, or potting a deer with a high-powered rifle, or building a model B-25 complete with bomb-bay doors that open and close.

In short, the primary requisite for success in fandom is a predilection for amateur journalism. Fans do all sorts of things in connection with science fiction, but primarily they write. They write stories, and articles, and poetry whose prevailing lousiness is probably only exceeded in the mundane press associations and the "Poet's Corner" departments of weekly rural newspapers.

When fans aren't writing anything else they are writing letters. A year's crop of fanzines makes a stack about a foot high, but the average actifan's correspondence during the same period would probably tower two or three feet if written on the same thick paper. While an appalling amount of the stuff could be admirably used to support Thoreau's assertion that most material sent through the mail isn't worth the postage it costs, it does serve a purpose. It gives the fan (who is usually still in the midst of his educational years) more practice in gathering data, thinking about what he has gathered, coming to a conclusion, and expressing his conclusion coherently, than the most exacting of teachers could beat into his unwilling skull in a century.

I doubt if anyone can be exposed to actifandom for a time and thereafter read a newspaper or magazine or textbook with the same attitude as before. Fandom teaches one to analyze what he reads simply by presenting so many conflicting opinions that no one can possibly accept them all. And the vagueness with which the field of science fiction is defined leads to practically the entire body of human knowledge being fair fodder for the insatiable typewriters of the fan writers. Thus a fan gazes upon the authoritative opinions of adolescents on everything from bebop to Korzybski, air-power to relativity, and the knowledge that other people of his own age are actually interested in and apparently informed upon these topics automatically makes them catch his eye when he sees them mentioned in his non-fannish reading.

It is important to note that in fandom the main interest centers upon what one has to say, not how he says it. In the citadel itself, the FAPA, the most merciful comment upon the appearance of many of the publications is to say that, in general, they are legible. Apropos of this I recall some fan's comment regarding a recent exhibit of mundane apazines, that the mundane ayjay groups put all their effort into neat and artistic typography, with little regard for the content of their magazines.

Thus it would seem that to be a fan one must be the type of person who derives genuine pleasure from reading and from writing, one must have a rather fully-developed "bump of curiosity" so that the varied topics which come up for discussion and dissection in the fan-world are of interest, and very likely one must also have a sufficiently resilient imagination to absorb the impact of the often-zany ideas which are batted around so casually by fans.

There is no doubt that the prozines are a useful adjunct to this fannish empire. They serve as a screening test to weed out of Earth's billions the few thousands who roughly fit the requirements in the preceding paragraph. They also furnished a launching-point for fannish discussions and activities, a common ground on which the star-begotten can get acquainted and establish the basis for more complex discussion and argument.

Without prozines, it is doubtful that a worldwide complex of imaginative individuals would have come into being on such a scale as present fandom. But if professional stidom were to vanish now, I doubt whether it would mean the end of fandom. About the most serious consequence would be lack of an excuse to hold a world convention each year -- but even that probably would be replaced by an annual FAPA convention or some similar event. After all, as everyone who has attended one says, fans go to conventions to meet other fans. And if pros are only incidental there, they are surely not essential elsewhere in fandom.

So when anyone suggests that fandom's purpose is to serve the pros, my reaction is this: From the fan point of view the situation is exactly the reverse -- the pros exist to help us fans make fandom bigger and better. And why do we want fandom bigger and better?

Because it's more fun that way.

THE END

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### THE TENTACLE CROWD

(Concluded from page 20)

Yes, the tentacle crowd is back and with a slick finish. If Bill had looked real close at the "presences" he would have seen a tentacle or two. You can't develop a super science, fly a saucer, sow "Catalyst X," and hold Bill down with just two hands. That takes tentacles -- at least ten per creature.

THE END

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### FORGOTTEN FANTASIES

(Concluded from page 9)

on Earth. The mortal is informed that he will be called into service again shortly, but only after "death," and he must prepare. He awakens in the temple and, leaving, proceeds to retire from business and set his affairs in order. Later, he is roused from sleep to behold the goddess, some 30 feet tall though she is, has paid him a visit. It is so dark that there is no sign of his familiar room. But he is informed that it is not quite yet time to go; but soon....

This novelette stands out far above the stories I have read in the old Weird Tales, most of which were science fiction, rather than fantasy. Although my taste is naturally for science fiction, the early days of Weird Tales were the formative period of that literature, and fantasy-weird material had a much firmer footing, so perhaps it is not strange that this fantasy carries a bigger punch than the Weird Tales type of science fiction. It is yarns like this that make it possible for some fans to dream of the past and accolade "the good old days."





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Due to conditions beyond our control, the actual printing of this issue is somewhat faulty in spots. For the first time in some 8 years, we ran into the worse batch of mimeograph ink that caused us much worries and sorrow throughout the complete run. We hesitate to give the name of the ink because it is one of the leading brands, selling at top price, and has ALWAYS been of top quality. Much off-setting together with the off balance of from light to dark duplication was encountered. We tried eight pounds of a complete stock at the store where the ink was purchased. All proved to be of faulty quality. Four different mimeographs were tried out on the job - but to no avail. Therefore, neither the editor, publisher or NFFF can be held at fault. Please do not judge future issues of FUTURIST by the near-poor showing in duplication of this ish.

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