

PAST, PRESENT & FUTURE

No. 5: 1981

ISSN 0157-5430

Past, Present and Future, a quarterly for inquiry and reflection on science fiction, is produced for limited free distribution by Graham Stone, GPO Box 4440, Sydney 2001, Australia.

= 26 = THE ALIEN ONE, by ARTHUR L. WIDNER Jr.

Short Stories. You couldn't get a simpler title than that. It was a monthly magazine begun by Doubleday and continued by Popular Fiction Pub. Co. It does not seem well known and I cannot establish the dates when it began and ended: I guess the early 1920's and late 1950's. Its editors were Dorothy McIlwraith and Lamont Buchanan in the Popular period beginning I understand in 1938, and from May 1940 they also edited the better known Weird Tales. Miss McIlwraith continued handling Weird Tales till its demise in September 1954, and presumably was also responsible for Short Stories to the bitter end, though Buchanan may have left the firm altogether when he did Weird Tales after September 1949.

How much fiction of interest to us appeared in Short Stories is an open question. I have not seen any listed anywhere. But there was at least one which should not be overlooked.

Throughout the war and for some time thereafter a British edition was regularly produced. This was a skinny magazine about 9½" tall, similar in format to the British Astounding of the era. I happened to pick up the Nov 1946 issue of this version soon after it was on sale in Australia (in Townsville, where I was then serving in the Air Force, so that dates to before June 1947) and was pleasantly surprised to see what it included. That copy did not survive subsequent moves, but I remembered the story even if no one else knew of it. Therefore when Keith Curtis turned up this very issue recently I greeted with eager recognition.

The point of interest was The Alien One, by Arthur L. Widner Jr. This was not his first professional appearance, though the first under his own name: he had earlier had The Perfect Incinerator in Science Fiction Quarterly Winter 1942, signed Arthur Lambert (so that's what the L stands for?) (also in the British Swan American Mags no. 15). At the time I first read The Alien One I suspected that it had originally been in Weird Tales, knowing how stories from US magazines often showed up in odd spots in the versions printed in the UK, and observing a bit of deliberate slanting for Weird Tales readers. But such was not the case.

The Alien One is very much a prewar-traditional space tale, perilously close to the formulae that Tucker named Space Opera in fact. The kind of space flight conditions it supposes read a little strangely today, but they attempted to transplant ideas from sea stories to a new environment.

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IN THIS ISSUE

- 26. The Alien One, by Arthur L. Widner Jr. (Unrecorded)
- 27. Title and Content (Addenda)
- 28. Warner Van Lorne (Addenda)
- 29. L. Taylor Hansen (Addenda)
- 30. Wede (Addenda)
- 31. Lucian of Samosata (Evidently not as well known as he should be)
- 32. Coincidence? (Some suspicious names)

There's the ship out of Mars bound for Ganymede with its two-man crew. This would in fact take several years, not the matter of days implied by the time scale of the story (and two men would be a poor risk to survive it) but never mind. Kathump! A meteor: oh-oh, damage. Automatic meteor guard on the blink. "Two of the starboard propulsors" Starboard? Starboard? But — Oh well, let's read on. "...are beyond repair, and two more are badly bunged up..." 'I thought as much, from the way she handled...It's practically impossible to get through ((the asteroid belt)) without automatics, and we can't go out of the plane of the ecliptic as we're allowed just enough fuel to get to Ganymede..." What do do? Simple: "This little asteroid — 7B22 — is on the very edge of the belt. We can land there and radio the Space Patrol..."

But that's just preliminary. Already grounded on the asteroid is the derelict spaceship whose crew has been ingested by the still-active amorphous monster with hypnotic powers, which has a distinct Lovecraftian flavor for submission to Dorothy McIlwraith. Weird Tales may seem an unlikely market for a story set in the space age that had been established as an acceptable setting in Wonder and Astounding by 1933. But there is precedent for almost anything in Weird Tales, and Nelson S. Bond had had some of his Lancelot Biggs series there in the war years. Whether the hint of Cthulhu was planned in the first place as a novel bit of incongruity, or whether it was written in after the story had failed to please SF editors from Campbell to Palmer, perhaps Widner could tell us. Quite an effective story, too good to be lost.

This copy of the British edition does not show a publisher anywhere: probably it was on the missing back cover. However, we have enough evidence to make an identification. There are three small illustrations to this story. The first, unsigned but known to be by Harry Turner, comes from Tales of Wonder no. 2, where it was the heading for Through Earth's Core by John Russell Fearn. It shows a multi-tentacled nasty groping for a torpedo-shaped craft, reasonably appropriate to The Alien One on a symbolic plane. The second is a smudgy human skull without clue to origin. The third, also by Turner and signed T, is a stub-winged rocket with anonymous planet behind it, which originally was the heading for The Venus Adventure by John Beynon (early incarnation of John Wyndham) in Tales of Wonder no. 7.

We can therefore see that this magazine must have been produced at the firm The World's Work, where an anonymous editor drew on a stock of old blocks, just as had already been done to create jackets for Eric Frank Russell's Sinister Barrier and Fearn's The Golden Amazon and The Intelligence Gigantic from old Tales of Wonder covers.

Now, who knows the date of The Alien One's publication? Who knows what other SF there was in Short Stories?

ADDENDA

= 27 = TITLE AND CONTENT (see Topic 1 and Addenda 25)

Well, I promised to give the source of that word I mentioned last issue as one that might once have been picked up and used as a title with more meaning than might be supposed: *iginwittentogenblatten!* I said the spelling was not guaranteed since I was going on memory and had deliberately not looked up the original (and no doubt the only) place where the word appeared. I was out by only one letter, not bad going. Now, if only I could remember more useful matters as well.

To explain the context of this ugly neologism and the use to which it might have been put, the first step was to locate the original text. That seemed easy enough. I "knew", because I "remembered" that it occurred in the essay *Is Ackerman a Schizophrenic?* by Prof. (sic) Carlton Fassbeinder, in 1/1, Nov 1940 of *The Damn Thing*, published by T. Bruce Yerke.

Wrong. Oh, that article is in that issue all right. But this word and the anecdote describing how Forrest J. Ackerman allegedly introduced it to the world is not in it. Well, I hadn't imagined the whole thing, I hoped, so it must be somewhere else. If not in a later *The Damn Thing*, then in some other Los Angeles production of the era. Fortunately it was not a long search. There it was, in the elegantly titled *Stench*, creation of S. A. Street and Finn (which Finn I know not): *Has Ackerman Snapped?* by Carlton J. Fassbeinder, continuing the theme.

The original piece, with the actual title *Is Ackerman a Schizophrenic?* quotes from a letter purportedly written to Yerke by Dr. Fassbeinder, "the noted

psychologist", in which the good doctor gives an opinion of Forrest J. Ackerman's mental condition based on some examples of his writings. Remember Ackermanese? To refresh your memory, Fassbeinder says that "One of the symptoms of schizophrenia is the desire of the individual to sever all connections with the real world, and create a world of his own, in which his personality is free to function...Schizophrenatics manifest this tendency by altering the written and spoken language. Such joining of words as 'Nycon', 'Chicon' and the substitution of numerical symbols, such as '2', '4', and '1', are examples of this ailment."

After some remarks about the implications of the condition and the symptoms many creative people show, Fassbeinder says: "I am afraid, Mr. Yerke, that the friend whose writings you sent me has a mild form of schizophrenia...Had you sent me more information...I could give you a more accurate opinion." Yerke comments briefly, ending: "Perhaps all fans are schizophrenatics."

A lot of things may occur to readers. Yerke was of course speaking in the character of the learned Fassbeinder, as his 1940 audience knew from the general ambience of *The Damn Thing*. Why? Well, introducing a spurious authority-figure may seem a cheap trick to give one's views more force, common in controversial literature: if you can't find an expert who supports your case, make one up. But here it was done I think partly as a joke, partly to show how an exaggerated style taken for granted by the in-group might look to a neutral outsider, partly to soften a criticism that might have deeply offended his victim by attributing it to a stranger. He was saying by implication: "Forry, you may not be a head case, but the way you present yourself in print and in public surely looks like it. Clean up your act, you're doing yourself and the rest of us no good with all this Ackermanese jive-talk."

A psychoanalyst or a psychiatrist, rather than a psychologist, might venture an educated guess about the author of some published writings, though I hope he would stress that it was no more than a suspicion to bear in mind in taking a closer look at the author.

All the same, it is true that these and other features of the Ackerman style strongly suggest typical schizoid verbal behavior. This would never have occurred to most scientifictionists in 1940 and it was worth bringing up.

Well then, let's go on to the sequel, *Has Ackerman Snapped?*. Its argument, briefly, is that Ackerman had begun his mission as a vocal advocate of science fiction an earnest if naive idealist, endlessly plugging world progress as he saw it and seeing science fiction as a force supporting it (as most of us did in those days, in case you've forgotten). Events having made nonsense of all that, now he was mentally dropping out into his own dream world, shown by irresponsibility, making a joke of everything, silly and erratic behavior, intensified word play.

"Shortly his actions will become totally out of place. He will be a veritable song and dance man. His conversation will degenerate to a steady stream of puns on words, puns on the puns...soon he will make puns on puns on puns until they will be so highly abstracted that they will be funny only to himself. He will even begin to make unintelligible sounds, meaning only understandable to himself. This, too, has been evidenced. The other night...he turned to Yerke and said in a highly incensed tone at some remark Yerke made, 'Why, you igginwittentogenblatten!' When asked what that meant, Ackerman explained that it was a word he had just made up."

This article was expressed somewhat more in the character of Yerke than of the eminent doctor, and ended with the implication that he was slipping himself, again disclaiming serious intent.

It might be noted that Ackerman did not continue to grow more extreme in this tendency as predicted, though a glance at *Famous Monsters* will show the same reluctance to speak more than a few consecutive words without punning. He has survived another four decades so far without collapsing or burning out, which is all you could ask.

But now do you see how *Igginwittentogenblatten!* would have been a plausible title to some of us? I'll come back to Fillyloo later.

= 28 = MORE ON WARNER VAN LORNE (see Topic 4: On Learning from our Mistakes)

Harry Warner asks (Horizons 40/4, Aug 1979, FAPA 167, p. 3299): "Didn't F. Orlin Tremaine get into trouble at one time for buying too many of his own stories? If so, the unpublished Van Lorne manuscripts could be those that he wrote before his superiors called him for it."

Well, let's see how this fits the facts as we know them. Did Tremaine get into trouble? I see no evidence for it. Referring back to Moskowitz's expose of the Van Lorne mystery (*1) we read: "John W. Campbell Jr. had always felt that Warner Van Lorne was actually a pen-name for F. Orlin Tremaine, the editor of Astounding Stories who had preceded him. The story was prevalent" (emphasis mine) "...that Tremaine had been dismissed by Street and Smith when it was discovered he was selling stories to himself, a practice once considered highly unethical, but in recent years almost a way of editing."

Rumor, no more. If Tremaine had written the Van Lorne stories — not impossible considering resemblances between their style and that of some of his known work elsewhere — what do we actually know about Street & Smith's policy on editors buying their own writings? Nothing, as far as I am aware. Perhaps they frowned on it, perhaps they didn't care. Other publishers in the popular fiction magazine field of the time expected it. Frederik Pohl tells us: "The problem was that Popular Publications was paying me ten dollars a week, which comes to \$43.33 a month. I have always been good at arithmetic. It took me no time at all to do in my head the simple calculation: $\$43.33 - 42.75 = 0.58$, and deduce that my salary might pay the rent but would do little about meeting our expenses...Well, I didn't expect to keep house on fifty-eight cents a month. Popular Publications didn't expect me to either, but it took me a while to figure out that what they expected me to do was what all the pulp editors did: to supplement my salary by writing for myself and for the other magazines in the chain." (*2)

Observe, too, that Campbell appeared in his Astounding in the guise of Don A. Stuart, and also Arthur McCann. It was no secret who Stuart was though McCann wasn't acknowledged for some time and S&S might just not have known about him. Would the firm's policy have changed in a short time? Besides, Campbell used Van Lorne stories, the last in Jan 39.

Nelson Tremaine, according to Moskowitz, "thought it would be a good joke on his brother if he could sell him a story without Orlin being aware of the author's identity..." and did it easily enough, to Orlin's vexation when he learned of the hoax. "People used to think Orlin was Van Lorne", Nelson noted. "The truth is that he was so darned ethical he would have considered it less of a breach to buy from himself than from his brother." That Orlin admitted writing one story, The Upper Level Road, confused the issue, but the timing of events makes it possible.

In any case, we have no reports of rumblings from the front office, much less of any action against the nepotistic editor. On the contrary, it appears that the reason Campbell was hired as editor was that Orlin had been promoted and didn't have time to handle Astounding. (*3) True, he did leave S&S not long afterwards.

We have to consider probabilities for want of hard evidence on points such as this, but thanks for raising it. The Van Lorne case is not finally closed.

F. Orlin Tremaine wrote six stories and two factual articles under his own name in SF magazines. Day (*4) lists five pseudonyms as used elsewhere: Anne Beale, Arthur Lane, Guthrie Paine, Warren B. Sand and Alfred Santos. Who knows where these names were used and whether any of the stories are of interest? And I wonder about Warren B. Sand. There were three stories signed Warren E. Sanders: The Sterile Planet (Wonder Quarterly Spr 32), Sheridan Becomes Ambassador (Amaz-

*1. Science Fiction Times 399/400, Ja/Feb 1963, p. 21

*2. Pohl, Frederik. The Way the Future Was. Ballantine 1979. p. 113-4

*3. Rogers, Alva. A Requiem for Astounding. Advent 1964. p. 48

*4. Day, Donald B. Index to the Science-Fiction Magazines, 1926-1950. Perri Press, c. 1952. p. 67

ing Jly 32) and The Memory Stream (Amazing Apr 33). Comments, anyone? I also notice that there was a story in Weird Tales, The Throwback by Orlin Frederick (Oct 1926) which is suggestive.

= 29 = WHO WAS L. TAYLOR HANSEN? (see Topic 5)

Joe Moudry writes (The Unteleported Fan 2, nd, FAPA 168 p. 10): "It certainly wasn't beyond Palmer to run a photo of someone and do an 'autobiography' of a pseudonymous author...e.g. John Bloodstone..."

True. Other examples are Ivar Jorgensen, Lee Francis and Tarleton Fiske. We can find cases outside the Palmer sphere too. There is a portrait of Dennis McDermott in Wonder Jan 33 which has only one head though the story associated with it, The Duel on the Asteroid, was jointly written by Walter L. Dennis, Paul McDermott and P. Schuyler Miller. A fictitious biographic note (though without portrait) of the Kuttner pseudonym Keith Hammond is in Startling Mch 46.

"So the Hansen material and biography in Palmer's Amazing could well have been tongue-well-in-cheek. In the adverts for Hansen books published by Amherst the sex of the author is never designated, though the author is designated as an archaeologist of American Indian concentration. All of this, of course, helps not in the least in answering your question." I wouldn't say that, at least it confirms that there is a problem and I'm on the right track with what thoughts I had on it. Checking in likely sources in the State Library failed to locate Hansen as a recognised archaeologist or anthropologist, but can we hear from someone with access to a good American reference library strong in these fields?

= 30 = WHO WAS WEDE? (see Topic 6)

Harry Warner writes (Horizons 40/4, Aug 1979, FAPA 168 p. 3299): "Another possible way of forming that Wede byline could have been the initials of siblings or husband-and-wife or any other pair with the same last initials. Were there any individuals...whose initials were W.E. and D.E.?" I don't think so. D. M. Edwards, Dolton Edwards and Don Evans appeared a few years later, and I can't see a possible W.E. on the scene.

= 31 = LUCIAN OF SAMOSATA

Histories of science fiction customarily mention as the oldest example of an interplanetary voyage the 2nd Century satire generally cited as True History (why don't they give the modern translation True Story?) by Lucian of Samosata. His other work including a moon flight, Icaro-Menippus, is usually overlooked, and it does not seem to be generally understood that this one was not a straight piece of fiction but a send-up of a lot of travel and adventure tales that have not survived.

Modern Science Fiction, ed. Reginald Bretnor, was a useful book in 1953 when it first appeared, the first substantial work on the field. Of course some of the contributions in it are dated beyond usefulness today, but some are as good as ever and most have a lot of interest. Advent did us a valuable service by re-printing it. *

Besides adding an index (inexcusably absent in the original) this edition has 12 pages of Notes and Corrections which clarify many points. Unfortunately one error was missed, a reference on p. 203 to "Lucian of Samos".

No, this is not another version of the name of Lucian's birthplace. Neither is Samothrace, which I have also seen. So let's get the facts clear.

Samosata is a city (now called Samsat) in ancient Syria, modern Turkey. It is on the Euphrates about 100 miles north-east of Aleppo.

Samos is an island just off the eastern coast of the Aegean Sea, near Smyrna.

Samothrace is an island in the northern Aegean, west of the Dardanelles.

* Bretnor, Reginald ed. Modern Science Fiction: its meaning and its future. Advent, Publishers 1979. Reprint of original edition, Coward-McCann 1953.

== 32 == COINCIDENCE?

Booth, Charles Gordon. Only known publication is Dust of Shun-Ti, in Weird Tales Oct 1925.

Booth, Frederick. Only known publication is Nothing but Dust, in The Thrill Book 1 May 1919.

Carlisle, Edward. Only known publication is Annus Mirabilis, in Amazing Stories Apr 1938.

Carlisle, Logan. Only known publication is The Airwayman, in Amazing Stories Apr 1936.

Edwards, D. M. Only known publication is Spheres, in Astounding Science Fiction Dec 1940.

Edwards, Dolton. Only known publication is Mathem in ce Klasrum (filler on phonetic spelling) in Astounding Science Fiction Sep 1946.

Hawks, Chester. Only known publication is Python Men of Lost City, in the one-shot Captain Hazzard May 1938; reprint Weinberg 1974.

Chester, William L. Known for the series beginning with Hawk of the Wilderness, in Blue Book and later book publications.

PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE
GPO Box 4440
Sydney 2001

Issue no. 5, 1981

Published by Graham Stone.
Limited free distribution,
Quarterly

- Ackerman, Forrest J. p. 28
Amazing Stories 5, 6, 12, 13, 17
 Arnold, Edwin Lester, Lieut. Gullivar
 Jones: His Vacation 15
 Arthurs, Bruce D. 24
 Asimov, Isaac 20
 Birch, A. G. et al. The Moon
 Terror 21 21
 Bok, Hannes 24
 Bloch, Robert 18
 Bothner, Florence 22
 Brown, Fredric. The Best of Fredric
 Brown 18
 Campbell, John W. 30
 Chain, Julian 20
 Charney, Jesse 20
 Coincidence? 32
 Collas, Phil 13
 Crimp, H. M. 12
 Curtis, Keith '8
 de Camp, L. Sprague 25
 Editors and assistants 23
 Errors, Typographical 4, 17, 18
 Esperanto 19
 Ethics of publishing, trading etc.
 4, 8, 30, 31
 Fassbeinder, Carlton J. 28
Fillylpo 2, 24
 Green, Roger Lancelyn. Into Other
 Worlds 15
 Gregor, John D. 15
 Hansen, L. Taylor 5, 31
 Hassan, Silaki Ali 20
 Hoaxes 5, 17, 31
 Homosexuality 6, 25
Iggittentogenblatten 26, 28
 Kuttner, Henry 19
 Lucian of Samosata 31
 McPhail, Dan 23
 May, Julian 20
 Mihilakis, Ulysses George 20
 Moskowitz, Sam 4, 30
 Moudry, Joe 21, 31
 Palmer, Raymond A. 5, 17
 Pohl, Frederik 30
 Porges, Irwin. Edgar Rice Burroughs,
 the man who created Tarzan 20
 Profanity 4, 26
 Pseudonyms 4, 5, 6, 17, 20, 31, 32
 Rumors 19, 30
 Schachner, Nathan 3, 4, 15
 Schizophrenia 28
 Science Fiction — History 2
 --- -- Activists 2, 15, 23, 28
 --- -- Australia 12, 13
 --- -- Early Works (to 1929) 15, 21
 --- -- Editors and assistants 22
Science Fiction Classics Series 11
Science Fiction Series 9
 Shaver, Richard Sharp 17
Short Stories 27
 Sloane, Thomas O'Connor 7, 22
 Space Flight 28
 Speer, Jack 5
 Textual Criticism 15
 Thought-Variants 3
 Titles 2, 23, 24
 Tremaine, F. Orlin 4, 30
 Tremaine, Nelson 4, 30
 Tuck, Donald H. 5
 Tucker, Wilson 19
 Vance, Jack 19
 Van Lorne, Warner 4, 30
 Warner, Harry 31
 Wede 6, 31
Weird Tales 21
 Wickedness 8
 Widner, Arthur L. Jr. 27
 Women Writers 5
 Words, Invented 2, 24, 28
 Words, Offensive 4
 Yerke, T. Bruce 28

PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE
 GPO Box 4440
 Sydney 2001, Australia