RIVERSIDE QUARTERLY

VOL. THREE NO. TWO

50¢

RIVERSIDE QUARTERLY

March 1968 Vol. III, No. 2

Editor: Leland Sapiro Associate Editor: Jim Harmon

Poetry Editor: Jim Sallis

Assistant Editors: Redd Boggs Bill Blackbeard Jon White

Send business correspondence and manuscripts to:

Box 40 University Station, Regina, Canada

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Unsigned material is by the editor.

Front cover by Robert Gilbert

50¢ per issue $1.50 per year

Extra thanks are owed this time to Mike Cugnet for his special efforts in drawing title captions to accompany the ERB and Tolkien articles. Thanks also to Gretchen Schwenn, whose captions for earlier RQ's were re-used this issue.

The number after your name on the mailing label indicates either your status or the issue (this being number 10) on which your subscription expires. E designates "exchange," L "lifetime subscribe C "contributor," and H "honourary."

RQ Miscellany

AS OTHERS SEE US

Mandatory reading for the student of science-fiction is Susan Sontag's essay, "The Imagination of Disaster," on recent s.f. films.[1] This critic's resume of s.f. movie clichés is gruesomely hilarious and her general diagnoses, needle-sharp. (Her remarks on s.f. cinematic sadism and its rationale--by the view of extra-terrestrials as non-human and therefore sub-human --brings to mind the Clayton Astounding Stories of the early '30's.) Whether or not he attends to movies, the s.f. reader will achieve both shame and enlightenment from this article.

Also inducing shame, for another reason, is Michel Butor's "Notes on Science Fiction."[2] This critic is familiar with H.G. Wells and Jules Verne, and he has read over half a dozen stories by s.f. writers born in the 20th century. On this basis he repeats the customary pieties on the satiric value of s.f., divides the field into three parts (Life in the Future, Unknown Worlds, and Unexpected Visitors), and remarks that the plausibility of such a work "is in direct proportion to the solid scientific elements the author introduces." Refutation is not necessary; with this essay Mr. Butor establishes himself as the only literary critic on two continents who knows less about science-fiction than Kingsley Amis.

---

1) Against Interpretation, New York, Delta Books, 1966.$1.95. Other essays in this collection are still better.

2) Partisan Review, Fall 1967, 595-602. Despite this article, the PR remains one of the more interesting literary magazines.

OPERE CITATO

The transitory character of amateur publishing means that Harry Warner's column, resumed this issue, will never be totally up to-date. By the time of (RQ) publication at least one of the editors listed will have moved, given his magazine to somebody else, or simply quit. For those readers who expect professional stability in an amateur publication I'd list as the consistently ablest U.S. fanzines:

Extrapolation (Tom Clareson, Wooster College, Wooster, Ohio 44691), $1.25 per year (two issues), 75¢ per copy,

Lighthouse (Terry Carr, 35 Pierrepont St., Brooklyn 11201), 50¢ per copy,

Yandro (Bob Coulson, Rt. 3, Hartford City, Indiana 47348), 3/$1.00 (11 issues per year).

(continued on page 166)

H.G. Wells Critic of Progress

A Study of the Early Fiction

CHAPTER TWO: THE LIMITS OF PROGRESS: COSMIC

by Jack Williamson

#1 Approaches to Progress

"It is surely significant," writes Norman Nicholson,

> that the man who preached progress more eloquently than anyone else should be the one who had the most vivid vision of cosmic accident, and who realized...that the destiny of the whole earth...hangs by a thread.[1]

The significance is that Wells preached progress not out of confident hope, but out of cold desperation. Uniquely gifted both with the analytic brain that might have served a great scientist and with the creative imagination of a great artist, he saw the probable shape of the future more vividly, by the testimony of his work, than any other man of his time. Distressed by his own visions of the world to come, he strove for many years to change it, with dramatic warnings, impatient exhortations, and attempts at mass education. As Nicholson says,

> Wells was aware from the first that the development of scientific knowledge was not in itself any guarantee of progress, and many of his romances were bases on the idea that science, divorced from humanity...may bring disaster to mankind. (ibid., 37)

But we exist in double jeopardy, from within ourselves and from without. Though our deadliest danger may well be our own animal nature, we also inhabit a hostile cosmos. Lecturing in 1902, Wells reviewed a whole series of external perils, ranging from the possibility that "there may arise new animals to prey upon us by land and sea" to the "reasonable certainty" that the solar system will continue to run down "until some day this earth of ours, tideless and slow moving, will be dead and frozen and all that has lived upon it will be frozen out and done with."[2]

Just entering his most optimistic period at the time of this lecture, Wells declared his belief "in the coherence and purpose in the world and in the greatness of human destiny" (ibid., 312-3). Earlier, however, during the years of doubt and discovery that produced the best of the scientific romances, he was still the cosmic pessimist. His studies of science had led him to a view of the probable future that he could neither accept nor ignore. Such thinkers as Malthus had led him to look at humanity in the emotionless light of biology. "Probably no more shattering book than the Essay on Population has ever been written, or ever will be written," he comments in Anticipations.

> It was aimed at the facile liberalism of the deists and the atheists of the eighteenth century; it made clear as daylight that all forms of social reconstruction, all dreams of earthly golden ages, must be either futile or insincere or both, until the problems of human increase were manfully faced...It aimed simply to wither the rationalistic utopias of the time, and, by anticipation, all the communisms, socialisms, and earthly paradise movements that have since been so abundantly audible in the world.

The writer of those words was hardly a preacher of inevitable and automatic progress! The earlier Wells, as his fiction shows, seems rather to have been fascinated with his imaginative exploration of the darkest aspects of the cosmos. At the very beginning of his writing career, as Anthony West observes, he had broken with Herbert Spencer's sort of progressive optimism. In "The Rediscovery of the Unique," he rejects the whole idea of evolutionary progress. He accepts in its stead the mechanistic view that the world is "nothing but a mere heap of dust, fortuitously agitated." West comments that

> ...it is impossible to be an optimist believing in inevitable progress if you also believe in a universe in which mind figures only as a local accident. There is also considerable difficulty in reconciling the idea of progress with a universe which by its essential nature cannot support a permanent world order. That Wells should have dealt with the ideological basis of pessimism in his first serious piece of writing throws some light on the real cast of his mind.

The prominence of the idea of progress in the early fiction does not mean that Wells was writing tracts for it or against it. The tracts came later. His major aim, during those beginning years, was more probably to find himself as a creative writer, to discover and perfect his own means of expression. He writes that in the years 1893-1894, under the influence of his friend Walter Low, "I was beginning to write again in any scraps of time I could snatch from direct money-earning. I was resuming criticism of life."[3] The life that he criticised most searchingly, it would seem, as his own. The autobiography, as well as the fiction, reveals the clash of discordant attitudes and emotions in his mind. He was his mother's son, no less than his father's. He had learned contempt for a useless aristocracy, but he had also been taught to fear the raw proletariat. He had trained his mind to the disciplines of science, but he had forgotten neither the traditional culture nor the desperate emotions of his youth. He hoped for a better world, but his idealism clashed with a better knowledge of real human life.

The idea of progress in his early work may best be regarded as a symbol, perhaps, around which he was striving to organise all these discrepant attitudes and emotions. The early fiction may be examined as a laboratory in which Wells was seeking to find and test his own attitudes. A study of the fiction from this viewpoint will clarify the processes by which the tension between unreconciled attitudes gives life and form; it will often reveal the sources of the validity and intensity and depth evident in the early fiction but lacking from much of what Wells wrote after this tension had begun to subside.

As biologist, Wells sees us as one more species trapped in the eternal wheels of evolution. As human being, he longs to help us escape our animal destiny. His own internal conflict, with the pessimist generally dominant, controls most elements of the early fiction.

The characters often represent Wells's own conflicting attitudes, and the plots usually reveal these attitudes in dramatic action. Details of the setting, less important but still significant, are frequently determined by the same conflicts. Weather phenomena frequently symbolise the hostile or indifferent nature of the cosmos. A hailstorm greets the Time Traveller with a symbolic chill when he arrives in the future world where even the elements seem generally to have been tamed (Ch.3), and an icy wind and showering snowflakes in the more remote future warn him of the nearing death of the planet (Ch. 11). The Martians, in The War of the Worlds, have been spurred to their high progress by "the secular cooling" of Mars (Bk. I, Ch. 1), and the narrator himself, at the peak of his suffering under the Martians, is beaten with "a thin hail." In When the Sleeper Wakes the snow on the city roofs is in symbolic contrast with the sheltered warmth within, showing the human victory over the cosmos to be narrow or illusory (Ch. 8). In First Men in the Moon the freezing atmosphere represents the stern cosmic forces which have driven the Selenites to their ultimate degree of evolutionary adaption, and which now threaten the immediate survival of Bedford himself (Ch. 18).

Generally, as we shall see, the emphasis in the early fiction is on the hazards to continued human progress: on the cosmic limits that may cut it short, on the human flaws that may spoil it. Even when Wells admits the occasional limited success of adaptive change, his evaluation of its fruits is seldom enthusiastic. In this chapter and those following, we shall consider in some detail first his imaginative exploration of the cosmic limits upon progress, next his study of the human limits, and finally his usually pessimistic evaluations of progress achieved.

Any separation of the novels and stories into such categories is, of course, arbitrary. The scheme is imposed upon the fiction, not discovered in it. At this point in his career, Wells was not writing a thesis on progress; he was striving instead to give objective form and aesthetic distance to some of the gravest conflicts within his own personality. The idea of progress is simply one important symbol. He does not set out to discuss first the external and then the internal limits upon progress and then to examine the consequences of progress beyond these limits.

Often, in a single story, he does all of these things. The Time Machine, for example, concludes with a dramatic emphasis upon the cosmic limits, when the vividly realised collapse of the solar system precludes further progress. But there is an earlier emphasis upon the human limits, when the human race is shown differentiating into the dainty cattle of the upper world and the grey troglodytes that eat them. There is also a sardonic evaluation of the consequences of progress, in the revelation that normal evolutionary adaptation has produces these two new breeds of not-quite men. Arbitrarily, however, The Time Machine will be classified here as dealing with the external or cosmic limits upon progress. The War of the Worlds, in which human survival is threatened by invasion from Mars, seems logically to belong in the same group. So do a number of the short stories which deal with astronomical or biological hazards to the indefinite advancement of mankind.

#2 The Time Machine

If the early fiction of Wells owes its form and life to the tension between incompatible attitudes, the nature of that inner conflict is easiest to see, perhaps, in The Time Machine, his first major work and perhaps his most brilliant. Though most of his later writing was done hastily and inadequately revised, he laboured painstakingly through at least seven versions of The Time Machine, of which five survive.[4] The earliest is the unfinished serial, "The Chronic Argonauts," published in the Science Schools Journal--of which Wells himself had been a founder and the first editor--for April, May, and June, 1888. By 1892, Wells had made two revisions of the story. Though these have been lost, Wells read parts of them to a college friend, A. Morley Davies, whose description is quoted by Geoffrey West.[5] The fourth version consists of seven unsigned articles published in the National Observer between March and June, 1894, while W.E. Henley was editor; this series has no sustained narrative, and it was broken off when Henley left the Observer. When he became editor of the New Review, he accepted a narrative version and ran it in five parts, January through May, 1895. Two differing book versions were published the same year, by Heinemann in London and Holt in New York. All these careful revisions show that Wells, in the beginning, was a literary artist almost as conscientious as Henry James.

Comparing the first attempt with the finished novel, we can clearly see Wells's conflicting attitudes giving form and dramatic life to his materials. "The Chronic Argonauts" is melodramatic, wordy, derivative, and conventional. Wells himself wrote of it in the autobiography:

> The prose was over-elaborate...and the story is clumsily invented, and loaded with irrelevant sham significance. The time traveller, for example, is called Nebo-gipfel, though manifestly Mount Nebo had no business whatever in the story. There was no Promised Land ahead. (Exp. 253-4)

A striking difference between the first version and the finished novel is in the treatment of the idea of progress. "The Chronic Argonauts" merely hints at the idea. A few symbols of progress do appear, in the name Nebogipfel, in the invention and explanation of the time machine, in the statement that it has been used to secure "valuable medical, social, and physiographical data for all time."[6] We never learn, however, exactly what those data are. The symbols of progress are completely submerged beneath a contrasting symbolism of decay, terror, and death. A figure of fear, not of hope, Nebogipfel is the scientist as destroyer. The most vividly presented part of the setting is a decaying Manse where foul murder has been done. The action, so far as it goes in the three instalments Wells wrote, is conventional gothic melodrama with overtones of "unearthly noises and inexplicable phenomena" (EHGW, 196). Instead of the people of the future, Wells introduces a mob of degenerate Welsh villagers.

"A cleansing course of Swift and Sterne intervened before the idea was written again for Henley's National Observer,"[7] as Wells confesses in his preface to the Atlantic Edition. The final version takes its shape from Wells's intention to explore the possible future history of mankind. The satanic scientist and the haunted Manse and the angry villagers have been cut out. The new Time Traveller is an amiable and rather ordinary man, who explains his extraordinary machine to a group of completely ordinary sceptics in a setting of commonplace detail carefully selected to contrast with the wonder of travel in time. The time machine itself is made real by means of a convincing laboratory demonstration which is followed by ingeniously created and vividly presented sense impressions of the actual flight through time, with night following day "like the flapping of a black wing," and the trees on the hillside "growing and changing like puffs of vapor, now brown, now green" (Ch. 3). Since Wells was an ardent cyclist at the time he wrote, he borrowed sensations and experiences from his familiar sport. The time machine itself is apparently very much like a bicycle: it turns over and stuns the Time Traveller when he stops too suddenly in the year 802701 A.D.

The chief plot interest of the middle section of the novel comes from the effort of the Time Traveller to learn the real nature of his future world, to trace out the results of eight hundred thousand years of change. Enormous but crumbling buildings around him are evidence both of long progress and of subsequent decay. Tiny, childlike man and women flock around him: they are the Eloi, idle vegetarians whose lives of aimless play are passed in weedless parks and great communal halls.

The time machine is stolen; in attempting to recover it he discovers an underground world of vast mysterious machines and finds that the Eloi are fed and cared for by a race of hideous albino creatures like small apes. At length he understands that the parasitic Eloi are descendents of the Victorian upper classes, and that the little underground apes, the Morlocks, are the children of the proletariat. Now the masters, the Morlocks breed the Eloi for food.

Escaping on the recovered time machine into the infinite future, he finds mankind extinct and the solar system itself near death, the earth spiraling inward toward the dying sun. Yet life persists: bright green moss grows on the sunward faces of the rocks, and enormous crab-like things crawl along the shore of an oily, tideless sea. The Time Traveller is appalled by

> the red eastern sky, the northward blackness, the salt Dead Sea, the stony beach crawling with these foul, slow-stirring monsters, the uniform poisonous-looking green of the lichenous plants, the thin air that hurts one's lungs. (Ch. 11)

Attacked by the gigantic crabs, he ventures even further into the future, testing an ultimate frontier of possible progress. An icy night falls, as the red sun is eclipsed. Ill and shivering, he sees a moving creature.

> It was a round thing...black against the weltering blood-red water, and it was hopping fitfully about... A terrible dread of lying helpless in that remote and awful twilight sustained me while I clambered upon the saddle.

So, from this vision of a time when the last chance of progress on earth has ended in "abominable desolation," the Time Traveller returns to the nineteenth century.

Some few flaws from the earlier drafts are left in this final version of the novel, but Wells has generally been able to redeem them with his emerging narrative genius. The story of Weena, the little Eloi girl who falls in love with the Time Traveller after he has saved her from drowning, is a somewhat unconvincing vestige of Victorian sentimental romance. The entire plot is manipulated to add dramatic interest to the imaginative tour of the future which is Wells's main concern. Sometimes this manipulation has awkward results, especially in the double climax of the escape from the Morlocks and the vision of the end of the world, and in the improbable readiness of the exhausted Time Traveller to talk for most of the night after his return. The ending, in which he does not come back from a second expedition, is a purely arbitrary device, implying little of either theme or character. But for the reader under the spell of Wells's paradoxical ideas, prophetic speculations, and persuasive narrative magic, such faults scarcely matter.

In this first and most sweeping survey of the probable future, Wells examines and evaluates the idea of progress from many angles. The internal or human limits upon progress appear most strikingly in the conservative guests who greet the Time Traveller's discoveries with varied attitudes of stupidity, bewilderment, and doubt.

"It sounds plausible enough tonight," says the Medical Man. "But wait until tomorrow. Wait for the common sense of the morning" (Ch. 1). The future world is filled with evidence of long progressive ages: the magnificent buildings and surviving works of art, the elimination of weeds and insects and germs of disease, the apparently complete subjugation of nature. Yet the Time Traveller not only finds that this age-long march of progress has been in vain; he finds that it has been in fact the cause of the later decay. This law of nature, that progress itself results in degeneration, is a cosmic limit that shapes the body of the novel. A second cosmic limit, which shapes the concluding section and provides the second climax, is that set by the final collapse of the solar system, with the planets falling one by one into the dying sun.

This particular catastrophe, incidentally, no longer seems so near as it did when Wells was writing. The accepted theories of his day held that the sun's energy, being chiefly gravitational, could last only a few million years. The more recent theories, providing atomic sources for solar energy, have extended the probable life of the solar system a thousand times. In spite of such sweeping revisions, however, the physical limits upon human progress seem as implacable now as they did to Wells. In the new light of the exploding atom, human life looks no more secure.

The other limit, the law that progress sets its own bounds, is worth a closer look. Wells, at least in the early fiction, is no utopian setting up an ideal world as the goal of all progress. A scientist instead, he sees the world as a dynamic train of cause and effect. Progress, conceivably, may lead to some sort of perfection, but even perfection in turn must result in something else. "What," the Time Traveller asks, "is the cause of human intelligence and vigor?" He answers himself: "Hardship and freedom: conditions under which the active, strong, and subtle survive and the weaker go to the wall." He points out that

> physical courage and the love of battle...are no great help--may even be hinderances--to a civilised man. And in a state of physical balance and security, power, intellectual as well as physical, would be out of place.
>
> (Ch. 4)

The Time Traveller grieves for the suicide of the human intellect.

> It had set itself steadfastly toward comfort and ease, a balanced society with security and permanency as its watchword, it had attained its hopes--to come to this at last...There is no intelligence where there is no change and no need of change.
>
> (Ch. 10)

Thus the Time Traveller discovers that progress limits itself. This fact he sees as a law of nature, an aspect of the cosmos as deadly to the dream of unlimited perfection as are the physical laws of mass and energy that decree the death of planets.

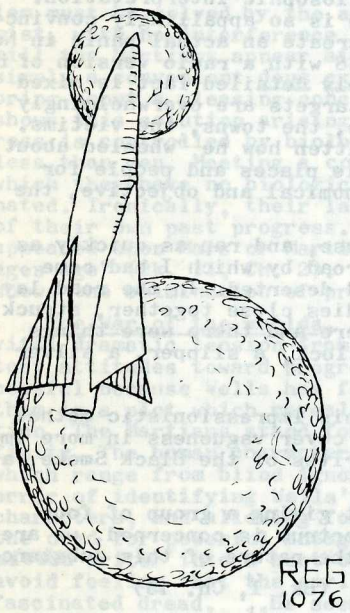
The Time Machine, in summary, is a profoundly pessimistic survey of the whole problem of progress. Anthony West has stressed its gloomy theme. The machine carries the Time Traveller to a point in the future

> from which it is obvious that a cosmic event is impending which will destroy the whole frame of reference in which mind, consciousness, and experience have any meaning...Wells is saying that the universe, like Kali, gives birth only to destroy, and that the scientific apparatus for examining reality can only bring home to man that everything he can do, think, or feel is finally futile. The end for the environment, as for the race and the individual, is extinction.
>
> ("The Dark World of H.G. Wells," Harper's Magazine, CCXIV (May, 1957), 68.)

The Time Traveller himself holds no brief for progress. In the epilogue, added for a later edition, the narrator says of him.

> He, I know--for the question had been discussed among us long before the Time Machine was made--thought but cheerlessly of the Advancement of Mankind, and saw in the growing pile of civilisation only a foolish heaping that must inevitably fall back upon and destroy its makers in the end.

3 The War of the Worlds



The War of the Worlds[8] takes its shape from another aspect of the cosmic limits upon progress, one merely hinted at in The Time Machine. In the major climax of The Time Machine, Wells shows the future of man eclipsed by the physical nature of the universe. In The War of the Worlds he explores a more immediate limit, one set by the laws of life. A biologist, Wells views mankind not as the completed achievement of creation, but simply as one species evolving in competition with others, adapting to the same environmental pressures, making the same hard fight for survival. In The War of the Worlds, as in a group of short stories written during the same early years, he shows mankind clashing with an alien biology.

The novel is constructed with a classic simplicity. The alien biology is introduced in the opening sentence, with this world "being watched keenly and closely by intelligences greater than man's and yet as mortal as his own." The Martians,

> minds that are to our minds as ours are to the beasts that perish, intellects vast and cool and unsympathetic, regarded this earth with envious eyes, and slowly and surely drew their plans against us.

Their planet is dying, and "the immediate pressure of necessity has brightened their intellects, enlarged their powers, and hardened their hearts." The invaders reach the earth in ten immense missiles, fired at intervals of twenty-four hours. Night after night, they fall near London. The Martians emerge to subjugate the earth. Men, curious and friendly at first, are stung into armed resistance by the unprovoked Martian attacks, and finally driven out of London in dazed and helpless panic. Although two or three Martians are killed, their superior weapons easily crush the best human defenses. Their victory seems secure --when suddenly they die, rotted by the micro-organisms of decay.

Telling his strange tale with immense gusto and skill, Wells avoids most of the defects that flaw The Time Machine. Fittingly, since men are such hapless victims of the cosmic struggle for survival, there is no human hero. The narrator is simply an observer of the action; writing after the war is over, he is able to fill out his account with scientific explanations, summaries of the wider action, and philosophic interpretation. Documentary in style, the narrative is so appallingly convincing that Orson Welles was able to create an actual panic in New Jersey on an October evening of 1938 with a radio version of it.[9] The technique is Defoesque: precisely detailed fact is mixed with ingenious invention. Martian targets are overwhelmingly convincing: the English countryside, the towns, the victims. In the autobiography, Wells has written how he "wheeled about the district marking down suitable places and people for destruction."[10] The writing is economical and objective, the details tellingly selected.

> Then we crept out of the house, and ran as quickly as we could down the ill-made road by which I had come overnight. The houses seemed deserted. In the road lay a group of three charred bodies close together, struck dead by the Heat-Ray; and here and there were things that people had dropped--a clock, a slipper, a silver spoon. (Bk. I, Ch. 12)

Now and then Wells trips over his impressionistic method of using bits of trivial detail to cover vagueness in more important matters. At one point he writes of the Black Smoke, a Martian poison gas:

> Save that an unknown element giving a group of four lines in the blue of the spectrum is concerned, we are still entirely ignorant of the nature of this substance. (Bk. I, Ch. 15)

Later he forgets the detail, but not the method. "Spectrum analysis of the black powder points unmistakably to the presence of an unknown element with a brilliant group of three lines in the green" (Bk. II, Ch. 10). Generally, however, he is far more successful; one of the first comments, a long and favourable review in the Spectator, compared the novel with Defoe's Journal of the Plague Year (EHGW, 123). The story as a whole creates an unforgettable impression of reality; the descriptions of devastation and panic might almost have been based upon actual observation of twentieth-century war.

Traces of the Victorian sentimental romance appear in a few chapters about the narrator's younger brother, a medical student in London, who rescues a conventional romantic heroine from robbers and sees her and her companion safely through the invasion and across the channel to France. But even these chapters are written in an objective style, with the emphasis not upon the love story but upon the convincing particulars that suggest the disintegration of a great city.

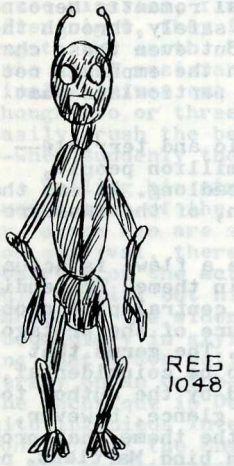
> It was a stampede--a stampede gigantic and terrible--without order and without goal, six million people, unarmed and unprovisioned, driving headlong. It was the beginning of the rout of civilisation, of the massacre of mankind.

The ending of the story, at first glance a flaw, is actually a tellingly ironic restatement of the main theme. The ending does violate the conventional rule that the central plot problem must be solved by the action or the nature of the protagonist, with no interference from coincidence. The germs that kill the Martians appear at first glimpse to be coincidental, simply a convenient deus ex machina invented by the author to bring about a pleasing conclusion. A second glance, however, shows this solution arising logically from the theme that progress is controlled by biological laws--which bind Martians, no less than men. Meeting a competing species of life against which they have no biological defenses, the Martians are eliminated. Ironically, their lack of defenses is probably the result of their own past progress. "Micro-organisms...have either never appeared upon Mars or Martian sanitary science eliminated them ages ago" (Bk. II, Ch. 2). Again, as in The Time Machine, Wells shows the culmination of progress leading to decline.

The War of the Worlds, like The Time Machine, draws its vital dramatic tension from the clash of Wells's own contradictory attitudes toward progress. The novel is artistically successful because Wells has found effective symbols and has placed them in a plot which reveals their meaning through dramatic action. The Martians stand for progress, continued almost to infinity. The human characters represent attitudes toward progress which range from blind ignorance to insane terror. Risking the error of identifying Wells's own attitudes with those of his characters, and allowing for the fact that in plot construction the need for powerful antagonistic forces can betray the uncommitted writer into a sort of accidental pessimism, we can hardly avoid feeling that the early Wells regards the future with a fascinated dread. He seems to relish contemplating "the extinction of man";[11] in the midst of The War of the Worlds, he writes Elizabeth Healey,

> I'm doing the dearest little serial for Pearson's new magazine, in which I completely wreck and destroy Woking--killing my neighbors in painful and eccentric ways--then proceed via Kingston and Richmond to London, which I sack, selecting South Kensington for feats of peculiar atrocity. (Quoted by Geoffrey West, op. cit., 108)

A scientist, Wells knows that adaptive change is inevitable; he has even developed (see Anticipations) a rational technique for studying the shape of things to come. A humanist, he loves the values of the past and the people he knows. He is appalled by the future he foresees--yet he lingers almost lovingly over each new figure of terror and death.



Such ambivalent attitudes shape the novel in many ways. In the body of the story, the suspense is intensified by hints of human decline. Writing from his viewpoint in the time after the end of the war, the narrator implies that progress has been reversed. Recalling the while cloth and the silver and glass on his dining table at home, he comments that "in those days even philosophical writers had many little luxuries (Bk. I, Ch. 7). At the end of the novel, however, there has been no apparent harm inflicted on earth outside a small area of England; even the greater part of London has escaped. A study of the derelict Martian machines has given "an enormous impetus to terrestrial invention" (Bk. II, Ch. 2).

The narrator--the"philosophical writer"--is unusual among the human characters in that he accepts the fact of progress. Looking back at the days of peace and plenty before the Martian invasion, he writes, "For my own part, I was much occupied in learning to ride the bicycle, and busy upon a series of papers discussing the probable development of moral ideas as civilisation progressed" (Bk. I, Ch. 2). At the end of the story he returns to his unfinished papers with a changed attitude. He writes that

> our views of the human future must be greatly modified by these events. We have learned now that we cannot regard this planet as being fenced in and a secure abiding-place for Man; we can never anticipate the unseen good or evil that may come upon us suddenly out of space.

Yet his progressive optimism is not entirely gone; he suggests that men may later reach new planets too.

> Dim and wonderful is the vision I have conjured up in my mind of life spreading slowly from this little seed-bed of the solar system throughout the inanimate vastness of siderial space. But that is a remote dream. It may be, on the other hand, that the destruction of the Martians is only a reprieve. To them, and not to us, perhaps, is the future ordained.

The pitiless Martian onslaught has convinced him that progress does not increase goodness. Despite the fitful gleams of optimism with which he relieves the ending of the narrative, he writes that "I must confess the stress and danger of the time have left an abiding sense of doubt and insecurity in my mind." Dark visions haunt him.

> Of a night I see the black powder darkening the silent streets, and the contorted bodies shrouded in that layer; they rise upon me tattered and dog-bitten...mad distortions of humanity. (Bk. II, Ch. 10)

Two minor characters, the curate and the artilleryman, represent two opposed attitudes toward progress, neither of which Wells himself seems to admire. The narrator, emerging from the scalding water into which he has dived to escape the Heat-Ray, becomes aware of the curate as "a seated figure in soot-smudged shirt-sleever," inquiring, "Why are these things permitted? What sins have we done?" When the Martians struck, the curate had been walking after the morning service to clear his brain; dazed, now he cannot accept the fact of change. The narrator soon learns to hate his "trick of helpless exclamation, his stupid rigidity of mind." When the two men are trapped in a ruined house from which they can watch the Martians emerging from their missile, the curate slowly breaks under the pressure of terror. When he will not keep silent, the narrator kills him. His body is dragged away by the Martians that his raving has alarmed. His inflexible resistance to change, the attitude of conventional religion, has led only to death.

If the curate can be taken to symbolise the traditional culture with its pessimistic resistance to progress, the artilleryman seems to stand for the optimistic and progressive culture of the technologist. He lacks traditional education, but he shows a surprising talent for survival. A practical man, he is quick to accept and take advantage of the changes in his environment. He is immediately prepared to fight for survival in a world where

> there won't be any more blessed concerts for a million years or so; there won't be any Royal Academy of Arts, and no nice little feeds at restaurants. (Bk. II, Ch.7)

Shrewdly, he has turned back from the fugitive mobs, to seek his food and shelter under the feet of the Martians. A cosmic pessimist in his own right, he observes that

> It's just men and ants. There's the ants builds their cities, live their lives, have wars, revolutions, until the men want them out of the way, and then they go out of the way. That's what we are now--just ants.

And, he adds, "We're eatable ants." Under the new order of things, "Cities, nations, civilisation, progress--that's all over. That game's up. We're beat."

Yet, with something of the desperate optimism of the later Wells himself, the artilleryman is laying plans for survival--even for continued human progress. Scornfully, he condemns the fearful, conformist majority of mankind.

> They'll come and be caught cheerful. They'll be quite glad after a bit. They'll wonder what people did before there were Martians to take care of them.
>
> (Bk. II, Ch. 7)

Declaring that "we have to invent a sort of life where man can live and breed, and be sufficiently secure to bring the children up," he outlines a bold scheme for survival underground, in drains and subways and tunnels. He has even begun digging. When the narrator joins him, however, he proves to be easily distracted from his vast progressive schemes by the temptations of looted food and drink and cigars and cards. Disillusioned, the narrator resolves "to leave this strange undisciplined dreamer of great things to his drink and gluttony, and go on into London." Thus, finally, the artilleryman becomes no more than a satiric thrust at the optimist planners of progress. The technological is no better than the traditional culture.

Although such symbolic figures sometimes debate Wells's quarrel with himself, his own attitudes toward progress appear more strikingly in his treatment of the invaders. For the Martians are not merely an alien species competing with men for control of the earth. Symbolically, they are also a final stage in the evolution of mankind. However sleepless, sexless, and monstrous they may be, the Martians are perhaps "descended from beings not unlike ourselves, by a gradual development of brains and hands." The narrator mentions "a certain speculative writer of quasi-scientific repute, writing long before the Martian invasion," who "forecast for man a final structure not unlike the actual Martian condition." This writer was Wells himself.[12] Attempting to forecast the tendency of natural selection, he had suggested that machines and chemical devices would gradually replace most of the parts and functions of the human body.

But the fact that Wells the scientist foresaw such evolutionary adaptations of mankind does not mean that Wells the human being approved them. Quite the contrary: he presents the Martians as vampire-like figures of horror. The first one emerging from the missile is "a big greyish rounded bulk, the size, perhaps, of a bear," glistening "like wet leather." The narrator, even before he sees the Martians feeding themselves by injecting human blood directly into their veins, is "overcome with disgust and dread" by the

> peculiar V-shaped mouth with its pointed upper lip... the incessant quivering of this mouth, the Gorgon groups of tentacles...the extraordinary intensity of the immense eyes...vital, intense, inhuman, crippled and monstrous... something fungoid in the oily brown skin, something in the clumsy deliberation of the tedious movements unspeakably nasty. (Bk. I, Ch. 4)

If the Martians represent an ultimate projection of the consequences of human progress, all the benign possibilities are ignored. Wells, instead, places his heaviest emphasis on improvements in the art of war. Writing at Woking in 1896, he was able to outline future military developments in remarkable detail. His Martians, in their armoured vehicles, advance against mankind with the panzer tactics of World War II. Their Black Smoke is a poison gas, dispersed in cannisters fired from rockets, and they are developing military aircraft for use in the heavier air of earth. They are waging total war.

The scenes of destruction by the Heat-Ray suggest Hiroshima, and the chapter in which the refugees from the vicinity of London are ferried across the Channel to France by "the most amazing crowd of shipping of all sort that it is possible to imagine" reminds one of Dunkerque.

Finally, it is the great past progress of the Martians, rather than any act of their intended human victims, that leads to their destruction. Having lost their immunity to the germs of decay, they are "overtaken by a death that must have seemed as incomprehensible to them as any death could be." As painfully as mankind, they have encountered the cosmic limits upon progress. The ultimate creation of evolutionary adaptation has been eliminated by the simplest. Progress, following cosmic law, has limited itself.

#4 "The Star" and Other Stories

Wells's short stories, more numerous and varied than the novels, offer an even wider insight into the conflicts symbolised by his resistance to the idea of progress. Nearly all written during the first seven or eight years of his success, while he was still the literary artist, they brought good prices from magazines; in 1901 he told Arnold Bennett that the Strand[13] was paying him £125 a story. They were collected in a series of volumes: The Stolen Bacillus and Other Incidents (1895), The Plattner Story and Others (1897), Tales of Space and Time (1899), and Twelve Stories and a Dream (1903). Later, a selection from these volumes appeared with a few additional stories in The Country of the Blind and Other Stories (1911). A final collection, The Short Stories of H.G. Wells,[14] includes all the stories in the earlier volumes and two or three newer ones. Only a few other bits of short fiction, such as The Croquet Player (New York, 1937), were published later.

The thick single volume of Wells's collected short stories is still a delight to read, rich in ideas and humour and surprise, full of an unquenchable cheerful vitality. The short stories, like the longer romances, are refreshingly free of the hero-and-villain and boy-gets-girl formulas of magazine fiction.

Never a systematic thinker, neither was Wells a systematic writer. Though he often tried to set up a regular working routine, such efforts always collapsed. He told an interviewer in 1906 that he could do more in an hour of "impulse than in a whole week of regular effort."[15] Early in his career,

> it was his custom to get up in the morning and talk with Mrs. Wells about any ideas he had in his head, and after breakfast he would sit down to work them out. If the inspiration did not come then he pushed the matter aside because it was sure to come later. (HGW, 120)

In this undisciplined way, he was able to write two or three articles or stories a week; and such romances as The War of the Worlds and The Invisible Man were also written

> in intermittent periods of spontaneousness. They were often dropped in the midst of other work, then toiled at, taken to pieces, and put together in all sorts of ways.

As he wrote Arnold Bennett:

> The Imagination moves in a mysterious way its wonders to perform. I can assure you that I am not doing anything long and weird and strong in the vein of The Time Machine and I never intend to. I would as soon take hat and stick and start out into the street to begin a passionate love. If it comes--well and good. (Wilson, op. cit., 45-46)

Much of the freshness and charm of all the early fiction comes from this free creativity. Later, when Wells tries to chop characters and plot to fit a didactic scheme, as he does in In the Days of the Comet, the result is artistic disaster. Not only was Wells impatient with fiction formulas, but also with the short story form itself. He commented in a letter to his father in 1898:

> I'm also under contract to do a series of stories for the Strand Magazine but I don't like the job...If you send them anything a bit novel they are afraid their readers won't understand. (Exp., 341)

When the spontaneous inspirations ceased to come, a few years later, he did not resort to formulas; he simply stopped writing short stories (Works, X, x).

Although there is a pattern in most of the early fiction, it is remarkably flexible. In Wells's own words, it is

> the method of bringing some fantastically possible or impossible thing into a common place group of people, and working out their reactions with the greatest gravity and reasonableness. (Ibid., I, xxiii)

Once he has arranged for the familiar to confront the unknown, he leaves the outcome to the forces of character and situation, without the intrusion of sentimentality. As he wrote in an introduction, "I would discover I was peering into remote and mysterious worlds ruled by an order logical indeed but other than our common sanity."[16]

More often comic than grim, the short stories have none of the sugary optimism of much Victorian popular fiction. Wells has no bias for things as they are. Rather, he is seeking to disturb his readers with

> the vivid realisation of some disregarded possibility in such a way as to comment on the false securities and fatuous self-satisfaction of every-day life.[17]

Forecasting "The Extinction of Man" in his essay of that title, he cheerfully remarks that "in no case does the record of the fossils show a really dominant species succeeded by its own descendents" (CPM, 173). Serenely absorbed in the downfall of man, he considers several of the potential rivals that later appear in his fiction: the gigantic crabs of The Time Machine, the conqueror ants of "The Empire of the Ants," the oceanic monsters of "The Sea Raiders," and the deadly bacteria of The War of the Worlds.

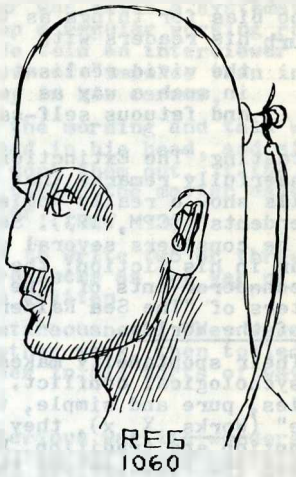
Their spontaneity makes the early stories a valid record of psychological conflict. Though most of the stories "are just stories, pure and simple, things written with amusement to amuse" (Works, X, x), they are full of Wells's irreverence for convention and tradition. His general plot pattern, conflict between the familiar and the new, leads naturally to comment on progress; of more than sixty stories, perhaps three out of four use the symbols of progress, though not in any consistent way. A few such stories as "The Land Ironclads" look approvingly at progress. Others, for example "Jimmy Goggles the God" and "The New Accelerator" exploit some aspect of change for the sake of comedy or surprise alone. Generally, however, the short stories, like the romances, reveal profound misgivings about the limits, the direction, and the consequences of the future evolution of mankind.

The cosmic insignificance of man is the theme of the remarkable vision of the universe, "Under the Knife." The narrator, already detached by long illness from all the emotions of life, undergoes a surgical operation. Dying, as he believes, under the surgeon's knife, he finds himself outside his body. The doctors and the operating room and the earth itself swirl away, leaving his detached mind adrift in space.

> Presently, when I looked again, the little earth seemed no bigger than the sun...I swam motionless in vacancy, and, without a trace of terror or astonishment, watched the speck of cosmic dust we call the world fall away from me.

His disembodied intelligence drifts through time as well as space. The moon spins visibly around the earth, and then the whole solar system is swept away from him. The stars and their planets stream past him like dust in a sunbeam, and the entire universe shrinks at last in cosmic darkness "to one minute disc of hazy light." This striking vision of the infinite smallness of mankind against the cosmic scale of space and time is not only grippingly real but astronomically correct. Seen against this scale, the idea of human progress is reduced to the vanishing point.

"The Star" is a brief but richly imagined bit of future history constructed upon the pessimistic statement that the future of mankind is utterly dependent upon the blindly random movement of unseen forces in a cosmos where the human race is no more consequential than the germs upon a speck of dust. A dark object wandering out of interstellar space collides with the planet Neptune, and the resulting incandescent mass falls toward the sun, just missing the earth. The resulting cataclysms are described with economy and power.



> Upon all the mountains of the earth the snow and ice began to melt that night, and all the rivers coming out of high country flowed thick and turbid, and soon --in their upper reaches--with swirling trees and the bodies of beasts and men.

A tide fifty feet high drowns the lowland cities.

> The tangled summits of the Indian jungles were aflame in a thousand places, and below the hurrying waters around the stems were dark objects that still struggled feebly and reflected the blood-red tongues of fire.

Pessimists conclude that human progress has ended, that "man has lived in vain." Millions perish, but the star passes. The insignificance of mankind upon the cosmic scale is ironically stressed in the comment of a Martian astronomer upon the extent of the damage to Earth.

> All the familiar continental markings and the masses of the seas remain intact, and indeed the only difference seems to be a shrinkage of the white discoloration (supposed to be frozen water) round either pole.

In "The Remarkable Case of Davidson's Eyes," Wells makes a novel use of the same pessimistic theme: that human survival is at the mercy of half-known and uncontrolled cosmic forces. Davidson, working at the Harlow Technical College, is bending with his head between the poles of a big electromagnet when lightning strikes the laboratory. His eyes are affected, so that he can see an island at the antipodes, though he is blind to things around him. (The ingenious theory of a "kink in space" with which Wells explains his peculiar accident has become one of the key gimmicks of current science fiction--a genre that must be regarded as Wells's own invention.)

The magnet in some way has twisted the retinal elements of Davidson's eyes through a fourth dimension. "Two points might be a yard away on a sheet of paper, and yet be brought together by bending the paper around." Although Davidson gradually recovers, suffering no permanent harm, the effect of the story comes chiefly from the sense of man at the mercy of the cosmic unknown. The peculiar power of these early stories arises from Wells's genius at making this unknown almost painfully near and real.

"Through a Window," although it has no direct reference to the idea of progress, is a melodramatic reminder that men survive or die at the whim of forces which they can neither see nor control. Bailey, sitting in a room with both legs broken and set, entertains himself by looking through a window at the busy traffic upon the Thames. He remains an idly detached observer, secure from any personal commitment, until the day when a Malay seaman runs amuck, climbs through the window, and dies reaching for Bailey with his creese.

An exploration of our astronomical limits is interrupted, in the story, "In the Avu Observatory," by an unexpected biological attack. The astronomer Woodhouse is at his telescope, "watching a little group of stars in the Milky Way," when a vast wing sweeps toward him out of the dark, a claw tears his cheek, and his ankle is"gripped and held by a row of keen teeth." The unknown attacker escapes into the darkness over the jungle. As Woodhouse reports to the chief observer, who groans at the quotation, "There are more things in heaven and earth--and more particularly in the forests of Borneo--than are dreamt of in our philosophies."

Perhaps because such biological limits offer more variety, complexity, and irony than do the equally severe astronomical limits of "The Star" and The Time Machine, Wells wrote many stories in which men are threatened or over-shadowed by rival forms of life. In "The Crystal Egg," for example, the tragically limited existence of the hero is brought into stark perspective by a glimpse of Mars. The egg is a television link between the earth and Mars. Its remarkable nature has been discovered by Mr. Cave, a pathetic little antique-dealer. Cruelly bullied by his wife and step-children, he finds in the crystal object a brief escape. Though the Martians in this story are mounting no war against the earth, the wonders of their world are significantly contrasted with the mean, tormented poverty of Mr. Cave's life. The beautiful, birdlike Martians appear more worthy of progress than do men.

Holroyd, the viewpoint character of "The Empire of the Ants," encounters the progressive rivals of mankind nearer home. A Lancashire engineer, he is in Brazil on a new gunboat sent to fight a plague of ants. An innocent young man straight from England, "where Nature is hedged, ditched, and drained into the perfection of submission," he has been confident of progress. "He had taken it for granted that a day would come when everywhere about the earth, plow and culture, light tramways, and good roads, and ordered security, would prevail." On the Amazon, however, he discovers the cosmic inconsequence of man. The forest is interminable. Scattered ruins of buildings suggest that the real masters here are the puma, the jaguar, and the ants.

In a few miles of the forest, Holroyd reflects

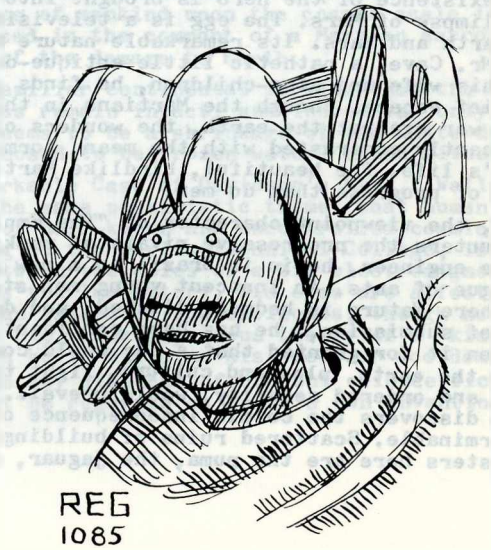
> there must be more ants than there are men in the whole world!...They had a language, they had an intelligence! ...Suppose presently the ants began to store knowledge, ...use weapons, form great empires, sustained a planned and organised war?

As the gunboat ascends the river, cosmic unconcern becomes manifest in the suddenly progressive ants, whose gigantic leaders wear clothing and have tools or weapons "strapped about their bodies by bright white bands like white metal threads." Reluctantly, fearful of being called to account for wasting ammunition, the Creole captain fires his big gun and then steams back down the river, leaving the ants undefeated. As the story ends, their empire is still expanding.

> So far their action has been a steady progressive settlement, involving the flight or slaughter of every human being in the new areas they invade...Holroyd at least is firmly convinced that they will finally dispossess man over the whole of tropical South America.

Many other stories repeat this pattern, in which the exotic element is an evolutionary rival of mankind. The plant kingdom in "The Flowering of the Strange Orchid," evolves at least a symbolic threat to human progress. The ocean gives birth to progressive rival species, in "In the Abyss" and "The Sea Raiders." The spirit world provides a malevolent and dangerous competitor in "The Stolen Body." The land produces another rival species in the enormous flying spiders of "The Valley of Spiders."

Though the novels and short stories discussed in this chapter express various moods and intentions, all of them are at least partly shaped by Wells's painful awareness that men exist within implacable cosmic limits, and that the continued evolution of mankind may be interrupted by physical or biological events beyond human control.



FOOTNOTES

1) H. G. Wells (London, 1957), 37-38.

2) The Discovery of the Future: A Discourse Delivered to the Royal Institution on January 24, 1902 (London, 1902).

3) Experiment in Autobiography (New York, 1934), 293 (abbreviated as Exp.).

4) Bernard Bergonzi discusses and compares the texts of the known versions of The Time Machine in "The Publication of The Time Machine 1894-95," The Review of English Studies, New Series, XI (1960), 42-51; he reprints the first version in The Early H.G. Wells: A Study of the Scientific Romances (Manchester, 1961), 187-214. See also Jack Williamson, "Brass Tacks," Analog Science Fact-Science Fiction, LXXII (January, 1964), 5, 91. The history of The Time Machine in Sam Moskowitz's Explorers of the Infinite (Cleveland, 1963), is inaccurate.

5) H. G. Wells (New York, 1930), 262-264 (designated as HGW).

6) Bernard Bergonzi, The Early H. G. Wells (designated as EHGW).

7) Atlantic Edition of the Works of H. G. Wells (New York, 1924),(denoted as Works).

8) First published as a serial in 1897, The War of the Worlds is included in Seven Famous Novels; the theme is foreshadowed in Wells's essay, "The Extinction of Man," Pall Mall Gazette (September 23, 1894), reprinted in Certain Personal Matters (London, 1898), 172-179; Wells's brother Frank suggested the idea of interplanetary invasion. For a critical text, based upon unpublished matter in the University of Illinois Archive, see David Yerkes Hughes, An Edition and a Survey of H.G. Wells' "The War of the Worlds" (doctoral dissertation, University of Illinois, 1952).

9) L. Sprague de Camp, Science-Fiction Handbook (New York, 1953), 15-17; Marjorie Hope Nicolson, Voyages to the Moon (New York, 1948), 1 f.

10) Page 458; Wells remarks in the preface to the third volume of Works that the incidents were so vividly imagined "that now when he passes through that country these events recur to him as though they were actual memories."

11) See Certain Personal Matters (abbreviated hereafter as CPM), 172-179.

12) The article is "The Man of the Year Million," Pall Mall Budget, November 16, 1893. See Bergonzi, EHGW, 36-38, and Geoffrey West, HGW, 105. The article is reprinted in CPM, 161-171, under the title, "Of a Book Unwritten."

13) Bergonzi, EHGW, 77; Harris Wilson, Arnold Bennett and H.G. Wells: A Record of a Personal and a Literary Friendship (Urbana, Ill., 1960), 59.

FOOTNOTES (continued)

14) The Short Stories of H. G. Wells (New York: Garden City, 1929).

15) New York Herald, April 15, 1906; quoted by Geoffrey West, HGW, 118.

16) The Country of the Blind and Other Stories, 1911, iv; quoted by Bergonzi, EHGW, 63.

17) "An Experiment in Illustration," Strand Magazine (February, 1920); quoted by Geoffrey West, HGW, 106.

MAGAZINE PUBLICATION DATES

(for short stories cited in text)

"The Remarkable Case of Davidson's Eyes" -- The Pall Mall Budget (March 28, 1895)
"In the Abyss" -- Pearson's Magazine (August, 1896)
"The Flowering of the Strange Orchid" -- PMB (August 2, 1896)
"The Sea Raiders" -- Weekly Sun Literary Supplement (Dec. 6, 1896)
"The Crystal Egg" -- New Review (1897)
"The Star" -- Graphic (Christmas Number, 1897)
"The New Accelerator" -- Strand Magazine (December, 1901)
"The Valley of Spiders" -- PM (March, 1903)
"The Land Ironclads" -- SM (December, 1903)
"The Empire of the Ants" -- SM (December, 1905)

ABBREVIATIONS USED IN CHAPTER TWO

Anticipations -- Anticipations of the Reaction of Mechanical and Scientific Progress upon Human Life and Thought

Exp. -- Experiment in Autobiography

SFN -- Seven Famous Novels of H. G. Wells

HGW -- Geoffrey West, H. G. Wells

EHGW -- Bernard Bergonzi, The Early H. G. Wells

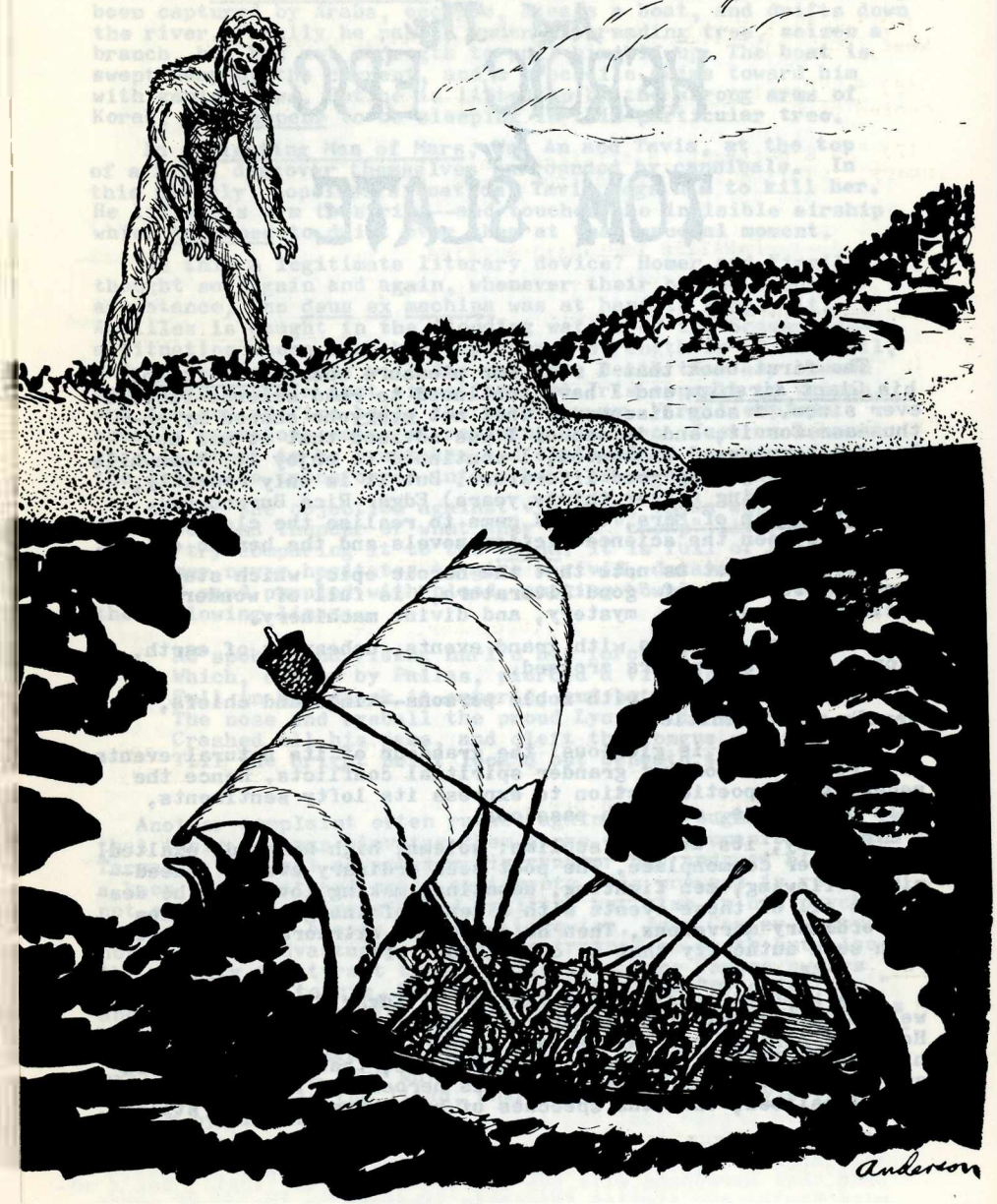
Works -- The Works of H. G. Wells

CPM -- Certain Personal Matters

SM -- The Strand Magazine

PMB -- The Pall Mall Budget

PM -- Pearson's Magazine



POLYPHEMUS

EDGAR RICE BURROUGHS And The HEROIC EPIC

by TOM SLATE

The first book that I read for pleasure was Tom Swift and his Giant Airship; and I have continued to read science-fiction ever since. I soon discovered that not everyone shared my enthusiasm for it, and in school I was advised that it was not "good literature." Undaunted, I continued to enjoy it. Meanwhile I was also enjoying good literature. But it is only recently, while re-reading (after thirty years) Edgar Rice Burroughs' A Fighting Man of Mars, that I came to realise the close resemblance between the science-fiction novels and the heroic epic.

To begin, let us note that the heroic epic, which stands at the very top rank of "good literature," is full of wonders, coincidences, monsters, mystery, and divine machinery.

Secondly, it deals with grand events, upheavals of earth, storms, heavenly powers aroused.

Thirdly, it deals with noble persons--kings and chiefs, devils and divinities.

Fourthly, it is glorious: the grandeur of its natural events is a reflection of yet grander spiritual conflicts. Hence the necessity of poetic diction to express its lofty sentiments, bold principles, and high passions.

Fifthly, its mood is sublime: solemn, high-hearted, exalted. It is never commonplace. The poet sees ordinary events indeed--rivers flowing, men fighting, debating, making love; but he describes all of these events with a depth of insight that makes the ordinary marvelous. Then he describes extraordinary events with such authority that he compels belief.

Now when we consider the fiction of Edgar Rice Burroughs, we see immediately that it shares some of these qualities. However, certain complaints have been raised against him: that his plots involve improbable coincidences, that his narratives are full of violent action, that his heroes and heroines are over-idealised, that the speeches of his characters are stilted.

Even his sincerest admirers have accused Burroughs of an "unconscionable reliance on coincidence." Two examples come to mind. In The Son of Tarzan, one of the characters, after having been captured by Arabs, escapes, steals a boat, and drifts down the river. Finally he passes under a spreading tree, seizes a branch, but has not strength to pull himself up. The boat is swept away by the current, and a crocodile swims toward him with gaping jaws. But he is lifted up by the strong arms of Korak, who happens to be sleeping in this particular tree.

In A Fighting Man of Mars, Nur An and Tavia, at the top of a hill, discover themselves surrounded by cannibals. In this utterly hopeless situation Tavia begs him to kill her. He lifts his arm to strike--and touches the invisible airship which happened to drift over them at that crucial moment.

Is this a legitimate literary device? Homer and Virgil thought so. Again and again, whenever their heroes needed assistance, the deus ex machina was at hand to supply it. Achilles is caught in the flooding waters of the Scamander--a situation where even his superhuman strength is of no avail, and he complains, he will die the same death that any common man would meet in that situation. But Iris appeals to Vulcan, and the god of fire boils the waters away. Virgil employs equally marvelous means of rescuing his hero. Just as Aeneas' ship is about to be overtaken and captured by an enemy fleet, the latter is transformed into a bevy of mermaids.

As for the objection against violence, those who deplore the blood and thunder of what they call "cheap" literature should try comparing it to the Iliad. It is full of battles, and Homer never hesitates to give a vivid, detailed description of sand purpled with blood, smoking bowels, etc. Consider the following lines:

> He spoke, and rising hurl'd his forceful dart,
> Which, driven by Pallas, pierced a vital part;
> Full in his cheek it enter'd, and betwixt
> The nose and eyeball the proud Lycian fix'd;
> Crashed all his jaws, and cleft the tongue within,
> Till the bright point look'd out beneath the chin.
>
> (Book V)

Another complaint often raised against Burroughs' heroes is that their prowess elevates them above common humanity. Beyond Tarzan's physical advantages his creator has endowed him with a keen intellect and noble sentiments. His prowess is revealed not only in his strength and agility, but also in his psychical domination over beasts and men. Likewise, John Carter enjoys not only the advantages of muscles trained on Earth but also the ability to attract trusty followers. Tars Tarkas swears eternal fealty to him, Dejah Thoris calls him "my chieftain," and finally he is acclaimed "Warlord of Mars." John Carter has but to show himself, and the enslaved red men rise up in irresistable strength against their captors. No doubt Burroughs exalts his heroes, but why complain about it? We can find an exact parallel in the Iliad, where the hero wins a victory simply by showing himself:

Thy want of arms, (said Iris) well we know
But though unarmed, yet clad in terrors, go.
Let but Achilles o'er yon trench appear,
Proud Troy shall tremble, and consent to fear
Greece from one glance of that tremendous eye
Shall take new courage, and disdain to fly.

She spoke, and pass'd in air. The hero rose,
Her aegis Pallas o'er his shoulder throws;
Around his brows a golden cloud she spread;
A stream of glory flammed above his head--
Thrice from the trench his dreadful voice he raised
And thrice they fled, confounded and amazed.
(Book XVIII)

As for stilted language, we find it not only in the speeches of Burroughs' heroes, but, in the following case, of a slave: "When I have told what I saw I shall have incurred the enmity of a powerful noble"...To which Tan Hadron replies, "And if you speak the truth, man, you will have won the friendship of a padwar whose sword is not so mean but that it may protect you even from a powerful noble."

I suppose that some critics will complain that a slave and a soldier are not likely to express themselves in a style so labouriously epigrammatic, to say nothing of their expert handling of the future perfect tense. To me, the splendour of those speeches is its own justification. Moreover, I find in the Iliad a conversation equally stilted, where Chalcas the priest seeks Achilles protection:

"For I must speak what wisdom would conceal
And truths, invidious to the great, reveal."
(Book I)

Achilles responds to this plea heroically; and like Tan Hadron he stiffly refers to himself in third person:

"E'en by that god I swear who rules the day,
To whom thy hands the vows of Greece convey,
Amid whose blest oracles thy lips declare;
Long as Achilles breathes this vital air,
No daring Greek, of all the numerous band
Against his priest shall lift an impious hand."

One could go on in this manner, demonstrating that most of the reasons that critics have offered for calling this literature bad are really reasons for calling it good, with the obvious conclusion that the critics do not know good literature when they see it. But I cannot abandon the argument at this point. I may have succeeded in stating and holding my ground; but an argument is not really won until the opponent's case is thoroughly understood. Obviously many people agree with the critics; they do not like the books. The objections that they offer are mere diversions, which it is useless to brush aside because their real objection lies somewhere else. What it is and why they never bring it into the open are the interesting questions that we must next explore.

I have argued that the epics of John Carter and Tan Hadron of Hastor belong in the same class with those of Beowulf, Achilles, and Ulysses, though they do not rank as high. I admit at once that Burroughs will not supplant Homer or Virgil, but I admire his heroic stories for their likeness to the great prototypes.

However, I suspect that this similarity is precisely what his critics do not like. I suspect that they do not admire the heroic epic at all. If the story of Ulysses had been published for the first time in 1915, if it were submitted to their judgment without the support of ancient tradition, would they have liked it? It is not hard to imagine what they would say: fantastic adventures among imaginary monsters in a series of imaginary islands, giving an altogether distorted idea of the Mediterranean world and peopled with unconvincing characters. Now when they pass judgment on the books of Burroughs, they imply that no one with a taste for good literature would want to read this author. What do they mean by "good" literature? Disapproving the scene where Tarzan plants a foot on the chest of his vanquished foe and shouts his victory, do they turn with satisfaction to the more classic triumph where Achilles drags the corpse of Hector around the walls of Troy under the agonised gaze of Hecuba and Andromache? If so, they can claim to reject a lesser epic in favour of a greater. But their real objection to Tarzan and John Carter and Tan Hadron is not a question of style, but of genre. It is not a question of prosody or imagery or allegory that troubles them: what they really object to is the heroic itself, I suspect, for all their talk about good literature, that in the privacy of their own thoughts they do not really delight in Milton or Dante, much less in the ancient epics.

Well, what of it? This, we might say, is a matter of taste, and many people are willing to admit they have no taste for the classics. But such a position will not serve the arbiters of juvenile literature: they are not satisfied simply to assert a personal preference; they require some authority that can be imposed upon others. This is why they refer so solemnly to literary values. But their reference is as vague as it is solemn. They dare not explain their canon of judgment too clearly, or it would give away the fact that their preferences are all wrong. All they want from literary criteria is the bare form of authority. For them, the canons must be loaded with blanks, because all they want is an impressive noise.

This sort of authority commits the unforgivable sin. He calls the good bad, and the bad he calls good. It is sad that many children do not appreciate good literature. A word of encouragement from a real authority might help them. But it is sadder yet to see many children with a natural taste for good literature being instructed to avoid it because it is bad!

This sort of authority is most presumptuous. He refuses to declare the canon of his judgment: he cannot say why it is bad for Dorothy to be transported to Oz by a cyclone; any such statement would also cover Dante's visit to Hell. The fact is that he has no taste at all for good literature. The only thing that enables him to recognise it at all is age--when its colour has been dimmed by centuries, he accepts it.

The most egregious of all critical blunders was that of the librarian at Downey, who objected to Tarzan's moral example, on the supposition that the Jungle Lord was not properly married to Jane. Actually Tarzan's morals were not only above reproach, but almost beyond belief. Readers will remember how he felt he deserved death for falling in love with Jane, when he (mistakenly) believed her to be engaged to another man. They may also recall in The Son of Tarzan how Korak's declaration of love to Miriam includes arrangements for a visit to the missionary in order that the wedding be properly solemnised. No, it is not the morals of the hero that are objectionable--it is heroism itself. The real reason why censors condemn the epics of Tarzan and John Carter is that they dislike and mistrust the heroic spirit: they hate the hero qua hero.

The reason for this attitude is not far to seek. Heroes are not necessarily good citizens. The hero has no place in a settled society--he is a disturber, and society must either suppress him or be unsettled by him. Free spirits, high-hearted, bold and daring, are not wanted in an orderly world. Even as a soldier the hero is sometimes unwanted, especially under the modern conditions of technological war. Achilles would be court-martialed today and probably discharged as psychologically unfit--paranoid. Even Agamemnon found him unmanageable. We can well imagine what a modern officer would say of a soldier who refused to obey orders and promised disaster to his country, as Achilles did when Agamemnon crossed him:

> Unmoved as death Achilles shall remain
> Though prostrate Greece should bleed at every vein;
> When flushed with slaughter, Hector comes to spread
> The purpled shore with mountains of the dead,
> Then shalt thou mourn the offense thy madness gave,
> Forced to implore when impotent to save;
> Then rage in bitterness of soul to know
> This act has made the bravest Greek thy foe.
>
> (Book I)

The notion that exuberant spirits should be suppressed by the government because they endanger good morals is a clever dodge invented by politicians to mask the real issue: governments are much more likely to be upset by moral fervour than by moral laxity. Politicians often find it wise to encourage sensual vices as a means of harmlessly dissipating energies that might otherwise move against them. So Tacitus remarks that when the Britons had become accustomed to Roman Baths and Roman vices, they were in no danger of revolting against Roman rule.

It is interesting to observe, in the present argument over psychedelic drugs, that exaltation is the thing feared by the guardians of society. They have no fear of the depressants and soporifica. Aspirin is universally known for its depressant effect upon the central nervous system--it reduces tension, slows the heart, calms the person down. It is freely available, dispensed at low prices, and consumed by hundreds of tons. The barbiturates, in spite of their notorious reputation for causing addiction, are also consumed in vast amounts without arousing much concern. If drugging were the issue, if the sheer quantity of physico-dynamic effect were the gist of the offense, then depressants would be regarded as a far more serious problem than the psychedelics. But consciousness-reducing drugs, however they may appear under the cold white light of eternity, are considered less likely than the consciousness-expanding drugs to disrupt social order.

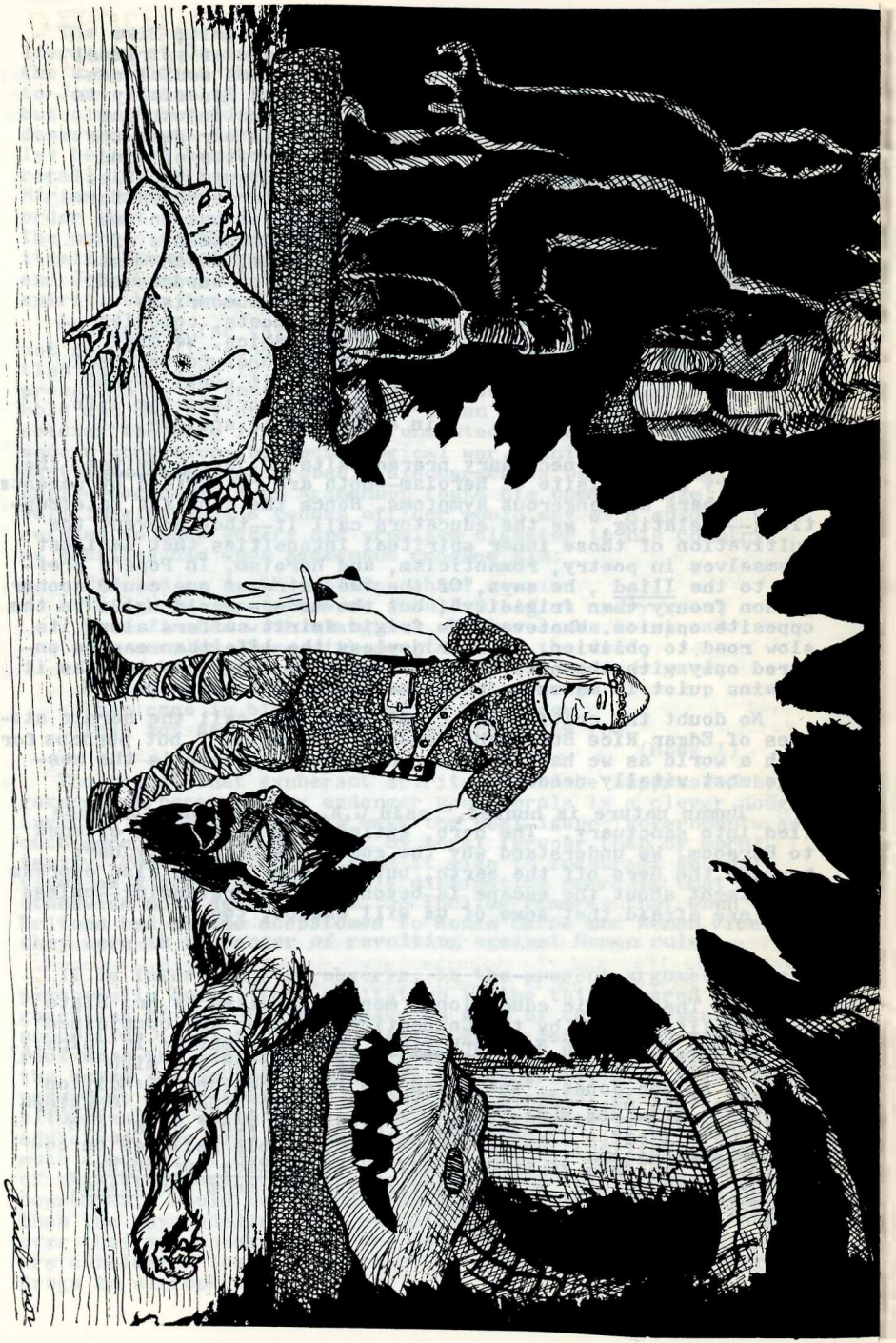
The heroic spirit, like every other form of spiritual exaltation, makes social control difficult. Especially in a commercial and industrial society such as our own, the more exalted states of mind are likely to cause trouble. Mass culture is designed for the mediocre; it has no use for superior endowments of spiritual force, which must be dissipated or suppressed. Hence we need humourists rather than poets, comedies rather than epics. We must continually puncture personal dignity lest it swell beyond the size appropriate for life in a democratic society.

Solemnity, the necessary prerequisite of joy; gravitas, the necessary prerequisite of heroism--both are recognised by parents and teachers as dangerous symptoms. Hence the constant interruptions--"relating," as the educators call it--that prevent the cultivation of those inner spiritual intensities that manifest themselves in poetry, romanticism, and heroism. In Pope's preface to the Iliad , he says,"Of the two extremes one could sooner pardon frenzy than frigidity"; but the modern world holds to the opposite opinion. Whatever the frigid spirit suffers along its slow road to oblivion, however joyless the life than can be endured only with the help of mind-deadening drugs, as long as it remains quiet it makes no problems for social control.

No doubt the critics are right when they call the heroic stories of Edgar Rice Burroughs "escape literature," but perhaps for such a world as we have made for ourselves, escape is the message most vitally needed.

"Human nature is hunted," said G.K. Chesterton, "and has fled into sanctuary." The hero, exiled from earth, has escaped to Barsoom. We understand why the guardians of society have hounded the hero off the earth, but why they should also express resentment about the escape is beyond our understanding--unless they are afraid that some of us will escape, too.

Note: The anaemic educational mentality cited by Mr. Slate is exemplified best by the Connecticut teacher who complained in the Nov. 29, 1936 New York Times that "the matter in pulps... constitutes a menace to pupils' morals, English and mind" (quoted by Bob Jones, "Who Liked the Pulps besides 10 Million Readers?" The Pulp Era, May-June 1967, p.21). The G.K. Chesterton quotation is from his essay, "Birds Who Won't Sing" (in Tremendous Trifles), while the "unconscionable reliance on coincidence" is from Richard Lupoff's Edgar Rice Burroughs: Master of Adventure, p.70. The translations from the Iliad, of course, are Alexander Pope's.



BEOWULF

SOME MOTIFS AND SOURCES FOR LORD OF THE RINGS

by SANDRA L. MIESEL

J.R.R. Tolkien's Lord of the Rings is a superbly effective subcreation, depicting a totally self-consistent Secondary World which offers the Primary World recovery, refuge, and consolation. It evokes that primordial longing for simplicity and oneness with nature which Eliade calls "nostalgia for Paradise."[1] As a perfect Secondary World, Middle Earth has its own traditions, legends, and histories -- some richly detailed, some tantalisingly vague. From what materials has this World been fashioned? Hypothetical sources include history, anthropology, and a variety of mythologies.

Generally, Tolkien mines history for cultural correlations rather than facts.[2] For example, Gondor's capital, Minas Tirith, is subtly reminiscent of Byzantium. Both the "Tower of Guard" and the "City Guarded by God" are beleagured citadels of venerable transplanted cultures, glorious seats of empire in exile. This is not to say that Minas Tirith represents Byzantium but that the author has employed historical associations to elicit reader response.

The geography of Middle Earth's principal continent is vaguely like that of Western Europe and the philological and cultural relationships between its races are patterned on those of the British Isles. Schematically: the elves are the Romans, the Dunedain the Romanised Celts, the Northerners the non-Romanised Celts, the Wild Men the pre-Celtic aborigines, the Rohirrim the Anglo-Saxons (by extension, the other Nordic elements as well), and the hobbits late mediaeval English yoemen. The last correlation is re-enforced by the dating of the Shire Calendar.[3]

Some of Tolkien's most pervasive symbolism is rooted in cultural anthronology. There are traces of primitive vegetation worship in the connotations of locale and season. The Ring-bearers' obyssey from the fertile Shire to desolate Mordor is a journey into the Wasteland, a passage through the Dark Night of the Soul. Frodo, like the Fisher-King, suffers wounds beyond earthly healing.

Climate and terrain worsen in lands fallen under the Shadow. Evil presences infiltrate the forests and Saruman defiles the Shire. The triumph of goodness heals the land's afflictions and fruitfulness returns spectacularly in The Year of Great Plenty.

The quest takes place within the fall and winter seasons, times when the power of wickedness was felt to be at its height. Is it just an artful coincidence that Sauron falls on a date corresponding to March 25, the Christian Feast of the Annunciation?

The inability of common orcs and trolls to stand sunlight and Sauron's power to darken the sky are solar myth characteristics of evil. Arwen and Aragorn celebrate their marriage after sunset to purge night time of its former grim associations.

Tolkien also makes extensive use of tree symbolism, one of the world's oldest and most universal motifs. The tree is the image of the cosmos, of absolute reality, of eternal renewal. It is the centre and support of the universe, the means of communication with divinity. It signifies life and may be mystically bound up with the fate of a specific person.

Thus the White and Golden Trees were once the joy of Valinor and their destruction the Great Enemy's primal sin. (Notice that minions of both Sauron and Saruman wantonly destroy many trees.) From the first White Tree sprang a line of living talismans for the Edain Kings, both in Numenor and Gondor. Their royal banner bore this device. But at the time of the story, Gondor's Tree was withered. Aragorn interprets the unexpected discovery of a new sapling as a favourable omen for his wedding. For centuries this seed had lain unsprouted on a barren mountainside just as Aragorn's forebears had long hidden in the wild. This Triad of Tree, King, and Nation, interdependent in their vitality, is but another expression of popular vegetation beliefs. This correlates with the Grail legends and their antecedents. Trees are also held in great reverence in the Shire. The hobbits' Party Tree might be called a "secular" counterpart of the Numenorean emblem. Replanting trees is the keynote of the Shire's restoration.

Vegetation imagery is also prominent in Tolkien's use of specific mythological motifs. The very concept of discrete, adjoining "circles of the world" recalls the Nine Worlds linked by the cosmic tree, Yggdrasill.

Norse community ritual life often revolved about sacred groves. The high-seat pillars in Viking halls were carven in semblance of Thor's oak and were scarcely less revered than that holy tree itself. As Aeneas bore his household gods from burning Troy, the refugee settlers of Iceland brought their precious ancestral pillars from Norway.[4] Likewise the fathers of the Dunedain carried a seedling of the White Tree to Middle Earth from sunken Numenor.

In the most primitive Norse myths, gods[5] and heroes came from Paradise beyond the sea and returned thence when their missions were accomplished. This recalls the elves' migrations. Also consider the eschatological similarities. At Ragnarok, evil would be defeated, but Asgard and the old order would perish. Only the gods' sons would survive to guide humanity into a new age.

Likewise in Lord of the Rings, Sauron passes away but so does all the ancient magic of Middle Earth. Aragorn, descendant of elves and kings is charged with the care of the changed world.

The terms Middle Earth and Elvenhome obviously come from Migard and Alfheim. Gimli is the name of Asgard's gold-roofed hall of righteousness. Could Frodo's name be derived from the Norse froðr, meaning "wise" or "fruitful"? It would seem most appropriate.

Compare the One Ring to the Ring of the Nibelungen and Aragorn's reforged sword Anduril to Siegfried's Gram. Smaug, the greedy dragon in The Hobbit, is near kin to Fafnir. Nordic legends tell of werebears (berserkr), barrow wights (draugr), and ghastly armies of the dead. The passage of Aragorn's party through the Paths of the Dead is strikingly like this description of a journey to the Norse Tartarus:

> It was needful...to leave the sun and stars behind, to journey down into chaos and at last to pass into a land where no light was and where darkness reigned eternally.[6]

The sun was feminine, the moon masculine to the Norse, Finns, and Baltic Slavs, just as to the inhabitants of Middle Earth. The Slavs connected the celestial bodies with trees of gold and silver and identified the earthly sea with the heavenly ocean. The latter motif is echoed in the elvish legend of Earendil's voyage.

To the Finns, white trees were sacred and their shamans climbed these trees to commune with the spirit world. The wizard's ability to speak the language of animals and Gandalf's transfiguration are shamanistic phenomena. The female Valar, Elbereth Gilthoniel, sower of stars, is reminiscent of the world-weaving Finnish goddess, Ilmatar. Their hero Ilmarinen apparently lends his name to Valinor's mountain Ilmarin and the names of other Kalevalan characters, Lemminkainen and Vainomoinen, would not sound out of place in Lord of the Rings.[7]

Tolkien's Undying Lands in the Western Sea resemble the Immortal Isles of Celtic fable, refuges of gods and privileged mortals, primaeval sources of wisdom and poetry. These places of perpetual feasting, which knew neither death nor grief, were quite numerous: one hundred fifty are mentioned in The Voyage of Bran. Among these was Falga, the Land of Promise, with its singing silver tree:

> Lovely land throughout the world's age,
> On which the many blossoms fall.[9]

The Welsh version was Annwfn, the Not-World, prototype of the Arthurian Avalon. Entrance into the Happy Otherworld was by invitation only, just as in the trilogy. Time is compressed for mortals visiting Elysium as it is for the Ringbearers in Lothlorien. This sojourn in a forest where the Elder Days live on is also a penetration into Sacred Time, the mythic time of the beginnings. It suggests the joys of Elvenhome across the sea.

The power, beauty, and immortality of the elves in Lord of the Rings are like those of the ancient Irish divinities the aes sidhe. But their personalities are based on Spencer's Elfe Lords rather than flamboyant Celtic models.

Elrond is no Finn mac Coul nor Galadriel a Maeve. Accounts of marriages between men and immortals and other minglings of the natural and the preternatural feature as prominently in the Celts' traditions as in Tolkien.

Yet any search for precedents and analogies as an end in itself is sterile. Knowledge alone does not insure artistry. The beauty of Tolkien's achievement lies in the skilful way he has interwoven so many motifs, making Middle Earth gloriously alive and splendidly real.

FOOTNOTES

1) Mircea Eliade, Patterns in Comparative Religion, trans. Rosemary Sheed (Cleveland, 1963), 383.

2) One exception, his gruesome image of the Dead Marshes, echoes a passage in the sixth century Origin and Deeds of the Gods by Jordanes. (See J.W. Thompson and E.W. Johnson, An Introduction to Medieval Europe (New York, 1937), 78.)

3) Frodo's journey occurs in 1418-1419, Shire Reckoning. Tolkien admits the hobbits were partly inspired by his Midland neighbors.

4) The historical event and the literary incident reflect an underlying need to remain in contact with a totemic centre, a concrete manifestation of the sacred. Cf. Eliade, op. cit., 369.

5) Vanir, or nature deities, not the later and more familiar Aesir-folk.

6) Saxo Grammaticus, Gesta Danormum, trans. O. Elton (London, 1893), book vii, p.344.

7) The similarities between the elvish language and Finnish are well known but lie outside the scope of this essay.

8) The Greek analogues were the Islands of the Blessed, of the Hesperides, of Calypso. However, the Celtic Happy Otherworld was not always located on an island. It could be under the sea, inside a hollow hill, or under the earth (like Virgil's Elysian Fields). Parallels between the Greek and Celtic traditions are due to their common Aryan heritage and not direct contact.

9) The Voyage of Bran, Son of Febal, ed. and trans. Kuno Meyer (London, 1895), v. 6.

A VALUABLE NEW BOOK ON WELLS

by

RICHARD D. MULLEN

Mark R. Hillegas, The Future as Nightmare: H.G. Wells and the Anti-Utopians, New York, 1967, 200 pp., $5.75.

It is a pleasure to be able to report on a truly valuable new book on Wells: Mark Hillegas's The Future as Nightmare, an indispensable supplement to Bergonzi's The Early H.G. Wells and Wagar's H.G. Wells and the World State and a much needed corrective to certain parts of the former, especially in its treatment of When the Sleeper Wakes. Try as hard as I can, I can make only one serious complaint about the book: it is too brief to be a fully adequate treatment of its subject.

Its central subject is the intimacy of the relationship between, on the one hand, certain books by Wells, chiefly When the Sleeper Wakes, A Modern Utopia, and Men Like Gods, and, on the other, the "major anti-utopias": "The Machine Stops," We, Brave New World, 1984, and the Perelandra trilogy. It is of course true that the existence of this relationship has never been a secret, but it is also true that Mr. Hillegas is the first to show not only that these books originated in reaction to utopianism of a Wellsian kind but also that they are permeated with Wellsian influence in structure and detail, in image and concept, to an extent far greater than presumably even the authors themselves were aware. The breadth of Wells's influence has always been appreciated, but it has remained for Mr. Hillegas to demonstrate its depth and power--and, we must add, its continuing effect, even if now largely indirect, on the novels and stories published under the science-fiction label.

To say that a book has forced you to change your mind is to pay it the highest praise you can. Mr. Hillegas's book is of more than ordinary interest to me if only because I have recently covered much of the same ground in an essay in Extrapolation (VIII, 31-63) on Wells and Victor Rousseau Emanuel--an essay in which I was rash enough to say that When the Sleeper Wakes is a forerunner to 1984 "only in the quite general sense that it is also a dystopia." If ever I have occasion to rewrite that essay, I will have to qualify that sentence rather elaborately, with full acknowledgement to Mr. Hillegas.

Although Mr. Hillegas seems to subscribe to what I have called the new orthodoxy on Wells (RQ, III, 66-68), his doing so has virtually no effect on this book, since he can with good reason end his treatment of Wells with Men Like Gods (1920). Even so, there is one gratuitous judgment that might well have been omitted. Coming to the early Wells with rather restricted interests, Mr. Bergonzi found When the Sleeper Wakes unsatisfactory and then proceeded to argue that it was the product of a man whose imaginative powers were failing under the stress of illness and overwork. Coming to Wells with wider interests, Mr. Hillegas demonstrates that Sleeper has been one of the more seminal books of our time--but elsewhere finds occasion to say that The Shape of Things to Come is "manifestly the product of a tired imagination" (p.63). A reader with a still wider interest in what Wells wrote about might argue that the difference between Shape and Sleeper, or if you will, Shape and A Modern Utopia, is a difference not in quality but in kind, and that the Wellsian imagination was operating with full vigour in the 1933 book. Furthermore, it might be put forth as at least a tentative thesis that Shape has to 1984 much the same relationship that Men Like Gods has to Brave New World. Having made this stricture, I must pay my respects to Mr. Hillegas for one of the most astonishingly clever bits of conciseness in all criticism. Although the fact was evidently not widely appreciated until the publication in 1966 of George Woodcock's book on Orwell, 1984 was first and foremost the result of Orwell's reaction to the writings of James Burnham, especially The Managerial Revolution. Writing a brief book concerned primarily with the influence of Wells, Mr. Hillegas both avoids any discussion of Burnham and forestalls any captious critic of critics with the following: "Given human nature and the managerial revolution, we should rather..." (p.124).

Since the book is so brief (albeit no more so than the typical scholarly book of the present decade), and since that brevity was presumably dictated more by the economics of publishing than by the desires of the author, one cannot in reason complain very much about what has been left out. None the less, two things strike me as curious. The first is the absence of any reference to The Messiah of the Cylinder by Victor Rousseau Emanuel--a novel which, if only because of its early date (1917), seems to have considerable importance, on intellectual if not artistic grounds, for any study of Wells and the anti-Utopians; for it is certainly a full-fleged counter-Wellsian anti-Utopia, with similarities to 1984 in ways in which the latter differs from Sleeper, We, and Brave New World. I would like to know whether Mr. Hillegas omitted it simply through an oversight or because he felt its rather low artistic quality made it unsuitable for discussion. The second curious thing is the statement that Facial Justice and Player Piano are "easily the most important anti-Utopias" since 1984 (p.163). Surely not--or at least, surely not easily. For me at least, the most important is Michael Young's The Rise of the Meritocracy, a work often dazzling in its satiric brilliance (here again, there may be a question of kind, for Young's book is less a novel than a future history). But such oversights--if oversights they are--must be inevitable in this day when it can truly be said that of the making of books there is no end. If Mr. Hillegas omits some books that I would have included, he also discusses some with which I am not familiar and mentions a number of which I have never heard. Although your knowledge in this field may well be greater than mine, you will surely find his book informative as well as stimulating.

RESTAURANT DE LA GARE

As the train pulls in, a garcon in soiled apron
Shoos flies from the dusty bottles, the sour fruit.
The clock runs down. Cheeses mate in their cage.
Wine from an off-year does not console the traveller
Eating andouilettes beneath the slick placards
Of girls beached at Cannes; he plots their curves,
But the tracks outside stretch only as far as the eye.
The time-table commits incest with the carte du jour.
The chef, loathing his trade, spits into the soup.
When the bells ring, the slattern at the caisse
Pockets the five-franc note that buys her hose,
And the train, hurtling along the dark platform,
Throws back the small change of a poor country.

--Lawrence P. Spingarn

ARRIVAL

most of a day drove on, and a city
developed into evening. the damp
pay phone struggled with voices in the
rain; a hotel broke into grey.
red herrings danced on the chrome
locks of a wheel; the asphalt shifted
with the map. a naked fly-covered bulb
kept the light in a hissing city;
bars covered the cobblestone streets.

--A. Schroeder

SNAPSHOT

Look: here is my new
zoom-lens camera,
sent me by the brother
taken by the army,
and here is his picture
standing in Germany,
sleek and functional.

--David Lunde

WOMAN WITH ONE EYE

Halfway
up the chalk cliff
face (now
chafed grey) the
eye: begins

the forehead is
abrupt,
the nose
slowly
falls (not
a face but
parts of several
faces pasted together)

and walking down Market
she's a marvel of gladness.

--Brannock Rose

SOFT 37 PLYMOUTH

(for Claes Oldenburg)

1.
Tuesday, 2:15 am:
I come to
in the bushes, saplings,
doing 45. On the back seat
a red and yellow bat-kite
catches gin.

2.
Tuesday, 12:06 pm:
I find bark caught on the running board,
see the flattened fender
and half the bumper
sticking straight back (it breaks off
when I bend it).

3.
Wednesday, midnight:
2 ageless women,
looking exactly the same and naked,
sit by the shore,
by the lobster beats and the sea wall.
My Plymouth sits nearby.

--Peter Warren

FOR LESLIE

In a new photograph
I stare through my Plymouth's vent window,
through the cracks and fog
of 30 years. Yesterday
(the afternoon bright as new chrome),
near Bloomington St. Laundromat,
I patched the rear bumper
while 3 weeks of clothes were spun
almost clean.

Now, in the dark of early morning,
my mind puts blossoms on an amyrillis
that never made one. The red
is bright against white walls.
Your call, last night,
put you back in the white folds of my mind,
back in this rusting shell,
this 37 Plymouth that sits
outside,
tipped by the wind.

--Peter Warren

LIVE BAIT

So the scene sets
upon him: all
forlorn & sitting
amongst her skirts

she strikes him
in his marrow-bone
full, knocking
the free eye dumb.

So pretty she
angles, he pets
with his tongue
her wet eye

& she's grateful.
Him too, letting
her lead him
(trusting, trustful)

by the blind hand
on her thigh:
she benches him
on her own ground.

--David Lunde

A LETTER TO MY WIFE

I hate (you)
The way you
Just squat there
And chew crackers

Must you choose
An infinity of boredom
In my spare time

Must you always?
crackers, (chew
and), squat
like that

I remain, in the wedlock
Of our cracker world, so hatefully

Yours,

Anthony Sobin

ONE, TWO

1.

She came in wearing
soft, with an orchid
pasted to her breath.

He blamed sin, hearing
gift, the pith (and/or did)
wasted, through her breath.

And through her breath
she came
in.

2.

Neon through cat fur shone
zither and psaltery
haltered the sun this
dog collar for the Dog Star
Sirius sir your concerns
paltry.

--Lee Milliken

ACT ONE

they stalk about her
walls of pure shadow,
breaking their legs over the web of
her unperturbed spider of dust;
making wind sounds in the corner
of her life
that stands on countless feet.

--A. Schroeder

SANDS

they phone and say
you've been exposed
and then no sound. I tighten things...
the silver in your nails begins to drift
through rusting wood...and then
no sound
uncovered voices, that have dried.

I nail the night against the roof,
you rustle, overgrown with wind,
the trees lie down and cover themselves
with leaves,

and then...no sound

you suddenly grow voices
you talk of greased trees
we are grinding up the sun
you say.

I see the colours that have died,
the rustling links that disappear
into the back of night,
and I outside; my arms around
the roof that guards me from the
wind...

and you leave, like a man
in the skin of a bear
that is not yet killed.

--A. Schroeder

TRUTH

Each moment a moment of needles,
Each phone call a tender incision.
Separation of heart from body
Has left me a mechanical toy
Rotating upon the axis
Of an etherized mind.
Each night a night tormented;
Sleep, but loud desire binds
In a web of hope. Slowly
Around and around me
Your silence winds my shroud.

--Reynold A. Harrs

SAD STORY

Sing a song for
Harry Younger, loved
two women, loved
the weaker more.

--James Castle

I don't know if
bees care, or machines, but
I do.

I take off an arm, put
it on the desk--an ear, nipple,
eye, half a tongue, raw...
Not enough.

I remove pectorals,
duodenum, transverse colon,
four rods and a handful of
cones, array them
in a kind
of spaghetti for you on the
table.

Still, it's not
enough. "More," you say:
"More. Not enough. More."

It's a fine defense,
my feathered lady.

To have never enough.

--James Castle

ALTERNATIVES

1.

Gin bright morning. Spatter
of surf, metallic, on beach.
Slippery skin, soft
as shells flung by
careless feet.

Tin-tint glaring a forenoon,
empty bottles brown,
and here comes the snapping heel
down against the sea: this is the
bluff, and gulls flapping. This
is the sound of snares, of
hoopla and tititititta.

2.

Cranes are eating kingfishers
on the banks of the Ohio; below,
fish turn, look back to
bills cutting water, blood
drifting down to rocks, half-
sheltered eggs waiting. The kangaroo
has a wallet in her pouch, our
whole sky has gone marsupial:
bright feathers of the kingfisher
wave over the poles while all around
the winds are spreading
the waves flat
the terns in turn
circle the death.

--Lee Milliken

IN IOWA
(for James Wright)

Grey cats
fretfully nurse their litters
in cold barns.
Pregnant hogs scrape the frozen mud
and grunt at their weight.
It is March.

There will be green in the fields seen:
I am a visitor used to mountains
and wait for the corn
to block out neighboring farms.

I hear the big, green tractors
all day and men with hammers
mending fence.
I am growing quiet
and old here
and watch for sea gulls.

--Peter Warren

SONG TO BE SUNG AT A GRAVE

This morning,
I slid down hills
in my old car, antique,
drove through blowing snow
so thick
I couldn't see the car
in front of me,
hit him twice
or 3 times,
was hit
from behind,
killed.

I've often wondered
what it would be like
to float
down the Iowa River
in a cube or a
glass box.

All the questions
have no answers,
the answers
no questions.
I loved her more than any
but with the same
inabilities.

--Peter Warren

THE TASTE OF ETERNITY

BY JANET FOX

They were all young in that crystal city, and in the parks the flowers blossomed all year long, and everyone was always happy, almost. Mali was young (but they were all young) and taut as a plucked string. She had waist-length golden hair and brown (incredibly alive) eyes. She and Jarrod walked in the park (there were many parks in the city of ice) in the shadow of the Medical Complex where in huge vats they distilled the blue wine of eternity--one vial every morning for each person. (They had thrown out all the clocks and calendars then, and there had been great mounds of rustling wheels and gears, red and black numbers on curling yellow paper.)

"You aren't smiling, Jarrod."

Their feet made echoing noises on the arched bridge, and the stream rushed by beneath it, blind, hurrying without a reason.

"I was just...thinking."

"Of me?"

They were all lovers in that rainbow city. No one advised the virgins to make much of time. Time made much of them--lovers with centuries for a kiss and eons for learning all the arts of love.

"No."

She knelt by a pool among the trees, studying her face, the pale skin smooth over good bone structure like a cool, white statue that smiled from some dim recess while time paced nervously by. She wondered dreamily if there had really been one hundred and twenty-two years since her birth. One lost track of time.

The sun was setting on a stained-glass city. "For once I wasn't thinking of you, darling. I was thinking of death."

"Yes, and I was thinking of pigs with wings and mountains made of marshmallow. Death, indeed."

He did not laugh with her, and she found that her own laughter stuck in her throat, sharp as a fishbone.

"We know the tops of the mountains and what lies on the bottom of the sea. We've explored the moon and all the planets, but there's one mystery we can't penetrate."

"But it's no mystery. Only darkness and the feeling of... not...being?"

"Oh, can you explain what it's like?" His hands concealed into hard bands about her arms. "I've thought about it and read books about it and even started dreaming of it, but how can a man say what death is until he's tried?"

"You can't mean...it's crazy. How can you throw all this aside for something completely unknown?"

"Yes. Completely. Unknown."

He turned his face aside and seemed to be looking very hard at something that Mali couldn't see.

It was night in a city of phosphorescent glass, and they left the park to walk in the streets with the other young people (so many young people). A carnival parade swept them aside, streamers and glittering confetti showering down on them in the wake of the merrymakers.

"They're so happy," said Mali.

Jarrod didn't answer but hurried her along the street.

"We're going to the Tower of Stars, aren't we? You've always loved it. That will make you laugh again." She hugged his arm, and they came to the Tower, an icicle dripping brightness into the air. They rode the bubble up to the highest deck where the stars seemed very near.

"They're like us," smiled Mali, "unchanging." She seemed to remember something about the stars, that they did move, violently and to no apparent destination.

"I'm not sure you'll ever forgive me," said Jarrod, though you'll have lots of time. Your love is too strong, foolishly strong."

"Do you have to talk like a madman? It's lovely here. The wind is blowing all the cobwebs out of the sky and making the stars shine. We're going to be in love forever."

He pushed her away, almost gently, and leaning to the top of the railing, he let himself fall. There was no sound, only a doll's body drifting aimlessly, finally alighting as a dark patch on the pavement in the glare of the street. A crowd of what looked like children gathered around making meaningless sounds.

Mali became aware of her hands as white claws on the railing. The wind was catching possessively at her thin dress. She wondered why the stars were spinning.

Morning came with the sparkle of the sun on a brittle crystal city, and Mali found herself (somehow) on her own white dais of a bed, alone. Of course, alone. She inwardly tested her love for Jarrod, and it was strong, solid as a wall to keep others out and herself inside. It was time to get up, and of course her supple (oh, so young) body obeyed. In the mirror was the face of a statue, no longer smiling at time. From a tap on the wall where all night long the bluish fluid had fallen drop by drop into a fragile glass there came a faint chime. She walked to the vial, picked it up (considered throwing it to the floor) and drank it quickly. The taste of eternity was bitter.

opere citato

BY

HARRY WARNER, JR.

Sometimes the negative approach comes closest to getting things explained. It would help, for instance, to point out that this is not a new fanzine review column. It appeared regularly in Gregg Calkins' Oopsla! five or six years ago. Next, it is not the kind of fanzine review which synopsizes and expresses opinions on a group of fanzines chosen as the most recently arrived or the best of the recent arrivals. Nor does it make an effort to be totally comprehensive on the particular aspect of fanzines that gets attention in each instalment. Finally, the writer, while welcoming fanzines for review purposes, can't guarantee that any given publication will fit neatly enough into the column's subject-matter to get reviewed.

Since this column last emerged into print, the fanzine field has undergone significant changes. There are more fanzines than ever before, principally because of those very changes: specialised subfandoms have become more prominent in the preoccupation with one author or one type of fantasy; the amateur press associations have been born slightly faster than other amateur press associations have died, a considerable feat; and fandom has begun publishing on a major scale in a half-dozen nations on the continent of Europe. The dividing line between fandom and prodom has been breached repeatedly, with definite effects on the kind of material appearing in many fanzines and the appearance of the material in a few other fanzines. The very word "fanzine" has not yet appeared in dictionaries, but it has been used in a mass circulation magazine like TV Guide calmly and without an explanatory footnote.

Some developments in fan publishing have been dwarfed by these obvious trends. But the less obvious changes could turn out to provide in the future some of the most important influences on fandom as a whole. I have been impressed by the manner in which colleges and universities are without deliberate intent or fanfare beginning to produce more and more clusters of fans among their student-bodies. This is not a new phenomenon, of course. The Massachusetts Institute of Technology Science Fiction Society originated in the early 1950's. The Science Fiction Society of City College of New York was formed in 1961. Miami University of Ohio organised a Science Fiction Association in 1949. UCLA claimed 78 members for its science fiction club when Forrest Ackerman discovered it in 1949. The University of Chicago Science Fiction Club started in 1952 or earlier.

But there was a difference in the 1940's and 1950's. Science fiction groups on the campus were frosting on the cake then. The bulk of fandom was still recruited from the reader sections in the prozines. Today, the letter sections, fanzine reviews, and club columns in the prozines are almost one with Nineveh and Tyre. More and more new fans are being recruited in the classrooms: either because a solitary fan finds a fellow student who reads science fiction, or because there is a formal science fiction club sanctioned by the school. This is not as undependable a site for recruiting new fans as you might assume. Most young people read at least a small amount of science fiction, and a state university with enrollment of 40,000 or so provides as many potential new fans as the prozine that used to have trouble selling 50,000 copies of each issue. The eventual result could be both a continuing source of new fans and a difference in the whole makeup of the average fan. Those that come from the campus may be expected to possess at least a minimal amount of intelligence developed into thinking habits. The prozine-derived fan was sometimes eleven years old and unable to act his age.

Symbolic of what might become the future norm is a present exception to the general run of fanzines. The eighth issue of Golana, "published at semi-irregular intervals by and for the students of the Brooklyn Polytechnic Institute," contains in its 54 pages such luxuries as multi-colour covers, professional reproduction with most of its text in letterpress typefaces, and one absolute novelty in my experience for a fanzine: remarkable calligraphy by John Closson which provides each of the poems with its own distinctive and theme-fitting style of lettering. The bulk of the prose is fiction, most of which possesses the freshness of approach and technical inadequacies that you'll find in most stories by good students. Fandom in general seems little aware of this publication or its staff: John Hoffman, John Najberg, Marshall Schwartz, Reggie Barry, Bob Mattson, Jef Bienenfeld, Edward V. Dong, Gilbert Wachsman, Allan E. Levy, and so forth are hardly the names you hear dropped at worldcons. They should produce many thuds if their publishing interest survives graduation.

Not nearly as elegant in appearance is Hugin and Munin. This publication by fans at Carleton University, Ottawa, Ontario, seems to have resulted from spontaneous combustion: its first issue appeared from the hands of a group of new fans who had seen only one issue of one fanzine in their collective lives, and decided to put out their own magazine before any more fanzines arrived. The second issue, with some 44 dittoed pages, emanates the unforgettable aura of slightly unbridled enthusiasm that can come only when a bunch of new fans have grown active almost simultaneously. The local readership is inexperienced enough to find useful a list of science fiction novels which aren't labeled as such by the publishers, but sophisticated enough to have published a useful checklist of the fiction of Roger Zelazny. The editor is Richard Labonte, who has become a fairly familiar name in fandom by now, and there are lots more where he came from, for we learn that Hugin and Munin has an on-campus circulation of 200.

The halls of academe can have other influences on the fan magazine field. Consider the case of the Tolkien fans. As everyone should know by now, the Ring novels have had three incarnations: the first, when they won a succès d'estime in the general literary world, the second, when general fandom discovered them and incubated within them a subfandom devoted to the author, and the third, when their paperback publication in the United States produced unexpectedly large sales, with particular demand in college towns. In volume 3, number 2, of The Tolkien Journal, editor Dick Plotz describes the current state of affairs in the most graphic possible terms: "There is no returning to the days when one could write messages on subway walls in Elvish and expect that they would remain confidential." He reports himself impossibly swamped by the demands for memberships in and services of his Tolkien Society of America. College fandom came to his rescue: Ed Meskys, an instructor in physics at Belknap College, Center Harbor, New Hampshire, offered his computer for the good of Middle Earth, since it can relieve the burden of addressing envelopes; and he "hopes to take advantage of other opportunities at Belknap which would enable him to take over most of the functions of the TSA with much less effort. The button-book-poster business may have to go to someone else," Plotz warns, as a reminder that fandom must still show some self-reliance and cannot be certain that institutions of higher learning will do all the work involved in distributing the travel poster, "Come to Middle Earth," prepared by Barbara Remington, or the lapel button that urges, "Support Your Local Hobbit."

Still another phase in the evolution of college fanzines is provided by a whole slew of publications emerging from a large geographical area in the general environs of MIT. The Twilight Zine has long been coming from MIT's science fiction club. As the years pass, the institution's graduates have formed occasional isolated colonies elsewhere in the nation, while back at headquarters, something odd happened: the editors became Cory Seidman and Leslie Turek, who initially surprised fans elsewhere by turning out to be feminine, and then startled MIT graduates by admitting that they weren't MIT students, either. In the first issue of The Proper Boskonian, Cory writes: "Leslie and I have long realized how unusual it was for two non-MIT undergraduates to be editing an MIT fanzine. Now that we are non-MIT non-undergraduates, the situation is nearly unendurable." As a result, college fandom in New England is entering its second generation through the creation of the New England Science Fiction Association, which has begun to emit several small publications while in its formative stage.

Meanwhile, the recent history of the MIT Science Fiction Society shows how useful a university's equipment and finances can be for large fan projects. MIT funds made possible the production two years ago of Erwin Strauss's index to 1951-1965 science fiction magazines, and it has turned into a best seller by fandom's standards: 700 copies had sold, at last reports, and a supplement covering 1966 had been issued. Without financial assistance, Mike Ward organised the Technology Amateur Press Association, the only school-centred apa in my experience. It survived through ten distributions until its recent demise.

Released in October was the third issue of Bibliographica Futurica Fantastica, the latest MIT project. Edwin W. Meyer hopes to make it the only complete source of information on "all recently published and forthcoming science fiction, fantasy and off-trail literature published in this country and abroad with descriptive details." A dozen pages of listings are included in this issue, together with instructions for using the elaborate system of symbols and keys to the bibliographical information and classification of each novel. These listings rely too much on publishers' blurbs for some titles and provide no supplemental information at all about other books, but regular publication of this service would be stupendously useful for research workers and collectors.

The Twilight Zine itself has reached its 22nd issue, evidence that fanzines can show academic influence without being too serious about it. The minutes of the MITSFS meetings reveal that the organisation voted to censure NASA because of disappointment with its estimate of the quantity of molecules at the surface of Mars, and discovered that a Selectric ball furnished with Elvish characters could be ordered for $215. Nineteen stanzas, to be sung to "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star," are devoted to Maxwell's equations, starting out: "Oscillate, oscillate, e-m wave; / Maxwell's equations will make you behave."

Golana: Edward V. Dong, editor in chief, Brooklyn Polytechnic Institute, 333 Jay St., Brooklyn, New York 11201, care of Box 439; no price specified.

Hugin and Munin: Richard Labonte, editor, 971 Walkley Road, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada, 25¢ per issue.

The Tolkien Journal: Edmund R. Meskys, Physics Dept., Belknap College, Center Harbor, New Hampshire 03226, $1 per issue.

The Proper Boskonian: Cory Seidman, 20 Ware St., Cambridge, Mass., 02138, included in $2.50 subscribing membership in New England Science Fiction Association.

Bibliographica Futurica Fantastica: Edwin W. Meyer, Box E, MIT Station, Cambridge, Mass., 02139, six issues for $1.50.

The Twilight Zine: MIT Science Fiction Society, Room W20-443, MIT, 77 Massachusetts Ave., Cambridge, Mass.,02139; 25¢ per issue.

the seasonal fan

BY

Jim Harmon

THE INFAMY OF FAME

All my life (a greater or lesser time than all your life) I have been reading about, hearing about, seeing about and through the famous people of our culture. They are the "stars," the celebrities, the revered, the notorious. It seems that most celebrities have something to do with movies or at least the entertainment business. Of course, there are politicians, athletes, a very few doctors, lawyers, men of art, and one or two writers. Everybody has to know the name of at least one living writer, for purposes of reference. "I could be another Hemingway if I took the time to put down all the stories in my head." The conversation-piece writer today has become John Steinbeck, I guess, largely by default. All of these celebrities, it has seemed to me, generally get in the news by making total asses of themselves with persistent regularity. Bogart can never be the hero to me he is to college-age fans--I remember the stories of his getting into fist fights over woolly panda bears. But of late, very late, I have come to sympathise with the famous people of the world. The way they have to live explains, if it does not excuse, their asinine behavior.

For a few brief weeks in November and December 1967, I lived like a celebrity without really being one. This is not nearly so good as living like a millionaire without really being one. A "celebrity-substitute" has all the vexations of the famous, without any "powerbase." You don't have the old school ties, the in-laws, the business associates to, say, ruin the life of anyone who slightly irritates you. Yet, the celebrity-substitute, living under the stresses of the true celebrity, certainly has such non-magnanimous urges.

With the publication of my book, The Great Radio Heroes, I became extremely easy to place for radio, television, and newspaper interviews around the United States. Because of the widespread nostalgic appeal of my book, not only to the audience but to the interviewers themselves, I became unusually sought-after, for an unknown writer of a first hardcover book. My interview placements ran far ahead of those for authors of even much better selling books. So much so, that I have found myself on the kind of tour usually reserved for writers who are not primarily writers--people like Phyllis Diller, Steve Allen, Art Linkletter, etc. For a month, I did approximately three promotional appearances a day, or nearly one hundred altogether. For that month I was catching daily jet planes (it seemed), staying in the best hotels available, and being fawned over by relatively well-known people.

Before the month was out, I found myself infuriated because the colours were off hue in my hotel suite TV set. I was, in short, well on the road to asininity myself. (I realise the point of this essay will be lost on those who feel that I achieved asininity years ago without benefit of luxurious trappings.)

The constant enplaning for such exotic destinations as San Diego and Hartford was a completely new experience to me (or was it?--more anon). Because of a rapidly disappearing fear of heights and mostly because of a not-too-rapidly disappearing poverty, I have done almost all my travelling by car, train, or primarily, bus. Cross-country bus travel can only be described (by me) as an ordeal. After passing (so briefly!) through modern, clean airline terminals through carpeted "gangplanks" to near (how few miles more up?) spaceship-like jets, I don't think I could tolerate "leaving the driving to them" on the roads for very long again. Statistically, I stand a better chance of living longer going by bus; it would also seem much, much longer. Unlike Ray Bradbury and a number of others of my own microcosm I do not think it is a real acceptance of life to crawl when one can fly. It's not living to the full potential of modern man.

But yet, flying did not seem a totally new thing to me. Movies and television have so previewed for us man's every experience that I was filled with a sense of deja vu, of being here before. I think that if I should ever find myself abed with Sophia Loren, it might prove exciting, but somehow not a totally new experience, thanks to Hollywood and Rome.

As a novice traveller (and only a celebrity-substitute) I put one mistake on my record. When the rear, coach-compartment washrooms were filled, I followed common sense and used the First Class Washroom. (It is better!) Both the First Class stewardess and my own steerage compartment girl told me: "Don't do that!" Like a participant in an old joke, I felt they were about to ask me to step off the plane.

I think my fear of heights has receded due to my discovery that this might reflect a fear of "falling into sin." I have fewer and fewer such worries. After all, at nearly thirty-five, there are so few sins left for me to worry about falling into.

Generally, when I got where I was going, I was treated with more deference than I was by the charging stewardesses of American Airlines. I found very warm and likeable two men I even had occasion to criticise in the past--Ralph Edwards in Hollywood and Mike Wallace in New York. Both men represented aspects of broadcasting I had disapproved of, both exposing "private" lives, Edwards in This is Your Life and Wallace with his probing TV interviews. Yet both men themselves represent higher tastes and talents than they were once forced to pander to by the "system" to which we are all victim. The loud, salesman personality of Edwards is certainly only an impersonation. In person, he comes across as the genius of commercial communication he is. While I once said that CBS radio replacing Invitation to Learning with Mike Wallace at Large was an example of antithetical programming, I am prepared to revise my opinion after experiencing the programme at work. The questioning for At Large and Personality Close-Up (both CBS Radio Network) seemed more sociological and philosophical than prying. By the same token, Edwards, as executive producer of his nationally syndicated TV property, The Woody Woodbury Show, seemed far less interested in making me look foolish than in making me look good.

Of course, it is easy to be swayed by people whose talent lies in their own personalities. (I recall the ecstatically brain-washed fan who had just visited the offices of Superman D.C. Publications and who repeated the party-line that D.C. was putting out the greatest comics of all time--Supergirl, Teen Titans, and all the rest--vastly superior to the E.C. of Wood and Williamson, the old strips of Alex Raymond, Walt Kelly, et al.) Certainly the entertainment business has nearly a corner on the market for personable people, even behind the scenes. Mrs. Ralph Edwards is one of the most beautiful and unposedly gracious ladies I have ever met, and Mike Wallace's producer, Joel Heller, is one of the most handsome (and unassumingly manly) men I have ever seen.

If I tend to blur two interviews on different coasts together, so are they blurred in my own recollection. That happens when you are doing the same thing, essentially, two and three and even four times a day, for weeks. In front of cameras or microphones a variety of personalities asked me the same questions and I'm afraid got mostly the same answers.

Q.: "How did you get interested in old time radio?"
A.: "I never stopped being interested. I listened to dramatised radio as long as it was around, started collecting recordings, artifacts, even before all radio drama disappeared."
Q.: "What was your own favourite show?"
A.: "I had two as a boy--Tom Mix and I Love a Mystery. They were similar in both making their heroes and adventures seem real. I realise now that I Love a Mystery was the more literate, and it today is my one top favourite."
Q.: "Can radio drama come back?"
A.: "Not successfully with scratchy old, hard-to-understand recordings of dated stories. It would take new productions of good new scripts, programmed in sufficient quantity to get people in the habit of listening to radio drama again."

The difference in the interviews lay in the difference of the interviewers. WNBC New York's Long John Nebel is a deep, complex personality who keeps you on your toes by keeping you guessing about what he will say next. KHJ-TV Los Angeles' Jack Wells is a man who has adopted the successful ultimate rudeness of Joe Pyne unconsciously while still under the impression that he, Wells, is being a "nice guy." Woody Woodbury is deceptively dense. They are all different; only you are basically the same.

Like the interviews, the posh hotel rooms, the fine eating and watering spots you are taken to are also the same. What does it matter that you have a suite with a colour TV when after doing four interviews in one day you are so tired that you have to fall in bed at seven in the evening and sleep till nine the next morning? (Nine thirty: another interview.) But if you feel like watching half an hour of TV before going to sleep, by God, you want that set to work! And if you are having a drink in a free quarter hour and somebody ruffles the new Big Little Books you just picked up, you feel entirely justified in slugging him.

Being one of the famous is not an easy life.

Fortunately, it is not likely to become a habit with me.

Note: "D.C." is derived from "Detective Comics," but no longer means this in the generic title "Superman D.C. Publications" (properly, National Periodicals, Inc.). Both "D.C." and "E.C." ("Entertaining Comics") are trade marks, in their present form more meaningful than when spelled out.

VOLUNTARISM

BY

JOHN W. CAMPBELL, JR.

Editor's note: What follows is a letter (because of length, printed as a separate article), written as a reply to that of John Boardman (III, 74-76), in turn an explication of Raymond Birge's "Parapsychology: Fact or Fraud?" (II, 247-264).

The anti-psi forces were riding high on their testtubes in Vol. 3, No. 1 letters department...but I'd like to see those proponents of rationalism versus voluntarism apply the scientific method to their rationalism, and use a little less voluntarism in their non-rational thinking.

Like this: it is voluntarism--or I prefer the term "volitionalism"--to hold, as they do, that everything in the Universe can be explained by known logical techniques applied to now-known laws of the Universe.

That involves two false postulates: (1) That we now know all the proper rules of rational thinking. (2) That what we now know is adequate to explain everything in the Universe.

The first is patently a false assumption; logic, which is what the self-assigned "rationalist" means by "rational," is a formalized method of manipulating postulates and/or data to deduce a conclusion. The conclusion is only as valid as the postulates, the data, and the assumed laws of logic.

The non-Euclidean postulates concerning parallel lines that lead to Riemann's and Lobecheffsky's alternative geometries opened new worlds of understanding, by a simple change of postulates--and are just as rational as Euclid's geometry was. Change one postulate, and you change the fundamental nature of the deduced Universe.

Yet before those pioneers did their work, it was "unimaginable" that there could be any rational alternative to Euclid.

O.K.--and equally, it is still "unimaginable" that there could be other fundamental rules of logic itself. But two fundementally different systems of logic, not describable in terms of currently standard logic, are well into development.

And not by far-out kooks. The University of Illinois Electrical Engineering Department (computers division) is working on one under an Air Force contract. It's leading to a self--aware computer.

Your self-styled rationalist-scientists who label me and others interested in psi "voluntarists" are, themselves, "guilty" (in their own terms!) of the hideous crime of voluntarism; they insist the Universe must be limited to the logically-deducible consequences of their now-known set of postulates and data.

They insist that their now-limited information and beliefs must rule the total universe. They are saying "Nothing is True but those things I say are Logical according to my perfect knowledge."

That, my friend, is pure voluntarism--and a mighty fortress against facing uncertainty. In the past, many people have found a mighty fortress in their God, who is infallible and omniscient.

Present scientific knowledge is neither infallible nor omniscient.

I am not a voluntarist; I don't think human will rules the Universe--either individual or collective. But my denial of the efficacy of human will includes denying that human knowledge can impose limits on what is and is not in the Universe--which is a tendency I observe is very prevalent among many self-styled scientists--who actually are not true scientists because of that voluntaristic attitude.

Also, unlike many of those SSS (Self-Styled Scientists) I do not believe in guilt-by-association. A couple of centuries ago there were hundreds of alchemists mulcting people with phony transmutation-to-gold schemes. This proves that all alchemists (whether they try to hide behind their new name, chemists, or not) are charlatans and crooks, huh?

And the witch-women and witch-doctors did not use scientifically approved methods, and this proves that all those people were crooks and purely fraudulent charlatans. That's why they discovered digitalis, curare, opium, cascara, hot poltices, and something over half the armoury of modern medicine? And also developed psychosomatic techniques for treating psychosomatic illnesses, which modern psychiatrists are beginning to rediscover in an approved, technical way.

It took a two-step rediscovery process to get hypnotism back into therapeutic technology. First Mesmer had to rediscover it, and a century or two later, Mesmer had to be rediscovered.

Science in its then-omniscience "knew" that such "animal magnetism" was nonsense.

My whole beef against the SSS is that they will not acknowledge that there are things that are real in the Universe which they cannot logically deduce for lack of present knowledge.

When Lord Kelvin, back the the last century, presented his absolute and complete mathematical-logical-scientific proof that the Earth could not possibly be more than 25,000,000 years old, his proof was perfectly logical. He showed that, with the known value of heat-conduction of rock, and any reasonable estimate of the original molten ball of rock that became Earth, and the known present rate of heat-flow from the interior of the Earth, that he could readily compute how long the Earth had been cooling.

His figures were fairly accurate, his logic impeccable, and his result ridiculous--because at that time, no scientist knew anything whatever about radioactivity, and the fact that potassium-40 and uranium and thorium decay processes were producing at least as much heat as Kelvin knew was escaping from Earth.

Any SSS who declares psi is "obviously provable nonsense!" is claiming to have absolute omniscience with respect to all the possibilities in the Universe.

That man is living in a voluntarist fantasy of the purest ray serene--he thinks his wisdom is unlimited.

I know mine isn't--and I know his isn't.

I frequently cite the "bumble bees can't fly" proof because it's typical; the mathematical proof of non-flying bumblebees stemmed from one false assumption: If bumblebees operated as fixed-wing aircraft, then their flight would be aerodynamically impossible. And that proof is 100% valid. My point is, simply, that when there's a false assumption--a hidden false assumption --logic, mathematics, and scientific data lead to ridiculous conclusions.

And you will never know when there is a missing factor in your logic...until much later.

For the fanatically convinced anti-psi SSS, I suggest the present situations:

1) The Marines are using dowsing rods, such as those described in Analog 10 years ago, for finding Viet Cong tunnels and bamboo-stake booby traps, neither of which can be detected by electromagnetic devices.

2) After over 100 years of violent "scientific" denial of any such ridiculous idea--it was finally demonstrated by electronic computer analysis that the phases of the Moon do influence Earth's weather. Which astrologers and farmers and sailors had been observing for a couple of millennia previously.

The computer didn't give them an explanation of how it came about...[but] simply demonstrated that it did.

3) Over a decade ago, John Nelson of RCA Communications showed that violent solar flares, with consequent radio blackouts and violent magnetic storms on Earth could be predicted by purely astrological techniques. "With Saturn and Jupiter in quadrature, and Venus in trine..." sort of things.

This was "clearly astrological nonsense," and very upsetting to orthodox scientists--particularly because the blasted nonsense worked.

At the time Nelson pointed that out, Science lacked the data necessary to guess at the reason it was true. They did not have the necessary appreciation of the magnitude of solar magnetic-field energies, nor of solar wind effects, nor of van Allen belts. With those necessary data missing, their logic and mathematics--like Lord Kelvin's about Earth's heat--lead to ridiculous conclusions.

And most scientists failed to consider the meaning of certain data they did have on hand; the centre of mass of the Solar System is not inside the Sun--it's a varying distance from the centre of gravity of the Sun. Just where it lies is determined by the angular relationship of the planets.

If Jupiter and Saturn are aligned on the same side of the Sun, the CG of the system is hundreds of thousands of miles outside the surface of the Sun; if they're on opposite sides of the Sun, the CG of the system is somewhere inside the surface of the Sun.

The Sun is an effectively perfect electrical conductor, with stupendous magnetic field energies entangled with that perfectly conducting plasma. Yank the mass around gravitationally, and there are electro-magnetic turbulences set up that are on an equally immense scale; they show on the solar surface as sunspots. (Hence the 11+ year Sunspot Cycle.)

Sunspots and Solar Flares project enormous currents of electrons and protons and great knots of magnetic field energy entangled with those charged particles. These forces, striking Earth's Van Allen belts, magnetic field, and the ionosphere, cause everything from auroras through magnetic storms and radio blackouts to violent disturbances of the ionosphere. Which has a catalytic effect on the stratosphere, and strongly influences the stratospheric currents.

Meteorological astrology, anyone?

Any time the SSS boys decide they know the ultimate absolute limits of what can be true--they're claiming they're omniscient. Anyone who claims omniscience thinks he's God Almighty. Well, that God is not only dead, he never existed.

My interest in psi stems from direct observation of phenomena that are real and reproducible by some talented individuals and not explicable in terms of now-known data.

Where the SSS says, "If my present data and logic can't explain it, that proves it doesn't exist," I hold, instead, that "If present knowledge and data can't explain it--maybe there's something new to learn here! Let's investigate!"

A true scientist does keep that difference in mind.

It's only the SSS type--the self-styled scientists--that are so arrogant as to deny their knowledge is not total.

Keep in mind that the great scientist Lord Kelvin proved, by the most advanced scientific knowledge of his time, that the Earth was not more than 25,000,000 years old. (Some of the earliest apes were having trouble with Nile crocodillians about then. The dinosaurs had been extinct for 100,000,000 years or so.)

And that the best scientific knowledge of 1955 showed that astrology had absolutely no valid data--nothing worth studying.

And that the best scientific data and logic of 1965 were still firmly holding that dowsing was nonsense--although some Marines were beginning to use it because it saved their leathernecks.

It's the SSS boys who are the real voluntarists; they claim that their orthodoxy determines what's true in the Universe.

Selected Letters

1639 La Vereda Road
Berkeley, Calif. 94709

Dear Mr. Sapiro:

I am glad to get Vol. 3 No. 1 of the Riverside Quarterly, with the letters in reply to my paper in the preceding issue. I appreciate your kind and enlightening interjected remarks. I have no serious objection, in general, to the three letters. But I am not pleased when a remark is attributed to me (and then stated by the writer not to be true), whereas I was merely quoting an authority who was definitely identified.

Thus Guthrie (page 80) writes, "Birge claims mediumship is a dead issue because there are no longer any mediums to investigate. This is certainly not the case" etc. But on page 250 of the previous issue I stated, "Mediumship, as J. Frazer Nicol has written me, is now a dead issue, for the simple reason that there are no longer any mediums to investigate" etc. As you know ...Nicol is one of the world's foremost investigators of psychic phenomena and a sincere believer in the reality of some of it.

But he is a very reasonable man with whom I had a lengthy and profitable correspondence. He, however, refused to discuss with me the reality of the phenomena produced by mediums, for the reason just quoted. What he actually meant to say, I suppose, is that there are no longer any really able mediums and those still practising are so obviously frauds that there would be no point in investigating them.

Guthrie also says (page 79) "...Many of the physical mediums were caught cheating. But it is hard to think of any major mental medium who was proved or even seriously suspected of being fraudulent." Evidently he has never read Houdini's book A Magician Among the Spirits. Also on page 249 I wrote, "Harry Price...writes 'fully 98 percent of the phenomena, both mental and physical, are fraudulently produced' "--and Price is one of the leading "believers"!

Finally, Guthrie says that "Rhine and parapsychology are almost synonymous in the mind of the public, no doubt including Dr. Birge." Yet in my paper I devoted just as much time also to the work of Soal in England and to Tenhaeff in Holland.

I think I am actually reasonably familiar with the work of practically every leading exponent of parapsychology in the world. Maybe you should have included the statement in my original paper that I had read over forty books on the subject and hundreds of original articles, because some of your correspondents (especially Guthrie) seem to imply that I really am not very well informed on the material under discussion...

Yours sincerely,
Raymond T. Birge

==========

To quote John Boardman's comment (last issue) on mediumship, "If...people still believe it when the perpetrators themselves [the Fox sisters] have confessed and revealed all--what can you do except sigh or swear, as suits your personality, and turn for consolation to...Erasmus's In Praise of Folly?"

==========

"Heathwood," 11 Cherry Garden Ave
Folkestone, Kent, England

Dear Leland,

Anent Armitage's remarks on The Time Machine, I incline to the theory that the Eloi and the Morlocks were conceived in Wells's youthful imagination when his mother was the housekeeper at the big historical mansion called Uppark. Wells as a boy often stayed with her in the servants' quarters "below stairs." "Below stairs" at Uppark was a world of underground passages and cells where the workers (the Morlocks) dwelt."Above stairs" were the soft parasites (the Eloi) living lives of ease.

Re Birge on Parapsychology: I distrust Rhine's card-guessing statistics because he tended to drop his subjects when their winning streak petered out. If he'd continued with them, maybe their losing streak would ultimately have counterbalanced the string of right guesses and evened the score at chance level.

From the mass of evidence collected by the Society for Psychical Research, who are well versed in the scientific method, it would seem that the balance of probabilities (which is all one can go on unless one has had personal experience) is in favour of telepathy, prevision and poltergeist (to which is allied PK) phenomena. Having myself had one experience of prevision (far beyond coincidence) and one of a PK-cum-poltergeist effect (which was thrice repeated in similar circumstances) I suspect Mind-stuff can to some extent both wander in Time and have effect on solid matter. In what fashion baffles me: there are no similies for imagination to work with.

Kind regards,
William F. Temple

==========

"Mind" has the same relation to "brain" that "horsepower" does to "engine"; i.e., it denotes not a thing but a mode of behavior--so I can't accept the notion of "mind-stuff."// The contradictions inherent in precognition and related topics were noted last issue, the (implied) argument being that if the future influences the present, then notions of temporal order--such as cause and effect, or before and after--are meaningless.

==========

423 Summit Avenue
Hagerstown, Maryland 21740

Dear Leland:

The article on parapsychology left me with particularly mixed emotions...I'm very skeptical about all the things that Birge condemns but I don't like the way he tries to debunk them. He fails to lay the foundation for some of his mundane explanations of the phenomena. I don't believe in haunted houses but I am reluctant to accept his locomotive explanation for the light in the window, because it fails to explain why the light was apparently visible only in one window. Unless this was a most eccentric house with only one window on one side, the reflection should have shifted to other windows if the observer's position changed somewhat. The extremely high frequency whistle as a signaling method in the card identifications is another dubious explanation. It seems to me that this would create a suspiciously slow identification. If the whistle came from a small mechanical device concealed in a pocket there would be little hope of varying its intensity or timbre sufficiently to enable the listener to distinguish between various signals. It would require at least two toots on the whistle to work out a complete five-card set of signals, even if the whistle was capable of producing distinct long and short signals; more toots, if the rubber sounding device didn't have that much lung capacity.

...And surely, Birge has omitted one of the conditions required to verify clairvoyance. He lists four, but it is equally essential that the prediction should be unknown to the individuals whom it affects; otherwise, if the free will philosophers are correct, the prediction could be responsible for its failure to come true, because knowledge of it could alter the course of events.

Panshin on Heinlein continues to be superb. I'm particularly happy about the final paragraph on Farnham's Freehold. It is the first printed comment on this novel, to my knowledge, which recognizes the real futility of Farnham's procedures. I can't be sure if Panshin is implying that Heinlein himself recognizes "the failure of Heinlein's long-held belief in the ability of the competent man to prevail eternally." I got the impression that Heinlein was trying to be sardonic and bitter when he left Farnham in another pitiful little fortress defended by threats and force...

I am amazed all over again at Jim Harmon, even though by now I should know enough to expect the improbable when he sets out to do something. He has even left me wanting to know where I can get that six-record collection of borrowings from his Radio Rides Again. I have an enormous guilt complex toward old days in radio, because I left behind when moving years ago eight or ten years' complete run of Radio Guide, a weekly publication that contained ten times as much information of programming and performers as today's TV Guide. This would be a priceless source of nostalgia and data. The pangs I've suffered from treating the old publications so callously have taught me that anything thrown away eventually is wanted again...

"Superman and the System" is a tantalizing sampling of what I assume will be an essay of considerable length. I'm impressed by one matter which has nothing in particular to do with Armytage's topic: the vast increase in the knowledge of early science fiction in recent years. Even a decade ago, it would have been quite impossible to draw on such things as the full-scale book on Wells' science fiction and the German-language inquiry into utopian fiction in that language. I imagine that there is a great deal yet to be done in this respect, to determine for instance if Wells had more models of sociologically-oriented science fiction to imitate than we now assume. There were enormous numbers of short-lived and obscure professional magazines that published fiction when he was young in England, and I imagine that the university magazine field is also largely uninvestigated. It seems unbelievable that Wells could have created solely out of imagination the first science fiction stories of merit on so many themes...

The conclusion of your fine essay on the early Astounding and its praise for Campbell's fiction lead to a fascinating source for speculation. What would have happened to science fiction if Campbell had been a quick failure as an editor, and had returned to full-time writing? I am thinking more of his influence as a writer than of the lack of influence as an editor. There are hardly more than a half-dozen important writers of... magazine science fiction who have evolved as writers over a long period of time: Heinlein, Sturgeon, and a few more. The rest, after perhaps an initial period of experimentation, have simply continued to write the same science fiction stories, decade after decade, with whatever changes in surface treatment are dictated by differing editorial preferences and reader demands. I can't believe that Campbell would have followed Leinster or Asimov in finding the most comfortable pattern and remaining in it, but I can't imagine what sort of science fiction he would have evolved as successor to the extremes represented by Forgetfulness and The Mightiest Machine...

Yrs., &c.,
Harry Warner, Jr.

Concerning high-frequency whistles--it's surely significant that in any experiment where they were excluded (see II, 259) only "chance" results were obtained.// During the atomic crisis the sole reaction of Farnham, the competent man, is (as Alexei Panshin says) to "dig a competent hole"--but such behavior might be justified by noting that before the bombing there was little else he could do, while after it his actions would be inhibited by knowledge of the future he alreadyhad experienced.// From Jack Williamson's bibliography we see that the fiction in these obscure British magazines was sometimes written by Wells himself--so our quest for origins appears to end right where it started.

Box 5455 River Campus Station
Rochester, New York 14627

Dear Leland:

..."The Mystic Renaissance." I think someone has said it before...but I shall say it again...St. John of the Cross would not have approved.

Mysticism exists in many cultures, in forms ranging from the simplicity of Zen and Molinos' Spiritual Guide to the rococo extremes of some of the Tantric schools. To explain the exact aim of the discipline...would take an essay of some length... I will do my best with elliptical phrasings...

N.O. Brown uses the Freudian viewpoint to put across a sort of mystical system and, since most of us have some awareness of Freud's thought, it might be best to begin with it. The basic idea is that in growing up one is, as Lidz says, indoctrinated as a new recruit into society. This entails the acquiring of a vast amount of repression, the effect of which is to split one's mind into a number of more or less dissociated systems, which interact with each other, and also with internalized "object relations," that is, with relations between good and bad "objects" as they have existed in one's immediate family...While these repressions are good in that by them one survives, they are bad because they can lead to hysterical conditions and, in cases when things are fouled up badly enough, to psychoses. By analysis, however, one becomes aware of...these mechanisms and so becomes...free of them, and...a whole, well-integrated person.

Brown interprets the infant state as a sort of Paradise from which we, through repression, fall, and which we sense as a dim, lost treasure...all through our lives. The object, for him, is the simplification of one's mind--the abolition of repression, and the return to the paradisal polymorphous perverse...The splitting of the mind, from this viewpoint, is the denial, deliberate forgetting, and selective inattending to, parts of one's own being. One introduces a series of splits into a single being, and maintains them by continuous, complicated series of actions in bad faith. (Cf. Sartre, Laing, and others.)

The abolition of repression, in these terms, is tantamount to stopping all one's actions in bad faith, and to divesting oneself of the excuses used to justify that state of affairs. The dissociated systems, the projections, and so on are, so to speak, reabsorbed into one's own being. Compare this, please, with the account of Zen in Kapleau's Three Pillars of Zen.

Zen is one of the simplest mysticisms...In Zen one merely tries to stop all the things in one's mind all at once. One realizes, then, that they were one's own, alienated actions. In other mysticisms, the stopping is connected with another movement, performed simultaneously, which often also serves as an aid to the stopping of action-in-bad-faith. One of the most ornate...systems is Tantric yoga, in which there is a vast system of correspondences set up between the mystic's body and various other levels of creation (cf. Eliade's Yoga: Immortality and Freedom), and in which the unification of the yogin's being becomes at the same time the unification and re-constitution of the cosmos...

The sense of union with, say, the cosmos is not a becoming the cosmos, but rather a becoming integral with the cosmos. The emphasis in mysticism is always away from phenomena--away from seeing visions, and so on.

Mystics universally tend to have visions, and tend to regard them as a rather irrelevant intrusion. In the more ornate mysticisms, however...one attains unification (of one's being) by an ascension of levels of emanation--in other words, by trying to detect, control and reabsorb one's "dissociated systems" one at a time...

...lots of [the material you cite]...is simply silly. Amelia Long's notion of brain cells harboring criminal impulses turns up quite a bit...It's the result of too much Sunday Supplement reading...It's useful as a story gimmick...Why try to make so much out of it? ...Does Heinlein necessarily believe in going through mirrors because he used the gimmick in "The Unpleasant Profession of Jonathan Hoag"?...

As for your exposition of mechanical as opposed to mechanistic psychology, mechanical psychology is often taken quite seriously, especially in neurophysiology, where researchers persist in being "guilty" of assuming that certain parts of the brain have certain functions. Why do you object to this?...

On page 274 you hit the telepathy-magic-mysticism shtick again. Please note that mysticism requires none of the apparatus of All-Souls or I-Know-Not-Whats. As Eliade points out in his book on Yoga, at the beginning...Yoga was an atheistic, aspiritual empirical discipline for reintegration of the psyche, which was only later absorbed into the Hindu framework...

...On to the letters.

Jack Williamson's: Sex in Stranger is not just an expression of filia (brotherly love...), but quite clearly of agape[Divine Love]. The use of sexuality in religion and religious mysticism is of course an ancient practice...Sexuality is, as far as I can tell, often used as a technique by schools of mysticism in every culture.

As for your editorial comment: please note that the love-making in Stranger is love, rather than knowledge: the book falls closer, actually, to some of the more unorthodox Christian mystical traditions than it does to Blavatsky.

Anyway, remember the noise about the presence of sex in the novel at all when it was first published?...

Sincerely,
---------- Richard Brzustowicz, Jr.

Sexual union, as in Stranger, is a direct physical representation of mystical "knowledge," which unites the knower with what is "known"--so small wonder that "sexuality is...often used as a technique by schools of mysticism..."// Since the mystic denies the reality of the material world (see II, 77-8)--his emphasis being, in Mr. B's words, "away from phenomena"--"reality" for him must be "spiritual"; hence his assumption of an All-Soul (or something like it) that underlies the world of sense-perception.// Mechanical psychology consists not in the belief that "certain parts of the brain have certain functions," but in assuming a one--one correspondence between personality traits and specific parts of the brain, as in Amelia Long's notion of particular brain cells as "harboring criminal impulses"--or the example cited in the letter immediately following. Such reasoning in a science-fiction story--which Hoag was not--doesn't mean that the author thinks it true, but that he possesses the occult type of mentality which considers it plausible.

==========

1613 4th St. NW, Calgary
Alberta, Canada

Dear Leland,

I was also interested in your article on the Mystic Renaissance, but...why did you restrict yourself to the old ASF? The view that human beings are simple stimulus-response machines is prevalent in modern SF also, as witness the series that Anvil is starting in Analog. A machine broadcasts waves that change emotions on a city-wide scale...with no after-effects, with no difference in the degree to which it affects people, and with no effects save that the emotions are changed. One would say that we are simply mechanical circuits, which can have parts added and removed at a second's notice, without changing anything but the part moved!

Sincerely,
---------- Gordon Phillips

The essay did not attempt to discuss all pulp science-fiction, but only a particular magazine at a particular time. The example cited by Mr. Phillips would not have been out of place in the old Tremaine Astounding, but in the present decade its naivete is positively frightening.

==========

57 Meadow Drive
San Rafael, Calif. 94903

Dear Mr. Sapiro,

...as to the review of my book, The Three Stigmata of Palmer Eldritch. Every review of it is different. However, the hallucination-environment is always mentioned and the theological symbolism is ignored. Yours is the first really to tackle the latter. The novel is not quite a dream, or even an hallucination: it is a state entered into by the characters, a stage of transformation into another level--possibly a supernatural level--and their attempts to find their way back to "sanity." It consists of a war between Palmer Eldritch (who is absolute evil) and Leo Bulero (who is not exactly "absolute good" but rather the benign form of nonevil life with which we are daily acquainted). In a sense, the novel depicts relative good attempting to combat absolute evil, and in the end the relative good--in the form of Leo Bulero--triumphs. I think it is important to note that this man, with all his failings, does triumph, and the record of his triumph is found not in the body of the novel but in the paragraph coming before it, his memo dictated after his return from Mars to Earth.

> "I mean, after all; you have to consider we're only made out of dust. That's admittedly not much to go on and we shouldn't forget that. But even considering, I mean it's a sort of bad beginning, we're not doing too bad. So I personally have faith that even in this lousy situation we're faced with we can make it. You get me?
>
> From an interoffice audio-memo circulated to Pre-Fash level consultants at Perky Pat Layouts, Inc., dictated by Leo Bulero immediately on his return from Mars."

In a sense, that paragraph is the real novel, and the rest is an autopsy...Leo has come back to Earth and he is his old self; Eldritch did not destroy--or rather consume--him, and he at once dictates a memo in his usual manner.

You, in your review, are quite right. The whole book is a struggle between what one might call a "white" mass and a "black" mass. This is the real point, and the victory is achieved by a "small" man, a man (Leo Bulero) who is, shall we say, the mere salt of the Earth. He is not a titan. But he is determined to remain himself, to achieve victory over a curse or contamination. It is a curse, really, the Palmer Eldritch figure, the curse that hangs over all life. But there are small men who can withstand it, and that was what I tried to show. Relative good --good as we know it here in its compromised state--is able to survive even a direct assault by the power of evil...

With much appreciation and thanks,

Philip K. Dick

The theme of psychic displacement (with the hallucinatory mode it implies) makes Mr. Dick's novel relatively difficult, so I'm grateful for his exegesis. I'm also gratified to learn that despite the topics he omitted--the Death and Rebirth character of the drugged "translations," the accidental vs. essential nature of the stigmata (as argued by Leo Bulero and Barney Mayerson, respectively)--the reviewer discussed at least one aspect of the story that hadn't been discussed before.

A-2762 Ortmann
Felsenstr. 20, Austria

Dear Leland:

I have read now the whole of Armytage's essay. Much as I welcome...comments on German sf in a foreign publication, I regret to say that he is often superficial and sometimes outright wrong. Calling Lasswitz an apostle of Nietzsche is on the level of Moskowitz's calling M.P. Shiel a "neo" Nazi. Lasswitz was in the tradition of German idealism: Kant, Schiller, Goethe and Fechner were his spiritual fathers. How could a tale written in 1871 possibly have been influenced by Thus Spake Zarathustra, written in 1884-85?

On the other hand, Paul Scheerbart has been influenced more by Nietzsche than Prof. Armytage would lead us to believe. Although, at first glance, his "Hate the earth! Hate the earth! Let her lie until she rots" (in a programmatical poem published in 1893) might appear to be in direct antithesis to Nietzsche's "remain faithful to the earth," his cult of the genius is close to Nietzsche's and his astral beings are a further development of Nietzsche. And of course, Scheerbart was an artist, not a prophet: he wasn't interested in evaluating mechanical tomorrows. Also, this great humourist's (he has been compared to Lawrence Sterne and Jean Paul) jesting Hegelian "I love thee, o Weltgeist, you dear old, old Weltgeist!" is in direct ascendancy from Nietzsche's "I love thee, o eternity!"

Regrettably, Armytage doesn't know the Russian writer and philosopher Vladimir Solowjew (1853-1900), who published "A Short Tale of the Anti-Christ" in Nedelja ("Week") for February 1900. The growing anarchy in Europe ever since the French Revolution, the fear of the yellow peril (in 1895, Wilhelm II of Germany... had appealed to the nations of Europe to unite against the Chinese hordes to defend "our holiest cultural goods"), and finally the advent of Nietzsche, who called himself the Anti-Christ (in Ecce homo), all combined to convince Solowjew that the end of history was close.

In this short eschatological fantasy...he envisions the conquest of Europe by the emperor of China and later the coming of the Anti-Christ, a Nietzschean overman...who is at last destroyed by the very word of the real overman, Jesus Christ; and in accordance with the chiliastic heresy of Tertullian, the 1,000 year long empire of Christ and his most holy followers begins on Earth.

If Solowjew can be called an "apostle" of Nietzsche, then, and only then, I'll accept also that Franz Werfel was an apostle of Nietzsche...

Best wishes,

Franz Rottensteiner

The term "apostle" was used by the editor for a chapter heading, and so cannot be attributed to Dr. Armytage.// It's a pity that the conjecture about Nietzsche and Lasswitz must be tossed out, since Nietzsche possessed a brilliant science-fictional imagination. See, e.g., his discussion in Zarathustra of cyclic recurrences--"...we have already been here infinitely many times and all things along with us"--a theme treated much less convincingly by 20th century writers like Donald Wandrei and Fredric Brown.

1420 Lexington Avenue
New York, N.Y. 10017

Dear Mr. Sapiro:

...What I'm objecting to is that the anti-psi people hold that they now know all the fundamental laws needed to explain the total universe. That all possible real phenomena ever to be observed, anywhere in space and time, can be explained in full by the few things our infantile science has already discovered. That already-known laws are both necessary and sufficient to explain everything in all space-time.

Hand a modern integrated solid-state circuit to a Bell Labs team of 1930 and let's see them explain it in full in terms of then known principles. Or a gallium arsenide solid-state laser. Or a sample of fission products from a nuclear power plant; every one of the viciously radioactive isotopes in it was known-for-sure to be a stable element totally incapable of radioactivity in 1930. They knew barium was not radioactive.

That was a mere 38 years ago--when I was studying at MIT. What the hell do those mentally constipated birds expect scientists to be studying 50--100--10,000 years hence, for Lord's sake? Worshiping at the marvels of the Final Ultimate Words of today's scientists--because there are no new fundamental discoveries ever to be made in all the Universe?

When we can't explain gravity, or the relationship of gravity, magnetic and electric fields? Or the energy source of quasars?

How ridiculous can you get?!

Regards,

John W. Campbell

My objection to Parapsychology is not that it entails a revision of spatio-temporal laws, but that it obliges us to abolish spatial and temporal concepts altogether.

RIVERSIDE MISCELLANY

(continued from page 95)

RADIOHERO

I gleefully report that co-editor Jim Harmon's The Great Radio Heroes (Doubleday, $4.95) is in its second printing, having sold 10,000 copies in its first three weeks. Reviews were generally enthusiastic: "..a memorable American document," "Jim Harmon is a hero himself," "..a significant historical work." Only the write-up in Variety was unfavourable, possibly because of Harmon's adverse comments on present-day radio and television.

"WITH SATURN IN QUADRATURE AND VENUS IN TRINE..."

Relevant to the meteorological remarks this issue (pp. 155-6) is a quotation--from H.S. Williams, The Story of Modern Science (New York, 1923)--sent in by Tom Slate:

> An attempt to predict long range weather conditions... was made by the late Sir Norman Lockyer, through study of the fluctuating heat of the sun, associated with the well-known periodical variation of sun spot activity.
>
> This idea has been elaborated by Professor T.J.J. See... whose very recent (1923) studies associate sun spot activity with the conjugations and oppositions of the planets Jupiter and Saturn. Professor See believes old astronomical data enable us, on this basis, to predict general weather conditions many years in advance. He foresees, for example, a very hot summer indeed, in the year 1961, and an even worse one in 2081.
>
> (Vol. I, p.212)

"FOR MEMBERS ONLY"

Last time I said that the Los Angeles Committee, after working since 1964 for the next s.f. convention bid, was bypassed in favour of the Berkeley Committee, which prior to late 1966 had done almost nothing. So one naturally asks, how could this undeserving group win the bid and why my own agitation over a fait accompli?

The deed was accomplished because the majority of voters were not regular fans but members of the local New York walk-in trade, impressed by the "hard sell." To quote one Los Angeles partisan, "...we didn't plan a very effective speech...Berkeley followed with a...pitch...that had a lot of fire and promised everything. The majority of the people at that bidding session...knew nothing about...either of the two bidders, except what they...heard then and there. At that particular moment, Berkeley did look like the more...competent bidder."

Specifically, Los Angeles's nomination speech, by Gene Roddenberry, was dull; while that by Berkeley's representative, Harlan Ellison, was not.

As to counter-measures, I do not wish that there be a re-vote or a boycott of the Berkeley convention--but only that something be done to prevent the injustice from being repeated. To quote one letter, "There was a great deal of discussion as to methods of preventing further site selections from being decided by people who are at their first convention...who won't be at the next one, and thus couldn't...care less who gets it. In fact, the second NYCon ...business session selected a committee to look into this."

I hope this new committee does its job, so that more polemics of this kind are not necessary.