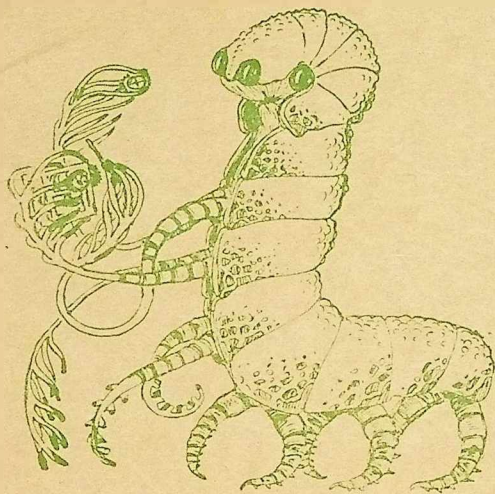


Stefantasy

Vol. Six No. Three

Whole Number Twenty

November, 1950



Norman Knight
1950

KENIAN WALL-MAKER

NORMAN L. KNIGHT

(From the story "Once In A Blue Moon")

Priceless

STEFANTASY

Volume VI

November, 1950

Number 3

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"Everyone's queer but thee and me, and even thee's a little queer sometimes."

• THE FIRST PAGE

"You can fool some of the people some of the time, and you can fool some of the people some of the time, but you can't fool some of the people some of the time."

—Ambrose J. Weems

There's No Accounting

ON SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 24, Pittsburgh was blanketed by smoke from the forest fires in Canada. The effect was unusual but not unprecedented. I have seen a similar light in the sky for a few minutes at sundown, and it always reminds me of the stage lighting for a summer evening scene in a production of Booth Tarkington's "Seventeen" that I saw many years ago. This time, however, it lasted all afternoon, during which the sky got steadily darker. I wondered what could be the cause, naturally, but felt no alarm. If we were to have a storm I could do nothing to stop it. I was astonished, therefore, when a radio news commentator who told of the fires told also of many people who, thinking the end of world was imminent, or the second coming of Christ, went down on their knees and prayed.

On another page is part of a letter from Norman L. Knight, presenting what are to me excellent reasons for believing the so-called "flying saucers" to be space-ships from another planet. Just yesterday I finished reading "Flying Saucers Are Real", a book by Annapolis graduate Donald Keyhoe, whose year-long investigation inclines him not only to this belief but also to the theory that the things come from some extra-solar planet rather than from Venus or Mars.

I suppose those who prayed on smoky Sunday would scoff at the idea that any other planet has intelligent life, to say nothing of intelligence centuries ahead of ours. I find it easy.

There's no accounting for tastes, is there?

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THING THINGS REVISITED

By Norman F. Stanley

(Ed. Note: Norm calls this a *postscript*, as it is a sort of sequel to a talk he gave at the *Torcon*, the 1948 Science Fiction Convention held in Toronto. Some of you have the *Torcon Report*, most of you read some of the talk's ideas in the November 1949 *Stef*.—wmd)

THE TORCON REPORT alludes to "short shorts" as the topic deemed most suggestive for further pursuit during the lively discussion of thing things which keynoted so aptly the spirit of utter confusion upon which the Sixth World Science Fiction Convention came to a joyous conclusion. Now that the conclusion confusion has in some measure abated and one can submit the clambake-as-an-emergent-whole to the long, hard stare of historical rationalism, it *still* looks as though short shorts may properly be acclaimed "pseudo-thing thing of the year." Yeah. The justification of the appellation is abundantly attested to by the astonishing outcome of the researches of the Institute of Helical Semantics, whose staff has latterly conducted a most searching exploration of the appalling insignificance of the short shorts concept and even extended the notion, through collateral investigations of brief briefs, scanty scanties, etc., to its ultimate generalization—unmentionable unmentionables.

This latter classification, as the name implies, is highly classified, a classified classification, in fact.¹ It is, however, by no means top secret—quite the contrary. Nonetheless, as must be blatantly obvious, any discussion of unmentionable unmentionables must be quite out of the question, inasmuch as any verbal advertance thereto inevitably brings about the instantaneous transformation of unmentionable unmentionables into mentionable mentionables.

1. Which, incidentally, is an excellent example of a thinged thing.

There has been, however, some speculation of a highly metaphysical nature as to the ultimate validity of the quantization postulate which has hitherto been invoked to account for the instantaneity of the transformation. While it must be regarded as quite generally accepted that the transformation is instantaneous, taking place, that is, in zero time¹, the most advanced view at present is that its quantization may be of a finer structure than the simple, one-jump situation of (unmentionable unmentionable)_{now} to (mentionable mentionable)_{still now} previously postulated, even though the latter may still be regarded as an accurate and strictly-from-George-Washington on all levels of abstraction down to and including the process level. But what of the sub-process level?

For a finer structuralization of the quantization of the transformation we naturally turn to the notion that the course of events leading from unmentionable unmentionables to mentionable mentionables may involve an intermediate stage. Two conceivable routes then suggest themselves. The necessity of their doing so is easily demonstrated: Since the only two intermediate steps possible are through mentionable unmentionables or else unmentionable mentionables, the necessity that they suggest themselves arises from the bizarre fact that these two classes of entities can neither be discussed nor not discussed, since the first operation would transform them into mentionable mentionables while the second

1. It is understood, of course, that time, in this discussion, refers to "t time"; zero t time, then, would be, say, from 1600 to 1600 GMT. In tau time, now*, the transformation interval would not be zero, though it would, as any fool kin plainly see, be non-archimedean with respect to any finite tau-interval†.

* Which would be some other time in t time.

† Similar considerations also hold true with respect to s space and sigma space, but we need not go into this matter here as we are quite sure that by this time all of our readers are well and sufficiently acquainted with the difference between s and sigma.‡

‡ Excuse it, please, but I must point out that these are excellent examples of foot-note foot-notes.—wmd

would transform them into unmentionable unmentionables. And that and that would never do. Thus, since they can neither be adverted to nor ignored, the only alternative is for them to suggest themselves. As for the student of the subject, by now messily impaled upon the prongs of this dilemma, there is little enough we can do for him, and so, fading away into the golden sunset, we leave him to cogitate on this unprecedented failure of his two-valued, non-survival, aristotelian, newtonian, euclidean, "dirty word", logics and reflect on its demonstration that the Heisenberg uncertainty principle cannot be overlooked even on the highest levels of abstraction. In the words of Agaricus the Younger, „*Quis the hell custodiet ipsos custodes* anyhow?"

FILLERS AN' STUFF

Anyone who smokes a pipe has probably experimented with mixtures of his own. Here is an experience along this line as reported by Earle Cornwall:

“Granger—1 lb.

79—2 packets

Revelation— $\frac{1}{2}$ lb.

Country Doctor— $\frac{1}{2}$ lb.

Rum & Maple—1 handful

Then I sat dow and lit a pipefull . . . and fell into a stupor. After I came to, I lit a second pipefull and fell into a torpor . . . Later on, I dared a third try and fell onto my head.

Anyhow, I believe I'll like that mix, after it gets tamed. Not bad at all—except for the nose-dive following a good stiff INhale.”

I'm not so brave as Earle. I tried a proprietary mixture once that had a similar effect upon me and I didn't even finish the first pipefull.

A Memory of Farewell

By George H. Freitag

WHEN I WAS LIVING with my aunt in the city, and was going to school there, my mother and father lived by themselves in a large house in the country. On week ends, after school, I boarded a bus and went to visit my parents in their large house and because I had not seen them all week I began to feel like a stranger. I was very young but I felt very old, especially riding on the bus with no one to talk to during the long and sometimes unpleasant journey. I used to count the houses that stood between the edge of town and the bridge, where I stepped down from the bus. All winter long, with the snow in the air, the frenzied houses sped past, and sometimes through the frosted window I saw images that took place only in the mind, and these were the most terrible.

Often darkness came before the bus arrived at the bridge. And in this dark the bus driver smoked a cigarette. I listened to the wind singing on the window ledges and I felt exactly like one who had no home but who went frantically from place to place. There was a gap that existed between the departure and the arrival in which I felt friendless. I was not able to draw close either to the house I had left or to the one I was approaching. I was the son returning but at the same time I was the son departing, and preparations were made as accurately and as minutely for my arrival as for my departure, so that often it was likely that the two distances or opposites merged and were one.

The walk from the bus to my parents' home was through a wide field and into a dense woods. There was another way to go, a less rugged route, but I did not want my father to think of his son as being afraid and tender. That was why I went through the

field and into the thicket; and in the thicket there was no wind; but high up above me, in the uppermost branches of trees, I heard the lashing wind sing. When I came to the clearing I could see my father's place, for it set in a deep hollow, and from the high place where I was able to look down, it seemed to be a warm and protected nest.

One time, emerging from the woods and expecting, surely to see the lamp burning at the kitchen window, I saw only the charred dark of shadow against the snow. There was no light burning at the window and no light anywhere, and I flung myself headlong down the slope toward the house only to catch myself and realize that I had already been there, as a visitor, and was returning to the bridge where the bus was to come. It was in that single, suspended moment that, indeed, I could say neither farewell nor hello; and it was in that moment, too, that I felt the most alone and the most grown. I wanted, quickly, to return to the warmth of my father's house, but everyone had bade me their farewells; it had all passed, and they had got into their beds. I walked on across the wide field; and the dense thicket absorbed the child and the man in me in an all engulfing embrace; and in my hurrying I left the child to die in the cold. Miserably and perhaps even bitterly I walked toward the bridge where the bus would come along . . . and I could hear the wind moaning in the bare trees.

So vibration, while not a physical law, is a spiritual manifestation of a physical law. That accounts for the whole visible world. It is comfort to have a scientist, who does not profess to be a Divine Scientist, assure us of the fact that the whole visible, physical world is nothing more or less than the condensed nebula-breath of the universe and that, if that could change, the whole physical world would disappear.

—W. JOHN MURRAY: "The Law of Vibration", *My Self Magazine*, V,6

Stop Me if You've Heard This One.

Yep—they're from TYPO GRAPHIC again.

The boy sat quietly in the day coach, a large wicker basket on his lap. An old lady sitting across the aisle noticed something dripping from a corner of the basket. Reaching over she caught a few drops on her fingers.

"Fresh country vinegar?" she asked the boy.

"No ma'am. Puppies."

■
Californian: "Now in my state we can grow a tree that size in about a year. How long did it take you to grow that one?"

Floridian: "Can't say for sure, but it wasn't there yesterday."

■
There was a lot of talk this year about simplifying income tax return forms. One tormented tax-payer actually did something about it. He suggested a form to the Internal Revenue Department on which these four lines appeared:

1. What was your income for the year?
2. What were your expenses?
3. How much have you left?
4. SEND IT IN.

■
American linotype operators are just as well pleased that an Indian leader, Diwam Bahadur Sir T. Vijayaraghavacharya of Udaipur does not live in the United States.

Sam Slade, president of a manufacturing company in this state, says Albert Dunkel in *True*, called in his first vice-president one day.

"Bill," Sam said, "I want a direct answer from you: have you ever fooled with my secretary after hours?"

"Yes," was the answer.

"Okay," Sam said, you can go."

The second vice-president was called in and asked the same question.

"Yes," he replied, "I have."

Finally the company's treasurer was sent for and queried.

"Hell, no," he answered. "I don't even think she's attractive."

Sam beamed.

"You're my man," he said. "You fire her."

■
The moon must be uninhabited. We have been in touch with it for some time now and it hasn't asked the United States government for a loan.

■
Small boy (writing answers on an anatomy test): Your legs is what if you ain't got two pretty good ones you can't get to first base, and neither can your sister.

■
First Old Maid: What kind of time did you have in New York?

Second Old Maid: Eastern Standard Time.

• POETRY PAGE

“And did not the philosophic Coleridge say that the
object of poetry was delight?”

—W. SOMERSET MAUGHAM

Tom Whitbread

BREVIARY IN ASHES

The breviary of my life is burned
By godless mind controlling godless hands.
No threat of hell, no scathing reprimands
Can make me reembrace what I have spurned:
The hollow mask of prayer devoutly learned
Subtly to sugar-coat greed's vain demands;
The empty words, the flatulent brass bands,
Hailing the hoax of advent, Christ returned.

I need no ritual for leaning-post,
No futile fawning in a hopeless plan;
The thinkers' theme, to help one's fellow man,
Requires no Father, Son, or Holy Ghost.
With reason's aid we free men shall dispel
The Churches' lure of heaven, drug of hell.

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IN THE ELEVENTH PLANE BEYOND TIME AND SPACE.

What Are Those Saucers?

(An excerpt from a letter from Norman L. Knight)

I read your account of the Flying Saucer, in this case a Flying Football, with some avidity. Yours is the first eye-witness account that I have read that was written by someone whom I know. It is the next best thing to seeing a Flying Saucer myself.

There are several features, or characteristics, of all the authentic-seeming Flying Saucer reports that (to me) appear to indicate a non-terrestrial origin of the objects, whatever they are. There are three of these features that one may group together: extremely high acceleration and speed, absence of wings or propellers, and ability to hover or move vertically. Of course one doesn't know just what technical advances may have been made by the military establishments of the world, but the combination of characteristics that I have mentioned constitute such a leap in advance, as compared to the performance of any type of aircraft known to the general public, that I find it hard to believe that any terrestrial government HAS made such a leap. It would represent a radical change in design, and it is my impression that the production of such a radical new type of aircraft would be a long, tough job requiring considerably more than five, six or ten years. Radical new designs in any field just don't reach the stage of successful operation in a hurry. It doesn't help any to point out that the Manhattan Project developed the A-Bomb in the space of a few years. Most of the theoretical work was already done, and after all the concentrated, frantic effort what came of it? A contraption for making a hunk of radioactive material blow itself to bits—not a nuclear-power generator. And the nuclear-power-plant designers still have to think in terms of using nuclear disintegration to generate heat which will generate steam which will generate electric-

ity. I can't believe that even a super-duper Manhattan Project could have produced an aircraft which acts like an "anti-gravity" spaceship in—let us say—less than 10 years. Even if such a project is under way anywhere I suspect that it would have been launched less than 10 years ago.

There is another feature of the Flying Saucer reports (or most of them)—i. e., silent operation. This could be due to the fact that most of the observers were too far away from the object, or were in an airplane at the time and in a noisy environment, and therefore could not hear any noise that the Saucer may have been emitting. A few reports mention a rumbling noise, or a rushing or hissing sound, but most of them say nothing of any sound whatever. If silence really is a characteristic of the Flying Saucers (or of some of them; there may be more than one kind) it becomes even more difficult to accept them as of terrestrial origin. If they are, it would mean that somewhere some Super-Manhattan Project, that probably was organized after World War II started, has produced a silent, wingless aircraft without propellers, capable of cruising speeds beyond anything that any government will admit that their aircraft have attained, and that can also stand still, start and stop abruptly, and move vertically. That I can't believe,

There is also the problem of why the Flying Saucers have been observed where they have been observed. If the United States or any other government has developed such a craft, why would they advertise its existence by flying specimens over some of the most populous regions in the world and then deny that they know anything about it? I can think of several other areas that would make better proving grounds than the continental United States. Why not in the South Pacific, or Alaska, or simply an airplane carrier in mid-ocean? A craft that can start and stop in a split second, or rise vertically, or stand still aloft, doesn't need a big landing field

and a long runway. If I had a craft like a Flying Saucer and wanted to keep it a secret I wouldn't go cruising around over Pittsburgh, or Seattle, or the Mississippi Valley. To produce such a craft, exhibit it in the sky, and then deny any knowledge of it, is to exhibit a certain coyness not characteristic of any military organization that I know of. When they have something new with which they would like to intimidate a possible future enemy, a public announcement is made—couched in vague and general terms, and sometimes accompanied by photographs taken from such an angle or distance that they convey no critical information.

However, if I were in charge of an interstellar survey, sent out by a culture that was still somewhat new to deep space exploration, and if I should discover our solar system and the planet Earth, I think that I would approach it cautiously. It would be difficult to decide whether one had chanced upon a race that was still chained to its home planet (but probably on the verge of achieving space travel), or whether one had found a frontier outpost of another interstellar culture. One would wonder, "Is this industrial, mechanized civilization that we see a native growth, or is it merely the by-product of occasional contacts with an even greater civilization? Does the absence of alien vessels in neighboring space mean that they don't have any or that they have spotted us and are simulating unawareness until they know more about us? As nearly as we can determine, one continent alone appears to be the focus and diffusion point for the mechanical culture that obviously dominates the planet. THAT is the area that we should watch."

HAW! HAW! HAW! DED!

The Italian Catholic publication, *La Civiltà Cattolica*, indicated that, should the earth become over-populated, the Church will urge virginity and, for married couples, partial or total sexual abstinence.

—Quick, submitted by Al Franck

OFFICIAL GOBBLEDYGOOK

Reprinted from *Typo Graphic*

A Program

Any assignment that can't be completed by one phone call.

Channels

The trail left by an interoffice memo.

Status Quo

This mess we're in.

To Expedite

To confound confusion with commotion.

Expediter

One who does same while riding fast trains and staying at good hotels.

Efficiency Expert

A guy who trains expediters.

Coordinator

A guy who has a desk between two expediters.

Liaison Officer

A person who talks well and listens better, but has no authority to make a definite statement.

Criteria

Measures which the other guy uses to underestimate what you have already overestimated the deal to be worth.

Incentive Program

A scheme to titillate a submerged urge.

To Activate

To make carbons and add names to the memorandum.

Under Consideration

Never heard of it.

Under Active Consideration

We're looking in the files for it.

In Transmittal

We're sending it to you because we're tired of holding the bag.

A Conference

A place where conversation is substituted for the dreariness of labor and the loneliness of thought.

A Clarification

To fill in the background so detailed that the foreground must go underground.

A Modification Of Policy

A complete reversal which nobody admits.

To Spell Out

To break big hunks of gobbledygook down into little hunks of gobbledygook.

Synthesis

A compounding of detailed bewilderment into a vast and comfortable confusion which offends no one.

Procedure

Everyday routine rigmarole.

Letter Of Transmittal

A way to pass the buck.

A Survey Is Being Made On This

We need more time to think of an answer.

Further Substantiating

Data Necessary

We've lost your stuff. Send it again.

To Explore The Ramifications

And brother, just wait till you see what we think of.

Confidential Memorandum

There wasn't time to mimeograph this.

Note And Initial

Let's spread the responsibility for this.

See Me, Or "Let's Discuss"

Come down to my office, I'm lonesome.

Let's Get Together On This

I'm assuming you're as confused as I am.

Give Us The Benefit Of Your Present Thinking

We'll listen to what you have to say as long as it doesn't interfere with what we've already decided to do.

Referred For Appropriate Action

Maybe your office knows what to do with this.

Referred To A Higher Authority

Pigeonholed in a more sumptuous office.

To Give Someone The Picture

A long, confused and inaccurate statement to a newcomer.

To Mastermind

To avoid blame for not doing while getting credit for the doing of others.

Research Work

Hunting for the guy who moved the files.

Point Up This Issue

Expand one page to 15 pages.

Functional Control

You tell him what to do and he'll tell you where to go.

Committee

A group that keeps minutes and wastes hours.

Research

Dragging data out of an inaccessible place.

Copying from one book is plagiarism; copying from two books is research.

An Economist

An economist is a man who tells you what to do with the money that you would not have if you had followed his proposals.

A Statistician

A statistician is a man who draws a mathematically precise line from an unwarranted assumption to a foregone conclusion.

Statistics

There are three kinds of lies—lies, damnable lies and statistics.

A Professor

A professor is a man who tells you how to solve the problems of life which he has avoided by becoming a professor.

A Conference

A conference is a group of people who individually can do nothing but who can meet collectively and agree that nothing can be done.

A Consultant

A consultant is a man who tells you

how to run your business and charges you more for his services than you could possibly make out of your business if you ran it right instead of the way he told you to run it.

An Expert

An expert is a person who avoids

all the small errors as he sweeps forward to the grand fallacy.

An Administrative Analyst

An administrative analyst is a man who, if asked to perform an appendectomy, would approach it through the mouth.

IT IS EASIER to say there is no God. The universe is so unhuman, that is, it goes its way with so little thought of man. He is but an incident, not an end. We must adjust our notions to the discovery that things are not shaped to him, but that he is shaped to them. The air was not made for his lungs, but he has lungs because there is air; the light was not created for his eye, but he has eyes because there is light. All the forces of nature are going their own way; man avails himself of them, or catches a ride as best he can. If he keeps his seat he prospers; if he misses his hold and falls he is crushed.—JOHN BURROUGHS, *The Light of Day*

IN THE REALM of science, all attempts to find any evidence of supernatural beings, of metaphysical conceptions, as God, immortality, infinity, etc., thus have failed, and if we are honest, we must confess that in science there exists no God, no immortality, no soul or mind as distinct from the body, but scientifically God and immortality are illogical conceptions. That is, science had inevitably to become atheistic.—CHARLES P. STEINMETZ (See C. P. Steinmetz by JOHN W. HAMMOND)

IF CATHOLIC THEOLOGIANs were compelled to base their claims of Papal infallibility on the character of their Popes, they would be gravely embarrassed.—PAUL BLANSHARD, *American Freedom and Catholic Power*

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‡ Price only \$99.95

† Price only \$56.99

‡ Price only \$365.00

Invitation

ANYONE WANT TO JOIN the Society for the Suppression of Kinescope Recordings that I just started? If there's enough demand I'll print letterheads on which you can write pithy letters for your TV station to put in the round file.

In its relatively short life TV has made a lot of progress. As seen on a good receiver a live program (even over the cable, which has only 2.75 mc bandwidth) is sharp, with good gradation and contrast. Inevitably there is a trace of both vertical and horizontal non-linearity, and it is not often that ghosts can be entirely eliminated, but in a properly-adjusted receiver these are not annoying.

One would expect TV broadcasters to do everything possible to try to attain the picture quality seen in today's movie-theatres. Instead they give us more and more kinescope recordings, whose perpetrators should be boiled in oil and then drawn and quartered. These monstrosities bear about the same resemblance to a live TV program that a 1905 wax cylinder bears to the latest LP's. It is not just because they are on film, either, for professionally-made photoplays, save for a slight loss of sharpness, are quite acceptable on TV. The kr's, however, multiply and add to any distortion in the original material until actors all appear to be severe glandular cases whose weird proportions keep changing as they move about.

Kinescope recordings are nightmare-inducers, *not* entertainment, and ought to be abolished.

ERRATA

The ad on the preceding page contains several typos. The trade-mark name is, of course, PI-PLATE, not PIE-PLATE. A o was omitted from the figure for the playing-time, which is 900 minutes, or 15 hours, per side. For *will contain* read *will include*, since the disc will contain also ten other long works. I hope Botch will overlook these slight errors. If not, they know what they can do.

• THE LAST PAGE

THE TO-HELL-WITH-EVERYTHING DEPT.

By W. MILDEW DANNER

THIS is the first issue of *Stefantasy* to be distributed in a mailing of the Fantasy Amateur Press Association. I hope to be admitted in time for it to make the November mailing; if I am not it will surely be in the one for February.

Stef was started in 1945 for VAPA which has, apparently, gone to join the dodo. When Harry Warner suggested that I get on the FAPA waiting list it seemed a good idea, so here I am. As the name of this publication indicates, I like science fiction and fantasy, which are, in fact, my favorite kinds of fiction. But don't get the wrong idea from the fact that the second syllable of this rag's name forms the word *fan*. Definitions vary, I suppose, but according to my definition I'm not a fan. For one thing, I use my garage as a place to keep my car. On the other hand, I consider being called a fan merely a mistake, not an insult, and I have enjoyed the few FAPA publications I have seen. I sincerely hope FAPA will like this one.

The proportion of "stefantastic" material in this issue is not necessarily typical; it just happened. In fact, about the only typical thing in *any* issue is the ads. *Stef* is wide open for ads of this nature, and the screwier they are the better. If you can think of any I'll be glad to see them. I'll be glad to see other material, too, if you think I can use it. If I can't I'll return it and tell you why.



COLOPHON

This thing was printed with printing
ink on paper in a printing press
with hand-set type.—wmd



NOTICE!

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