



from our friends), you continue to receive the MT VOID even while we're off on vacation. In fact, we might even be dead at this point. (But the discussion will happen June 26 even if we are.) [-ecl]

2. Let me get the trivia from the last issue out of the way first. There may be other films that involve food science but the three

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post-1950 films I was driving at were E\_n\_e\_m\_y\_f\_r\_o\_m\_S\_p\_a\_c\_e (a.k.a Q\_u\_a\_t\_e\_r\_m\_a\_s\_s\_I\_I) in which a government project to make artificial food is doing just that, but it is food for aliens. A human who comes in contact with the stuff is horribly burned. Come to think of it, wouldn't that happen with Tabasco? The second is T\_h\_e\_S\_t\_u\_f\_f, which is a paranoia film that was, I suspect, inspired by the Dannon Yogurt ads where they tell you that you are eating live bacteria cultures in Dannon and that is supposed to be a g\_o\_o\_d thing. In this film there is a new dessert that is better-tasting than ice cream that turns out to be 1) addictive, and 2) an organism that is assimilating the people who eat it. S\_o\_y\_l\_e\_n\_t\_G\_r\_e\_e\_n gave new meaning to the phrase "You are what you eat." F\_o\_o\_d\_o\_f\_t\_h\_e\_G\_o\_d\_s (I and II) could arguably be included also.

The film prior to 1950 that was really food science fiction is T\_h\_e\_I\_n\_v\_i\_s\_i\_b\_l\_e\_M\_a\_n. The scientists in this film are food scientists. You have Dr. Cranley (played by Henry Travers, who went on to play Clarence the Angel in I\_t's\_a\_W\_o\_n\_d\_e\_r\_f\_u\_l\_L\_i\_f\_e) explaining that food science is not glamorous, but it prevents hundreds of deaths and thousands of stomach aches each year. The of course it turns out that Jack Griffin had been working with a dangerous food additive, monocaine.

But my point from last time is that food science has taken a nasty turn, perhaps because the science of making food preservatives has gotten so much bad press. Its new aim is to find ways to fool the consumer. They want to make artificial foods that taste and seem natural. About a year ago there apparently was some real trouble with cookie manufacturers sending spies to do food espionage. Fresh, home-baked cookies dry out on the outside but stay moist inside for a few days. That probably has become prized in cookie

aesthetics. One manufacturer found a way to make cookies that had the duality of texture and what's more they were "better than natural cookies" in that they retained that texture longer. Well, another manufacturer wanted to find out why and sent spies to steal samples of cookie dough. They got the secret, but by then it had become public knowledge. You use two different doughs, a dry one for the outside of the cookie and a wetter one for the inside. Apparently you can't tell that there are sharp edges between the crisp part of the cookie and the soft center. Fooled you, didn't they? And so science marches on, making new materials more enjoyable to eat than food.

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A fact never went into partnership with a miracle. Truth scorns the assistance of wonders. A fact will fit every other fact in the universe, and that is how you can tell whether it is or is not a fact. A lie will not fit anything except another lie.

-- Robert G. Ingersoll

Robert Adams' BOOK OF ALTERNATE WORLDS  
edited by Robert Adams, Martin H. Greenberg, & Pamela Crippen Adams  
Signet, 1987, ISBN 0-451-14894-0, \$3.95.  
A book review by Evelyn C. Leeper  
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When I first looked at the table of contents of this book, I noticed that the stories were novelettes or even novellas rather than the usual assortment of short stories. And the editors have managed to avoid the usual over-anthologized stories for some less well-known ones. In his brief introduction, Adams says the two are connected: the better alternate-history stories run to longer lengths and hence are usually left out of anthologies, whose goal (it often seems) is to have the longest table of contents possible. The nine stories included here average fifty pages in length.

Murray Leinster's "The Other World" is the story of what might

happen if the ancient Egyptian magicians had found a way to travel through portals to a parallel, uninhabited world and then sustain themselves there by looting our own world. It's old-fashioned science fiction, and written with such vibrant images that I couldn't help but think it would make a great movie.

Subtitled "The Role of the Air Force Four-Door Hardtop," George Alec Effinger's "Target: Berlin!" is typically bizarre Effinger, applying what Darrell Schweitzer has called the "silly factor" in alternate histories. In this case, the silly factor seems to be that in this alternate world, the aircraft of World War II were all modified cars: the Americans flew Mustangs, the Germans flew Volkswagens, and the Japanese flew Toyotas. No, that not an anachronism; World War II was delayed by agreement of all concerned (maybe to give them time to develop cruise control?). This may be some people's cup of tea, but frankly it doesn't do it for me.

Fritz Leiber's "Adept's Gambit" seems mostly an excuse to put Fafhrd and the Gray Mouser into our own world. After a few pages, I decided I didn't care what world they were in, or what happened to them. H. Beam Piper's "Last Enemy" I had read before and found fairly mundane then, so did not re-read and cannot comment in detail on.

L. Sprague de Camp's "Aristotle and the Gun" is "Alternate History Plot #2A": man goes back in time and tries to change things for the better; things don't work out the way he planned. (For the curious, Plot #1 is "things just happen to turn out differently," and Plot #2B is that "man goes back in time and tries to change things for the better; things do work out the way he planned." Plot #2B makes for a fairly dull story and is not often used.) Since de Camp knows something about history--a requirement that many alternate history authors seem to overlook--the story has a very authentic feel to it and is one of the

better ones in this anthology.

Larry Niven's "There's a Werewolf in My Time Machine" is one of the many stories in which Svetz goes back in time to get some historical animal and ends up picking up some fantastical parallel in a parallel world instead. His time machine, like Dr. Who's Tardis, seems to have some sort of permanent glitch.

Robert Silverberg's "Many Mansions" has so many parallel threads that it's almost impossible to keep track of them all. Silverberg even uses the old hackneyed Plot #2C: man goes back in time, kills grandfather (either his own or someone else's, it doesn't seem to matter), and things may or may not change. Silverberg, as usual, makes even this old plot new.

T. R. Fehrenbech's "Remember the Alamo!" is a combination of Plot #1 and Plot #2B. Normally, it would be a strong story, but it has too much to compete with here. It does have the advantage of dealing with alternate American histories, while most authors in the genre still seem to prefer fooling around with European history.

Jerome Bixby's "One Way Street" is another common plot (okay, Plot #3, if you want a number): man has an accident and finds himself in a world similar to, but not exactly like, our own. Bixby is best known for his story "It's a \_ G\_ o\_ o\_ d Life," adapted for \_ T\_ h\_ e\_ T\_ w\_ i\_ l\_ i\_ g\_ h\_ t \_ Z\_ o\_ n\_ e. This story will remind the reader of another \_ T\_ w\_ i\_ l\_ i\_ g\_ h\_ t \_ Z\_ o\_ n\_ e story, "The Parallel."

Though not all the stories are great, the assortment provides something for everyone and a good look at some of the better alternate history stories that you may have missed until now.