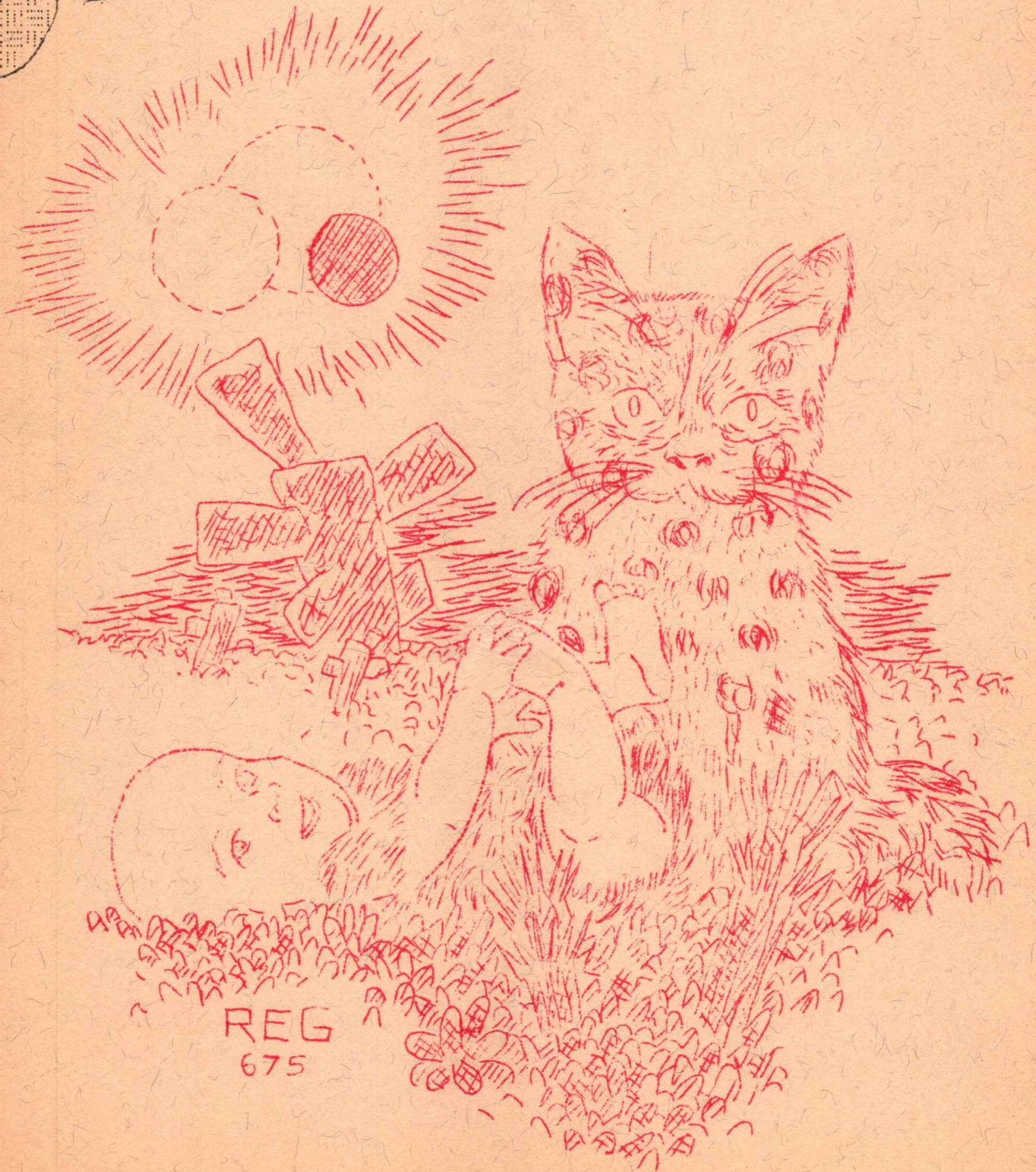


2457

# STARLING

five-



REG  
675







# STARLING

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is published by Hank Luttrell at Route 13, 2936 Barrett Station Road, Kirkwood, Missouri. It can be had for trades 25¢, contributions,

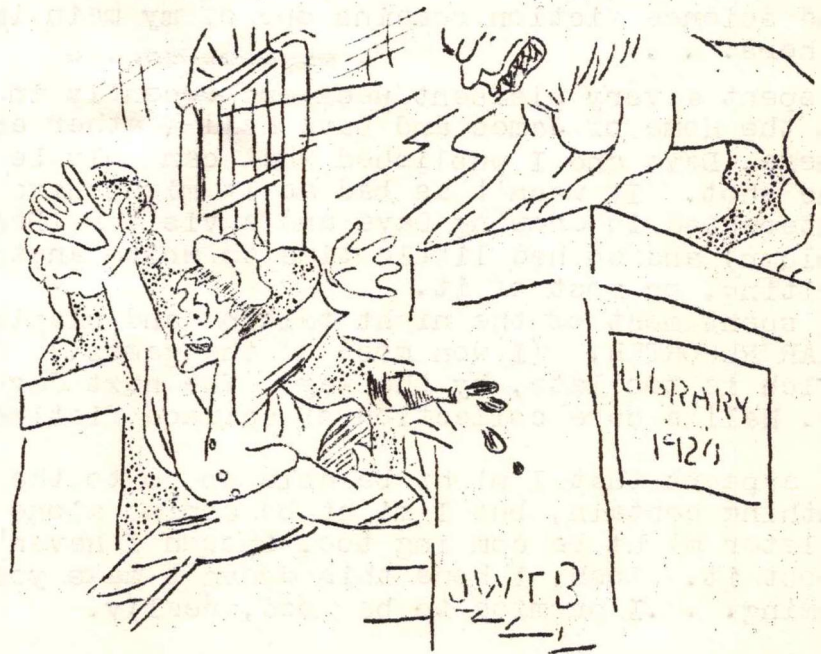
letters of comment, and can you think of anything else? Published very Quarterly.

## CONTENTS\*\*

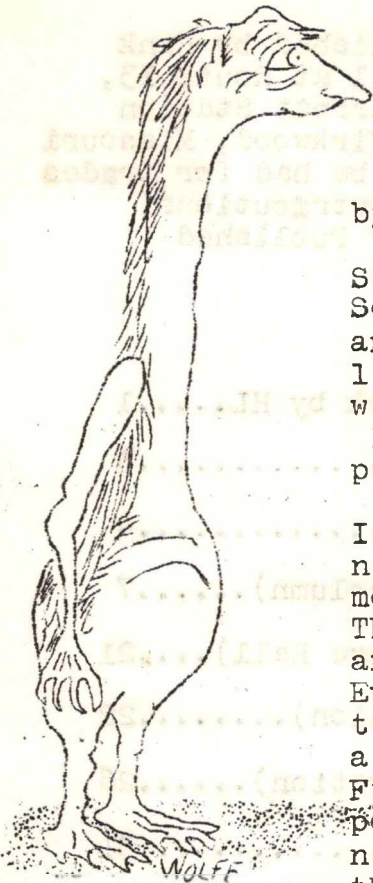
Cover by Robert Gilbert--red printing by Dave Hall, black by HL.....	1
Editorial...by Hank Luttrell.....	3
Star High.....by Nate Bucklin...(fiction).....	4
Words from Readers...edited by Hank Luttrell..(letter column).....	7
David N. Hall's column....(a LoC typed on stencil by Dave Hall)....	21
The Good Old Daze by Hank Luttrell..(hopefully non-fiction).....	22
Thomas Wolfe and the Preacher..by Bill Scheidt..(non-fiction).....	26
Poetry.....by Dave N. Hall.....	31
A Handful of Wonder by Roger Cox, Bill Scheidt, Hank Luttrell..	
..(book reviews).....	32

## ART CREDITS

- 3 Jurgen Wolff
- 4 Rolf Koster
- 9 Robert E. Gilbert
- 11 Hank Luttrell
- 14 Andy Porter
- 17 Rolf Koster
- 21 Robert E. Gilbert
- 22 Jim Bogart
- 25 Andy Porter
- 32 drawing by Jurgen Wolff,  
caption by Hank Luttrell
- 2 Jim Bogart







## YOUR MAN IN MISSOURI-

by Hank Luttrell

Some readers are going to be unhappy about Bill Scheidt's article in this issue. In fact, unless I answer it myself before someone writes in, I'm very likely to hear the old, "What does that have to do with science fiction?" So I will answer it: Nothing.

Bill even said it himself when I asked him for the piece; "But that isn't science fiction!" I agree.

If, oh, YANDRO had run an article about Thomas Wolfe no one would have asked a question of the above mentioned type (well, I don't think they would. . .) They have been publishing a long time (er. .yes.) and they don't confine themselves completely with sf. Everybody knows this and no one questions their right to do so. (Or if they do, its more of the order of a general attack on fandom, "Sf fandom for Science Fiction" goes the cry.) In my case, I don't think people are quite expecting me to publish completely non-sf-slanted material. In that respect at least, this article should be an ice breaker.

Don't misunderstand me. I plan to publish things that interest me, and science fiction remains one of my main interests. There are others. . .

\*\*\*\*\*

I spent a very pleasant week end recently in Crystal City, Missouri at the Home of James and Dave Hall (father and son, both fans) While there, Dave and I published what can only be called an unfortunate one shot. It wasn't as bad as it might have been, however, as I got interested in drawing Dave and a visitor (Becker Staus, see letter column) and so had little time to write anything. Dave did the writing, or most of it.

We spent most of the night talking and playing some silly game called STAR REPORTER. (I won most of the games.) We stayed up to 5:00, which is too late, by the way. The next day I looked with awe upon Mr. Hall's huge collection of science fiction books.

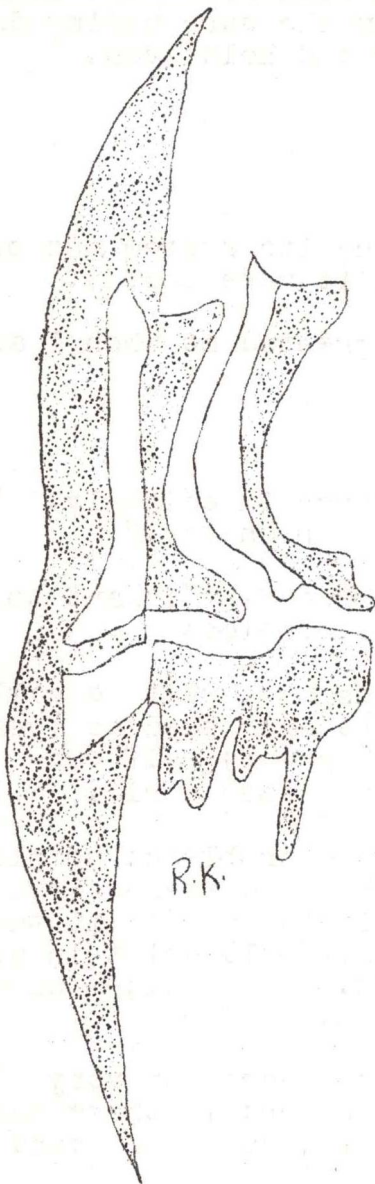
It appears that I might be able to go to the Midwestercon this year. Nothing certain, but I might be coming alone with the Halls. Paul Gilster might be coming too, though I haven't talked to him yet about it. Gosh, I hope this doesn't make you change your mind about coming. . .I promise to be good, really.

Any comments on the book reviews this time??

Hank Luttrell

# STAR HIGH

by Nate Bucklin



When you look behind you and see a pair of wings sprouting from your back, you don't say, "Impossible." You flap.

I never did anything like that. I considered the situation until somebody gave me a yank and I zoomed forward through space. I yanked back, and forth, and back again; no results, I kept going forward.

I flapped. And when you find your wings flapping, and no air resistance, and yourself moving just as fast in the same direction--that's when you say, "Impossible!"

Do you agree? I said "Impossible!" and a voice chuckled in my ear, "You always say the same thing, don't you?"

"Probably," I answered. Then memory came flooding back. "Oh--you turned me on again. How long have I been out?"

"You're not ours," he answered seriously. "Our party went this way at the beginning, when we had to start searching; you're only the first outsider in twenty life-cycles or so. I mean, twenty age cycles."

"That's a long time? Our people never die on us."

He considered. "Well. . . ninety revolutions of the home around its primary. Now, we last longer. Sometimes whole groups die between. . . but I made it, and so did all

the rest, and I'm three hundred." He was almost arrogant about it.

"And I'm a thousand," I told him. "No kidding--I really am. I don't remember back to the home, though."

It isn't surprising," said the invisible being. "We left about twenty thousand years ago. But what beats me is whenever one of you old guys loses energy, you wake up and say, 'Impossible'. It's as if you don't believe in wings, in living."

"There isn't any air resistance." I considered that for a while. "Have one of your psychoanalysts think it over."



"what news from your party?" asked the blank.

I had to think about it for a while, then. . . "WE'VE FOUND A PLANET!"

Immediately there was a shape in front of me, with his arms, legs, and wings all absorbing propellant energy from the surrounding dust clouds and nearby stars; I caught up with him and held even.

"Broadcast: Planet found!"

"Where?"

I gave him coordinates, of the world itself and its system and of all surrounding stars so that they could find it more easily.

"I know one of those," said the one who had greeted me when I awoke. "We didn't come very close."

"How far?" I asked impatiently.

"Two thousand light years," came back the answer immediately. "We can get that far without a midway point to absorb energy."

"Let's stop nearby and tank up first," I suggested. "I want to get there as soon as possible." But I knew it was hopeless.

We left home twenty thousand of its revolutions ago, what we call "years." Or rather, the concept which could be expressed as "years." Or anything. Cycles. There was a revolutionary war; half our world was mutants, and we could not exist on the same world.

We solved the problem by moving. But there were problems; no place to go! I was born after a search of twenty thousand years, trying to find a world without another intelligent race on it that was suitable for our habitation. Meanwhile, we could exist in pure space, without any consequences except boredom. So we did--and we searched. What else was there to do? Not much.

We were still searching; worlds of our kind don't crop up very often, and those without intelligent life apparently never; if there had been a new one formed recently enough to lack it, we never found it.

I led the way to my choice of the nearest stars; a 8-type dwarf with a luminosity too low for real comfort, but no star of type 5 or better was in the immediate vicinity. We adsorbed our fill of energy at all levels before proceeding onwards. Wings flapped. . . that surprised me. I only knew air at rare intervals, but I kept flapping my wings as though something really would happen. As my subspace converters were in my wings, however, and this was the way they operated, there was no problem; if I stopped, I would stop. (and I WISH THERE WAS ATMOSPHERE)

About a year later, low on energy, we arrived at the starting point, a type 6 and a beauty. All up and down the spectrum it radiated just

the lines we needed for proper sustenance. There was everything. Just like I remembered it from my stopover there, just before I'd been revived in my memory. No noticeable changes.

I zoomed down to the surface of the world, changed to my material form, and flew across the wide sea, the multiple islands of the largest ocean, trying to find a sign of life. Besides the immense dome covering a city on the shore, and the shattered sunscratches millicircumferences south, there wasn't any. Perhaps life had come and departed in this world.

We searched, and searched, and searched. No life; everything was ravaged, gutted, destroyed completely; anything we could use for entertainment or learning, gone. We'd be unable to decode their writing and change it to ours in any event; most likely it would be totally unintelligible, or even not obviously writing.

Finally we found a place to give us at least some information; a room stacked high with pictures of all descriptions, of everything, from conglomeration of lines drawn apparently at random to the sunscratches of the ruined cities, all of them, and even a drawing which I remembered from my last stopover as a distorted sketch an H-bomb, or was it a phoenix-bomb? It had been too many years. Too long, even for someone aged a thousand.

Then it came.

An upright drawing of a being something like us, with a few details altered--wings much smaller, other four limbs larger and gesturing, face much different with ways for breathing no space-traveler could utilize. Then I knew where we were.

Our home world.

Earth.

I headed toward the legendary star Arcturus, on my next circle of the universe, and turned myself off.

END

6

# WORDS FROM READERS

a letter column edited by Hank Luttrell

Harry Warner, Jr., 423 Summit Avenue, Hagerstown, Maryland, 21740

Dear Hank:

It was encouraging to learn that your title has the same associations for some other readers that it arouses in me. For a while, I had assumed that I was the only recipient who has backslid so far from exclusive preoccupation with science fiction and the future. For indeed, when I read STARLING I do not think of a creature from a distant sun or a little star or any of its other possible science fiction associations. Instead I think of the fate that has befallen the entire business district of Hagerstown, where we have not only a white Christmas every year on the sidewalks but also sheer, abject terror on the part of every human who must walk around roosting time. The only thing that has discouraged the billions of starlings consists of a tape recording amplified over a pa system mounted on a truck driven through the downtown streets. A local genius somehow caught a starling, tied a string to its leg, let the bird dangle for a while, and used his tape recorder to preserve the bird's remarks. This method of chasing away starlings by their own distress cries ended when a nice old lady stopped the driver one night and told him that a big man like that should be ashamed of himself for frightening such nice little birds. He didn't have the heart to continue the work.

The David Hall story is excellent in this issue, once the initial block of the lack of a title is overcome. The reader who finds that the writer has not taken the trouble to think up a title assumes that the author has been equally lazy in other respects and it takes a while to get over the impression. The dialog is excellent, the basic theme is not worn out through overuse by others, and the only improvement that might be suggested would consist of just a little relaxation of the policy of sparseness and laconic character. I never thought that I would ever suggest that a beginning writer should put more adjectives into a short story, but I've done it.

Clay Hamlin's basic thesis that action science fiction is fun to read is sound but I doubt he could justify the implication that lack of it killed so many prozines. Of the half-dozen survivors, two are famous for the emphasis they've put on sociological and psychological science fiction, and the third never had much to do with action stories until it made up for lost time by publishing GLORY ROAD. It would hardly be coincidence that half of the survivors publish none of the kind of science fiction that should have saved the field. The prozines were decimated because magazine fiction of all types stopped selling, with some help from the added fact that there were never enough people interested in science fiction to support all those magazines, anyway.



You deserve all sorts of praise and admiration for publishing so fully the letters that are not exactly complimentary to previous issues. However, the letter section could profit somewhat from some judicious editing to amputate the remarks that have no reference to STARLING and no inherent importance, the listing of what someone likes and dislikes without explanations, and some of the more rambling comments like the one that runs through the first paragraph on the other side of this very piece of paper.

//I thought your first paragraph was rather interesting. But  
//I might mention that I am making a little more effort at  
//excluding the more-or-less unimportant. HL

Either you or I omitted a word in my letter that causes me to feel alarm, lest there may be a secret campaign under way already to prevent me from going hungry. What I meant to say was that I once had time but no money to read all the science fiction that came along, and now I have the opposite condition, money but no time. It was probably my fault, for I've developed the distressing habit of falling asleep before I finish writing loc's.

//My fault. I seem to be trying to develop the distressing  
//habit of making up my own letters as I go along. HL

Your reactions to the pulps were very interesting. It's quite rare that this sort of review is published by someone who hasn't become jaded with present-day science fiction before he gets around to the old magazines. The only disappointment for me was your failure to be more enraptured by Thrilling Wonder Stories. I fell toward that publication as many other fans feel toward Planet Stories, as a magazine which made no pretensions to publish literature but gave much entertainment and evidenced a sane attitude on the part of the editor and readers. Those Via stories went on so long that they finally were lampooned unmercifully in fanzine parodies. Not that the initials of the author give a clue to the fact that it's a pen-name.

I've never tried to form a science fiction club in Hagerstown. Once I saw a notice in the company publication of the Fairchild factory, which had at the time nearly 10,000 employes. But I didn't respond to it, and if the group formed, it either failed promptly or went underground in order to avoid general fandom from discovering it. Right now there is only one other person in Hagerstown with fannish instincts and he's so anxious to make a good showing in his senior high school year, for scholarship purposes, that he hasn't become active. I know a couple of other fellows who like to read science fiction, and might join a club. But nothing has happened and that proves something that Dwain forgets to emphasize: someone with lots of energy and willingness to work hard is an important ingredient for organizing a local club. If I had those characteristics, or anyone else with interest in science fiction here had them, there might be a Hagerstown Science Fiction Society at this very instant.

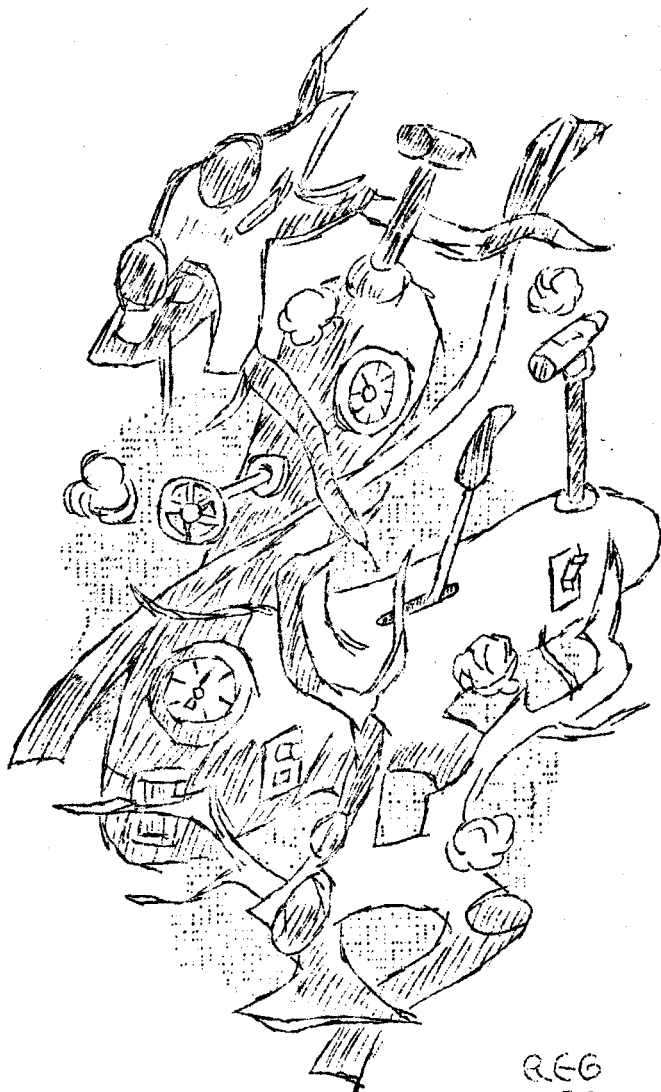


Gary Hubbard, RA 16806841 Cof, 2nd Bn, Fort Devens, Mass, USASA#TR

Dear Hank;

S4 came at a good time. Student life at an army training camp center is usually frustrating and depressing at best, but these last two weeks have been abominable. It sometimes makes me wonder if some mysterious force isn't working against me.

But to S4. Outside of a lack of fiction in quantity, it wasn't bad. Your format is improving, which is good. Using the blue paper for covers is good, mainly because it looks like a cover. White is no good because it looks like just another page. Yellow is okay, but I don't particularly like yellow. And Pink like Rick Mann uses looks like the inside of someone's stomach.



REG  
638

You've really got a winner as artists go. REG may be a first for S. An artist who can draw.

Although FICTION by David Hall will get plenty of adverse mail, I LIKED IT. And, what, David, does anyone else's opinion matter when you have mine! About the story, though, I have one complaint. You should have not ended the story with that line, "Oh hell," said the young man, "Here we go again." That is a cleche (sic). It is a line which has been used so many times that it has lost it's effectiveness. You should have thought of something else for the young man to say.

I see that you are having a Miserycon. This is too bad, because until a couple of weeks ago I was stationed at Fort Lousy Woods

//are you sure that's how  
//they spell it? Say, I've  
//heard some stories about  
//that place. For a while  
//it was in all the newspapers.  
//It seems it was most immoral  
//around and about the camp.

hl

...which is just a weekends pass away from St. Louis. This has always been a problem with me. It seems that whenever there's a con, it's always held someplace that's impossibly distant from me. Next year, I'll probably be in Fairbanks, Alaska, and they'll hold it in



the Virgin Islands (known as the VirginVention).

//Naw, we weren't having a convention. Dave Hall was pulling your leg. Also mine. HL

What S4 lacks in fiction, it makes up amply in Locs. I suspect what Harry Warner suggest (i.e. many fans aren't really science conscious) is true. I have found this out about myself in times past. But now I feel safe to say that I am more science minded than some fans. How many fans can--as I can--explain how that transistor radio they wear around their necks operates. Not many I should imagine. As for rocketry experiments, I performed a few in my days. They were rudimentary affairs, however. Merely empty CO<sub>2</sub> capsules filled with match heads (which was both the cheapest and most expensive fuel we could afford. Once we tried an exotic mixture of matches and gunpowder we got from a rifle bullet. As rockets they made great fragmentation bombs, and it is only through physical dexterity and quick wits that I am here today. But one of them finally worked. We found that we were making a mistake by filling the things full of matches. We weren't allowing room for the hot gases to escape. So we filled one half full. Success!! Our Mark XZA-23.5 rose to the unparalleled altitude of 3 and 1/2 feet and hurtled through the air for 2 seconds to land 50 feet away. Unfortunately, soo after, the local surplus store stopped stocking CO<sub>2</sub> capsules.

//I must admit trying to get a few rockets off the ground myself. They all burned quite nicely, but, no, none of them ever did make it. I used a quite interesting fuel. I melted down lots of sugar and added KNO<sub>3</sub>. A most interesting fuel. It burned with such violence, I just burned most of it on a concrete block, before I even put it in to a rocket. It was more interesting than lighting fire crackers.

My experiments with hydrogen were always quite successful. (except for the time I exploded the generator in the basement). I used a strong lye solution and aluminum. Both were easy to get, and they worked better for my purposes than the traditional acid-zinc. I sent up several ballons, as well as making some of the loudest noises ever heard in this part of the country. (Try generating both H<sub>2</sub> and O<sub>2</sub> into a big ballon, and then lighting it. But from a safe distance, of course. HL

Lovecraft was, as Cox says, a master of the wierd and strange, but disquieting and manifestly terrifying, no. Lovecraft's terrors would only terrify a Victorian mentality because his horrors were Victorian horrors. Also he was not a man of vast and nearly boundless imagination for he repeatedly used the same plot variants over and over again. He was, though, a writer with a well developed sense of wonder and considerable writing ability. And out of his mind he created an interesting mythos.

//Your turn, Roger...or anyone else, for that matter.





Becker Staus, who didn't put his address on his letter.

I don't know why you had to ruin your magazine first thing with that story by Surthead Hall. His humor is obscure to say the least and anyway if the story isn't the product of a dope dream I think he stole the plot from me. Couldn't even think of a title, could he? You might as well go back to ratfinks.

Clay Hamlin writes like a senile old man. He keeps mumbling for page after page and comes up with absolutely nothing. I suppose you published this because Clay Hamlin is a well-known fan and he heads the NEW story contest and is a gosh-wow and everything, but I still think it was a pretty lousey piece.

Does Cox drink? His illustrations look like it. Funny thing--I actually read that Almruicuc or whatever it is by Roger E. Howard (sic and double sic), and I thought it was as frothing a piece of crap as it has ever been my misfortune to pick up. Needless to say, I borrowed it from Hall.

Say, Hank, baby, why didn't you tell me you were going to visit Hall down here in good old Crystal? I would have notified the police. As it was, I didn't have a shot gun shell in the house.

The best thing you could do for STARLING is to put a little LIFE in it. I suggest you start a new series: Adventures in Sexual Sadism. You could assign your splendid writers like Cox and Hall to it. . . then publish it in Swahilli and give it an air of mystery.

Despite all the other horrible things in this issue, I must say that I liked the cover. I just look at Hall, and then at the skull. Then I look at Hall's head. Then I look at the skull. Then I look at the knife on Hall's desk. Then I look at the skull. Then I look at Hall. Then I look at the skull. Yes, I liked it.



Rolf Koster (who's address isn't on his short note. As every one knows, I refuse to look them up)

. . .Despite the goody-goody format, I liked the issue very much.

//Please, Rolf, tell me what you ment. Goody-Goody? HL

Mike Deckinger Apartment 10-K, 25 Manor Drive, Newark, New Jersey,  
07106

Dear Hank, I was amused by Clay Hamlin's references to HOCUS, which were totally irrelevant when contrasting the decidedly inferior quality of that past fanzine, with my review of STARLING, but still interesting to see what someone had to say about this zine after so many years. Clay is of course quite right in his assessment of HOCUS: the first few issues were unreadable and hardly worth the effort to do so. The mimeographing work was spotty and irregular, the layout was crude, the artwork was deplorable, and the contents mediocre. Compared to the first few STARLINGS, the latter were 100 per cent better in every department. As I recall, David Prosser didn't begin appearing until around the eighth or ninth issue, not any earlier. Stony Brock Barnes had just folded his VAMPIRE TRADER and sent me the several stencils upon which Prosser had inscribed full page illos. I ran these as received, and they probably inspired more comment than anything else. Shortly thereafter Dave began sending me pre-cut stencils directly, even to the point of creating a cover, and this continued for four or five issues. He also produced an impromptu illustration with Joni Cornell (now Stopa) when I managed to corner them both at the Pitcon long enough to collect some art on a stencil someone had given me. Otherwise HOCUS was quite unspectacular in content and format and incorporated every mistake, when I first began publishing (close to eight years ago), that I would avoid now and that I dislike finding in so many new current publications.

Clay is overrating MONDAY EVENING GHOST drastically by referring to it as former "Champ". The only thing about MEG that made it different from other fanzines was the extra-ordinarily good mimeowork and editor Jennings' inhumanly everwritten editorials and features which were frequently the result of hasty and indiscriminate padding. Jennings had the irritating habit of swearing unswerving allegiance to some cause that might strike his fancy for a moment, without fully investigating it first. After the disastrous release of A TRIP TO HELL he all but vanished, and none have really missed him. His potential was first misused and then finally corrupted beyond the point of redemption.

A. E. van Vogt is imaginative undoubtedly, and may appeal to you if prefer his frequent overplotting and calculated confusion but I find the adventure element to be greatly reduced when I first have to decide what is going on, to whom, and why. And in a vV story one can't always be sure. His plots complications are frequently devices to advance the readers' befuddlement without improving the narrative until finally one is forced to shake his head and grant Mr. van Vogt

the doubtful admission that he has won and throughly succeeded in obscuring the story.

//I never give up, I just keep on reading HL//

FICTION, by David Hall had some amusing ideas but recieved the inevitable shoddy packaging that spoiled the contents. Some of his sentences were good, such as: "The young man looked at him, 'I didn't know he was your buddy, honest, mister' " " ' That's okay, We exchanged Christmas cards was all, " said Yogi." On the other hand, hall should practice rewriting, in order to avoid phrases like: ". . .Lou Carlos' friend's gun. . ."

There definitely is a resurgence of interest in pure action stories, as Hamlin points out, but I question the beneficail nature of this. From what I've seen (and read) comprising this trend, much of the material seems to bear a strictly antiquarian value, of the sort that you'd like to have in your collection, but you wouldn't really care to read.

//I don't think I'd want anything in my collection I didn't want to read. HL//

Most of the Burroughs books are absurd and indefensible from any veiw point, except as pure, unadorned escapism. Fu Manchu is slightly better, and Doc Smith can be taken provided you dont cram too much Kimball Kinnison in at one sitting. Doc Savage is completely incredible and without any foundation in reality or plausibility. The characterizations merely proves that Lester Dent knew nothing about the existance of inter-personal relationships. I think James Bond deserves some mention too, since there is a very definite science fictional element present in many of the books and Fleming created him as a larger-than-life character whose glamorous (equally inflated) would provide a much needed and south after spark of escape. Burr Burroughs used the savagery and romance of primitive civilization to offer this diversion. Ivan Fleming merely updates the setting, but gave a like amount of uninhibited byplay

//. . .and I understand that in Fleming's books they are often NOT married, while in Tarzan, there are only a few rumors. . .

HL//

Paul Gilster 42 Godwin Lane St. Louis, Missouri 63124

I am really amazed at the progress that you are making with STARLING. And I especially want to concretulate you on the great job on the cover. You showed that to me when I was over last at your house, and I know that it must have been an extremely difficult job to cut it intostencil. You did a great job; it looked fine. And what a cover drawing! It was perfect. I don't think that you can do much better than that, no matter who your artist may be. I likethe blue paper that you used on the cover. It sort of sets the front page off from the rest of the pages.

Your editorial is good and contained some good ideas. I like your editorail's for STARLING, they seem to have some sort of appeal to me, although I'm sure I don't know what it is. Maybe it is the fact that some editors seem to love to fill their editorials up with a lot of trash that really says nothing. But you have something to say and



say it in a readable fashion. This also holds for your article on the pulps. Being a true fan of such publications, I was very pleased to read this article. But one thing, do try to avoid such things as happened on the top of page 37, where you start out with an idea and then decide that it is all wrong, all right in the middle of the article. Besides this minor point, the article was very interesting. I became interested in the Merritt story, FACE IN THE ABYSS, that you mentioned, and found that I had it in a 1950 issue of A MERRITT FANTASY, which is a pretty good place to find something by Merritt. I liked the story also, although I was not overwhelmingly impressed with it. I too would like to read the sequel. When and where did it appear?

//FANTASTIC NOVELS, Nov 40, according to Brad Day. HL

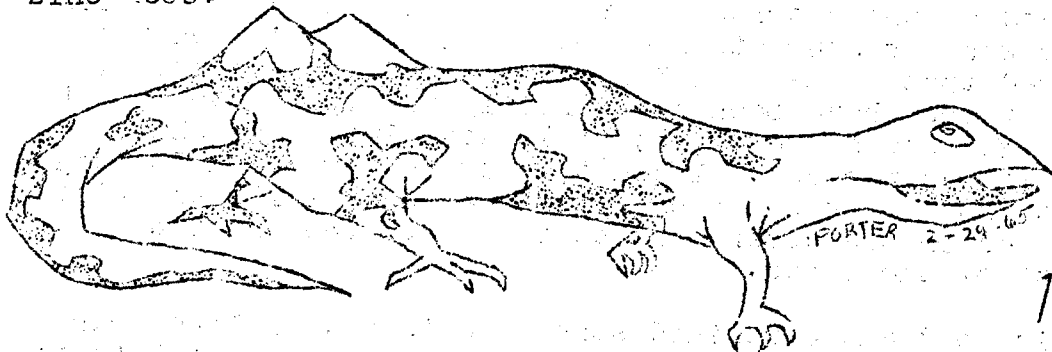
Also appearing in that issue of A MERRITT FANTASY was a story called THE GREEN FLAME by Eric North. I have heard of Eric North time and time again, and yet I can't quite place him. Do you know anything about him? The story was very good, and about as long as FACE IN THE ABYSS.

//Brad Day, again, tells us that that Eric North was a pen name of Bernard Cronin. The only other story listed in his 1926-1950 index is THREE AGAINST THE STARS, which was a novel and appeared in the May 50 issue of FANTASTIC NOVELS. HL

Sorry to drift so far from the original subject, which was, of course, STARLING. Back to it. David Hall's story was rather good, it seemed to me. I wish I had been home the night that you two came by and I was out. More from Mr. Hall in the future?

Clay Hamlin took up a large amount of space to say astoundingly little. I like action stories and read many of them. The article makes it clear that Clay does, too, but the trouble is that he never really sets forth a thesis and develops it completely. He just rambles on about famous characters, etc., and then, before you know it, the thing is over with. I think he can do better than this.

There isn't too much to say about the letter column. It was long, and interesting. I hope that you keep the letter column at about its present ratio as far as comparison with the size of the rest of the 'zine goes.



Also, your comments on the letters are very good. I hate the kind of editor that comments on every little word that the reader says, and am glad to see that you do not do this. You handle it very well.

The illustrations in STARLING 4 were very good, all except for the one of page 12 by Cox. His other illo is good, but this one isn't, and there isn't any question in my mind that when Cox puts his mind to it he can come up with some of the most abominable art that I have ever seen. If he would stick to stories and leave his little rocket ships alone, I think it will be better all the way around. But the rest of the illustrations were very good. REG, of course, is almost always brilliant. Liz Riggs has a definite talent. How about giving her some bigger pictures next time, and more of them.

//Just in passing, I would like to mention that I can't give them to Liz, she has to give them to me. Secret Aside To Paul: I think I'll have Liz design my next color tour de force on the you know where. HL

Roger Alan Cox (who's address changes so often that I might as well not even print it. If you want it, you can write me, and I'll give you his latest.)

I thought the repro in #4 was between fair and moderately acceptable. But the spelling, grammar, and typos shouldn't have happened in a Hogben story.

The REG art was good, but the pieces by me were miserable. Not that they were miserable; as a matter of fact, they were quite good before Hank Slaughtered them with his ball-point pen stencil cutter (so now the secret is out.)

//No it isn't. I use regular stli to cut all illustrations, including your own. Isn't it amazing how much better the REG illos look after I "Slaughter" them? HL//

The issue is lacking sorely in only one respect, and that was because there was no fiction by my hand included. The reason for its absence being that I haven't sent you any material for months.

Now, to the contents of the letter column--E. E. Evers is wrong. I love Tolkien, and like the LORD OF THE RINGS trilogy well enough to do a term paper on it last year for English, but I pattern Vastari after Conan, Fafnid, and Elric. The Tolkien character that comes closest to matching Vastari is Aragorn. I just can't see Vastari clomping around the Shire, for some reason. . . .If I seem to have thrown a little IRRT into my writing by accident, it's alright with me.

Personally, I thought "The Thing Below" stunk to all Avernus. It was the worst thing I wrote during my 8th grade exuberant period, and Tim Eklund had the misfortune to dredge up the original version and print it, rather than my later revision. Same thing goes for "Shadows of the Golden Age"--I wrote it (parts I and II in Dec. 62, and Tim got me to give it to him along with a bundle of other story



fragments that I had discarded as useless crud. I was forced to finish it, so I sent you that abrupt conclusion for #3. "When the Darkness Lifts--" came off the typer this summer, as did two or three other Vastaristories. I sent "The Wings of Darkness" (13 pages), "Crimson Destiny" (2 pages) and "The Brooding Cliffs" (30 pages) to Richie Benyo for his GALACTIC OUTPOST.

//Which has folded. HL

Sorry, Gary, Vastari is a private game. Unless you want to collaborate. . .

Robin Wood 375 Day St., San Francisco, Calif. 95601

. . .I've found that advanced English classes aren't so concerned about grammar construction and such, they are more interested in what if anything, you have to say in your comps. In other words, ideas, not construction, counts primarily. Dunno if this applies in your case or not. . .

//Good heavens, if my teachers graded me on the ideas I express in my stuff, I would never get a passing mark. Almost without exception, my thoughts are in 180° opposition to thoughts of my teachers. I hope they continue to grade me like they are now, on how I say what I want to say. I don't mean grammar or sentence structure, I mean my--well, style? HL

Cuyler Warnell Brooks, Jr. 911 Briarfield Road, Newport News, Virginia, 23603

You're still pretty bad on illos, repro and tyos but #4 does seem to be a slight improvement over #3. The really important thing is the material and you do well there.

FUNKS FABLE is good. I was sorry to see Cox give up SHADOWS OF THE GOLDEN AGE, but the Vastari thing looks even better. The start of Vastari is clearly Lovecraftian as someone mentioned and I did get a slight flavor of Tolkien further on. But there's nothing wrong with that. After all, Lovecraft started out imitating Dunsany, and so did Smith.

EEE's writing is getting very professional now. With a little expansion his piece in #3 would be as good as anything in the prozines. Not that I like it.

Whats with all these untitled "fictions"? You trying to start a fad? Hall's Fiction" in #4 was very good, I thought.

//I would just love to start a fad. I wish that just every person that wrote a story for me would give it a title so I wouldn't either have to make up one, or call it "Fiction". Now wouldn't that be a fad? HL

There was altogether too much lettercol in #4. Gad, what you want to print all that crud for? Let them write each other. Hamlin in particular just runs on and on and on.

Dwain Kaiser's article on forming an sf club was interesting. This area has over a million people, counting Norfolk, but there's no club here. There is a college of some sort in Norfolk but I don't know anybody there. It only takes about one half hour to get to Norfolk but costs \$1.25 toll. There's no used-book store in the entire area, and hardly any bookstore worthy of the name. Of the three fans in the area that I know, two are ex-fans, and there is nothing more discouraging, one is stuck in a military academy, and so that leaves Phil Harrell and me. Oh, well. . .

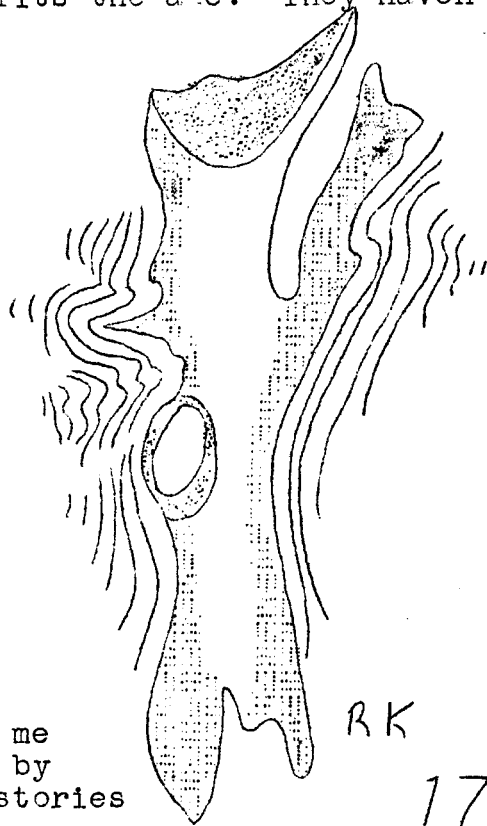
Art Hayes, P.O. Box 135, Matachewan, Ont. Canada

Only a few writers, in the SF field, have developed a style that can be defined as theirs, and theirs alone. In some cases, that style became a part of fan language. To speak of a vanVogtian story usually means a complicated type of story that has, it seems, plots within plots, more than one story interwoven into one story in a way that is pleasing. I don't think there are very many authors to distinguish themselves with a term of fanslang.

When I was a child, I thought like a child. Now that I am a man, I hope I have progressed enough to think as an adult. That, to some extent, summarizes my views on Hamlin's article, for the Action romance, or blood-and-thunder type story. Having progressed (??) through over 20 years of SF reading, I don't want to regress to what I enjoyed in my earlier days. Today's authors and publishers are searching for the type of story that fits the age. They haven't found it, but they are looking for it. I don't think it will be a regression to the action-romance type.

But, even though I often disagree with Hamlin, I applaud his views in regards to Mike Deckinger. How well I remember his early efforts at producing a fanzine. Horrible isn't the word for it. Mike has forgotten what it is like to start off publishing, and the difficulties HE encountered. A convenient memory system, but hardly a realistic one.

I can't get interested in forming another sf club, nor even on how to do it. Weird Tales? I got sick of it some time before it folded. I was sorry to hear it folded, only because there were some who did like it. TW & FFM, I was sorry to see go, though. But, one thing that consoles me is that since they reprinted so much, by now, they'd be printing most of the stories I've already read. Planet was Trite.



RK

17



Ben Solon, 3915 N. Southport, Chicago, Ill. 60613

That thing that Dave Hall wrote under the delusion he was writing fiction is about the worst thing that I've ever read. Even Cox's Vastari yarns--they at least have some semblance of a plot--are better than Hall's "Fiction."

Clay Hamlin's charge, that literate stuff has lost out to action-adventure stories is utter nonsense. A look at the Hugo winners of the past few years will prove that the majority of fandom prefers the literate type story to the "thud and blunder" story. Sure action stories sell well in paperback reprints, but reason behind that is nostalgia. If Burroughs, Howard and the rest of the sabre-hackers were writing their stories today, they'd have one hell'uva time selling their stories. The market for action-adventure stories has steadily declined since World War II. Mr. Hamlin, will you please tell me how many stories, in the last ten or so years, have been purely action-adventure stories? Damn few in proportion to the number of literate, social satire or criticism stories. Incidentally, by action-adventure, I mean a story wherein action is the entire story not a part--albeit an important part, of the story.

// A look at the Hugos prove nothing. What do a few hundred fans mean when compared with science fiction readers at large? You prove to me that all those books were bought because of nostalgia. All I know is what the book store owner told me, "Most of those books are bought by people too young to have known the originals." (And that may prove something else again: most of the buyers of the action stories are teenagers.) We weren't talking about "the last ten years... ." We were talking about now. HL//

As to your book reviews, they're something of a let-down after the reviews in #3. Cox calls the Randolph Carter stories: ". . . the lesser fraction of HPL's prose efforts." He couldn't be more wrong. Most people, myself included, consider them to be among the best. They were written over a period of something like seventeen years, the earliest, "The Statement of Randolph Carter" being written in 1919, and the last, THE DREAM-QUEST OF THE UNKNOWN KADATH left (complete) unpublished at the time of his death in 1937. The Randolph Carter stories combine the Cthulhu Mythos with the earlier Dunsonian tales.

I wonder about Cox, anyone who could call something like ALMURIC "great". . . The published version wasn't even a final draft; it's a first draft of (I think) one of Howard's early efforts. Before he became popular with the readers of WEIRD TALES, Howard experimented with various imitations of other writers techniques. Of these, the most famous is SIBLIFACE, a rather mediocre pastiche of Rohmer's "Fu Manchu" stories. My theory about ALMURIC is: Howard wrote it at the onset of his career, sometime before 1928, and couldn't sell it. Instead of scraping it, he filed it away and let it moulder, never attempting to publish it. Instead, he used it as the background for his "Conan" stories. After his death, it was sent to Farnsworth Wright, who in a moment of weakness, published it as a serial. 24 years later, Don Wollheim resurrected it from the yellowing pages of WT; where it should have couldered forever.

Michael Viggiano, 1834 Albany Avenue, Brooklyn, New York 11210

Teri Moore please note: Most of the people who wrote negative comments on STARLING probably find the zine a little bit interesting or they wouldn't bother to write. We hope that the comments will help to make the fanzine better. We know that STARLING is not a professional job and is put out by teenagers like ourselves, but with a little bit of pushing and help, STARLING can become a top notch job.

John Boston, 816 South First Street, Mayfield, Kentucky, 42066

It seems to me that you've missed a point in suggesting that we read poetry for social significance and science fiction for imagination. Much poetry is just as imaginative, and often more so, than most science fiction--in a rather different way, of course. I'd suggest that you look up T. S. Eliot's "The Hollow Men" and Dylan Thomas's "And Death Shall Have No Dominion", which are both excellent examples of this. The Eliot is a world-renowned poem, of course; it's in the senior literature books here at Mayfield High School. The Thomas poem you might have to hunt for, but it's well worth the search.

//Well, I've read both of the poems you mentioned. I think these are the first things you've mentioned in your letters that I have read. What kind of science fiction fan are you, anyway, Hank? Those weren't even science fiction.

According to Clay Hamlin, psychological, "literary", and sociological science fiction all failed miserably. Very interesting. How, then, does he account for the fact that when the Bust overtook the science fiction field along in the middle of the '50s, magazines like PLANET STORIES, STARTLING, THRILLING WONDER, FAMOUS FANTASTIC MYSTERIES, and so forth failed, while ASF, F&SF, and GALAXY, the home port of most of the psychological, literary, and sociological science fiction, survived? All these with little or no assistance from the three "geniuses" he names, Bradbury, Clarke, and Heinlein? I'm afraid Clay's argument falls down there, and inflicting the matter as an either-or, black-white thing. He totally ignores the fact that many of the most successful science fiction novels have been combinations of, for example, social criticism, and liberal dollops of adventure. Perhaps the works of Poul Anderson are most exemplary of this; see THE MAN WHO COUNTS, WE HAVE FED OUR SEA, and so forth.

Stephen Barr, Box 305, Nocona, Texas, 76255 //Nocona? Gosh, what a wonderful name for a convention site. HL

The article (if it could be called that) by Hamlin was okay, but he could have made it so much longer and more interesting if he had tried. That man knows so much and yet he is so lazy that he won't take the effort to write any of it down so that neos will know anything about the old days.



The most promising feature in the ish was "A Handful of Wonder" which was the book reviews by Roger Alan Cox. I'm afraid that Roger has a lot to learn before he is really a good reviewer. Comments such as (page 29) "It is nearly impossible to tear yourself away from the novella. . ." "WHY is it impossible to tear yourself away? //glue? HL//What was the author's style like? How did he handle it? What was disappointing about it? I really don't know what to tell Roger that will help him. I review one book per week usually a hardback, for the Wichita Falls Times and Record News. I don't get paid for it, but I receive free reviewers copies about two weeks before the public gets them. I review them and my review appears a week or two after being written. My payment is the book which I get to keep. The Time and Record News is a small newspaper, since Wichita Falls is only 100,000 population--plus the other smaller towns lying around it that subscribe (like ours). How did I get the job? They needed reviewers that could keep the weekly pace, since I read fast and have some talent for it, I got the job simply because no one else was around to give me a run for my money. Since I plan to be a journalist this is giving me valuable experience. Why don't you check your paper, just about all of the papers need some outside free help. If it weren't for the cultural center in Dallas, I could be writing for the Dallas Morning News, but the book editor refuses my stuff on the grounds that they have a small column and ample reviewers to fill the position.

I don't know how this is going to help Roger but if he will study styles, such as Miller in ANALOG, and try real hard, someday it will come to him. This letter may have sounded as if I am a Big Guy or something. Nothing could be further from the truth. There are a couple people in your letter column that know more about writing than I may ever know. Roger is going to have to work on his analysis and style and see if he can come up with something better --at least he can get rid of that woshwowoboyoboy stuff and try to be serious.

#### ALSO HEARD FROM:

Tom Dupree, Jack Gauchan, Creath Thorne, Richard Gordon (a Scot, who after exchanging letters with me for quite a few months, suddenly turned pro. Yes, I take all the credit. Seriously, watch NEW WORLDS for him), Jim Bobart, plus various other people saying something like "Here is a quarter. Send me STARLING." or "Hey Stupid, where's my STARLING??!"

This week end I went down to Crystal City and soundly beat both David Hall and James Hall at every game we played, except those which require some skill, such as Chess and Billards.

MY COLUMN. By David N. Hall

Don't blame me. That was Hank's title for this column (thing); I suggested a better title, but Hank censored it. "No," he said, "This is a goodie-goodie magazine." So I called it, "My Column", with understandably pride.

Actually, the only reason I am being allowed to write this at all is because I showed up with an hour and a half notice. I just figured that since I live in Crystal City and Hank lives just up the road a peice I would come up and see him. Gosh and shuckings. It'ss only about forty miles.

This is a LoC on Starling 4. I have been expressly forbidden to mention the name of Nate B-----n, with whom (or in behalf of whom, or about whom) I have been debating a vitally important fact: namely, his name is not spelled "Buklin" like he was left over from a Tolkien story, but "Bucklin" like a real flesh and blood musician. I wonder if Nate is going to write in on that point? Or if he realizes it. Or if he realizes anything.

Other than that, I would like to complain about the cover. Hank, my good man, you could have least made sure that you could tell the "R" from "A". I don't beleive you are half trying. If you had put any effort in it at all it would have been all right, or if you had had some appropriate script for it, it would have been all right, but you're just not trying. I don't know, Hank, you are just going to have to work a lot harder.

"Blank space left for illos)

(Interruption while Hank tried to explain to me what it is Ed Meskys is doing with the Glossary of Middle Earth in Neikas. I never did get it straight but then I'm not sure Meskys knows either. Who knows? The Shadow knows!

-----  
A fan is a person, sometimes.  
-----

That started out as something else but I have forgotten what.  
-----

A fan is the person/who, when he says "I like it. It's crap, but I like it," -- isn't trying to be funny.  
-----

I was writing about Starling 4. But I am being constantly interrupted by Hank's little sister, which makes it difficult. You should have driven in the bung, Hank.



REG  
640



# THE GOOD OLD DAZE

by  
Henk Luttrell

((I'm sure some-  
one has used  
that title be-  
fore, but  
until I  
find out  
positively,  
I'm going to  
use it anyway.))

STAR TRADER  
JWB

FUTURE combined with SCIENCE FICTION Dec. 1941 Vol two, number two  
edited by Robert Lowndes

The lead novel here was a reprint of Ray Cumming's AROUND THE UNIVERSE. This was first published in SCIENCE AND INVENTION July 23, Vol. 11, #3 thru Dec 23 Vol II #8. As such, one wouldn't expect too much from it. But even when approaching this thing from that direction, one has to be disappointed.

This novel has almost countless faults, any one of which would be enough to damn it. However, when we compare these major, unforgivable faults with a few of the basic wrongs in the book, most of the faults fade into trivialities.

The main character, an uneducated, fat, boring slob named Tubby, is suddenly given a "power." Any wish he makes comes true. In order to get the real story underway (the power that was given to Tubby wasn't really part of the story, you see, it was only the method with which Mr. Cummings was able to build a space ship. Handy, what?) Tubby wishes up this fellow named Sir Isaac Swift Defoe Wells-Verne. The two of them dash off to Venus. I suppose if he were alive, Mr. Cummings would explain that the book was a farce, and its real purpose, its only purpose, was to educate the reader. And, in fact, most of the book is taken up by Sir Isaac's learned discussions of astronomy. I was usually able to skip over these parts, however, as you could generally tell when Tubby was going to ask Sir Isaac another silly question.

At the climax, of course, Sir Isaac and Tubby save the earth from a bunch of aleins.

I understand that Lowndes was finding it hard to find stories at this time; as the rates his publishers paid were some of the lowest in the field. (For more about this, see SaM's article in THE ORIGINAL SCIENCE FICTION STORIES #3, vol. II, Winter, 1962. Very interesting.) It shows. Not only in the novel, but in the rest of the stories as well.

Two of them were by Lowndes altogether--"No Star Shall Fall" by "Wilfred Owen Marley" and "Quarry" by Mallory Kent." The first of the two was the best short story in the book, but none too good at that. A third story was a collaboration of the editor, Fred Pohl, and Dirk Wylie, called "Something From The Beyond."

The novelette was by Frederic A. Krummer, Jr.; and wasn't too terrible. In fact, it seemed just as good as anything published by, oh, say THRILLING WONDER STORIES or AMAZING at that time. I don't see how Lowndes got it with the rates he paid. Unless, of course, Krummer had completely saturated all other markets. It might not be as impossible as it sounds, Krummer was one of the more prolific writers of that time.

The cover, by Bok, was very good.

You will never believe it, but I didn't dislike the Cummings novel as much as it appeared in my review. I thought it was interesting . . . sort of in the same way pictures by cave men are interesting.

FANTASTIC ADVENTURES Vol. 10, #2, Feb. '48, edited by Ray Palmer

Here, now, the lead novel is by Richard Shaver; called SLAVES OF THE WORM. "From bad to worse?" you ask. Well, no, surprisingly.

Bon't misunderstand me. SLAVES OF THE WORM wasn't good. But while Cummings' novel was boring, trite, inconsistent, silly, etc.; Shaver's is only sort of trite, over written and silly. Compared to Burroughs, Howard, etc., this book isn't really too bad. There seems to be little doubt that Palmer did most of the real writing on these things; and what ever else Palmer was and is, he was a pretty fair professional hack.

I bet that if Shaver and Palmer had played their stories as fiction, without ever mentioning the "Truth" behind the "Shaver Mystery" Ace books would right at this moment be publishing their novels, and Ballantine would just about be ready to proclaim "ITS SHAVER MONTH!" Who knows? Lero Comics.

Does anyone out there want to know what the Shaver Mystery-Hoax is all about? Cool. I didn't think so.



"The Silver Medusa" a short story by house pen name Alexander Blade is distinguished by a good Virgil Finlay illustration, clearly readable prose and almost passible plot in a magazine in which neither readable prose or passable plots were the rule.

Rog Phillips was one of Palmer's best writers. His stories were never brilliant, I don't think he ever wrote a good characterization. But some of his plots were almost good and his writing was clear and very professional. The story TWICE TO DIE is standard Phillips.

The worst of the remaining stories is H. B. Hickey's "To Dust Returneth" and the best--none too good--is "They Buried Her Body" by Gordon Philip England. Robert Moore Williams and William P. McGivern are somewhere in between those two.

AMAZING STORIES Vol 21, #3, March 1947, edited by Ray Palmer

You know, it is really hard for me to realize that AMAZING and FANTASTIC ADVENTURES "lead" the field as far as circulation went. And yet, I understand they did. The best thing I have ever been able to say about these two Palmer edited publications is something like: "It's horrible, but if you read it real fast, just for the fun of it, maybe you won't notice it. Much." One doesn't even have to go as far as ASTOUNDING to find a vastly better magazine. Even STARLING, THRILLING WONDER, FAMOUS FANTASTIC MYSTERIES, on and on, were better publications.

I just don't see how Palmer did it, Shaver or no.

What brought that on? Well, this here issue is rather bad, you see..

The Shaver novel in FA might have been readable, but this thing-- "Joe Dannon, Pioneer" by Shaver, certainly isn't. Never have I read a worse story. Even in STARLING.

Says Palmer in his editorail, ". . .he (Shaver) is one of the finest writers in America today, and can hold his own against the best, even in the respected field of Adventure." Um-hum.

There were two things wrong with Heinrich Hauser's novel, TITAN'S BATTLE. 1.) He should have cut out the 45,000 introduction and just told the 10,000 word story. and 2.) the 10,000 word story wasn't any good anyway, as it was one of the most ludicrous, illogical, and silly things I have ever read since "Joe Dannon, Pioneer." Other than that, it was just fine.

STARLING STORIES Vol. 18, #3, Jan. 1949

Ace has been reprinting some of Kuttner's novels from STARLING; perhaps they will get around to this one. They could do worse. It is better than Burroughs, at any rate. Its name is THE TIME AXIS, maybe it has already been published in book form and I missed it?

Basically, the novel is much like many of the stories of A. E. van Vogt.

No, the novel is not quite wheels within wheels within wheels, etc., but it does use several of the things that van Vogt used or over used from time to time. For instance, at several points the main characters black out only to wake up in different surroundings. VV was forever killing one of his heroes off, only to have him come around under different conditions, more confused than ever. So it went in this novel.

The climax echos vV's stories. Those of you who have read some of vV(now, I like van Vogt, but I am quite aware that not everyone thinks this way.) know what I mean by his "vast metaphysical concepts with which the characters usually get themselves involved. Here too, we find something of this sort. At the end of the novel, the characters manage to cleave the universe in two. (ho-hah!!)

The novel isn't as good as it could have been, mainly because of some unfortunate characterization. (vV never bothered with characterization. Here, Kuttner makes an attempt, and never quite makes it seem real or even passable.)

The Finlay illustrations are simply wonderful. (Yes, I'm a Finlay fan --how did you ever guess?)

Jack Vance, who could become one of the most important science fiction writers we have, has a short story here, called "THE Sub-Standard Sardines." Amusing, but hardly classic.

Most of the other stories don't deserve much of a looking at, but I will look at Rene LaFayette (L. Ron Hubbard) 's FORBIDDEN VOYAGE, because of it's singular lack of direction. On one hand, Hubbard seems to be attempting a serious story of Possible Futures, while on the other he lets a bunch of stock "humorous" characters and situations slip in. Either he didn't care what he was writing as long as it sold, or he didn't know what he was doing. I should think it was the former.

Murray Leinster (Ahh, I must mention Murray Leinster--he is one of my favorites) has a short story here which was to serve as an introduction to Ron Cantrell, a character who was to have a novel in the next issue. The story is called, oddly enough, "The Story of Rod Cantrell." Not too great. But the Finlay illustrations are (ahh, I must mention Finlay, he is one of my favorites.)

-----  
My sister and I are home alone, and she is expecting her boy friend. She just gave me a bottle of soda. I think it is drugged. I'm too smart for her. I'm going to pour it in the Rubber Plant. Ha-Ha.

# THOMAS WOLFE AND THE PREACHER

by Bill Scheidt

". . .vanity of vanities! All is vanity.

"What does man gain by all the toil at which he toils under the sun?

"A generation goes, and a generation comes, but the earth remains forever.

"The sun rises and the sun goes down, and hastens to the place where it rises.

"The wind blows to the south, and goes round to the north; round and round goes the wind, and on its circuit the wind returns.

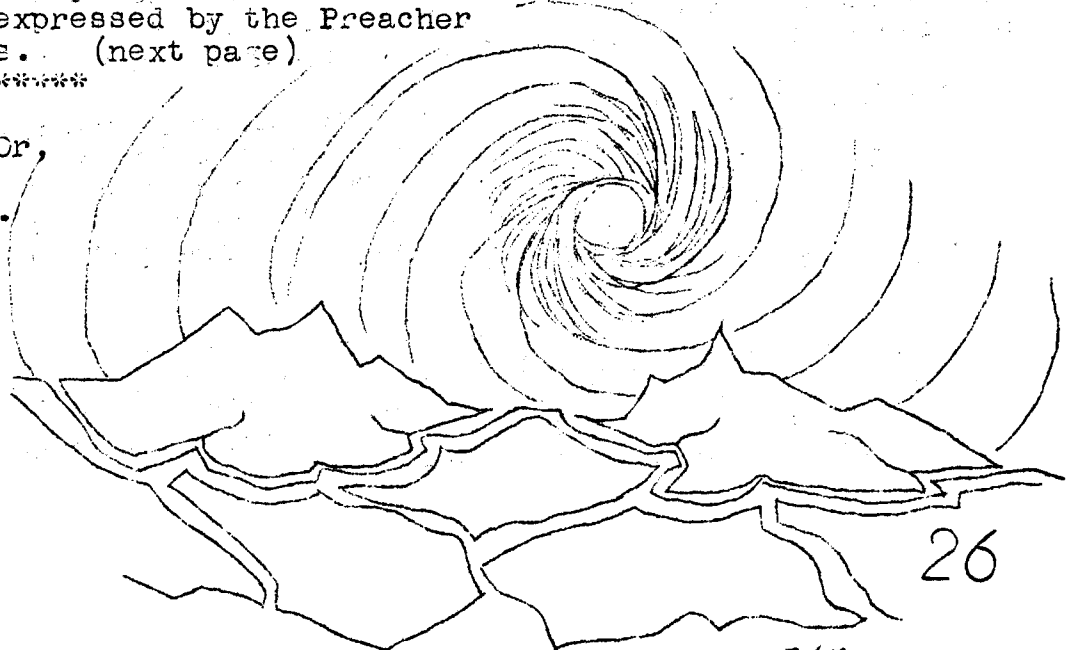
"All streams run to the sea, but the sea is not full; to the place where the streams flow, there they flow again.

"All things are full of weariness; a man can not utter it. . . ."<sup>1</sup>

During the last twelve years of his life, Thomas Wolfe produced a series of four autobiographical novels, spanning nearly his entire life. (In chronological order, and in the order in which they were published, they are: LOOK HOMEWARD, ANIMAL, OF TIME AND THE RIVER, THE WEB AND THE ROCK, and, YOU CAN'T GO HOME AGAIN.) Through out these books there is a progression of belief and conviction as Wolfe views the world around him. Wolfe examines life with a wild intensity, discarding and keeping ideas until he arrives at last in a confrontation with the idea expressed by the Preacher in Ecclesiastes. (next page)

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<sup>1</sup>ECCLESIASTES, Or,  
The Preacher.  
Chapter 1: 1-8.



PORTER

3-5-65

26



In LOOK HOMEWARD, ANGEL There is less than in any of the other three novels and yet it is just as necessary as any to the development of his final belief as stated in his "Credo" shortly before his death. During this early part of his life he learns that he must deny the conformity of the world, to attain the dynamic freedom and independence he desires.

Wolfe, the youth, was wild and impetuous, fantastically energetic and alive. He had a family tradition of extremes, especially from his father, who sought to absorb the whole of life, and passed this desire to his son. He had no use for the Greek's idea of moderation; instead he did everything in immense proportions.

"In the morning they rose in a house pungent with breakfast cooking, and they sat at a smoking table loaded with brains and eggs, ham, hot biscuits, fried apples seething in their gummed syrups, honey, golden butter, fried steaks, scalding coffee. Or they were stacked batter-cakes, sun-colored molasses, fragrant brown sausages, a bowl of wet cherries, plums, fat juicy bacon, jam. At the mid-day meal, they ate heavenly! A huge hot roast of beef, fat buttered lima-beans, tender corn smoking on the cob, thick red slabs of sliced tomatoes, rough savory spinach, hot yellow corn-bread, flacky biscuits, a deep dish peach and apple cobbler spiced with cinnamon, tender cabbage, deep glass dishes piled high with preserved fruit--cherries, pears, peaches. At night they might eat fried steak, hot squares of grits fried in egg and butter, porkchops, fish, young fried chicken."<sup>2</sup>

And so, is it any wonder, then, that Thomas Wolfe was also an immense man in all manners? Physically, he was six feet three inches in height and weighed two hundred and thirty pounds. He either gorged himself or fasted for days. He drank to unconsciousness, or abstained completely. He went days without sleep, or slept for days. When writing, he smoked dozens of cigarettes, and literally drank and paced until the early hours of the morning; then walk the streets mumbling and muttering for hours, until physically spent. He would then sleep into the afternoon.

And, yet, this was not life for Thomas Wolfe, but rather only a result of his intense search for life. He was so immersed in his own consuming struggle with thoughts and ideas that at times he was completely oblivious of the world around him. In the end, however, he must return to the world to seek, to question: When, Where, How? In the final scene he talks to the ghost of his dead brother, Ben, and asks:

"Where, Ben? Where is the world?"

"Nowhere," said Ben, "You are your world."

". . . Is this the end? Have I eaten life and have not found him?"

"Fool," said Ben, "this is life. You have been nowhere. . . there is one voyage, the first, the last, the only one."<sup>3</sup>

\*\*\*\*\*

2 and 3 Look Homeward, Angel page 94 and 520

27

"Even still, he felt that he must go out to the world, to envelope and digest the way of things, to find a leaf, a twig, a door, a small thing on which all the colossal truth of eternity must hinge. He must go and search again, outward toward the "Holy Grail" of his desperate and overwhelming need--this is the hope of the final passage:

"Yet, as he stood for the last time by the angels of his father's porch it seemed as if the Square\* already was far and lost; or, I should say, he was like a man who stands upon a hill above a town he has left, yet does not say, "The town is near," but turns his eyes upon the distant soaring ranges."<sup>4</sup>

The next two books by Wolfe are a record of the continuing search for life; but excellent as they are, they seem only to be a prelude to the wisdom and understanding of his final work, YOU CAN'T GO HOME AGAIN. In a strange way, maybe mostly imagined, Thomas Wolfe almost seems to know that he will never write another book, that now he must tell what he has found life to be. He says that it is not a final statement of belief, because no philosophy of worth can ever be static, but must change, and grow and mature. This belief is not an end, but a foundation for growth,

And at last he has arrived at the truth of Ecclesiastes:

". . .I said to myself, 'I have acquired great wisdom, surpassing all who were over Jerusalem before me; and my mind has great experience of wisdom and knowledge! And I applied my mind to know wisdom and to know madness and folly. I perceived that this also is but a striving after wind.

"For in much wisdom is much vexation, and he who increases knowledge increases sorrow.

". . .then I said to myself, 'What befalls the fool will befall me also; why then have I been so very wise?' And I said to myself that this also is vanity.

". . .I said to myself, 'Come now, I will make a test of pleasure; enjoy yourself. . .I make great works; I built houses and planted vineyards for myself; I made myself gardens and parks, and planted in them all kinds of fruit trees. I made myself pools from which to water the forest of growing trees, I bought male and female slaves; I had also great possessions of herds and flocks. . .I also gathered for myself silver and gold. . .

"So I became great and surpassed all who were before me. . .then I considered all that my hands had done and the toil I had spent in doing it, and behold, all was vanity and a striving after wind, and there is nothing to be gained under the sun."<sup>5</sup>

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4. Look Homeward, Angel page 522

5. ECCLESIASTES, portions from Chapter one, 16 thru Chapter 2, 15  
\* the Square of the city.

The Preacher of Ecclesiastes has methodically considered all things in an attempt to assess meaning in some act or work of toil. With every verse he destroys belief and tears down and refutes all that has traditionally been counted to hold value, either as a worthwhile act or at least one which the doer can derive pleasure from. He even finds a search for wisdom futile, since it only increases one's sorrow.

In a similar though lesser way, Thomas Wolfe had also experienced these things in life. He became famous, loved and praised by many, quite well physically, and had in general lived the things that we hold to be of value in this world.

After he had achieved most of the hopes he had held since his youth, Thomas Wolfe had to decide if they had been enough. He had to decide if these acts and conditions, in actuality, filled the need, and the desire of his life.

what

"Since childhood I had wanted/all men want in youth: to be famous, to be loved. These two desires went back through all steps, degrees, and shadings of my education; they represented what we younglings of the time had been taught to believe in and to want.

"Love and fame. Well I have had them both.

"You told me once, Fox, that I did not want them, that I only thought I did. You were right. I wanted them desperately until I had them, but once they were mine they were not enough." (He now talks of a great man whom he had met before achieving fame. He realized then that greatness had not been enough for the other man--and would never be enough for him--but. . .)

"I say, I should have learned from that. And yet, how would I? Does one ever really learn from others till one is ready for the lesson? One may read the truth in another's life and see it plain and still not make the application to oneself. Does one's glorious sense of 'I--', this wonderful, unique 'I' that never was before since time began and never will be again hereafter--does not this 'I' of tender favor come before the eye of judgement and always plead exception? I thought, 'Yes, I see how it is with him, but with me it will be different--because I am I.' . . . I could never learn anything except the hard way. I must experience it for myself before I knew. . . Fame, like Love, was not enough."<sup>6</sup>

With the accomplishment of their aspirations, both Wolfe and the Preacher have found the victory to be hollow; for neither it was enough. And now the real decision must be made. Is life, then, a pretense, a farce, a cruel hoax for those who see it clearly--or is there still something else, somewhere? A climax; a fulfillment? Though each can show the complete uselessness, the complete futility of human life, neither can accept the conclusion.

How does each find hope? In two ways, they search for the truth, and arrive at close to the same determination.

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6You Can't Go Home Again page 653-55



It is amazing that although nearly the entire book of Ecclesiastes is devoted to showing the futility of life and effort, never once does the Preacher question the existence of God, but rather several times states with conviction that God is in the world, and the world in God. Even more than not denying God, it never occurs to him to refute the existence of his Lord. Though he can show and believe the vanity of fame, glory, pleasure, labor, love, hate, wisdom, or anything he might do, God is.

And in this unquestioning faith is his "out." Although anything on earth may seem to be labor in vain, and may well be as far as what can be attained on earth, he believes in Judgment day. He believes in God, and so, also, he believes in Heaven and Hell. There is no judgment on earth; the fool and the wise man come to the same fate. But this fate is the same only to earthly eyes. Death is the end of life on earth, but it is not enough to end life. Reward or punishment, Heaven or Hell, for eternity. This is the end of vanity.

"Rejoice, O young man, in your youth, and let your heart cheer you in the days of your youth; walk in the ways of your heart and sight of your eyes. But know that for all these things God will bring you into judgment. . . The end of the matter all has been heard. Fear God, and keep his commandments; for this is the whole duty of man. For God will bring every deed into judgment, with every secret thing, whether good or evil."

Thomas Wolfe? He can not deny what he has found:

"Man was born to live, to suffer and to die. . ."<sup>8</sup>

He can not deny it, but, yet, he goes on to tell that he must deny it.

"Man was born to live, to suffer, and to die, and what befalls him is a tragic lot. There is no denying this in the final end. But we must, dear Fox, deny it all along the way."<sup>9</sup>

Wolfe sees man as being two---Man-Alive and Man-Eternal.

". . . Mankind was fashioned for eternity, but man-alive, was fashioned for a day. New evils will come after him, but it is <sup>with</sup> the present evils that he is now concerned. And the essence of all faith, it seems to me, for such a man as I, the essence of religion for people of my faith, is that man's life can be, and will be, better. . .

"You and the preacher may be right for eternity, but we Men-Alive, dear Fox, are right for Now."<sup>9</sup>

For Thomas Wolfe, there is hope on earth. He does not deny the Preachers of fulfillment in eternity, indeed, in the last passage he sees this as our final hope, but unlike the Preacher, he sees Man-Alive with a destiny. His argument is not logical, in fact, it is without logic altogether, unless one would call it the logic of faith, and religion--based on faith. Thomas Wolfe believes in man. Thomas

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7. ECCLESIASTES, Chapter 11 and 12 (portions)  
8 and 9 YOU CAN'T GO HOME AGAIN page 664 and 666

Wolfe believes in himself--as a man.

But Thomas Wolfe, as a man, knows that he must die, and he believes in eternity. His final "Credo" is not a testament of God, as is the Preacher's--but it is a final statement of conviction of something beyond the world, something beyond life, something for Man-Eternal.

"Something has spoken to me in the night, burning the tapers of the waning year; something has spoken in the night and told me that I shall die, I know not where. Saying:

'To lose the earth you know for greater knowing; to lose the life you have, for greater life; to leave the friends you love, for greater loving; to find a land more kind than home, more large than earth---

"---Whereupon the pillars of this earth are founded, toward which the conscience of the world is tending--a wind is rising, and the rivers flow.' "

END

By David N. Hall

The moon is a merciless master,  
Each night I would deny her in fear  
Her beams mean my freedom is ended  
My dark hours of horror are here.  
I cannot defy my white master,  
She transforms me to shapes that are foul,  
And I flee through the woods in my horror,  
I flee, and impotently howl.  
Briars, bráars, brambles sharp,  
The cutting into my palpitating side;  
And I hear the voices of hunters,  
And I know that I quickly must hide.  
For twelve hours my vigil is horror,  
Terror and fear are my fate;  
A burden I fear I must bear,  
Till I pass to death's other gate.  
What a fine rest that then will be to me,  
For me, when my grim cup is passed,  
To be free from my dread lonely burden,  
To be free of the grim moon at last!

31

# A HANDFUL OF WONDER

CRASHING SUNS, by Edmond Hamilton

Acc F-319, 192 Pages., c. 1965, cover by Ed Valigursky 40¢

These tales are so old that it hurts to read them. Why Don Wollheim insists on bringing back all these blud and thunder space operas, I'll never understand. All the stories included here are so old that Hugo Gernsback must have Proofread them for Amazing. The dates given are 1928, 1929, and 1930.

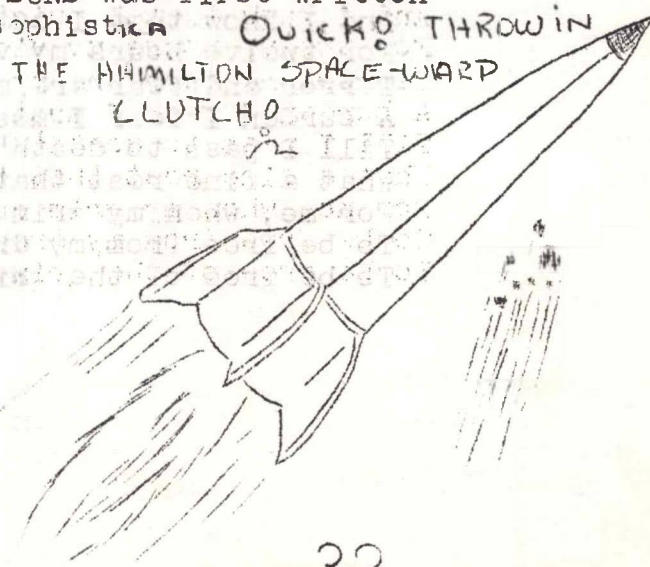
The stories... "Crashing Suns", "The Star Stealers", "Within the Nebula", "The Comet Drivers", and "The Cosmic Cloud" are all action and no science. They bore with their overdosage of ray guns and dated Flash Gordon cliches. In the first story, the hero sticks his head out of the conning tower window to view the "traffic of the space lanes" as he approached Earth. How do you stick your head out of a window in a spaceship without problems?

You have a hard time rationalizing some of it. I recommend that you skip this one. It really isn't worth your time. ....Roger Alan Cox

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The five short novels collected in CRASHING SUNS are truly representative of a bygone era of stf. Ed Hamilton is certainly the dear of this colliding worlds, crashing universes type of adventure stf. In the five stories, the Universe and the Solar System are saved no less than twice and the Galaxy once. Incredibly enough each disaster is averted with only seconds to spare, and in each case by a mere man. Since the twenties, when CRASHING SUNS was first written stf has become a great deal more sophisticated. Although we have not stopped writing "end of the universe stories". Today our plots involve steady state theories, expanding universes, and situations in which the hero is confronted with the 2nd Law of Thermodynamics. I do not intend to belittle the scientific type, but for many of us, anyway me, these old bang-pow, slug it out action stories are heartily welcomed.

It is impossible to dismiss the plentiful scientific implausibilities scattered throughout the collection. The astronomers of the Federation are apparently able to see thousands of light years instantaneously.



32

WOLFF 65



Hamilton, of course, could have easily gotten around this by creating some sort of instantaneous viewing device, but he fails to do so. The examples are many, as Hamilton goes blissfully about combating the insidious alien intelligence through men who win because they are strong, courageous, noble and right. It would be ridiculous to defend ~~CRASHING SUNS~~ on its scientific-accuracy, but then it was never meant to be that sort of material; as far as good old fist-swinging science fiction goes, Ed Hamilton is easily the best.

....Bill Scheidt

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I agree with Roger when he mentions he doesn't know why Don Wollheim insists on bringing back these stories. I agree with him insofar as I can't see why Don reprinted these particular thud and blunder stories rather than one of the score of stories written for such magazines as THRILLING WONDER STORIES or STARTLING. These stories are old. Hugo Gernsback never proofread them, however, Farnsworth Wright did. CRASHING SUNS was a serial starting in the August, 1928 issue of WEIRD TALES. The rest of the stories also appeared in the late twenties and early thirties.

Perhaps one of the worst things about this book--quite apart from any other fault--is sameness of plot. All of the stories have almost the same things happening in them. In different issues of magazines, this would not be too noticeable, but in a book, it is. I think that Wollheim would have done well to reprint some of Hamilton's other stories instead of these.

Last issue I told a number of you that this would be your last issue. Then I went and forgot to write down the names of those I gave that message to. So--this issue, if there is an 'L' on your mailing label, this is you last issue, unless you do something.