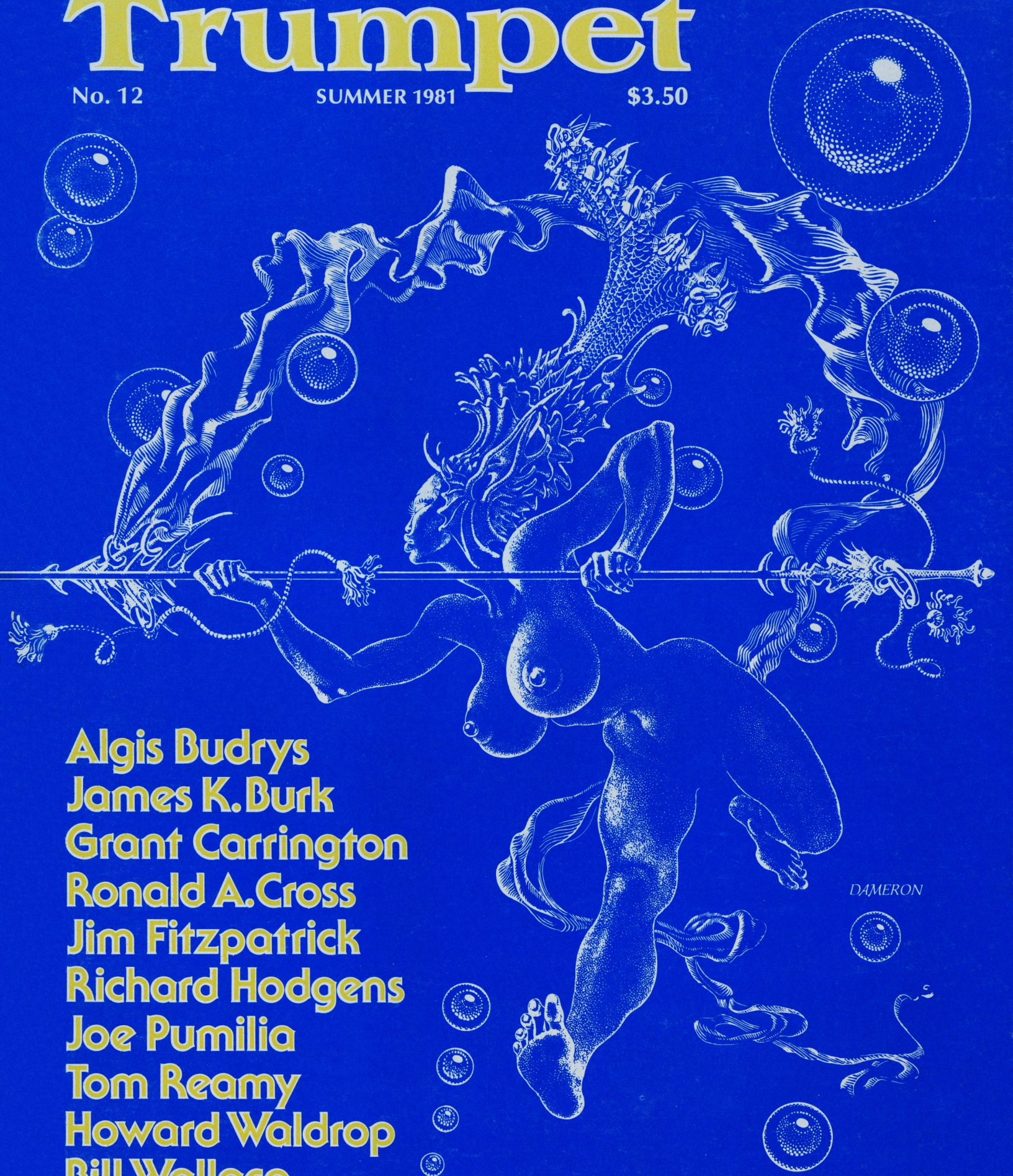
THE MAGAZINE OF SCIENCE FICTION & FANTASY HYPERBOLE

Trumpet

No. 12 SUMMER 1981 $3.50



Algis Budrys
James K. Burk
Grant Carrington
Ronald A. Cross
Jim Fitzpatrick
Richard Hodgens
Joe Pumilia
Tom Reamy
Howard Waldrop
Bill Wallace

STERANKO

trumpet

SUMMER 1981 NO. 12

THE MAGAZINE OF SCIENCE FICTION AND FANTASY HYPERBOLE

This Issue was Edited and Designed by Ken Keller and Tom Reamy
Associate Editors: Alex Eisenstein & Arnie Fenner
Typesetting by Nickelodeon Graphics, Kansas City, Missouri
Printing by Inter-Collegiate Press, Mission, Kansas

features:

Front cover illustration by Ned Dameron
Inside front cover by Jim Steranko • Inside back cover by John Severin

TRUMPET is published twice yearly (Summer and Winter) by Ken Keller, 1131 White, Kansas City, Missouri 64126. Printed in the United States of America. Opinions or viewpoints expressed in features are those of the authors and not necessarily of this magazine or its staff. All letters of comment sent to TRUMPET will be treated as unconditionally assigned for publication and subject to editorial comment. Single copy price: $3.50. 1 year subscription: 2 issues $6.00, U. S. & Canada only. Foreign subscriptions $7.50 surface rate, $11.00 Air Mail. All Foreign orders must be in U.S. funds. Bookstores and dealers: 40% discount on orders of 10 copies or more, wholesale quantities and rates available upon request. Published letters of comment will receive one free issue for each letter published. Trades arranged. All submissions to TRUMPET must be accompanied by return postage or S.A.S.E. Payment for accepted contributions will be made *only* in the form of free copies of the issue in which the material appears. Adv. space is not available.

trumpet people

TOM REAMY

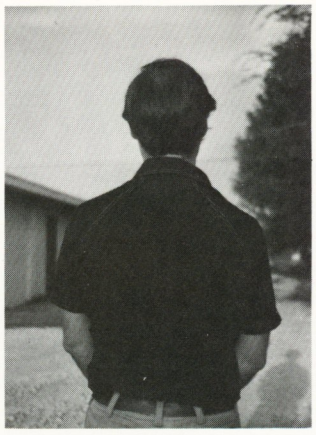
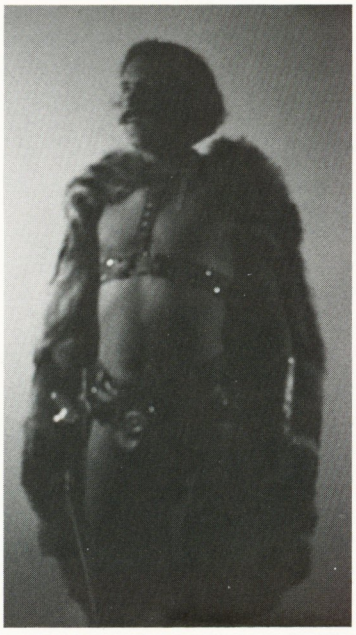


PHOTO: PAT CADIGAN

JAMES K. BURK

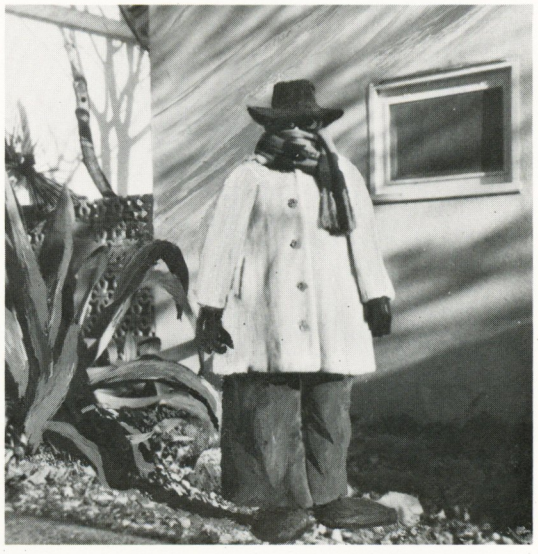
PHOTO: PAT CADIGAN

VIKKI MARSHALL



RON MILLER

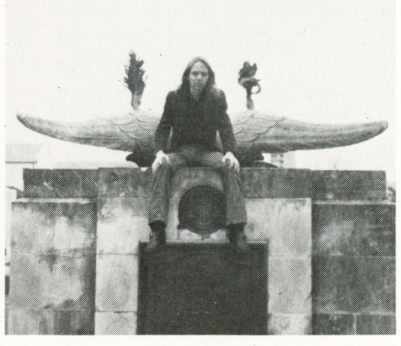
JIM FITZPATRICK



M. M. MOAMRATH

RONALD A. CROSS

WILLIAM ROTSLER



BILL WALLACE

The late **TOM REAMY** was becoming a well-established sf writer at the time of his untimely death in late 1977. A Nebula and John W. Campbell Award winner, Tom was also an accomplished editor (*Trumpet* and *Nickelodeon*), sf critic, technical illustrator and graphic designer. The face of **JAMES K. BURK** should long be remembered by the fans of Lin Carter's fiction. Jim's razor-sharp critical analysis, always an enjoyable feature of *Delap's F & SF Review*, will continue in future issues—if he's not assassinated first. **VIKKI MARSHALL**, one of the three most exciting women in Kansas City is a free-lance commercial artist, costume designer and seamstress for the Missouri Repertory Theatre. Her sf work has appeared in *Chacal, Shayol* and the *MidAmeriCon Program Book*. The stunning astronomical art of **RON MILLER**, which resides in numerous private art collections (not to mention the Smithsonian), has won many sf convention art show awards. Ron is also an award winning f & sf costume designer. Ireland's **JIM FITZPATRICK** owes his artistic influences to Harry Clarke, Alphonse Mucha, and Barry Smith. His most recent work can be viewed in *Th\ Book of Conquests* from Roger Dean's Dragon's Dream Press, as well as on the album covers for the rock group Thin Lizzy. The eccentric anti-genius of **M. M. MOAMRATH**, one of the lurking shadows of American pulp horror fiction of the 20s and 30s continues to haunt us by its sheer ineptness. Need we say more? **RONALD ANTHONY CROSS** is a California writer whose fiction has appeared in such anthologies as *Orbit 20, New Worlds, Future Pastimes, The Universe Within* and *Black Holes*. He has also completed two novels. **WILLIAM ROTSLER** is a multi-talented professional sf writer, filmmaker and photographer. Bill is also one of the most prolific cartoonists in sf fandom, a talent that won him the Best Fan Artist Hugo in 1975 and again in 1979—long overdue honors. Besides being one of Moamrath's editors, **BILL WALLACE** is one of the talented Texas neopros, affectionately known in some quarters as "The Texas Crazies". He was also co-chairman of the 1978 World Fantasy Convention.

solar wind:

Editorial & Other Pretensions

by ken keller

Phoenix From Ashes

Anyone who has been involved in sf fandom during the past three years is probably aware that Tom Reamy, who founded *Trumpet* and its successor, *Nickelodeon,* died quite suddenly in late 1977 from a heart attack while working at his typewriter on a story for Ed Ferman at *The Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction.*

Naturally, I find myself thinking about Tom as I begin these words—the tragic loss to the field of his immense writing talent, his many other accomplishments of the past and, more importantly to me, the loss of his friendship. I find that, even after almost three years, I still miss him a great deal.

Perhaps more than any other person that I can think of, Tom has been a major influence in my life and involvement in science fiction fandom. It was this very magazine that introduced me to sf fandom in the sixties, forever fixing my perceptions of—and ultimately determining my place within—amateur publishing. More significantly, it was the *Dallascon Bulletin* and Tom's ill-fated "Big D in '73" Worldcon bid that forged my interest in sf conventions and infected me with the convention organizing bug—an experience that was to eventually lead me down the long road to chairing the 1976 World SF Convention. All of this was set in motion, ironically, years before we actually met and became good friends while attending the 1973 D'Con in Dallas.

From this meeting came the eleventh issue of *Trumpet,* two issues of *Nickelodeon,* a typesetting and graphic design business (Nickelodeon Graphics), and some of the K.C. Worldcon innovations that Tom had planned for the hoped-for Dallascon: fanzine-style progress reports, a hardcover program book, closed-circuit TV and a lavish 35mm film program.

As I look back over the past years and events, seeing how things have now come full circle, I instinctively feel down deep that the fates intended the paths of Tom and myself to cross. There are just too many coincidences in a long and convoluted sequence of events for me to feel otherwise—making me wonder if there isn't something to the idea of predestination after all.

Howard Waldrop's thoughts about Tom (which begin at the end of Tom's article on page 6) echo my own sentiments; his passing is still deeply felt by those of us who knew him. Howard's article is actually a greatly condensed version of a substantially larger reminiscence that Howard did for EarthLight Publishers and their memorial edition of Tom's short fiction, *San Diego Lightfoot Sue and Other Stories.* If you've never read any of Tom's fiction, I highly recommend the EarthLight edition as an introductory volume; it is beautifully designed and is a fitting tribute to the genius of Tom Reamy—a genius that within a relatively short period of time elevated his work to the topmost ranks of fantasy fiction.

An additional legacy that Tom left behind was a partially completed third issue of *Nickelodeon.* Almost all of the contents of this comeback issue of *Trumpet* started out as that third issue, which explains why *Nickelodeon* subscribers are receiving *Trumpet* and why the letter column, which begins on page 7, is devoted to comments on the second—and final—issue of *Nickelodeon.*

In addition to the title, the other major change that I have inaugurated is the elimination of the nude centerfolds that characterized *Nickelodeon.* My reason for doing so is strictly economic; the centerfolds with their male nudity began to cut into wholesale dealer and bookstore sales to the point of almost bankrupting the magazine. Although issue #1 did pretty well, #2 virtually died on the vine. Ironically, #2 had no frontal male nudity and a fully exposed female, but to its detriment it seems. (I had expressed the opinion to Tom that fandom wasn't ready for this kind of thing, which helps to reinforce my opinion that fandom is still ultra-conservative in many of its viewpoints.) Because the larger circulation fanzines like *Trumpet* depend heavily on wholesale buyers to make ends meet, it was necessary to eliminate this feature if I wished to avoid drastically cutting back on the production values of *Trumpet*—something that I refuse to do at this point. Historically, the medium was always part of *Trumpet's* "message" if I may paraphrase McLuhan. And it will continue to be so as long as I edit and publish *Trumpet.*

In place of the centerfolds, I plan to run a series of art features and portfolios as I have done with this issue, an area that most of the high circulation sf fanzines seem to be ignoring these days. But then, *Trumpet* always did this kind of thing anyway under Tom, so I see no reason not to continue the tradition.

Back Issues & Others

I'm sorry to say that *Trumpet #1-11* are long out of print and draw premium prices from those dealers that have copies for sale. But I do have plans (in about a year or so), after I have successfully re-established *Trumpet,* to publish an 80-100 page, perfect-bound edition of *The Best of Trumpet—the Tom Reamy Years* to fill the void. This edition will put back into print some of the outstanding features that made *Trumpet* one of the finest and most widely read fanzines of the sixties. All features will be reproduced from the original pages, just as Tom originally presented them, with introductory comments by some of the people that helped to make *Trumpet* a three-time Hugo nominee.

However, this issue's immediate predecessors, *Nickelodeon #1 & 2,* are still available at $2.00 per issue for those who may have thought that they, too, were out-of-print.

While I have your attention, I might as well mention the fact that I am, for the moment, the exclusive distributor for the remaining copies of the progress reports and program/memory book of the 34th World Science Fiction Convention—MidAmeriCon (of which, by coincidence, I was chairman). They are still considered by many to be the quintessential sf convention publications of all time—almost 400 full-sized pages of in-depth articles, insightful humor, explosive commentary and gorgeous artwork, covering a number of divergent aspects of the sf world at the time of the 1976 Worldcon.

All four progress reports and the *hardcover* program/memory book are being sold as a set (postpaid) for $11.00, due to the interrelated nature of the MidAmeriCon publications. If you were a member of MidAmeriCon, or happened to see a member's copy, I'm sure you'll agree that the program/memory book is worth the price alone. In addition to the usual detailed convention information (hotel floor plans, con schedule, chairman's message, etc.), the program/memory book has lengthy articles by Isaac Asimov, Robert Bloch, Tim Kirk, Richard Lupoff, George Scithers, Susan Wood, Howard DeVore, Tom Monteleone and Robert Coulson; complete bibliographies to the fiction of Robert A. Heinlein (GoH) and Wilson (Bob) Tucker (Toastmaster); extensive film notes, with stills, on MidAmeriCon's lavish film program written by Tom Reamy, Frederick Clark, Bill Warren, Bhob Stewart, Karl Edward Wagner, Jim Wnoroski, Jim Loehr, Steve Rubin and Dale Winogura; the Robert A. Heinlein art portfolio, illustrating 33 of Heinlein's works by some of the sf field's most talented artists including Frank Kelly Freas, Rick Sternbach, Tim Kirk, Ron Miller, Steve Fabian, Jim Odbert, William Rotsler, Roger Stine, Grant Canfield, Michael Hague, Robert Kline and 24 others. All the preceding is wrapped within an expensive Kivar binding with illustrated endpapers and full-color dustwrapper by George Barr. The MidAmeriCon program book is a milestone in the history of the World Science Fiction Convention and a fine example of Tom Reamy's masterful ability as an editor and graphic designer.

The foregoing items can be ordered direct from me at the address listed in the colophon; all checks should be made payable to Trumpet

Publications. (Quantity discounts are available to qualified dealers and bookstores—rates available upon request.)

Forecasts & Augurations

Since I have most of the material typeset I can be pretty definite about the lineup for next issue—providing that something irresistible doesn't come along in the meantime. I'll hedge my bet and say that what follows will be in *Trumpet #13,* barring natural calamities and the editorial whims of yours truly.

(Just because I'm Captain doesn't mean that I have to run a taut ship.)

On hand for next issue is what I consider *the* definitive article on the **Star Wars** phenomenon—a continuation, of sorts, of what Tom Reamy begins this issue, but in a totally different direction. With the first of **Star Wars'** multi-million dollar sequels **(The Empire Strikes Back)** having been enthusiastically received last year, and with the **SW** craze firmly entrenched in our culture, a penetrating, steely-eyed critical analysis of the most popular film in cinema (and science fiction) history now seems appropriate. This in-depth article by Dr. Dan Rubey ("Star Wars: Not So Far Away") is similar in its thoroughness of approach to the article that Richard Hodgens did on **2001** way back in *Trumpet #9*—just in case your memory stretches back that far. I'm certain that after reading this article you will never be able to view **Star Wars**—and its underlying subtleties—quite the same way again.

Unfortunately, the haunting specter of M. M. Moamrath will not cast its eldritch shadow over the pages of *Trumpet #13*; but a talent worthy of his tarnished crown will, however. David Wilson (whose article in *Nickelodeon #1* drew more mail than any single item in that issue) will make his bid for fiction immortality with a tale of culinary horror ("Eat the Fishcakes of Frankenstein") that also just happens to be a hilarious send-up of the Hammer Frankenstein films and fast-food restaurants. As they say, you've got to read this to believe it.

Richard Hodgens will be back with a lengthy article ("Long Live the Zoromes! Long Live Zor!") on Neil R. Jones's "Professor Jameson" stories. The tales of the Zoromes were the longest running series in sf history and among the most popular stories to come out of the Golden Age of science fiction. Both DAW Books and Garland Press began reissuing them in book form in the mid-seventies, much to the delight of those who enjoy exemplary space opera. The article has forewords by Isaac Asimov, Donald Wollheim, Robert Lowndes and Frederik Pohl and includes a directory to all the Zoromes introduced in the series. This is a major historical work.

John Kessel will make his *Trumpet* debut next issue with a short article ("Does the SF Fan Perceive?") which is, despite the implications of its title, a clever and witty parody of the (sometimes) myopic tendencies of "the scientific method." Included with the article will be the usual unintelligible diagrams to buttress the cogent points of the essay.

Years before the appearance of the Abrams' editions of *Gnomes, Faeries* and *Giants,* Kansas City commercial artist Hank Jankus (whose artwork has appeared in the excellent KC semiprozine, *Shayol*) was working on a similar vision of mythic lore on the subject of Trolls. *Trumpet* will spotlight Hank's work in progress next issue with a beautiful art portfolio which includes biographical notes and background material on the project. And who knows, perhaps in a few years you may find a coffee table book, entitled *Trolls,* on the shelves of your favorite bookstore.

While on the subject of things artistic, I should mention that Alex Eisenstein will be exerting his influence as Associate Editor next issue with the second of *Trumpet*'s f & sf art retrospectives, dealing with Edd Cartier's illustrations for the "Interstellar Zoo" section of the 1951 Gnome Press edition of *Travelers in Space.* These drawings are among Cartier's rarest work and are certainly some of the finest depictions of alien life-forms ever to appear in the science fiction field. The illustrations will be reproduced actual size, from the originals, for the first time anywhere without the garish overlay colors that marred their exquisite detail in the Gnome Press edition. Commentary will be provided by Alex who is one of sf fandom's well-known original-art collectors.

James K. Burk will be back in the guise of author, rather than outspoken critic, in *Trumpet #13* with a Fredric Brown style short story ("Poetic Justice") that is a wry commentary on the potential fate of hack science fiction writers—literary drudges please take note. Even when writing fiction, Jim's razor-sharp critical eye can't help exerting itself.

Rounding out *Trumpet #13* will be the usual editorial discourses, the letter column and artwork by Jim Odbert, Richard Corben, William Rotsler, Frank Frazetta, C. Lee Healy, Jeff Jones, Jim Schull, George Barr, Jim Cawthorn, Steve Fabian, Mike Gilbert, Dan Steffan and others. I can guarantee an outstanding issue.

Closing Thoughts

Well, since I'm just about out of room for this issue, I'll have to hold off on some comments until next time. (If things go as planned, you'll be seeing *Trumpet* about every six months.) Before closing out I do want to thank all my friends in fandom who've shown a great deal of encouragement and support in my efforts to revive *Trumpet,* especially George R. R. Martin and John Kessel, who've literally made it possible after more false starts and unexpected delays than I care to remember. I trust this issue will meet their expectations.

The article which immediately follows was completed by Tom just a short while before his death and stands as the final piece of writing of his fannish career. I'm sure you'll agree that even after three years it remains amazingly fresh in its perceptions and accurate in its predictions. I hope you enjoy it.

And I hope that you will be here for the next issue. □

Star Wars has hit this country, and perhaps the entire Free World, like a sneak atomic attack. Its unexpected and phenomenal success will have ramifications in the movie business that no one can really comprehend at this time. It will undoubtedly be years before its full significance can be realized.

Its success is phenomenal any way you look at it. **Star Wars** became the highest grossing movie in history within a few months after its release; and it did this while still playing exclusive engagements, *before* going into general release and before being released overseas. It surpassed in a few months what **Jaws,** the previous record holder, had amassed in over three years. The fact that *any* movie could be that popular is unbelievable enough, but that one of ours, a lowly, passe, old-fashioned space opera could do it boggles the mind. What the final outcome will be after it goes into general release, hits the small towns, is saturated at the drive-ins and hits the rest of the world is anybody's guess. **Gone With The Wind** held the record for over twenty years. **Star Wars** may hold it forever.

Two questions immediately beg answers: why is **Star Wars** so popular and why have a few of the top people in science fiction gotten their noses out of joint because of it?

Most of the Hollywood moguls would give their first born for a clear, concise answer to the first—and couldn't care less about the second. But I think both questions have basically the same answer.

Ben Bova, who dislikes **Star Wars** intensely, is reported to have said it is trivial and Lucas should have made it meaningful like **THX-1138.** I don't want to put words in Mr. Bova's mouth. . .but I will. If his definition of the word "meaningful" is the same as it is with most of that part of the science fiction fraternity who feels that science fiction has become too important for sense of wonder and entertainment, and since he uses **THX-1138** as an example of meaningful science fiction, I can only assume it is; then meaningful equals relevant equals despair and hopelessness. Everything is shit and there's nothing we can do about it.

Mr. Bova seems to have forgotten that Lucas *did* make **THX-1138**—and it died. (True, Warner Bros., in a fit of spite, helped it die, but die it did.) Even fandom was moderately indifferent to it. Lucas made **THX-1138** and nobody cared. Why should he do it again? I don't know if he figured it out with cold calculation or whether it was simply the instincts of a good moviemaker, but he learned something that Hollywood seems to have forgotten about twenty years ago: a movie's first job is to entertain.

Hollywood used to know it without thinking. Samuel Goldwyn, who made some of the best movies around, said, "If you want to send a message, call Western Union." Of course, he didn't really mean it because, although he made a lot of "pure" entertainment, he also sent a lot of messages. The prime example is **The Best Years of Our Lives,** which told of the problems facing returning World War II servicemen. But he knew that the first job of a movie was to entertain and he did it—without diluting the message in the least. He said the problems were serious and real and very large, but not insurmountable. He said there was hope, that we could fix it if we worked at it. And the audiences left the theaters feeling good, aware of the problems, and ready to slay dragons.

EVERYTHING IS SHIT & THERE'S NOTHING WE CAN DO ABOUT IT!

Illustrated by Grant Canfield

Then somewhere there around the late fifties a lot of people in the movie industry, like a number of people in science fiction these days, began to get the idea that movies, also, were too important for the masses, too important for sense of wonder and entertainment, that entertainment would somehow contaminate the Grand Purpose of "film." (There weren't, as far as I know, any movies made about the problems facing returning Vietnam veterans, but television dealt with it extensively during its "relevant" period, especially on shows like *The Mod Squad* and *The Rookies.* And the attack was almost always the same: the problems were insurmountable; things had gotten so bad there was no longer any hope.)

Movies fell into the hands of *auteurs* who made films only they understood, and critics, who wrote reviews only *they* understood, went along with it, praising obscure and despairing films and turning up their noses at entertaining movies. Fortunately film critics, unlike theater critics who can close a play the first night, have little or no impact on movie audiences. They even sometimes seem to take pride in the fact that their standards are so esoteric the masses can't comprehend them. Occasionally, however, they goof, as Pauline Kael did with **West Side Story.** She wrote a glowing review, but after it became a boxoffice success, she did a "second thoughts" review. It wasn't really any good after all. She very nearly said in the second review that it couldn't be any good if it was that popular.

There are those who might argue that boxoffice receipts are not the best, or even an acceptable, guage of a motion picture's worth. But they are; they measure the audience and the audience is the only guage. Of what use any movie, regardless of its message or lack of one, if it does not communicate? What good is the most vital warning if no one listens? There may be movie makers who are expressing their "art" and care nothing of monetary return, but any worth notice should care about an audience (those who feel their work too personal and precious for human eyes can be dismissed; they will in all probability get their wish) and audiences and boxoffice receipts are inexorably linked. One cannot exist without the other.

THOUGHTS ON THE STAR WARS PHENOMENON by Tom Reamy

But this cult of everything-is-shit-and-there's-nothing-we-can-do-about-it is not limited to movies. It's in pop music and it's in science fiction. In a recent review in the *Chicago Daily News,* Lester Bangs said about a new Peter Frampton album: "Peter Frampton is evil. You ask how Wonder Bread can possibly be evil. I will answer that all palliatives are inherently evil. [. . .] The nature of a palliative is that it makes the mind think that the disease doesn't exist even as the mind rots. Why do you think so many of Frampton's songs have such titles as 'You Don't Have to Worry'? It's because Frampton offers his audience a security blanket, some false and entirely vacuous consolation to keep them, at least temporarily, from realizing that they are totally desperate."

It's no coincidence that **Star Wars** is the most popular movie ever made and that Peter Frampton is one of the most popular rock stars.

In science fiction both Robert Silverberg and Barry Malzberg have announced they are leaving the field because their books no longer sell as well as they once did. It's also no coincidence that both usually write fiction of despair and hopelessness.

The amazing part about it, in the case of the movies at least, is that it has gone on for so long. The whole episode has proven almost suicidal. Few of these films have been anything but boxoffice disasters. When one of them *was* a success, such as **Easy Rider,** it was for other reasons, not because the audiences wanted despair and hopelessness. But it's still going on. Just this year there were four big-budget, super-starred (Sean Connery, Gene Hackman, Burt Lancaster, Sophia Loren) marginally science fiction films that dished it out at its blackest: **The Cassandra Crossing, The Next Man, The Domino Principle,** and **Twilight's Last Gleaming.** They all told us that 1984 is already here and it's a hell of a lot worse than we ever imagined it would be. Three of those films played to virtually empty theaters. **The Cassandra Crossing** did a bit better because it used razzle-dazzle action and special effects, though it wasn't really successful.

What the ramifications of **Star Wars** will be depends on how the Hollywood moguls read its success—and how they read the failures of the four films just mentioned. And they're going to read it every way possible—and a few ways you would have thought impossible. Movie moguls are notoriously thick headed; it takes forever to get a new idea through to them and forever to root it out once it's run its course. They want desperately to believe that once they find a successful formula it will be good forever.

We're bound to see a deluge of science fiction movies because most of the moguls are going to read "science fiction" as the central ingredient to that success—and I think they're wrong.

The way to read **Star War's** success is fairly simple: it's an *over*reaction to twenty years of the movies telling us everything is shit and there's nothing we can do about it. This orgy of adoration will not be repeated on another science fiction movie, not even the **Star Wars** sequels. When another movie comes along that tops **Star Wars** it will be something completely different—and just as unexpected. **The Sound of Music** topped **Gone With The Wind; The Godfather** topped **The Sound of Music; Jaws** topped **The Godfather; Star Wars** topped **Jaws;** each one a totally different kind of movie. And that's the way it will be next time.

If Hollywood reads it right it may find it hasn't been healthier since the forties. If it starts entertaining again and stops doom-saying the people will be there again. It's true that entertainment has never disappeared from the screen, but it's been in such a minority that people have gotten out of the habit of going. **Star Wars** has proven that they're still out there, waiting.

And it isn't necessary to banish relevance totally from the screen; it's perfectly all right to tell us there are problems, but tell us the way **The Best Years of Our Lives** told us, not the way **The Domino Principle** did it. □

TOM, TOM!

A REMINISCENCE by HOWARD WALDROP

Tom Reamy was a large man, big-boned and heavy-set, but he moved with the ease of someone half his size. He had long fine hands, the first two fingers of the right hand stained yellow from the innumerable cigarettes he smoked each day. He smiled a great deal, even when people around him were looking woebegone. His voice was soft, surprising coming out of such a large man. He was kind and gentle and shy in many ways.

He usually wore the same kind of clothes: a light nondescript work shirt with short sleeves, and darker colored nondescript pants, with casual shoes of one sort or the other.

I remember Tom by the places he lived—the house on Debbie Drive in exciting Plano, Texas, a home in a subdivision on the north side of Dallas, and later a trailer park north of Richardson.

One Sunday in 1969 we all woke up to the news that a tornado had destroyed the trailer park north of Richardson. We tried to call all day, but the lines were down. About 4 p.m., several of us piled into cars and drove up there with a vague notion of claiming the body, or helping Tom sift through his scattered wreckage. We found the trailer park across the street gone, leaving the one Tom lived in untouched. I think we had an impromptu celebration; I remember playing *Risk* all night.

Risk wasn't Tom's game, though—bridge, or one of its mystical progeny, was. At some SF conventions, I've passed through the lobby or the party room, making that last grogged-out, gritty-eyed 4:40 a.m. swing through the place, and there would be Tom, wide awake and concerned over whatever was happening on the card table in front of him.

Tom, being a full-grown human being, had done many things before I met him. he had been a movie projectionist, dispatcher at a concrete plant, skip-tracer for a collection agency. Mostly, from 1957 until the aerospace industry imploded, he worked as a technical illustrator for Collins Radio in Dallas.

Tom was an excellent artist. In the 1950s, his artwork appeared in SF fanzines like Harlan Ellison's *Dimensions* and the Dallas Futurians' own *CriFanAc,* which he edited from time to time. The Dallas Futurians included, among others, Al Jackson, Greg and Jim Benford, Tom and the group was semi-run by a guy named Orville Mosher, a behind-the-scenes manipulator whom no one got along with. One of their last acts was to finally elect Mosher president of the Futurians unanimously. and then disband the organization.

What those people did for entertainment between then and 1965, I don't know. It was that year that Tom and Al Jackson began editing *Trumpet.* Tom put his art, articles, movie reviews and considerable layout skills in it. He showcased the newest art talent of the time—Bernie Wrightson, Vaughn Bode, Tim Kirk, Jeff Jones and many others. He even adapted and got George Barr to illustrate an elegant comic-strip version of Poul Anderson's *The Broken Sword.* There were articles by andy offutt, Jerry Pournelle, Harlan Ellison, David Gerrold, Robert Bloch. He did his own Westercon report, "The Adventures of Grady Goodmonster," which was everybody's first hint of just how well Tom Reamy could write.

Then along about 1969, we all went temporarily crazy and got involved in the Big D in '73 World SF Convention bid. One of the things we did to pull everybody's strings was to publish *The Dallascon Bulletin* and mail it free to over 6,000 people. We were accused of trying to buy the bid. People said we were secretly funded from Argentina. They said we must be spending $2,000 an issue in printing costs alone. But mostly, people were upset because a city tried to win a worldcon bid by attempting to gain the support of so many people.

Suddenly I found myself drafted. Just as suddenly, the Big D in '73 bid started coming apart at the seams, behind the scenes. Instantaneously, the bottom dropped out of the aerospace industry. What with out-of-work technical illustrators three-feet deep in the streets, Tom had begun to write screenplays, and became briefly involved in a Dallas film production company. Nothing permanent came of it so Tom took his income tax refund check and drove to Los Angeles to make his fortune.

Tom was to spend a little more than two years in Los Angeles, working on films in any capacity from gopher to assistant director, writing screenplays, and seeing movies by the daysful. (It was the writing of screenplays that turned him later to writing the stories.) It was the chance to do movie work that took him to Hollywood, and it was the chance that one of

(continued on page 44)

PERSIFLAGE

Letters of comment on Nickelodeon #2
with remarks by Tom Reamy & Ken Keller

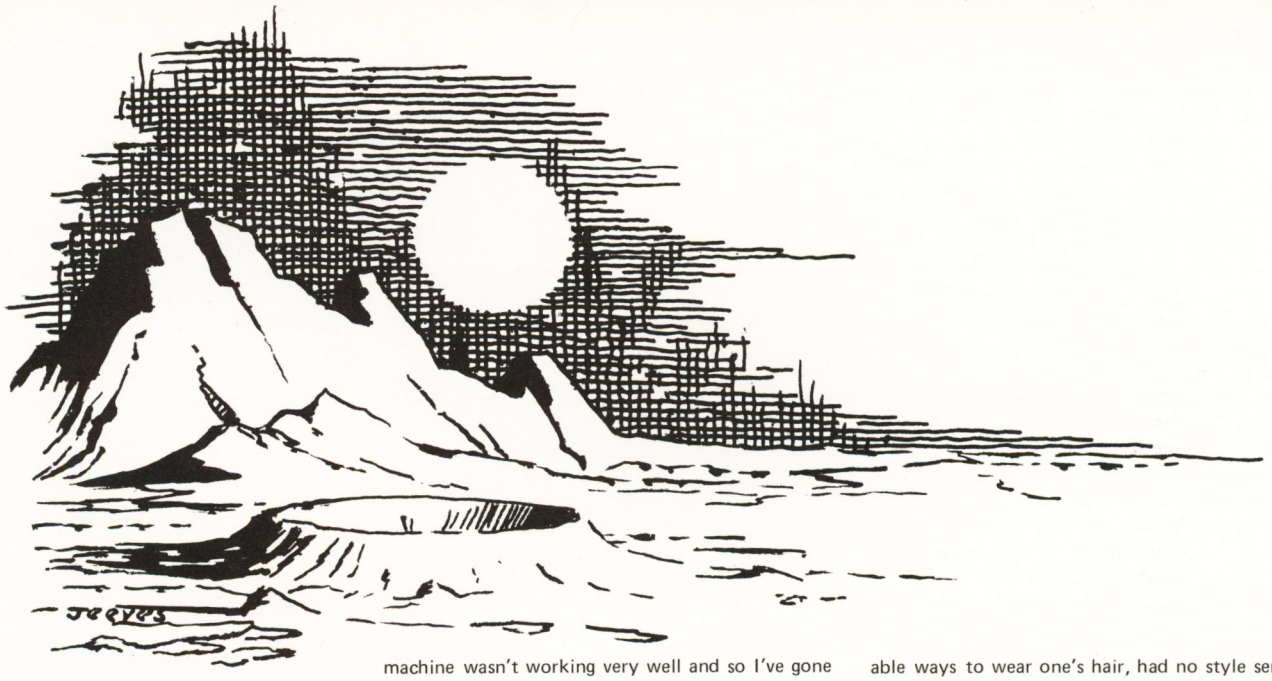
Phil King
c/o Carter's Beach
Erie, PA 16511

Regarding your fanzine, since you seem to be interested in criticism and opinion, I was more impressed with STARLOG. **[If I had STARLOG's budget, staff, and distribution, you'd be more impressed with TRUMPET. —KK]** I suggest you avoid anything that isn't strictly science fiction as an "exotic" quarterly. Feature articles are fun but shouldn't be overdone. (Izat & Aristotle would have made good paragraphs or columns.) Everybody enjoys an interview with a name writer, who likes a crummy cartoon? The characters are cute but careful again; they are distracting.

Now, probably the most important criticism, the nudes. If science fiction readers need anything it's the right kind of erotica. I would suggest many more nudes with a sci-fi theme, using an assortment of props, guns, green bikinis, etc.

Who cares about cold-water flats and woodsy stuff? David Gerrold in a green bikini and Flash Gordon gun, now that's exotic.

[Your ideas of what makes a good fanzine are certainly. . .unique. I agree with you to a certain extent that centerfolds with props, sets, costumes,

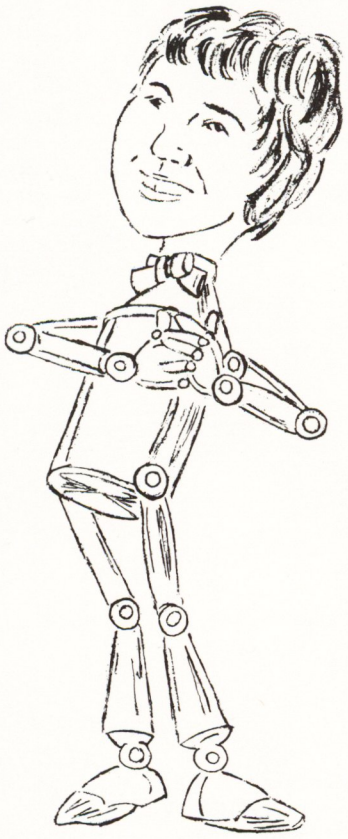


and extravagant photographic effects would be nice, but it's a simple economic fact that it can rarely be done, given TRUMPET's budget. For this, and a variety of reasons, which I've discussed in my editorial, I've decided not to continue this feature.—KK]

Phyllis Ann Karr
Box 8082
Louisville, KY

My family, friends, and I have all enjoyed it immensely, finding my name on your list of centerfold candidates. Can't tell you how it's brightened my fall, finding myself in such company as Asimov, Bova, Bradley, and Yang the Nauseating!

Since you didn't approach me at Worldcon, I assume I'm one of the people you don't know. Am therefore taking the liberty of sending you a picture. It *did* begin with a photo (honest!) but the xerox machine wasn't working very well and so I've gone over the important lines in pencil. It isn't absolute nudity, but I hope you'll forgive the bow tie and spats in view of the daring frontal angle and almost wide-open posture.



[You would've made an ideal centerfold and you would certainly meet Phil King's criteria for centerfolds with a "sci-fi" theme.—KK]

George Barr
904 Toyon Ave.
San Jose, CA 95127

NICKELODEON arrived yesterday—which prompts this overdue letter. You deserve heaps of praise for the [MidAmeriCon] program book. It was beautifully laid out and printed, and more comprehensive than any I've seen before. Usually it isn't until weeks after a con, when I have time to sit down and study the book, that I can find anything in it, or make any sense out of the way it was put together. Not so this time. It was clear, attractive to the eye, and enjoyable reading.

[Thank you. It's also three months out of my life and I'm not sure it was worth it. I would say it was EXHAUSTIVELY comprehensive. Pat Cadigan, who helped me set the type, and I thought about putting a cartoon in it showing me, with the program book all bundled up, going out the door to take it to the printer, with Ken running wild-eyed after me shouting, "No! No! You can't take it to the printer yet. We haven't told them the color of the wallpaper in the mezzanine ladies' room!" But more mundane matters usually occupied our time.—TR]

Jim's layout (to coin a phrase) turned out well in NIK-2, though I'm sure his photos didn't have the streaks and scratches that have shown up in them. He's a consummate photographer and wouldn't have sent them out like that. **[Indeed, the printer didn't do well by them. Those streaks were caused by the half-assed wiping of the plates—and they also managed to gray some of them terribly.—TR]**

I found especially interesting the comments on David Wilson's previous article. At the risk of sounding like I am tootling my own horn, I was one of the exceptional students in my highschool—in the top ten of a graduating class of around eight hundred. It would be very easy for me to say that, yes, the exceptional student has it very tough in school. I did. But several of the others of that top ten were among the most popular kids in school. Looking back as objectively as possible, I can see that I must have been a *creep.* It wasn't just that I was a bit smarter than the average; I was small and rather delicate of build (hard to believe today), had a mop of longish, very curly hair, in a day when either the crewcut or the greased-down ducktail were the ONLY acceptable ways to wear one's hair, had no style sense at all, and no money to indulge it even if I had. I had a very high-pitched speaking voice (still do), and had absolutely no talent for—or interest in—sports. It would have been all right if I could have just faded into the background. But I was always answering the teacher's questions correctly, and getting top grades on compositions and book reports. I had a fairly good singing voice and was given solo parts in the school's A'cappella choir within the second month of my being in it.

In my sophomore year I was showing up the seniors in the art classes. The problem was not that I was good at things; it was that I was just basically not a very likeable nor admirable person. I don't think I flaunted brains or ability; but if you do things better than others, you get noticed.

It was a difficult time. Puberty brings with it an intense awareness (in boys) of incipient manhood, and there is a constant comparison of one'sself against everyone else. *Manhood* means size, strength, agility, physical prowess. Up to this point the girls had been maturing faster, were bigger, often stronger, and (traditionally) better students. For the first time, many boys were in a position to really feel a sense of pride in their physical selves.

Them someone like me came along—small, weak, homely, with nothing at all to admire of the things they were rapidly learning to admire in themselves—and I was getting better grades, more attention and praise from teachers, and I could do, rather well, a lot of things they couldn't.

I was hated. With absolutely no paranoia at all, I can say very honestly, I was persecuted. High school was HELL! That was the major reason I never went on to college. I used the combined excuses of lack of funds, etc., but the truth was I just couldn't face any more years of being despised by the people around me.

As I said, it would be easy to take the position that I was hated because I was superior. But it wasn't so. It was because I seemed to *deserve* so little of that superiority. Had I been tall, athletic, good looking. . . I'd have been a hero. I know this because there were others who were. And personality had a lot to do with it, too. Remembering what I was like, I think if I ran across a kid now who was like I was then, I, too, would want to stomp him into the ground.

I cannot believe in an hereditary superiority. Too often I've seen the children of really superior parents, with all the opportunities in the world—perhaps *because* there were so many opportunities—fail at everything they tried. Too often (because of family fortunes) that hasn't seemed to matter much.

The reverse is also true. A great majority of the

really intelligent and accomplished people I know have literally pulled themselves up by their own bootstraps—overcome financial adversity, educated themselves, fought their way against seemingly insurmountable odds. I think in many cases it has been the very problems themselves that brought out the superiority in those people. Had there been no trouble to overcome, there'd have been no reason to try. If I am anything at all now—and I'm not claiming anything—it's not because I am inately more intelligent than the average (my spelling alone would refute that) nor because I have any more inborn talents than anyone else. I think it would be because I had to work so damned hard to salvage a little self-respect out of the years of being ridiculed by everyone my own age. Be superior if you can—but be *physically* superior as well, or it's not a heck of a lot of fun.

I went back and re-read David's article. I think on the first reading I—and apparently several others—misunderstood what he was saying. I think, in a sense, he is right in that we have been so educated to the idea of EQUALITY in everything that my first reaction to his article was to consider him awfully conceited. For obviously he considered himself one of the aristocracy he was writing about. He'd have been unaware of the problems, and indifferent to them otherwise. And I have a great dislike of people setting themselves above and apart from the rest of humanity.

But then, as I said, I re-read what he'd written. And I find myself much more in agreement with him than I was before. Taking *his* definition of aristocracy, there is nothing at all wrong with his considering himself a part of it. One cannot be smarter than those around him and not realize it. At the risk of sharing the tar brush with which he's being slightly blackened in the letters in NICKELODEON, I, too, am a bit smarter than the average person I meet. I have been all my life, and I've known it all my life. But I wasn't smart enough to learn how to use it and live with it. I'm not immune to jealousies and resentments. It's very easy for me to understand how I was hated in school. It was not the fault of the other students that they'd been educated to look for the *physical* ideal in people. Had I possessed that, I could have been as smart as I wished, and been a *leader—IF* I'd had the sense not to flaunt the superiority. Even now I find that the people I admire most are those who are genuinely modest and humble (i.e., "teachable," aware that there is still much for them to learn) while still being superior in knowledge and/or accomplishments. I cannot stand the individual who insists upon telling me how good he is. I figure that if he's really good, his work will speak for itself.

I think that this is probably the reason for my first reaction to David's article. He was, in effect, telling me that he was of the aristocracy. On reflection, I realize there's no other way the article could have been written.

I sympathize with him for the misery he's evidently had in school. But I hope it doesn't sour him on life. Genius is sometimes hard to bear in others; but bitter cynicism is even worse. I think the aristocracy has to have, if nothing else, a certain amount of compassion. One doesn't lead if one doesn't feel that the followers are worth leading. One just removes one'sself from their presence.

But he's right about the people who try to destroy what they cannot equal. . .in the name of democracy. In the convention artshows there has been a strong movement to have certain artists disqualified on the grounds that they are unfair competition. That is hogwash. The same with the movement to eliminate certain of the perennial Hugo winners. If one wins a prize only because all of those who are better were eliminated, the prize is worthless. If Kelly Freas, Tim Kirk, or LOCUS were pulled from the running for their respective Hugos, how could the subsequent winners ever know if they could have beaten them? Unfortunately, there are a lot of "competitors" who don't care. The *prize* is what they're after, whatever they have to do to get it. If equality has to mean mediocrity, I'm with David all the way.

What David has termed "separateness" or "exclusivity" is, when you come right down to it, almost everyone's refuge. It might not be put into those terms, but we all practice it. We associate with those with whom we are most comfortable, whose company is the most stimulating and enjoyable. If we make the distinctions because of wealth or family position, then we pretty much deserve the kind of friends we get.

There are many in fandom who try constantly to crash the "cliques." And it's gotten to the point that some of the cliques expect it, and want it. It gives them their exclusivity. They've withdrawn, not for reasons of friendship or compatibility, but in order to BE APART and "special." I don't know who to pity most: those in the groups, or those who are trying so hard to *get* in.

I think if David gives himself and the rest of humanity a chance, he'll find his peer group. Though I wouldn't presume to advise, I think it may not happen until he leaves home. . .and perhaps leaves town.

In the city where I was raised I am still "just creepy old George Barr." There is nothing I could do in this God's world to make myself acceptable to the people who grew up despising me. And it wasn't until I'd been away from home for several years that I realized I really didn't *have* to prove anything to them. They just plain don't matter. They have their lives, and I have mine. I have my circle of friends, who are very important to me—and I think I'm important to them. People are added to that circle constantly, and others wander out. It's exclusive only in the sense that we are being ourselves and enjoying what we do. . .and anyone who doesn't enjoy at least some of the same things is not likely to be comfortable in that circle for long. I don't think in terms of aristocracy or commoner—but naturally I think my friends are pretty special—and they *are* uncommon.

When David gets out and away from the people he's known and who know him, he'll find that he can be pretty much what he wishes. Unless he's forced by employment to associate with people he doesn't like, he can create his own circle of peers. It sounds damnably paternal to say it—and I *hated* it coming from others—but he's young. I would like very much to read his writing on this same subject a few years from now, after the fierceness of his school years dims a little with time.

I wish I'd had a chance to speak with him at the con. I think he'd be worth getting to know.

[I, too, fit into an almost identical pattern with you and David—except that I wasn't small. And I was never tormented by my fellow students, at least, not after grade school. I can remember being picked on when I was small, but not in junior high and high school. I was never a part of the social whirl, the student blue book, or the smart set, but I was "friendly" with them if not "friends." I usually had three or four fairly close friends, who also generally fit into the pattern and, strangely enough, the school "tough." Not the macho school hero, but the kid who is probably now either in prison or on parole. God knows why they usually picked me out to be their friend, but it happened in almost every school I went to. The friendship was never lasting, because we had nothing in common, and I'm at a loss to know what either of us got out of it.

My school years differed from yours in another way that might be significant: my parents moved a lot and I seldom went to the same school longer than a year, and they were usually small-town schools. My graduating class had about thirty, rather than eight hundred.

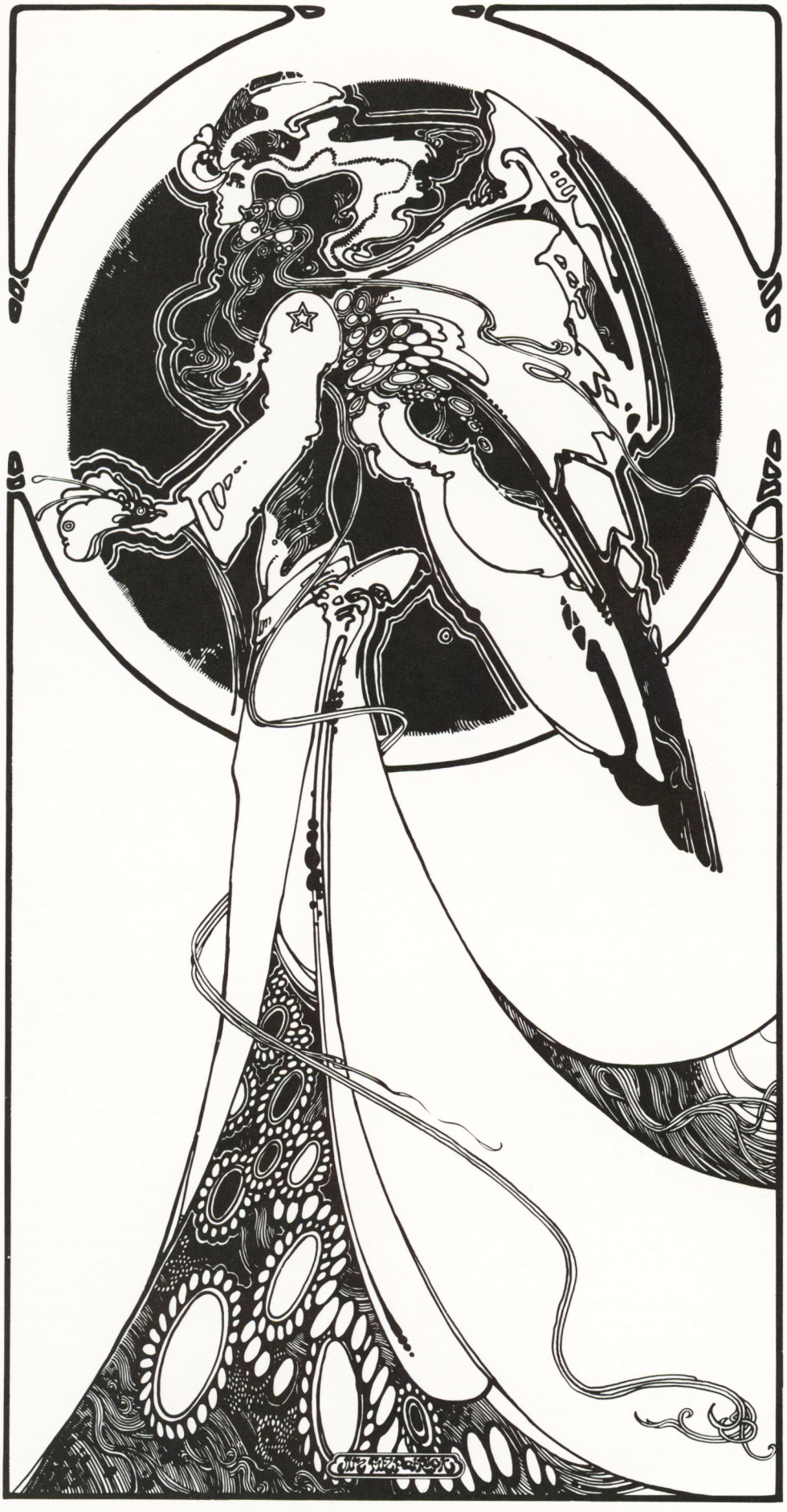
Maybe one of the reasons I was never picked on was because I was satisfied with the way things were and never suffered from peer envy. I honestly didn't care that I wasn't a part of the in-group. I remember a conversation with my high school drama teacher. (While I was close to most of my teachers and quite often teacher's pet, I was closest to the drama teacher. He was about the only teacher I ever had that I socialized with away from school.) We were talking one day about peer group pressure, specifically about one girl who was emotionally shattered because the group she had been a part of had "cast her out" for socializing with a member of another group. He said that most students were socially stratified in that way. . .unless they were lone wolves like me. The remark was a stunning revelation to me; I had never thought of myself as a lone wolf, but it was obvious as soon as it was pointed out. I was genuinely indifferent to the whole thing,

which may explain why I was left alone when others in the same pattern were victimized.

Probably a more realistic explanation is that I reacted to being picked on in the lower grades and unconsciously learned to adapt to the situation; learned what moves I could make and what moves I couldn't make in order to be left alone. Changing schools so often helped a lot too. I could keep practicing until I got it right.

I think school was my downfall. Everything was so absurdly easy, I never learned to strive or discipline myself. I was almost always a straight-A student. I did all my homework in study hall and never took a book home. Unfortunately I don't have a fortune to fall back on.—TR]

God—that back cover! It was a prize winner in a worldcon art show. . .which only goes to show how much they've improved over the years. I wish it were dated so people wouldn't continue to ask me



if this is an example of a new trend. As I recall, it was done somewhere around '61 or '62. I'd appreciate some mention of that being made. It was painted when Tim Kirk was approximately 10 years old. *That* should put it in perspective. *sigh* I remember it fondly as one of the best things I'd ever done at the time.

Bruce Moffitt
Box 201
Purdin, MO 64674

Jim Thomas is a tease. He apparently got this from his mother's side of the family. I didn't realize people still did tease, however my age may be showing. Actually, he does remind me of *my* mother. Next issue of NIckelodeon, I will expect frontal nudity, as the first one hooked me. You are the answer to a zine I used to buy on the newsstands, The Young Physique, which also teased. I thought you were going to show all of it. He might make an attractive centerfold, given the right attitude, which would be a willingness to hold nothing back! I feel cheated, and you know it, damn well you know it.

Otherwise, Nickelodeon is great, better than what one finds on the newsstands. The Barr bacover is great. It's too bad you and J. T. are smartasses.

Tell Fran Calhoun from me, that at least she's not a tease, and Black is truly beautiful inside *and* out. Thank you, Fran, for delivering what was ordered.

[Well, Bruce, at least no one could accuse NICKELODEON of penis envy.—KK]

Ed O'Reilly
Dept. of Sociology
Ohio Northern University
Ada, Ohio 45810

Relax, you and Ken put out an excellent 'zine this time around. No. 2 was an engaging potpourri of well-written articles and fiction.

Grant Carrington and Thomas F. Monteleone provided perspective and witty insight into the agony and ecstacy of the "slush pile" with "Izat Knows the way to Flushing." (Lemme tell ya, fellas, grading undergraduates' essays and term papers may be worse.) Jack Dann's plea for a rethinking of the role of science fiction was cogent and articulate. Richard Hodgen's "Aristotle's Word for Science Fiction was Poiesis," was a bit too "term paper-ish" for my taste (I see enough as it is) but it's carefully worded, scholarly format at least demonstrated that Rich had done his homework for this one. Your analysis of Agatha Christie's later books was also effectively documented, but don't you think the article was a bit tardy? Every Christie fan I know has long been aware of the steady erosion of quality in Dame Agatha's later stories. "Has She Lost It?" was thus a case of attempting to prove the obvious. You should have written the thing five or ten years ago. **[But, you see, it was a new discovery to me. I only began reading Christie in the '60s and by chance I only read the stuff from the '20s, '30s, and '40s. When I happened upon her new novels (I probably thought at the time that she hadn't written anything in twenty years) I was in a state of mild shock. I had skipped the whole erosion period and went from verdant forests to devastation in a matter of two books. I still haven't read much from the '50s and '60s because it just isn't reprinted very much.—TR]**

The highpoint of the issue was Howard Waldrop's "Save a Place in the Lifeboat for Me." Warm, witty, loaded with sentiment without being overly sentimental—the story was delightfully, gently, touching. Howard deftly and affectionately evoked the classic comedians and skillfully blended in the "the day the music died" theme. Frankly, I'm impressed as hell. In and of itself, "Save a Place. . ." justified the existence of Nickelodeon 2.

[The story was included in Gardner Dozois' "Recommended Reading" list for his 1976 year's best anthology.—KK]

The character sketches of fans accompanied by nude photos seem to have stirred up a bit of controversy. I'm certainly not going to fuel the controversy, as I can take 'em or leave 'em. The "bios" *were* well-written, though, and I am intrigued by some of the names on that list.

In sum, a fine issue (and it only took you two tries to get it right). **[You are part of a minority. Most people seem to think the second issue was a definite let-down from the first.]** I might suggest that a few more whole-page illustrations like Odbert's inside cover would add to the zine. **[This issue should be an improvement in that department.]**

Tom, your "Mistress of Windraven" in Chacal 1 was impressively well-crafted. **[Thank you.—TR]**

Barry N. Malzberg
Box 61
Teaneck, NJ 07666

I found Nickelodeon 2 at the SF Book Shop in New York and read it with pleasure. It is my opinion for what it's worth, that this is the best produced and most interesting science fiction magazine (any classification) I have seen in many years. Am enclosing $2.00 for issue 1.

The Carrington/Monteleone article, a respectable piece, brought back in wretched detail my own recollections of my long-ago and brief editorship of Amazing in which, out of misplaced conscientiousness, I advised the publisher and the world that I wanted to receive and cover *all* submissions, an explosion of enthusiasm which resulted, one memorable weekend in August of 1968 in dealing with five hundred unsolicited manuscript submissions. An absolutely numbing experience the moreso when one realizes as one must that we who have staggered out of the slush pile to publication let alone "careers" are the "winners" in this game. I would fervently recommend to writers like Ellison, Silverberg and Malzberg who are into "renunciation" that they spend a weekend with the slush pile; it might induce a certain humility. For two thirds of them, anyway. The other is, alas, a hopeless case who *envies* the authors in the Monteleone/Carrington heap but there is nothing to be done with people like that except to denounce them as the ingrates they are.

Fran Calhoun is beautiful.

[On issue No. 1—KK]

I realize that I am at least a year late in my desire to enter the M. M. Moamrath Unfinished Limerick Memorial Contest but on the other hand none of the correspondents in No. 2 deigned to compete and Mr. Schweitzer's lone entry is quite poor. I hope that you will forward my contribution to Messrs. Pumilia & Wallace for their consideration and that you will keep me on the list for your magazine.

There was a young guy from Fuggoth
Who fell deep in love with a suggoth
He tried to make time,
But was foiled by the slime
And so told the suggoth to fuggoth.

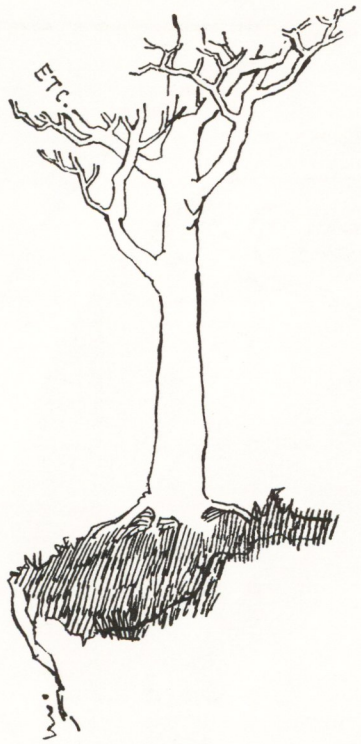
Or, alternatively:

And so told the suggoth to buggoth.

[Maybe we could start a series: each issue a different editor telling slush pile horror stories. I'm sure there must be enough to go around. However, to be completely fair, we'd have to alternate with writers telling editor horror stories.—KK]

Robert Werner
Box 8090
Albany, NY 12203

Very intriguing, the piece on being a slush pile processor for *Amazing* and *Fantastic*. It's odd that Monteleone and Carrington come off as highly sane for all of that. However, the article, I regret, fails to meet my personal needs, and due to the large amount



of material read recently on publishing (particularly of science fiction) there is no time for personal comment, though this does not imply criticism of its merit.

There is the other side, that of the slush pile producer. My guess would be most of us are earnest; some work harder than others; a few might actually amount to something one day. Being impractical souls, we ought to at least get a hold on reality—"Maybe I shouldn't waste time and postage trying to place this at *Playboy*, but see right away if *Perry Rhodan* wants it as a 'shock-short'." We should endure in silence. **[I don't think it's a waste of time and postage to try Playboy first. It's a bit like buying a state lottery ticket; it's cheap and the payoff is enormous—and the chances are about the same. But I wouldn't be surprised if 98% of the sf writers made their first sale through the slush pile. What other way is there?—TR]**

As for rejection slips, insincere and dead-pan, when you've read one you've pretty much read them all. You know that intuitively at first and the empirical evidence eventually grows and grows and grows. Strangely enough, the most apologetic and comforting rejection slip in my collection arrived from the *National Lampoon*, and there was no detectable irony. The one from the New York *Times Magazine* stated a submission was an act of "kindness." The briefly resuscitated *Harper's Weekly* had one with "Dear Friend" as a salutation and a promise for a "quicker reaction time" in the future.

A few are more bearable. *The Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction* had (or has) a slip with a cover illustration on the flip side. David Gerrold is responsible for one total original, nothing less or more than a very nice Tim Kirk drawing of a weeping dragon.

Some things are not very bearable, such as what *New Times* did last year after I sent them a very brief letter of comment. I received a reply, a form reply: "While we appreciate your taking the time and interest. . ." **[And they probably paid a PR firm a tidy sum for preparing that letter.—KK]**

Robert Bloch
2111 Sunset Crest Drive
Los Angeles, CA 90046

A great issue—but after inspecting the photo layouts, I was surprised not to find a Jimmy Carter interview. However, the one with Fred Pohl was compensation enough. The list of centerfold nominations puzzles me a bit. Where is Harry Harrison? Who left out R. A. Lafferty? To say nothing of Sol Cohen. . . (always a good idea).

Anyway, full marks to you for an impressive job. The Barr bacover (which I like to think of as "Here comes Harlan now!") is truly impressive. Hoping you are the same.

E. F. Michael Anft
62 Ambergate Street
Kennington, London SE17 3RX

I am sending you two U.S. Bucks 'cos I saw your ad in Locus and I fink it's bleedin' great a geezer has been smart enouff to put two and two togefer and bwing out a reely smutty science fiction magazine, you know waht I meen?

Like, I reckon that fings like we all do every day are never talked about in ovver sf zines, things like fucking, tossing off in the shithouse of the train going from Clapham Junction (sorry about the 'Clap' bit, mate, but it reely exists, like) to Seven Sisters in Norf London, and shooting inta the conductors face when the cunt is hammering against the shithouse door like a hard-on and yer gotta open the fucker, and reel life confessions like "I was de Bang in de Gangbang Gang," or "IT came from outer shpace; half human, half fart."

Oi, what ya mean by 'unclad persons,' Mister Odeon? Is that peoples wiff nuffink on? If yeah, I fink yer is doing us all a great survice and more boys should do fings like that.

Pleeze rush me my own copy of yer zine as fast as them cunts at the fucking post office will deliver de bastards. Fank you, Mister Odeon. **[Whatever happened to British reserve?—KK]**

Steve Beatty
303 Welch Ave.
Ames, Iowa 50010

You are guilty of false advertising. The cover of *Nickelodeon* 2 promises 'two centerfolds' when in fact there are none. Nothing folds out! There is a center *spread* of Jim Thomas, but that's not a center*fold*. The pictures of Fran Calhoun weren't even in the center.

Actually that is not a complaint—it's a picked nit. **[Don't you think 'centerfold' has become a generic term, like 'Kleenex' (applied to all facial tissues), 'Xerox' (applied to all dry copiers), 'Coke' (applied to all soft drinks—didn't you ever say, 'let's go get a coke,' and then order a Dr. Pepper?) I think 'centerfold' has come to mean any nude photo layout. I may be mistaken, but aren't Playboy and Playgirl the only ones with nude photo layouts that actually fold? Yet all the others call theirs centerfolds too.]**

When a photo is going to be Not Too Revealing, it appeals to my aesthetic sense to have the Revealed Area limited by soft shadows as on page 23-25, rather than the edge of the photo or page as on page 27. So let's have some pictures of females with soft shadows too.

As for 'Save a Place in the Lifeboat for Me,' I seem to combine the attitudes of *all* the editors who rejected it: I didn't like it, didn't think it was funny, didn't understand it, and didn't think it was a story. **[The responses to Howard's story seem to be either at one extreme or the other but, I'm happy to say, the opinions similar to Ed O'Reilly's are in the majority.—TR]**

A. MacDonald
Santa Cruz County,
California 95060

Although I'm only nine yrs. old I've ben reeding Scientifiction sinse I was 4. Somebody gave me a copy of your Fan Mag & pics are SWELL!!! But why dont you get some *good* writters like Perry Rohdan & Tom Swift & guys like them? Are you some sor of a CHEEPSKATE? (joke) But seeriosly *WHY DON"T YOU?*

Another thing, I am a writter & publisher too & I don't see how you can sell yuor crudzine for only a nickel. Even tho I use my pop's ditto duplicater & his ink & his paper, it costs me more than 5¢ just for postige. Bit III swap ish's with you, even—even thoug *my* fanzine is filled with good stuff and good carttoons and puzzles and &.

YUOR 2ish looks some better. Keep at it & youll get their yet. That girl sitting on that radiater—is she yuor mother (joke) or just somebody you know. I hope that radiater wasn't hot BUT ILL BET IT WAS WHEN SHE GOT DOWN OFF IT. (joke) My mom saw it & took it away from me. But I got up early & got it out of the garbbage can & it wasn't hurt, hardly, just some gravy on the editoriall which doesnt matter. If you wont swop ish's with me III risk some of funny money (that's what my pop calls $$$$$$ but he's still fighting the tax man about something & turns purple when $$$$$ are mentoined.) So's here is 13 funny money dollars for 2 yrs (& ish 3 had better be a WHOLE LOT BETTER!)

(Actifan No. 1 & Pres. & Founder of
21st CENTURY SPACE EXPLORERS &
Editer & Publihser of FASTER FOREVER)

[You didn't really need to send money, though for safety's sake I won't return it—we all know the condition of the post office these days; I would have been happy to trade with you. It's the duty of those of us who have reached the pinnacle to lend a helping hand and a smile of encouragement to the struggling neofans, with their sticky quarters and purple fingers. The next time you see me at a convention, be sure to say hello—as long as I'm not in conversation with another BNF, of course. (joke) —KK]

Craig J. Hill
220 Standish, No. 1
Redwood, CA 94063

It is within my gracious gravy heart that I thank you very dearly for sending me the latest *Nickelodeon.* I have conceived the fact that this issue is a definite breaking point for the World of Nickelodeon, indeed. Your articles are frank and open dealing with pulsating vibes that still move many of the enduring sensitive people of this planet. Andrew Porter's fanzine is now, to many confirmed reports, using that regularish samey Vertex grade paper, whilst this different publication swoops out open into the waving cheering hands of the fandom infinite with slick grade XXX KHROMACOATE paper that matches perfectly to the fantastic articles about science fiction that deals with human nature itself. It would, in this context, be totally absurd to match one grade XXX Tom Reamy to one grade XXX Andrew Porter, since it is easily assumed that both dudes have something absolutely different in mind when they hang out and produce SF fanzines, anyway.

[That's true enough; Andy and I do have different goals with our magazines, but it's amazing how few fanzine publishers can accept that as legitimate. There's an ossified core of faanish fanzine producers who remind me of the Red Guard, out roaming the fannish countryside, burning barns and poisoning wells, wherever they think they've found revisionism. But we here in Albania know that they are the actual revisionists; we have returned to the Real Truth. We know, and they have forgotten, the first fanzines were professionally printed imitation prozines. Alas, XXX grade paper may become an impossible extravagance.—KK]

It is perilous to conceive that you are getting paranoid about Important Subscribers dropping off your appreciative mailing list because they have the flagrant expose of gloomy genitals. **[There were only two and I wouldn't categorize either as "Important." They could be, though; I didn't know either of them.]** The song remains the same in developmental psychology that most of the people I used to know thought nothing entirely strange about running naked in the streets, to bear in mind the startling in vogue attempts to frighten their Republican neighbors. Fran Calhoun gets four stars in my book for doing a xlnt pictorial. However, at the same hand, finding out that nude pictorials of men don't exactly freak me out, I found the Jim Thomas pictorial too timid for me. Actually, the next male nude centerfold should be one of superior star quality that all audiences would find irresistable. Like me for instance.

Arthur D. Hlavaty
250 Coligni Ave.
New Rochelle, NY 10801

I like Nickelodeon. You can chalk up one more vote in favor of nude pictures. I very strongly prefer females, but I don't find the males "disgusting" or nasty or frightening or anything like that.

Dear Contributors:

Either I or one of my cats has read the enclosed article, and we are returning it herewith. Because of the volume of submissions we receive it is impossible for us to give you the individual comments your article may deserve, but the brief checklist provided below may be of some help.

x The second-person style has fallen into disrepute even among bad sportswriters, and a good thing, too. I read the first sentence & said, "No, dummy, I am not Grant Carrington. I was not Grant Carrington in June, 1971. I have *never* been Grant Carrington."

Sorry about that. Except for that one flaw, I enjoyed "Izat Knows the Way to Flushing."

I agree with Jack Dann that more people should read the fiction of Stanislaw Lem, particularly THE FUTUROLOGICAL CONGRESS and THE CYBERIAD. I think that one reason for the unfair neglect of him is that many readers have confused him with a critic named Stanislaw Lem, whose writings are filled with invective, dogmatic generalizations, and all the ignorance of the workings of the American sf field that one would expect from a man who has literally never been within thousands of miles of it. Lem the critic shows almost none of the subtlety & wit of his novelist namesake.

Actually, I think that what Dann likes most about the criticism of Lem & Suvin is what I like least. Dann metaphorically implies that the study of literature can be "scientific," that criticism can be made "rigorous" like a mathematical proof, that books can be "put under a microscope." Perhaps he dreams of the "artometer" satirically suggested by Robert Anton Wilson, which could be pointed at a book to give a reading in "decihomers" or "millishakespeares." But it is at best a pre-Heisenberg model of science which Dann seeks to emulate. He ignores the fact that a book is always a transaction between reader & writer. You can if you wish set up a "rigorous" system by which you will determine the literary value of a book, but there is always the danger that you may find yourself tempted to enjoy books which do not measure up. Of course, those with sufficient self-discipline can train themselves to the point where their feelings never conflict with their theories, but that strikes me as more trouble than it's worth.

[I wonder if Lem's lack of readers in this country might not have something to do with a few of the points Jim Burk brings up in his article this issue on Lin Carter. The majority of the TV generation does not seem to read—anything. And those who do want something that makes no more demands on them than a TV program. I know that fans feel they are immune to this, but I don't think they are. They have a strong resistance, but not total immunity. You only have to look at the sales figures of various authors to conclude that Lem's fiction is more demanding than most fans will accept. —TR]

As Gil Gaier points out, saying that something would fit into Riverside Quarterly is not necessarily an insult, so let me be unambiguously nasty. The Hodgens article would fit into Science Fiction Studies.

I was interested to see that Frederick Pohl considers "In the Problem Pit", a good idea that didn't quite work, because I had the same reaction. I have a theory about it. Once upon a time, an sf editor told one of his writers, "I don't mind your having people settle all the great problems of humanity in your stories, but couldn't they do it while they're dodging flame lizards on Venus?" To me, that sounds like the sort of thing Peter Prescott would make up for one of his anti-sf diatribes, but the editor in question boasted of saying it.

As you may have guessed, the editor was Pohl, and I think that's what's wrong with "In the Problem Pit." Pohl created some very interesting characters, but I felt he didn't develop them sufficiently, and he wound up the story with a big action-suspense finish where I would have preferred a more personal resolution.

If you follow Sheryl Smith's suggestion & require that your nude models write limericks that scan, your next centerfold may be Dr. Asimov.

Ira M. Thornhill
1900 Perdido Street, Apt. B97
New Orleans, LA 70112

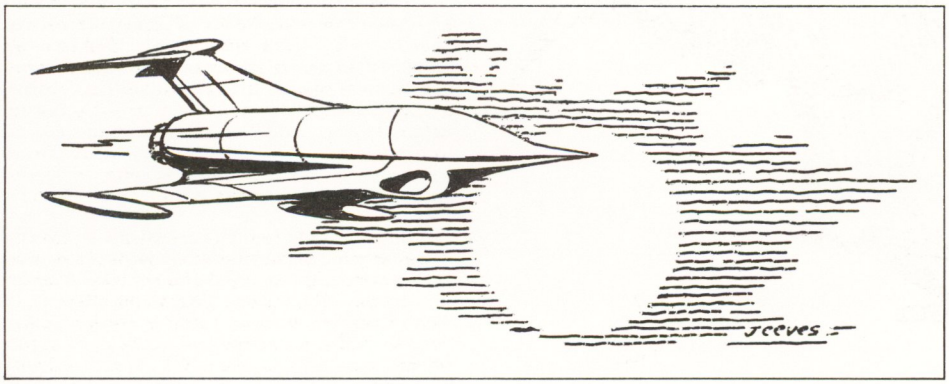
Nick 2 is beautiful!!

The centerfold(s) work—both of them. Obviously the persons doing the camerawork this time knew which end was up (of the *camera,* you understand)—the resultant layouts are far superior to the mess you had in No. 1. **[There are those who disagree with you—such as the next letter. —KK]**

The list of names of "requested" centerfolds was almost worth the price of the issue by itself. I can't read thru it without cracking up all over again.

Strong point for the issue? "Save a Place in the Lifeboat for Me." Twice already I've found myself describing this to friends and having to stop and try to remember where I read it. So I wind up advertising Nick. I'd love to see it 'performed.' Runner up is "Izat knows the Way. . ." and the continuing adventures of the slush.

Weak point thish? The letter column. Surely you've received more interesting letters than this during the *year* since the last issue. **[Nope. The length of time doesn't matter, really. You get all the**



letters in the first month or two anyway.] And it's locked in a dead heat with "Looking Back at the Future."

Everything else (I did leave out a few things I hope) is somewhere in the great middling. Competent—interesting—entertaining even. One can really ask for nothing more. A zine that can be read more than once in a single week and enjoyed both times is rare—and Nick 2 can be. **[Ah! All fanzines need more readers like you, Ira. —KK]**

Hopefully 3 will be somewhat more rapidly completed—I for one can hardly wait for the next installment of the continuing rediscovery of the great M. M. Moamrath. **[Wel-l-l-l, we didn't exactly make it out sooner but, if present plans work out, future issues should become a bit more frequent. And the Moamrath trunk is hopefully as bottomless as the Robert E. Howard trunk.—KK]**

Darrell Schweitzer
113 Deepdale Rd.
Strafford, PA 19087

Some comments on this issue: Tom, in all honesty the nudity is getting boring. First time it was a splendid, tasteless joke, but now it has become a tedious waste of space. The pages could have been better used for just about anything else. With the Utley section there was at least considerable humor, but now we have clearly posed photographs surrounded by some of the most insipid, affected-informal copy this side of a third string skin magazine. As long as you're parodying the whole concept of the nude centerfold, fine, but when you begin to do it straight (if that is the right word here) it becomes as yawn-provoking as title-clipped magazines you see craven rain-coated degenerates thumbing through in remainder-magazine stores. (Well, *they're* of course looking for stray Harlan Ellison fiction. . .) I cast my vote in favor of stopping the feature altogether unless you can do something really unique with it.

[Well, we weren't really having an election, but your "vote" was noted. Unfortunately, it became a moot point when events precipitated my taking over this magazine completely. As previously noted, part of my editorial covers my decision for this area of TRUMPET.—KK]

Another thing I didn't care for was the Waldrop fiction, but I'll admit this was because I didn't understand it. I don't know who the musicians were, and even after reading the piece I had no idea what had happened on the day in question which shouldn't have. Humor? Well I didn't see much. I don't think Marx Brothers humor works well on the printed page. Chico has to be at least heard, and Harpo has to be seen. When he "gets tough" on the printed page all we're left with is a mental picture of how he looked in films we've seen. Not the same thing. Speed of delivery may have a lot to do with it. No one reads as fast as Groucho or Chico could speak, and their lines in print don't have the same impact.

[For all who didn't know, the musicians killed in the plane crash were Buddy Holly, Richie Valens, and the Big Bopper. The musician who took the other plane at the last minute and survived was Waylon Jennings. Howard and I discussed at great length his using their real names, but he felt that to do so would require exhaustive research, that all the "facts" used in the story would have to be authentic. By using fake names, he needed only to approximate actual events. He much preferred to do the former, but felt the effort involved was far beyond the needs of the story. —TR]

The only thing I can say about Dan Bates when he agrees with Theotocopulos (yes, that's the correct spelling, copied from the first edition of the screenplay book, MacMillan Oct 1935—obviously the name derives from 'Theo,' or God, and 'copulos,' or copulate, and the rest I'll leave to your imagination.) is why not progress? By all indications the squalor & misery & oppression of which he speaks is universal through time and place. All you have to do is look at societies which have experienced little change, and see if they're any better off. Nope, they're not. No noble savages to be found. Or noble ancients either. One of the most stable social systems in the history of mankind was that of the old Chinese empire, which assumed its basic shape at the beginning of the Han Dynasty (c. 200 BC) and lasted till 1911. The result? Dire poverty for the great majority, rigid social stratification, and one of the most brutal and unenlightened legal systems the world has ever known. I can't say much good about the caste-system of India either.

I suspect all the things we call "progress" occur despite these evils, not because of them. Certainly mass illiteracy impedes scientific discovery because most of the best minds go to waste (what happens if a genius comparable to Einstein is born upriver on the Amazon? He carries a blow-gun like everybody else.) while scientific advance (such as the invention of the printing press) have greatly widened people's horizons and increased the possibilities for change. Scientific advance has also wrought other important social changes as the abolition of slavery. Two thousand years ago slavery was universal and accepted. If you told an ancient Roman that one day there would be no buying and selling of human beings anywhere in the world, he would consider you to be far more utopian than we consider Wells. Yet it was only with industrialization that slavery no longer held its own economically. (Of course if there is a collapse of civilization, as many back-to-nature people are dearly hoping, slavery will be one of the first things to reappear. Feudalism will probably be another.)

[You are being utopian if you think slavery exists nowhere in the world today. I was reading somewhere recently that it is quite common in the middle east, though it has taken on for the most part more genteel forms: parents are selling their children into slavery rather than having them taken by force.—KK]

Anyone who doesn't think the world has improved since the scientific revolution began should either take a long hard look at how the majority (not just clergy and kings) lived 600 years ago, or simply visit a still medieval village in some remote part of Asia. **[I expect those people will give you arguments about peace of mind vs. Veg-A-Matics.]**

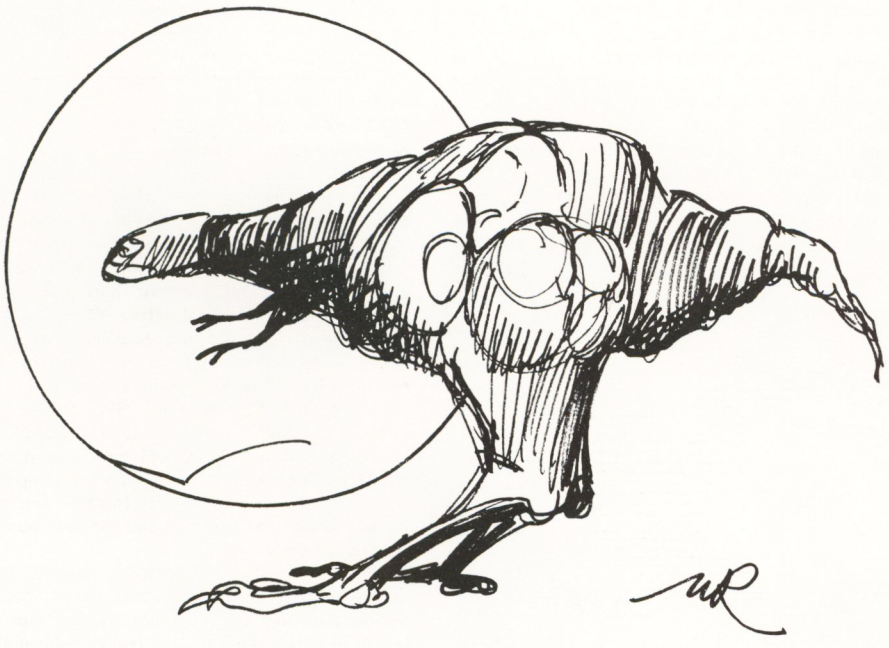
There just *aren't* any good old days. Any period of history will be found wanting. I think that the present-day United States offers the best for the most (not all, as Mexican migrants or other groups will explain) so far in all the history of mankind. Of course contemporary Cambodia is another matter.

Of course we whitewash the future (and the past —e.g. William Morris' scrubbed-clean medievalism) but this is just a temporal greener pasture syndrome. Anything far away seems exciting, even if it isn't. The past wasn't nearly as exciting as most historical novelists make it either.

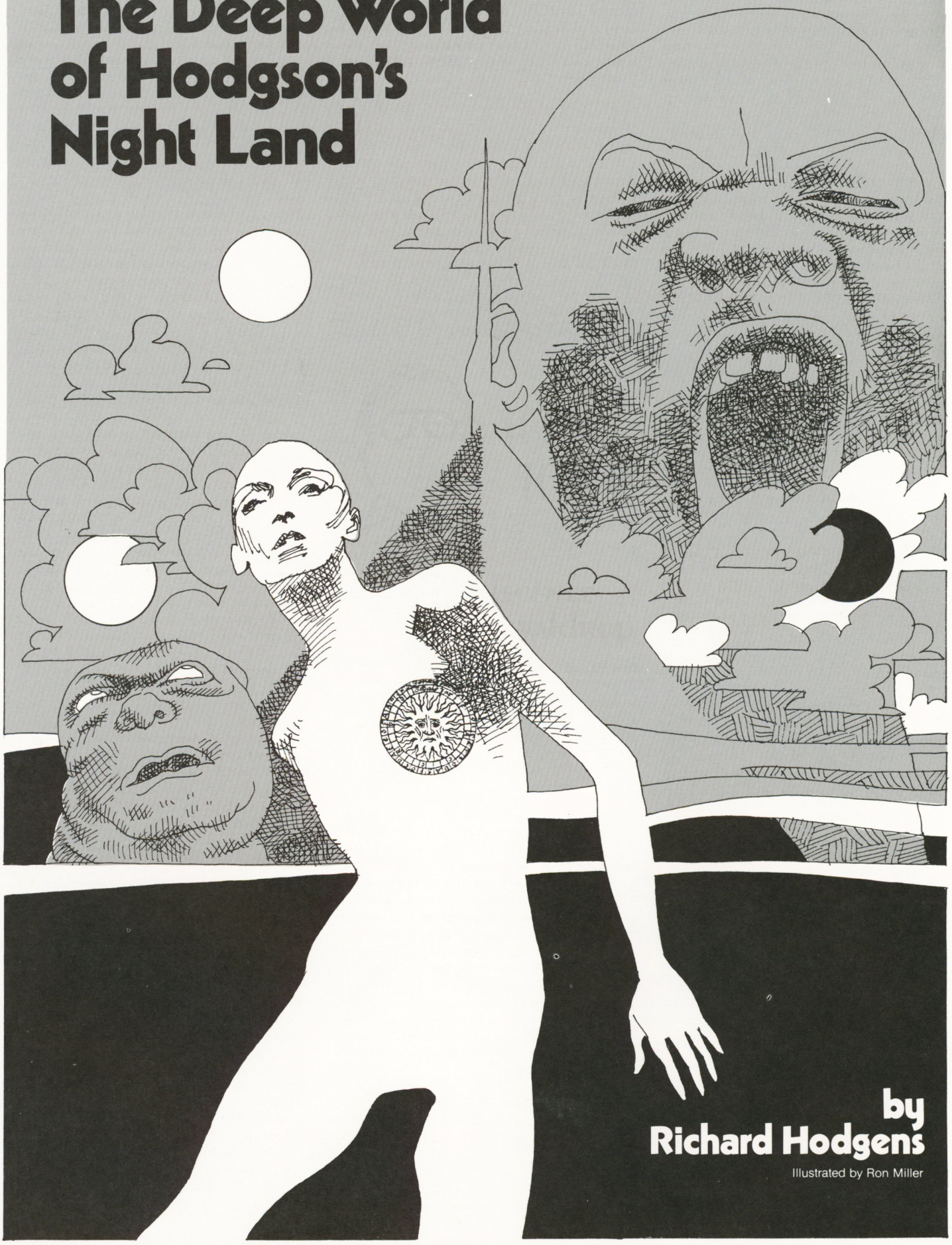
I wonder if Aristotle via Hodgens is giving good advice to modern fantasy writers. It seems to me that a greater degree of realism is needed in fantasy, so there can be contrast with the fantastic elements. The people and actions have to be completely believable so the reader will accept them without question and be willing to accept the rest also. To use the example of Hector and Achilles, in a modern fantasy novel, that *would* be a blunder of the first order, and having the gods fill in the gaps in plot logic wouldn't do. It would look shoddy and the whole illusion would collapse. You have to save the supernatural for where it is intrinsic to the plot, not just throw it around out of laziness. (Of course, Homer's idea of what was fantasy was much different than ours. No modern reader can ever really understand Homer's works the way an ancient Greek could. Two things are missing: the knowledge of the Greek culture, and the absence of knowledge of everything coming after, which give the 20th century reader a different perspective.) For us, the only way out of this would be for Achilles to say *beforehand,* "All right, nobody touch him. I want him for myself." No supernatural needed, just foresight on the part of the author.

By the way, it's interesting to compare Aristotle's ideas about the impossibility of staging the scene to Shakespeare's *Troilus and Cressida.* Shakespeare's Achilles is an egotistical coward who *orders* his private troop of soldiers to treacherously and unchivalrously kill Hector when he is resting and unarmed. Before that the two do meet in combat and it seems to make sense in the framework of chivalry. This is a personal duel and a personal vendetta, and everybody else doesn't interfere out of respect for fairness.

I've so far only seen one cover-letter which was as bad as some of the ones Monteleone reproduces. I got a manuscript for my s&s humor book *Blundering Barbarian Tales* with a letter to the effect of: "I didn't think this was very funny or worth finishing, but I showed it to my brother and he liked it, so I finished the thing and here it is." The author should have learned to trust his own judgment. □



The Deep World of Hodgson's Night Land



by
Richard Hodgens

Illustrated by Ron Miller

the dead sun

The setting of William Hope Hodgson's weird masterpiece of 1912, *The Night Land,*[1] now strikes readers as awesome, not only in itself, but also because of the author's apparent absolute originality in conceiving it. Their admiration may be chilled somewhat by the idea that this setting also seems absolutely impossible. Yet on examination, it is neither so original nor so impossible—but it does remain awesome.

The narrative supposedly has been written in the seventeenth century by a bereaved man who has dreamed, or lived in, the far future:

> . . . It was not as if I *dreamed;* but, as it were, that I *waked* there into the dark, *in the future of this world.* And the Sun had died. . .[2]

The Sun had gone out, ages before, but man still lives in the Earth. The narrator, in his future life, reconstructs future-history as prehistory from "olden books. . .that had seemings of verity in them," particularly from one "little book of metal, very strange and ancient":

> . . .it told again, that which oft I had heard (even as we in this age, read of the Deluge) how that once . . . the world did brake upwards in a vast earth-quaking that did rend the world for a thousand miles.
>
> And there came a mighty chasm, so deep that none might see the bottom thereof; and there rushed therein an ocean, and the earth did burst afresh. . .[3]

> And there was, further, a part in the ending of the book, that did seem to be writ of a time that came afterwards. . .
>
> And therein it did tell of a huge and mighty Valley that did come out of the West towards the South-East, and made turning thence Northwards, and was a thousand miles both ways. And the sides thereof were an hundred miles deep, and the Sun did stand in the Western end, and made a red gloom for a thousand miles. And in the bottom there were great seas; and beasts strange and awesome, and very plentiful. . .
>
> Then, in that ending of the book, there was one that did not write, having lived in a vast later age, when the Sun had come anigh to his dying, and the upward earth was grown quiet and cold and not good to live upon. . .[4]

Men descended to the bottom of the rift, where vulcanism supplemented the warmth of the dying Sun. Ages later, with the Sun dead, men retreated to a Last Redoubt, a "grey metal"[5] Great Pyramid, and

> . . .then, so it would seem, as that Eternal Night lengthened itself upon the world, the power of terror grew and strengthened. And fresh and greater monsters developed and bred out of all space and Outward Dimensions, attracted, even as it might be Infernal sharks, by that lonely and mighty hill of humanity, facing its end. . .[6]

> And when the humans had built the Great Pyramid, it had one thousand three hundred and twenty floors. . . . And the whole height of this pyramid exceeded seven miles, by near a mile, and above it was a tower from which the Watchmen looked. . .[7]

From the observatory atop the Pyramid, men cannot even see the walls of their Deep World. They watch the monsters who watch the Pyramid, monsters like mountainous heads:

> To the North-West I looked, and in the wide field of my glass, saw plain the bright glare of the fire from the Red Pit, shine upwards against the underside of the vast chin of the North-West Watcher. . . . "That which hath Watched from the Beginning. . ."[8]

Even the basic situation—with man surviving, though the Sun is out, because the Earth is not yet cooled to death—seems bizarre, but it appears to be tenable science fiction for its own time,—if, maybe, only for its own time. Through the first decade of this century, at least, the von Helmholtz-Kelvin contraction theory of solar heat remained tenable, while the discovery of radioactive elements on Earth suggested that the planets might retain their internal heat for millions of years after the contracting Sun solidifies.

Earlier, in the nineteenth century, the cooling of the Earth seemed to many to be a more immediate threat to life than the cooling of the Sun. The discovery of radioactive elements postponed the Earth's cooling and its consequent desiccation. It was natural, of course, to hope that radioactivity might postpone the Sun's darkening, too. But that could not be proved, nor even easily hypothesized.

A striking illustration of the problem is provided by comparing Simon Newcomb's *Astronomy for Everybody* as first published in 1902 with the revision by Robert Baker published thirty years later. In 1902, Newcomb presented the contraction theory and did not mention radioactivity at all:

> It may seem almost impossible that heat sufficient to last for millions of years could be generated in this way; but the known force of gravity at the surface of the sun enables us to make exact computations on the subject. It is thus found that in order to keep up the supply of heat it is only necessary that the diameter of the sun should contract about a mile in twenty-five years—or four miles in a century. This amount would not be perceptible until after thousands of years. Yet the process of contraction must come to an end sometime. Therefore, if this view is correct, the life of the sun must have a limit. What its limit may be we cannot say with exactness, we only know that it is several millions of years, but not many millions.[9]

Between 1902 and 1932, when Baker revised this "popular exposition," a great debate raged; it was not settled, for Baker could write:

> With the discovery of radioactivity, astronomers inquired as to whether the sun's long-continued radiation might not be kept up by the disintegration of radium and similar elements in its interior. Appropriate calculations soon gave the negative answer. A way is left open, however, if we wish to imagine that the sun contains elements more complex than the heaviest element, uranium, found in the earth. It should be added that we have no knowledge of such super-radioactive elements.[10]

The common reader in the first decade of this century would learn that the contraction theory was unsatisfactory, because it did not allow enough past time, but that no theory—only hypotheses, or half-hypotheses or suggestions—had replaced the contraction theory. While it seemed to many authorities that something atomic might be going on in the Sun, none could tell what, much less say how much longer it might go on. There were no later calculations like Helmholtz's, Newcomb's and Kelvin's, no radioactively revised dates for the birth and death of our Sun. And as for the Earth, with its store of radioactive elements, one might imagine that it was not growing cooler, but hotter. One at least knew that the Earth would retain heat indefinitely—indefinitely, that is, in relation to old estimates of its cooling. So would the Sun, no doubt, after its own crust solidified. But that dark Sun would not do the Earth any good.

Thus Hodgson could very well have rationalized the nightmare situation in *The Night Land.* In fact, his seventeenth-century and far-future narrator hedges a little: ". . .though, it must not be a thing of certainty, that even at this far time the invisible, black heavens held no warmth for the world"[11] And, writing long, long after the event, he is not obliged to explain at all

> the Days of Darkening (which I might liken to a story which was believed doubtfully, much as we of this day believe the story of the Creation).[12]

the rift

The other basic natural element in Hodgson's set, the colossal rift, the Deep World in this dark, has more complicated origins. While the cosmic situation is very much of its time, this particular geological fault seems much less so. The importance of rifts in the surface of the Earth was not widely recognized early in this century or late in the last.[13]

One likely place to look for Hodgson's inspiration, then, is Camille Flammarion's *Omega,* the obvious source of Hodgson's dramatic situation.[14] Hodgson took the concluding human episode of the astronomer's future-historical novel and intensified it, turning the episode into an epic. Flammarion has a last man, Omegar, in a last city at the bottom of what had been the Pacific Ocean,—with all the world dying of internal cooling and external desiccation, not on account of the dying Sun. Omegar decides to kill himself but he is prevented by "a hand on his arm,"—actually the psychic influence of the last woman, who lives in another "last city" at the bottom of what had been the

Indian Ocean. Communication between these last cities had been lost. Omegar goes to her by airship. The last couple tour the desiccated planet and visit the ruins of the Great Pyramid of Cheops before they die.

Hodgson puts out the Sun and leaves millions of people alive in *The Night Land,*–but he, too, has another "Last Redoubt," "somewhere out in the desolation. . .a second place of Refuge,"[15] a Lesser Pyramid which falls to its inhuman besiegers. Communications between the besieged Pyramids had been lost, but the hero in the Greater Pyramid and "the maid" in the Lesser Pyramid become aware of each other telepathically. To save the maid's life, the hero goes out into the Night Land. . . He has to go on foot, though; flight is a lost art because the air is now so thin.

Hodgson owes Flammarion a lot, but Hodgson's great rift is not exactly Flammarion's old ocean-deep, nor even a mere, deliberate variation of it, it seems. Hodgson had another, more immediate source. The Pyramids–Flammarion's Great Pyramid of Cheops and Hodgson's sealed, hollow, metal Pyramids–are a link and a clue. . .

But if the initial inspiration for Hodgson's Deep World is to be found in fiction, it might as well be in Wells or Verne.

Wells's influence on Hodgson is obvious, and in "The Further Vision" in Wells's *The Time Machine*–the furthest into the future his Time Traveler dares go–there is a hint, a descriptive phrase, that might have touched Hodgson's imagination and caused him to create his awesome geography. Says the Time Traveler to his friends,

> "I cannot convey the sense of abominable desolation that hung over the world. The red eastern sky, the northward blackness, the salt Dead Sea, the stony beach crawling with these foul, slow-stirring monsters. . ."[16]

There can be no doubt that Wells, at least, consciously borrowed this bit of the Holy Land for his far future,–partly for its poetic value, partly because all seas will grow "oily" like the Dead Sea, in time. So there it lies, under a dying Sun, though not at the bottom of a rift. But the actual Dead Sea is at the bottom of a rift.

And in Jules Verne's *Around the Moon,* there is a suggestive discussion of the Lunar rills, with Barbican describing one as

> ". . .a yawning chasm two miles wide, fifty miles long, and so fathomless in sheer vertical depth as to leave its black profundities absolutely invisible in spite of the dazzling sunlight!"

In general, he says of the rills,

> ". . .They are simply crevasses, like those so often noticed on Alpine glaciers, only that these tremendous cracks in the surface are produced by the shrinkage of the crust consequent on cooling. Can we point out some analogies to this on the Earth? Certainly. The defile of the Jordan, terminating in the awful Dead Sea, no doubt occurs to you on the moment. . ."[17]

The actual Jordan-Dead Sea rift is a kind of precedent for Hodgson's fantastic Night Land and is its possible source.

In *The Boats of the Glen Carrig* and in several short stories, Hodgson depicted a fearsome Sargasso Sea,–exaggerated, fantacized, filled with specially evolved monsters.[18] His Deep World is a less obvious, farther removed, more poetic imaginative development of the same kind, from the Jordan-Dead Sea rift.

The science of this matter seems justifiable, at least for poetic purposes. To quote a later authority,

> Early travelers in Palestine described the Jordan Valley as a sunken segment of the crust. . . . Geological evidence has completely confirmed the opinion. . .[19]

Of course, Hodgson's Deep World is an exaggerated, extrapolated fault; such faults were to be expected as a result of the cooling of the Earth's crust. In Flammarion's *Omega,* a twenty-fifth century professor puts it this way:

> "As the earth loses its internal heat and becomes cold, crevasses will undoubtedly form, as in the case of the moon. The complete extinction of terrestrial heat will result in contractions, in the formation of hollow spaces below the surface, and the contents of the oceans will flow into these hollows, without being changed into vapor. . ."[20]

Or, to quote the popular science of Richard Proctor:

> . . .there is good reason for believing, with Saemann, Le Meunier, Frankland, and Sterry Hunt, that in the remote future of the earth the waters of the sea will be withdrawn into [the earth's] interior. . .[21]

Or of Percival Lowell, in his *Mars and Its Canals:*

> So long as the internal heat suffices to keep the body fluid, the liquid itself sees to it that all interstices are filled. As the heat dissipates, the body begins to solidify, starting with the crust. For cosmic purposes it undoubtedly still remains plastic, but cracks of relatively small size are both formed and persist. Into these the surface water seeps. With continued refrigeration the crust thickens, more cracks are opened and more water given lodgment within, to the impoverishment of the seas. The process would continue till the pressure of the crust itself rendered plastic all that lay below, beyond which, of course, no fissures could be formed. / How competent to swallow all the seas such earth cuticle cracks may be we ignore; for we cannot be said to know much of the process. We can only infer that to a certain extent internal absorption of surface seas must mark a stage of the evolution by which a star becomes a world and then an inert mass, one of the dark bodies of which space is full.[22]

Lowell denied that Mars's *canali* could be such cracks, but he saw them in the Moon and, maybe, Mercury.

Add that it was well recognized that volcanic activity is at its height along coast-lines, and what may appear to be Hodgson's arbitrary invention–"there came a mighty chasm. . .and there rushed therein an ocean" –turns out to be just what ought to be expected, especially as Earth ages. As Proctor put it:

> It is clear that this constant variation of pressure on one-half of the region must have a tendency to produce openings or cracks running parallel to the coast-line. . .[23]

Hodgson only ignored or evaded the question of the possible stability of a rift one hundred miles deep; the figure he gives is only "legendary," of necessity. It might also be objected that his use of "Earth Current" –the power on which future men draw– amounts to poetic licentiousness; but it might be answered that his "Earth Current" and that of the *Encyclopedia Britannica* are simply not the same things. His owes something to early ideas of radioactivity.

Whether or not Hodgson, a clergyman's son, consciously shaped the Night Land out of the Jordon-Dead Sea rift, he might well have read George Adam Smith's *The Historical Geography of the Holy Land,* first published in 1894. Smith's vivid description is certainly suggestive; as one reads it, one can see the Night Land come nearer and nearer:

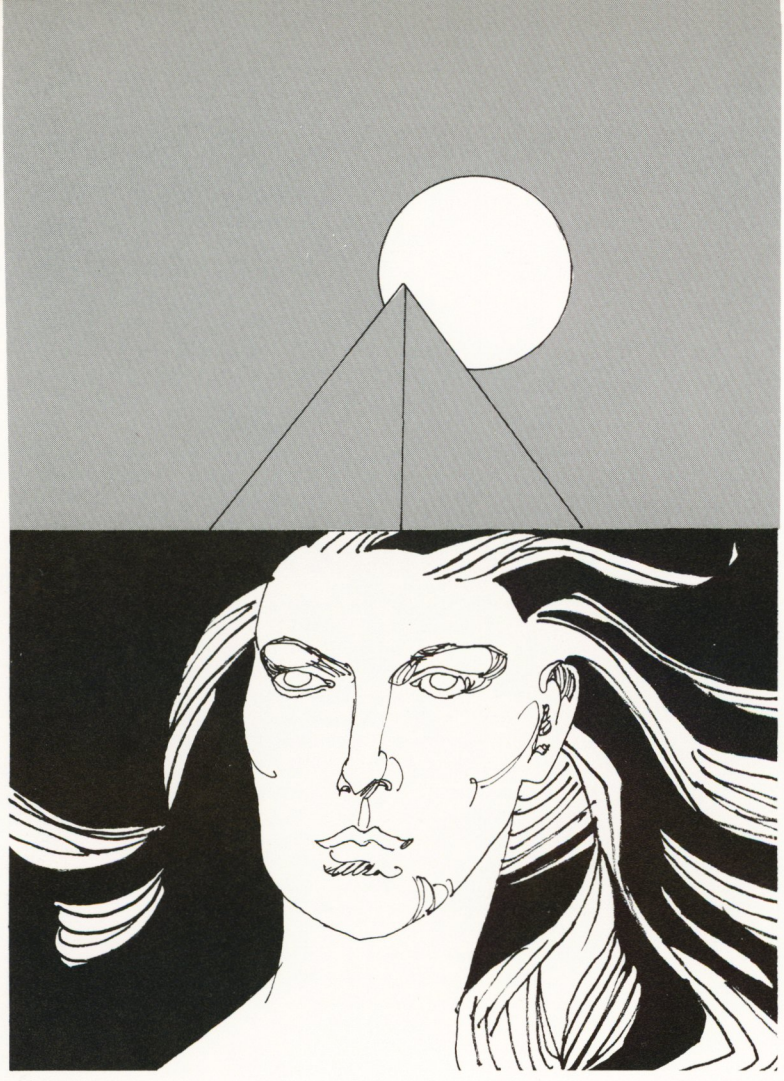
> The Nile and the Jordan, otherwise so different, are alike in this, that the historical singularity of each has behind it as remarkable a singularity of physical formation. Both valleys were laid open by the same geological disturbance, and it left them equally monstrous and unique.[24]

After describing the Nile, Smith goes on to say that

> . . . the Jordan is as solitary and extreme an effect of natural forces. There may be something on the surface of another planet to match the Jordan Valley: there is nothing on this. No other part of our earth, uncovered by water, sinks to 500 feet below the level of the ocean. But here we have a rift more than one hundred and sixty miles long, and from two to fifteen broad, which falls from the sea level to as deep as 1292 feet below it at the coast of the Dead Sea, while the bottom of the latter is 1300 feet deeper. In this trench there are the Jordan, nearly one hundred miles long; two great lakes, twelve and fifty-three miles in length; large tracts of arable country, especially around Gennesaret, Bethshan, and Jericho, regions once populous like the coasts of the Lake of Galilee; the sites of some famous towns–Tiberias, Jericho, and the "Cities of the Plain." Is it not true that on earth there is nothing like this deep, this colossal ditch?[25]

Citing the best authorities, Smith notes that

> . . . Some think that the change of climate– great decrease of rain with the disappearance of the glaciers [of Lebanon]–enough to account for the gradual shrinking of. . .one large



> lake into two. . . There are, however, traces of various sea-beaches so distinct, and some so far apart, that it has been inferred that the confinement of the water successively within these must have been caused as much by sudden convulsions, for which the region has been notorious. . . Volcanic disturbances on a large scale took place in the Jordan Valley within comparatively recent times.[26]

And the deeper one goes, the more "deformed" is what life may be found:

> Hull. . .accounts for the peculiar fauna and flora of the Lake of Galilee and Jordan by their original connection with the ocean. . . They suffered the change. . .of the passage from salt to fresh water.[27]

Going into more detail,

> What we have. . .between Galilee and the Dead Sea is a long narrow vale twice expanding—at Bethshan and Jericho—to the dimensions of a plain. The Old Testament bestows on it both the Hebrew names for Valley—Deep and Opening. Greek writers called it the Aulōn or Hollow, and the Arabs El-Ghôr, or the Rift. . .[28]

In the Ghôr, one sees "debris of an old sea-bottom, that assumes the weirdest shapes, and give a desolate aspect to the Vale."[29] And within the Ghôr is the Zor, the still-narrower valley cut by the Jordan, where there are "ugly mudbanks. . .with an occasional bed of shingle. . .foul with ooze and slime" and, in general, "unhealthy jungle relived only by poisonous soil." Naturally, too, "The Arabs of the Ghôr. . .are sickly and degenerate."[30] Finally,

> In ancient times the valley was infested with wild beasts. To extirpate them was one of the serious difficulties in Israel's conquest of the country.[31]

And so it is for the men of the far future who make their way down into the Great Deep, in *The Night Land.*

Down the Valley to the Dead Sea at the bottom, and Smith becomes most eloquent with wonder, horror, the sublime. There are

> . . .hot springs in the sea bottom. Along the shores are deposits of sulpher and petroleum springs. The surrounding strata are rich in bituminous matter, and after earthquakes lumps of bitumen are found floating on the water. . . The ['bitter and imprisoned'] water is nauseous to the taste and oily to the touch. . .[32]

And

> . . .everywhere beyond [the shore], to the heights of the surrounding hills, reign violence and desolation. . . . Ancient beaches are visible round it, steep banks from five to fifty feet of stained and greasy marl, very friable, with heaps of rubbish at their feet. . . . Last crumbling shelves of the upper world, there are not in nature more weird symbols of forsakenness and desolation.
>
> Beyond these terraces of marl the mountains rise precipitous and barren on either coast.[33]

As for its human associations, through the Bible,—

> In this awful hollow, this bit of the infernal regions come to the surface, this hell with the sun shining into it, primitive man laid the scene of the most terrible judgment on human sin. The glare of Sodom and Gomorrah is flung down the whole length of Scripture history.[34]

That is, the incinerated cities are mentioned even in Revelation (11, 8).

> Surely there is no region of Earth where Nature and History have more cruelly conspired, where so tragic a drama has obtained so awful a theatre. . . . Nature, when she has not herself been, by some convulsion, the executioner of judgment, has added every aggravation of horror to the cruelty of the human avenger or the exhaustion of the doomed. This history of the Dead Sea opens with Sodom and Gomorrah, and may be said to close with the Massacre of Masada.[25]

Smith tells the terrible story of the siege of Masada, and then describes that fortress itself—on account of "its awful remoteness, its savage height, its power to turn armies of besiegers into stony despair"—as "the Gorgon's head magnified to a mountain."[36]

This striking image, this "Gorgon's head" as a "mountain," is especially suggestive. There are such monsters in the Night Land, surrounding and besieging the Last Redoubt:

> . . .and thus the four watchers kept ward through the darkness, upon the Pyramid, and moved not, neither gave they out any sound. Yet we did know them to be mountains of living watchfulness and hideous and steadfast intelligence.[37]

Hodgson, if he read Smith and was consciously or unconsciously influenced, naturally reverses the image. For Smith, Masada is the Gorgon's head. For Hodgson, the Pyramid is Masada and the Gorgons are outside. Hodgson naturally takes the point of view of those besieged, instead of the point of view of the besiegers. (Not that it was unnatural of Smith to put it as he did, either; one must think what it would be like for the nineteenth-century tourist.)

Add that "Gorgon's head magnified to a mountain" and the correspondances between the Jordan-Dead Sea rift as described by Smith and the world Hodgson invented are remarkable. Every basic element of description in Smith may be found, intensely exaggerated, in Hodgson,—except, indeed, the density of the Dead Sea water and "the sun shining into it" and the Pyramid. . .[38]

But as for the Pyramid, Smith himself links the Jordan with the Nile. And outside the long, straight Nile Valley, Egypt is desert, like the whole upper world outside the long rift in Hodgson's work. By the Egyptian Pyramids crouches another monster, Sphinx. Masada was a last refuge, and so were the Pyramids.

Hodgson took the Dead Sea "hell"—and with it came associated elements—and he made it a much worse hell, and also man's only refuge left on the Earth.

the pyramid

Besides contemporary scientific specula-

tions, and actual geology intensely exaggerated, and historical associations, Hodgson of course put into his Night Land all possible eschatological associations, and the Pyramids provide some of these.

Flammarion added the actual ruin of Cheops' Pyramid to his story of the end of the Earth as an abode of life, some millions of years hence. That architectural survival may seem unlikely, but it may be likely enough. Flammarion does not do much to convince us—much less to convince us of the survival of Cheops himself, who appears to the last man and woman as a ghost,—but Richard Proctor's earlier article, "The Pyramid of Cheops," argues for that tomb's indefinite survival. Proctor, after dwelling on the age of the stone of which the Pyramid is built, points out that

> Compared with the vast periods of time thus brought before our thoughts as among the demonstrated yet inconceivable truths of science, the lifetime of such a structure as the great pyramid seems but as the duration of a breath. Yet, viewed as men must view the works of man, the pyramids of Egypt derive a profound interest from their antiquity. Young, compared with the works of nature, they are, of all men's works, the most ancient. They were ancient when temples and abbeys whose ruins now alone remain were erected, and it seems as though they would endure till long after the last trace of any building now existing, or likely to be built by modern men, has disappeared from the surface of the earth. Nothing, it should seem, but some vast natural catastrophe engulfing them beneath a new ocean or hurling them down the slopes of a new-formed mountain range, can destroy them utterly, unless the same race of beings which undertook to rear these vast masses should take in hand the task of destroying them.[39]

Besides being a tomb, a house for Cheops to live in forever, the Pyramid was an astronomical observatory, or so Proctor and Flammarion and Percival Lowell all said in their non-fiction. According to Proctor,

> . . .the great pyramidal transit-tube, while as yet its aperture remained uncovered (which we may be sure it did so long as Cheops remained alive), told observers, suitably placed down its length, the time when [heavenly] . . . bodies passed the meridian of Ghizeh. So is interpreted the tradition of old, that priests, placed on the top of the pyramid, announced when this or that orb was passing.[40]

This time, Flammarion's article on the subject had come earlier, and Proctor could add a Note:

> Not the top of a nearly complete pyramid, as Flammarion absurdly imagines, setting observers to observe planets and comets, while scarce able to balance themselves on the pyramid top![41]

But of course Hodgson's Great Pyramid, unlike Cheops' Pyramid of almost solid stone, is a metal sky-scraper for the whole surviving human race to live in for as long as possible, and the top is the logical place for observers to observe—though there are no planets or comets, only volcanoes and monsters, in their universe deep in the dark—a universe differing far more from ours than the Ptolemaic, or even the pre-Ptolemaic, ancient Egyptian. Few writers can have conceived—much less conveyed with conviction, as Hodgson does—such great *difference.* He uses it as an atmosphere for telling a variant of one of the best myths we know (the best-known versions name the hero and heroine Orpheus and Eurydice) and expressing the endurance of human love and courage in spite of death. □

footnotes

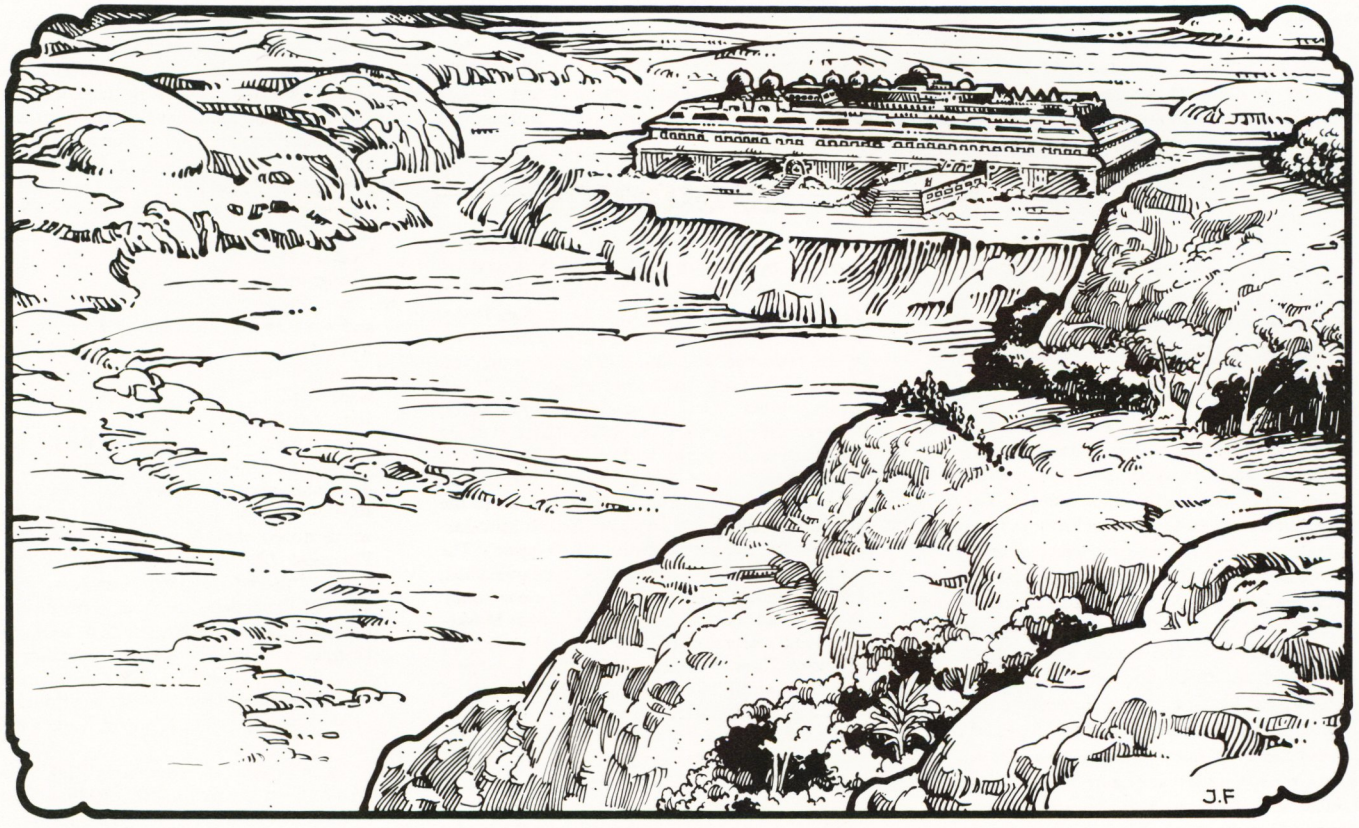
1. *The Night Land: a love tale* was first published in London, by Eveleigh Nash, in 1912. It was reprinted in its entirety in *The House on the Borderland and Other Novels* by William Hope Hodgson, Sauk City, Wisconsin, Arkham House, 1946; it was reprinted with minor deletions in two volumes, New York, Ballantine Books, 1972; and was reprinted in its entirety by Hyperion Press, Westport, Connecticut, in 1976. There is some information about the author in H. C. Koenig's introduction to the Arkham House volume, and there is some in Lin Carter's introduction to the Ballantine edition, and also in Carter's introduction to the Ballantine edition of Hodgson's *The Boats of the Glen Carrig* (1971; first published, 1906; and included in the Arkham House volume). A three-part critical biography by Sam Moskowitz, who researched primary materials, appeared in *Weird Tales,* Volume 47, Numbers 1-3, Summer, Fall and Winter 1973. A revised version of this biography appeared in *Out of the Storm: uncollected fantasies by William Hope Hodgson,* ed. by Sam Moskowitz, West Kingston, R.I., Donald M. Grant, 1975. The only book of reference I know of that mentions Hodgson is *Who Was Who,* 1916-1928, Vol. II (London, Adam & Charles Black, 1929). The entry reads: "2nd Lieut. R.F.A.; *b.* 15 Nov. 1877; 2nd *s.* of Rev. Samuel Hodgson. *Educ.:* abroad. Some years at sea as an officer in Mercantile Marine; commenced writing, 1902; first book published, 1907; commissioned July 1915 (R.F.A.); gazetted out of the army, 10 June 1916, owing to ill-health due to injuries received on active service; eventually regained health and was recommissioned, 18 March 1917." Then eight books are listed, and his addresses—in Wales and France—are given. The entry concludes, *"(Died 17 April 1918.)"*
2. All quotations from *The Night Land* are from the Arkham House volume cited above. This, p. 322.
3. Ibid, p. 375.
4. Ibid, p. 376.
5. Ibid, p. 322.
6. Ibid, p. 329.
7. Ibid, p. 328.
8. Ibid, p. 323.
9. *Astronomy for Everybody / A Popular Exposition of the Wonders of the Heavens* / Simon Newcomb, LL.D. / Professor, United States Navy, Retired / Garden City, New York, Garden City Publishing Co., Inc., n.d. (copyright 1902; Preface dated October 1902),—page 105.
10. *Simon Newcomb's Astronomy for Everybody* revised by Robert H. Baker, Ph.D. / Professor of Astronomy in the University of Illinois, Garden City, New York, Garden City Publishing Co., Inc., c1902, c1932, first edition,—pp. 89-90.
11. Hodgson, op. cit., p. 328.
12. Ibid, p. 328.
13. This is apparent from a sampling of late 19th-century and early 20th-century references on geology. See, for example, the 9th (1875-99) and the 11th (1910-11) editions of the *Encyclopedia Britannica,* and compare this, from the 12th (1922): "GEOLOGY. . .*Fracturing.*—The study of structural geology has shown in recent years a marked return toward the recognition of lines of fracture, and founderings on a large scale, as influencing existing topographical features. . . . The tracing of rift-valleys, better styled trough-valleys, from the Jordan region to Nyassaland, and on a minor scale in the post-Oligocene groove of the Rhine from Basel to Mainz, has led to a general attempt to correlate faults and river-courses. . . . One of the most powerful influences in the correlation of surface-features and crustal structure has been the completion by E. Suess of the third volume of *Das Anlitz der Erde* in 1909. . . ."
14. *Omega: The Last Days of the World,* by Camille Flammarion, New York, the Cosmopolitan Publishing Co., c1894. The book has been reprinted by Arno Press, N.Y.
15. Hodgson, op. cit., p. 331.
16. *Three Prophetic Novels* of H. G. Wells selected and with an introduction by E. F. Bleiler, New York, Dover Publications, Inc., c1960,—p. 328.
17. *Space Novels* by Jules Verne Translated by Edward Roth. . ., New York, Dover Publications, Inc., n.d.,—p. 344.
18. An account of the history of the fictional Sargasso Sea is given in *Lands Beyond* by L. Sprague de Camp and Willy Ley, New York/Toronto, Rinehart & Co., Inc., c1952, pp. 231-241. It is worth noting that Verne started it, in his *Twenty Thousand Leagues under the Sea.* Hodgson's is the last "literary-romantic" treatment of the subject that the authors consider, in his *The Boats of the Glen Carrig* (1907), his first book. Most of Hodgson's "Sargasso" shorts are collected in his *Deep Waters,* Sauk City, Wisc., Arkham House, 1967. See Moskowitz, op. cit., for Hodgson's use of the setting and his fantastic and Darwinian contributions to it.
19. "The Problem of Mountains" by Samuel J. Shand, from his *Earth-Lore,* c1938, in *The Crust of the Earth / An Introduction to Geology,* edited by Samuel Rapport and Helen Wright, New York, New American Library (Signet), 1955,—p. 20. The "early travelers" are of course early modern travelers, who might have had the geological authority of their own time, when catastrophism was in fashion.
20. Flammarion, op. cit., p. 96.
21. *The Universe of Suns and Other Science Gleanings* by Richard A. Proctor / Author of the article "Astronomy" in the "Encyclopædia Britannica" and of "Easy Star Lessons" "Saturn and Its System" etc. A new edition. . . . London, Chatto & Windus, 1905,—p. 262.
22. *Mars and Its Canals by Percival Lowell. . .*, New York, The Macmillan Company, 1906,—pp. 146-147. The idea is also to be found in Verne's *Around the Moon,* p. 407: ". . .water. . .sinking . . .into the crust-cracks caused by cooling."
23. Proctor, op. cit., p. 265.
24. *The Historical Geography of the Holy Land* by George Adam Smith (KT., D.D., L.L.D., LITT. D., F.B.A. Principal and Vice-Chancellor of the Univ. of Aberdeen), New York/London, Harper & Brothers Publishers, 25th Ed. / Rev. Throughout, n.d. (Preface to the 25th ed. dated 19 October 1931; Preface to the 1st ed., 28th April 1894),—p. 468. Quotations given here from the 25th ed. also appeared in early editions accessible to Hodgson.
25. Ibid., pp. 468-469.
26. Ibid., p. 470.
27. Ibid., p. 470.
28. Ibid., p. 482.
29. Ibid., p. 483.

(continued on page 44)

The Lost City

TEXT AND ART JIM FITZPATRICK

SCATTERED IMAGES.



I NOURISH DREAMS
AND GATHER SCATTERED IMAGES
STREWN LIKE TORN PETALS
CAST IN THE FRAGRANT WIND.

HIGH ABOVE
THE STONY HEATHERED PLAIN
FAMILIAR PATTERNS SWIM
IN THE MISTS OF THE MINDS EYE

AN ACCURSED CITY
OF AGELESS ANTIQUITY,
REARS IN MALIGNANT MAJESTY
OUT OF THE BROODING HILLS

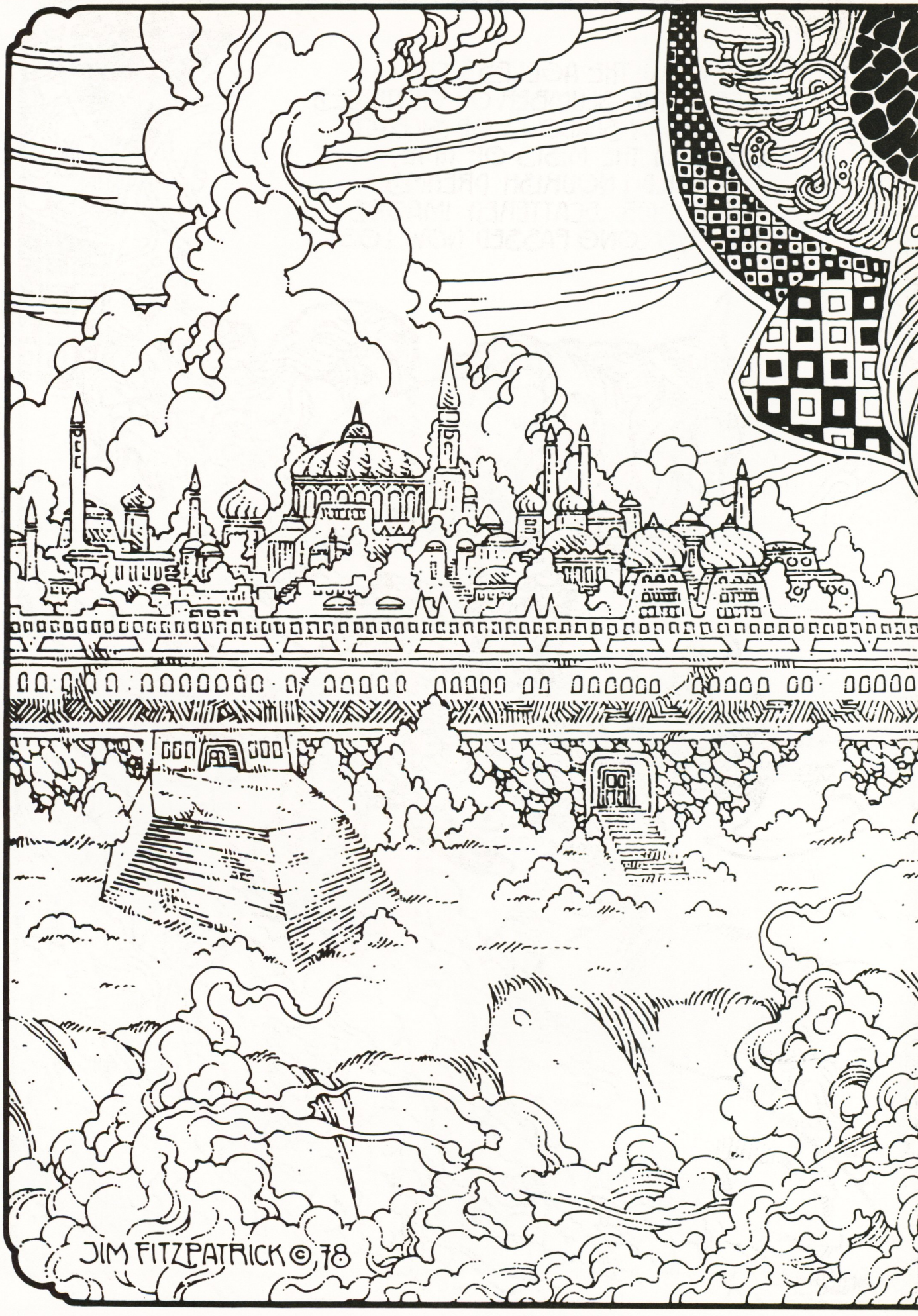
A SPUR OF LIGHT
CAST FROM THE RISING MOON,
SETS AGLOW SHADOWY SPIRES,
ESCUTCHEONED DOORS, VAST HALLS,

WALLS OF MARBLE
LINED WITH CARVEN IMAGES,
SING OF DEAD GENERATIONS
AND LONG-PASSED GLORIES

REFLECTED
ON A CONSECRATED BLADE,
SILVERED AS A LOOKING-GLASS,
THE IMAGE OF A HORNED DEMON
STARES DOWN ON THE GATHERED HOST
OF AGELESS WIZARDS AND FRENZIED FOLLOWERS.

THE VISION DIMS,
THE SHADOWS SHIFT AND FALTER,
AS THE BLADE IS RAISED AN ICY WIND
SWEEPS ALL FROM THE MIST OF MEMORY
AND DRIVES THOSE SCATTERED IMAGES
BACK INTO THE LABYRINTH OF LEGEND.


J.F


JIM FITZPATRICK ©'78


NOW THE AGELESS CITY
SLEEPS THE SLUMBER OF CENTURIES
CLOAKED IN SHADOWS OF SILENCE
VEILED IN THE MISTS OF TIME,
WHILE I NOURISH DREAMS
AND GATHER SCATTERED IMAGES
OF DAYS LONG PASSED NOW LOST.

M.M. Moamrath: THE SHUFFLER FROM THE STARS

edited by Bill Wallace & Joe Pumilia

Illustrated by Doug Potter

This is one of the many unpublished manuscripts of M. M. Moamrath discovered through the diligent efforts of Joe Pumilia and Bill Wallace, and despite a number of threatening letters and attempted physical assaults, we are printing it. Moamrath was one

of the trailing shadows of American pulpy horror. A contemporary of H. P. Lovecraft, he was a regular in the pages of such magazines as Thrilling Pugilist Stories, Slant-Eyed Torture Tales *and* Spicy Entymologist Tales. *The garret room described in the story was an actual residence of Moamrath when he was trying to hawk his pathetic scribblings on the streets of New Orleans. Today it is aptly memorialized as a parking lot. Moamrath cannot properly be said to be a racist or a bigot, for his fear and loathing of races other than his own (he was part Chinese, part Italian, part Mexican, part Negro, and part Amerind) was actually an irrational phobia, almost as strong as his loathing for jello and spaghetti. He was philosophically eclectic—he bought every crackpot theory from hollow Earth to Aryan superiority. In truth, he actually believed the racial cliches propounded here, but the editors think you will agree that the unintentional humor and self-revelation more than make up for any lapse of taste or style. Interestingly enough, in Moamrath's notebook we find a long list of cliches to be incorporated into this story. Only one was not used: "Leroy, keep away from that wheelbarrow! You know you don't know nothing about machinery!"*

† †

I can still remember with loathing and trepidation that night in my rooms in the Rue De Vudu at the edge of New Orleans, just overlooking the infamous Midabamboo Swamp, with its Deadman's Sump and other deathtraps. From the streets below my garret room came the tinkling strains of the Dark Town Strutters Ball, the sounds of carefree picaninny laughter, and the smart snap of shoeshine rags. I was engaged at the time in my necromantic researches, delving into the dreaded *Negrognomicon* of the insane Bantu pygmy Bundolo Kreegah, when the atonic ethnic music assaulted my ears. For a moment I had visions of Mardi Gras, but the Fat Tuesday festival had been held months before. Then I peered through the grimy window, past soot-encrusted brick, down toward the dimly-lighted streets where a teeming, noxious negroid mass of subhumanity was moving purposefully, though gayly, toward some destination in or near the swamp, which began where the cobbled Rue De Vudu ended. It seemed to me that they were chanting the words "Ungl'lmn wgn'jden ftghm," and as I listened I became filled with an almost unreasoning fear—for these were the very words that opened Kreegah's 61st chapter, titled "Wgmna'wu Thdkdkm."

I shuddered, yes, for I knew the darker meaning of these seemingly harmless words. I knew too the most loathsome secrets of the black thing that came down from the stars in response to them, for I myself had called that atrementous monstrosity from the nether regions on a dark June 19 only two years before.

What had led me into the blasphemous researches that summoned that swarthy, disgusting parody of a man from its interstellar enclaves I do not know. But in any case, I make no apology for my actions, for I felt I was endangering no one but myself. Ever since that day when I had by devious means obtained a copy of the dreaded *Negrognomicon* from the Under The Counter Book Emporium in a walk-in alley in the French Quarter from a furtive old darkie who claimed to be an actual descendant of Kreegah, I had been enthralled by the book's immense store of interconnected hyper-mythology inscribed in dung beetle blood on pages of zebra skin (on the white stripes). The story of how the book actually came to be in my possession is too horrible ever to repeat. I was particularly interested in Kreegah's analysis of that disputed area of physics revealed by the 3rd century astrologer Sudo, who had been condemned by the Manicheans, Cathari, Zoroastrians and the Southern Baptists for his unholy researches into Sudo-physics. Now I well understood the warnings of such moderns as Earbrass, Bhunkim and Fiersome who have tried to suppress the work.

Included in Kreegah's tome were several pages of diagrams, annotated in Bantu, a language which I had learned from Bubba Kowabonga, a tribal medicine man who had been educated at Oxford where I had made his acquaintance. At the time, I was majoring in prehuman languages, and my knowledge of his esoteric tongue enabled me to pursue my researches into the paranatural. (His interest in the subject was naturally hereditary.) One odd thing about Bubba that I should mention is that he hardly spoke more than a handful of English words. Most of his conversations were carried on with the excited gesturing characteristic of his debased race, and frequently he resorted to drawing diagrams in the grime of his chest with spittle. No doubt one might think it remarkable that he should have graduated Summa Cum Laude, but in view of his occult manipulations, that is not the case; after the administration began to detect a pattern in the strange deaths among the faculty, the common factor being that each of the deceased had failed Bubba in one or more subjects, his education was swiftly and painlessly completed by the simple expedient of handing him an old mail-order catalogue order blank with his name inscribed in Bantu and telling him it was a diploma. He straightaway vanished from the dung hut he had constructed on the rugby field and was never seen again.

It was Bubba's tutoring that enabled me to comprehend the eldritch obscurities of Kreegah's dark tome. The volume reposed in a place of honor in my garret, on a narrow bookshelf in the loo; I was troubled by curious stains on some of the pages, stains that appeared after visits by some of my more decadent friends. Nevertheless, the vital pages were still quite legible when I set forth on my grand design.

In Kreegah's dark tome there is a passage that reads, in translation:

> By dis hyar formmala can yo' call dem GREAT ONES down fum de stars. On de holy day of JUNETEENTH yo' goes outen on an ol' hill ere high place and looks up at de sky and jabber up at de stars, "Mammy, Mammy, gib me som' o' dat good ol' corn bread!" Den down fum de stars will come de SHUFFLER and he gwine make all yo' wishes come true. . .

I had my doubts as to the efficacy of this formula, but I was determined to put it to the test. That night I made my way to a high wind-swept hill north of town and began the eldritch rites. I saw by my watch that the mystic hour of 11:46 p. m. was swiftly approaching. Legend had it that this was the hour when Booker T. M'Bungabu, high priest of sunken Pu, held a fish fry in honor of the sea god Coney, near the present day island of that name. In preparation for the rites, I placed several crisp fragments of fried chicken in a brazier and let their fragrant odor waft upwards to the heavens. The most potent part of the spell required a primitive chant, which fortunately I had recorded on a wax disc. I cranked up the Edison talking machine, placed the needle in the groove, and the eerie voice of Al Jolson drifted over the benighted hillside.

Then I screamed out the prescribed chant:

"Mammy, Mammy, gib me som' o' dat good ol' corn bread!"

Nothing immediately happened. I tried again:

"Mammy, Mammy, gib me som' o' dat good ol' corn bread!"

Again, nothing happened. I checked the chicken and saw that it was almost burnt to a crisp. I gave the talking machine an extra wind and shouted again to the glowering stars:

"Mammy, Mammy, gib me som' o' dat good ol' corn bread!"

But absolutely nothing happened and, vastly disappointed, I gathered my apparatus, packed it into my ruck sack (along with my authentic Cajun rucks), and began my weary way homeward. Could it be that I had misread the Bantu inscription and had uttered the wrong spell? I decided that there was no use in indulging in morbid self-recriminations and upon arriving at my rooms I repaired to bed and slept soundly.

As was my custom, I rose at 4 a. m. to brush my teeth. I do not know the origin of this quirk, but a young Viennese psychoanalyst whom I met while hiking through the little-traversed Offwhite Forest of East Austria in 189_ suggested that this compulsion stemmed from unconscious guilt feelings left over from my childhood, perhaps resulting from my abortive assassination attempt upon my dentist. However, on my way to the bathroom I felt something under my foot like a slick, flat pebble and I slipped to the floor, banging my antecubital fossa on a nearby gasogene. After recovering, I examined what I had slipped on. It appeared to be a flat, moist, black ovoid. The terrible significance of that hideous ebon object did not at first strike home. It was only later, when I found more of these horrifying and ghastly things that I realized their true nature. Scattered about the rooms, constantly underfoot, were *millions of watermelon seeds!*

Though I was terrified at first, I soon grew elated, for I recalled certain words in Kreegah's chronicles of black horror:

"When de Shuffler fum de stars he come, youse'll know it 'cause youse'll fin' seeds fum dat good ol' watermelon all oveh de place."

I knew that my sorcerous ceremony had been an unqualified success, and I was anxious to see the dark servitor I had summoned.

I was not long in waiting. That night after supper, as I sat down with my favorite pipe for a quiet smoke, I gradually became aware of being watched by some invisible presence. Distantly I heard a whining voice say, "Massah, Massah?"

The Shuffler from the Stars had come at last.

Speaking in the ritual prescribed by the dreaded *Negrognomicon*, I said imperiously, "Is that you, R 'Astus? Do you acknowledge my natural superiority?"

"Yassah, Massah," said the voice. "You is de summoner and Ah is de summonee."

"Good. Now, boy, you get your ass rite cheer, heah?"

Immediately the whining voice said, "Oh, yassah, yassah. Please, Massah, please don't beat dis tired ol' body!"

"Stop that whining and come here," I ordered.

"Yassah. You's de boss."

It was then that my eyes began to penetrate the dark shadows of my angled room, and as I looked into the corner whence came the voice, I perceived two dim shapes, each with a centered ovoid, dark as a raisin. "Smile, boy, so I can see you," I said, adhering rigidly to the Bantu ritual. At once a small scimitar of whiteness appeared Cheshire-cat-like below the rolling eyes.

"Come over here, boy," I ordered. From the shadows stepped the dusky demon whom the ancient unholy writings had called R 'Astus. He was dark in color, like coal, and smaller than a human being, stoop-shouldered and cringing. A few wisps of grey kinky hairs covered his sweaty pate, and in one hand he clasped an ancient felt hat, with which he made constant furtive, embarrassed motions. I fancied I could hear the dead-leaf flapping of his huge lips vibrating nervously and his hideous furtive shuffle. His eyes seemed to roll as though he were crazed with fear, like a mare that has been ridden hard through a pack of wolves.

"Sumpin' Ah kin do fo' you, Boss?" he asked tentatively.

"Fetch me a mint julep, boy," I commanded. This too was part of the ritual, which stressed that above all, the sorceror must show the demon who is boss. Then R 'Astus vanished in a puff of musky-scented smoke.

But in a matter of seconds he had reappeared, holding a mint julep in one hand. He seemed to be sweating even more profusely (if that can be believed), and was puffing and wheezing like a locomotive, rolling his eyes and blubbering insanely. With the old felt hat he was attempting without success to stem the tide of moisture off his cranium.

"Sorry Ah's late, Boss," he said, "but Ah couldn't find no ice. Ah had to go all de way to Tibet, and up dem mountains. Dat abominable feller overcharged me fo' it too! But here is at de las', thanks be to Kingfish."

I took the drink and sipped thoughtfully. Kingfish, I knew, was one of the Elderly Gods, the unspeakable Odd Ones from beyond space and time and the authority of the Louisiana Highway Patrol. Apparently it was this deity to which my boy paid homage.

"Boy," I said, watching him snap to a sort of wary alertness, "now we get down to the nitty-gritty. I'm going to pass the biggest spell that has ever been passed, and I want you to get me the ingredients. First—write this down, now—"

"Ah's sorry, Boss, but I nevah learnt to read nor write. But Ah's purty fair at remem'brin'."

"Very well," I said, vexed. "First, come midnight, fetch me some mold from Marie Laveau's tomb—"

At this, R 'Astus' eyes lit up in horror, and his dark flaccid features stretched into a rictus of abject fear.

"Oh, Massah, not dat, please, not dat! Ah's powerful afeered of bein' in de boneyard at night!"

"For heaven's sake, what are you afraid of?"

"Massah, don't yo' know dey's *spooks* in dem boneyards? Dey comes out at midnight and reaches up dere han's outten de groun', and dem long, bony fingers come a-clawin' at you, and when dey grabs you dey takes you down to de Debbil, and de Debbil, he puts big iron chains roun' yo' feets, and he chains you to a red hot rock where you mus' gotta shovel hot coals, and den—"

"Oh, shut up!" I yelled.

"Ah's sorry, Massah—please don't beat dis tired ol' body!"

Eventually, I persuaded my reluctant demon servant to perform the required errand, but from this point on I noticed a marked change in him. He began to grow surly and shiftless. He was late on his appointed rounds. Occasionally I saw a glint of defiance in his dark eyes. One day I found it necessary to confront him.

Recalling the proper words from Kreegah's dark tome, I asked, "You ain't getting uppity, are you, boy?"

"What you mean, Boss?" he asked in a taciturn voice.

"I mean, what do you think you are, talking to me in that tone of voice?"

"Bwana, I ain't paid to think."

"Don't get smart with me, R 'Astus!"

"You's de Boss," he said darkly.

I was far from satisfied with this conversation. My demon servant thereafter grew increasingly moody and lazy, and I was forced to employ the whip on occasion, but even this did not seem to deter him from his surly ways. At last I even began to harbor irrational fears, for I recalled the story in Kreegah's dark tome of the haunted packing plant and the revolting eldritch cleaver within. One day I was confirmed in my worst suspicions when I caught my boy reading some *horribly suggestive and disgustingly shocking civil rights literature!*

"What's the meaning of this, boy?" I demanded.

"It's nuthin', Boss. Juss som' stuff dat som' folks in a bus gib me."

I do not know precisely why, but this revelation produced in me a sensation of grave disquiet. Thereafter I began to regard R 'Astus in a more wary manner. There was something less of a shuffle in his walk, something more of independence in his spirit. Once I actually caught him sitting in my chair with his feet on my desk. Though he immediately snapped to attention, there seemed somewhat less servile hesitation in his movements and he seemed to regard me through eyes that mirrored not so much abject servility as a sullen, moody brooding.

No longer did he murmur supplications to his awesome brethren, Unkatom and S'Tepinfechet in his off duty moments. No longer did he sing spirituals to keep up his spirits during the various nocturnal errands on which I sent him. And, most disturbing of all, his dietary habits indicated a disquieting change in his character, for he was gradually turning away from moon pie, collard greens, fried chicken and watermelons and began to show a preference for such human foods as hamburgers, french fries, and even lamb chops. I no longer found watermelon seeds scattered about, and no longer heard his happy voice singing the gay, carefree hymns of his people. He sulked frequently and on occasion I thought I could make out vague threats muttered under his breath. I knew that I would have to put a stop to this.

So it was that I went again to that dark windswept hill on the outskirts of town and raised my voice up to the stars, employing the proper verses from Kreegah's dark tome to summon down the dreaded being at whose name the dark legions of the damned must bend the knee.

Clad in a pure-white sheet, I held up the burning cross and cried out, "Oh, Great Klud, Grand Dragoon, hear my call, for one of my boys has dared to step above his place!"

But no answer came to my frenzied plea. Apparently these particular words in Kreegah's chronicles of horror were incorrect, and I now began to suspect the true deviousness of that ancient Bantu pygmy. It was undoubtedly his desire to open the legendary Pearly Gates only to those blasphemous, debased, sub-human anthropoid mongrels that so closely resembled his own primitive gibbering tribe. It was then I guessed the true secret behind the so-called civil rights movements that sowed the watermelon seeds of dissatisfaction among the carefree, childlike race who were our natural servitors. They were masterminded by dark demons called down from the nether regions to spread the pernicious and disgusting mythos of equality!

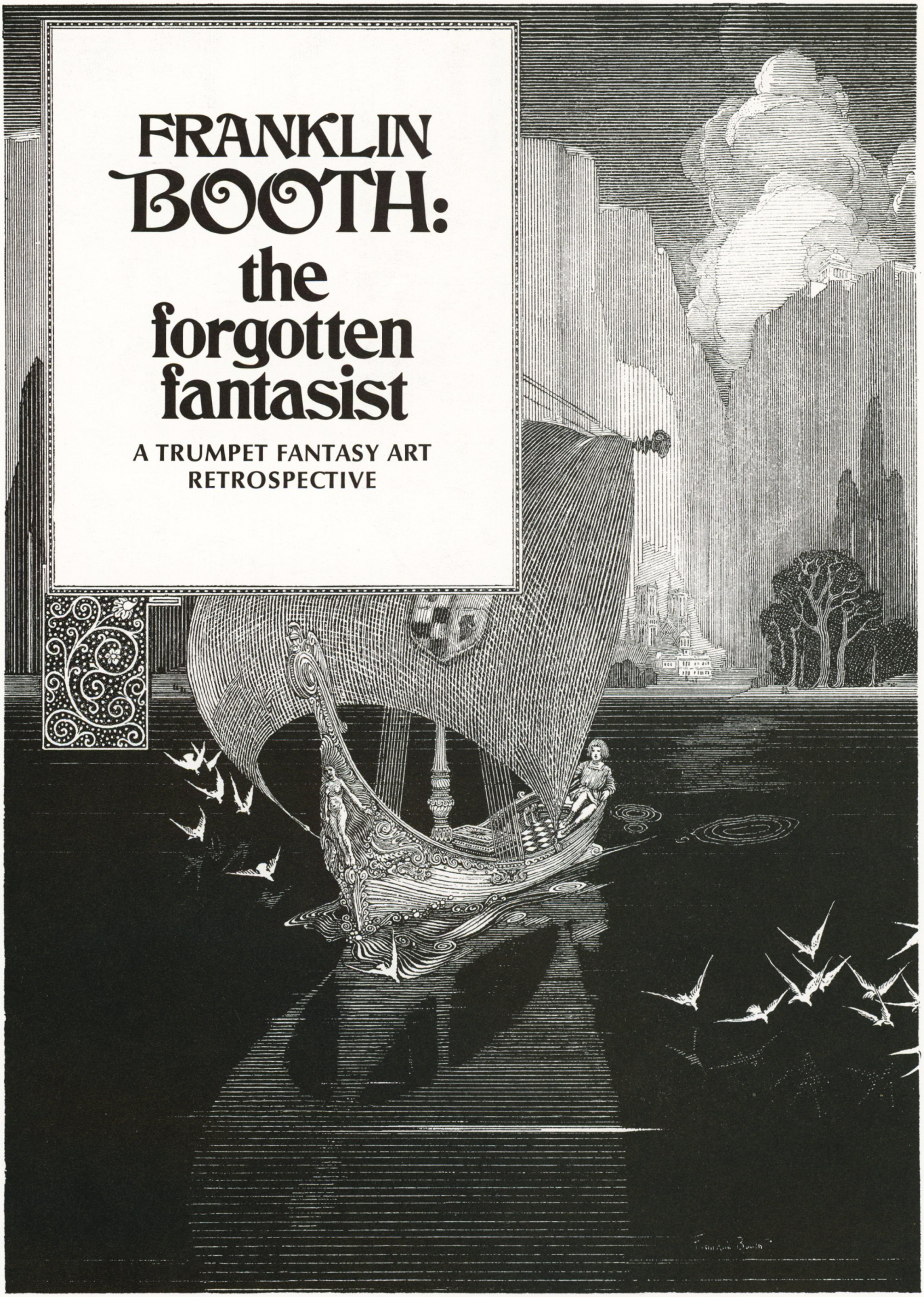
I knew from that moment that the resolution of this problem could come only from my own actions. Thus I called the demon into my chambers one night and said, "R 'Astus, we're going to take a little trip into the country tonight."

"I suppose I feel like it," he said, brushing an imaginary crumb from his crushed velvet evening jacket with one hand, while fluffing his Afro with the other.

The reader can surely see at this point just how intolerable matters had become. The very appearance itself of my servant had changed. He had begun to dress sharply, to take on an increasing resemblance to that high demon of eld, the unspeakable *Shami Davis.*

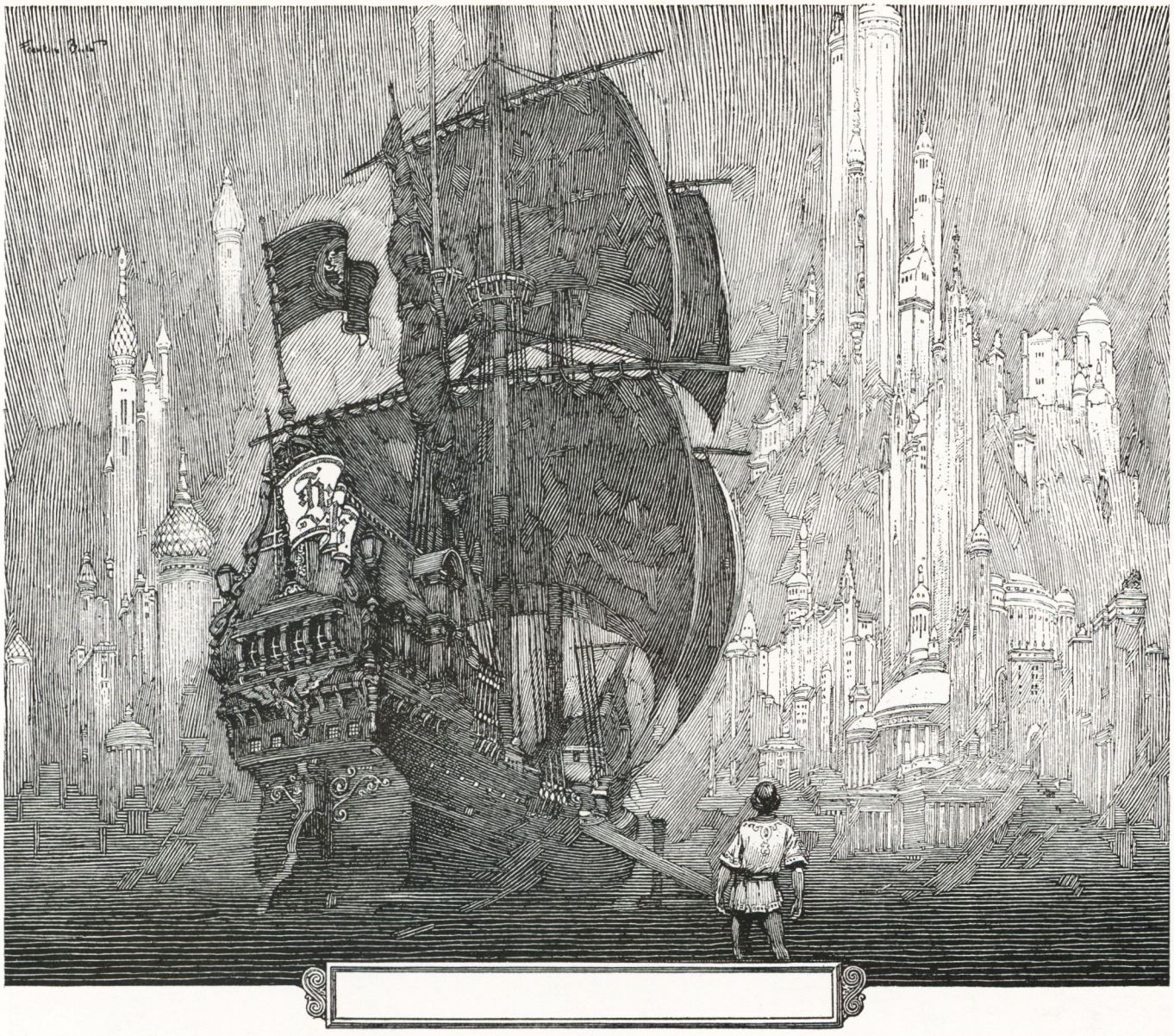
As we walked down the labyrinthine cobbled way of the Rue De Vudu, R 'Astus asked, "I say, old bean, what's in that black bag you're carrying?"

(continued on page 44)



FRANKLIN BOOTH: the forgotten fantasist

A TRUMPET FANTASY ART RETROSPECTIVE



In an era which produced such diversely talented illustrators as Howard Pyle, Alphonse Mucha, Maxfield Parrish, N. C. Wyeth, Heinrich Kley and Joseph Clement Coll, one of the finest pen and ink illustrators of the early 20th century is relatively unknown today. Franklin Booth, a true master of his medium, worked almost exclusively in the advertising and newspaper fields, producing beautifully distinctive works of commercial art. Although enjoying a great deal of success and popularity in his heyday in the 1920s, he fell into almost complete obscurity after the Second World War. With the general resurgence of interest in the field of illustration of the past five years (including the reprinting, by Nostalgia Press in 1976, of the 1926 volume, *The Art of Franklin Booth*), many of the almost forgotten masters of illustration are now being rediscovered.

Booth was born on a farm in Indiana in 1874. He spent the first twenty-six years of his life there and the vivid memories of the Indiana farmlands and forests inspired and dominated his drawings throughout his life. He was educated at the Quaker Academy in Westfield, Indiana and, at the age of twenty-five, in 1899, he became a writer and artist for the *Indianapolis News.*

Booth spent a year at the *News,* writing and illustrating light verse. After that time, when he had proven to himself that his interest in and talent for art was genuine, he left Indiana, took a short sabbatical in Europe, and enrolled for four years in the Chicago Art Institute. Completing that he moved to New York City and went to work for the Munsey publications.

In two years Booth had tired of the grind and limitations of the pulps and decided to try for something better. He collected his savings and, in 1906, went to Spain for a year of sketching and touring the countryside. When he returned to New York to set up permanent residence, his career bloomed. His illustrations appeared in such periodicals as *McCall's, Colliers, Red Book, Scribner's, Liberty, Cosmopolitan* and many others. Later commercial assignments would keep him busy seven days and nights a week. He became one of the most sought-after and best-known illustrators in America.

Booth would occasionally take time out for periods of travel around the country. To illustrate just how successful he was, I quote from an article by John Jellico in *American Artist,* January 1966.

"I recall his telling me of the vacation he took throughout the United States in his chauffeur-driven Rolls-Royce!"

Physically, Booth stood almost six feet tall, was broad shouldered, and had thick white hair combed to one side . . . the perfect image for an artist at that time. Tall and strong like the men in his drawings, he was an inspiration to his students at the Phoenix Art Institute in New York during the mid-thirties.

Booth's art always conveyed a special, oftimes ethereal, feeling and a spirit of visual poetry that is still compelling, even after more than a half century. There is, at all times, a strong sense of truth and beauty in his illustrations, although his subjects are almost always romanticized and idealized. Booth's work conveys a convincing expression of man and nature, many times as dreams and fancies of some far-off land

and time.

In an article in *The Poster,* September 1929, Herbert Kerkow wrote: "It is Mr. Booth's high achievement that he satisfies not only the visual sense but indicates so often as to establish a characteristic, a consciousness of gracious and beautiful things—'of meadows never won nor wandered in' or the poignant echoes of a solemn recessional fading to silence in some vast cathedral."

And John Jellico, in his article in *American Artist,* continues that thought: "His work does not depend for its chief interest upon what he saw in nature, but how he changed what he saw. Comparing his landscapes with nature, we can see how the artist has transformed a prosaic, commonplace view into a lively, decorative composition, and has even caught the light-hearted spirit of his subject matter."

Perhaps the most outstanding aspect of Booth's art is his technical brilliance. His work, with its fine craftsmanship, evokes the wonder and nostalgia of old steel engravings. Though working almost exclusively in black and white, the pattern of his fine lines, their differences in length and spacing, seem almost to conjure up the beauty of a full-color painting.

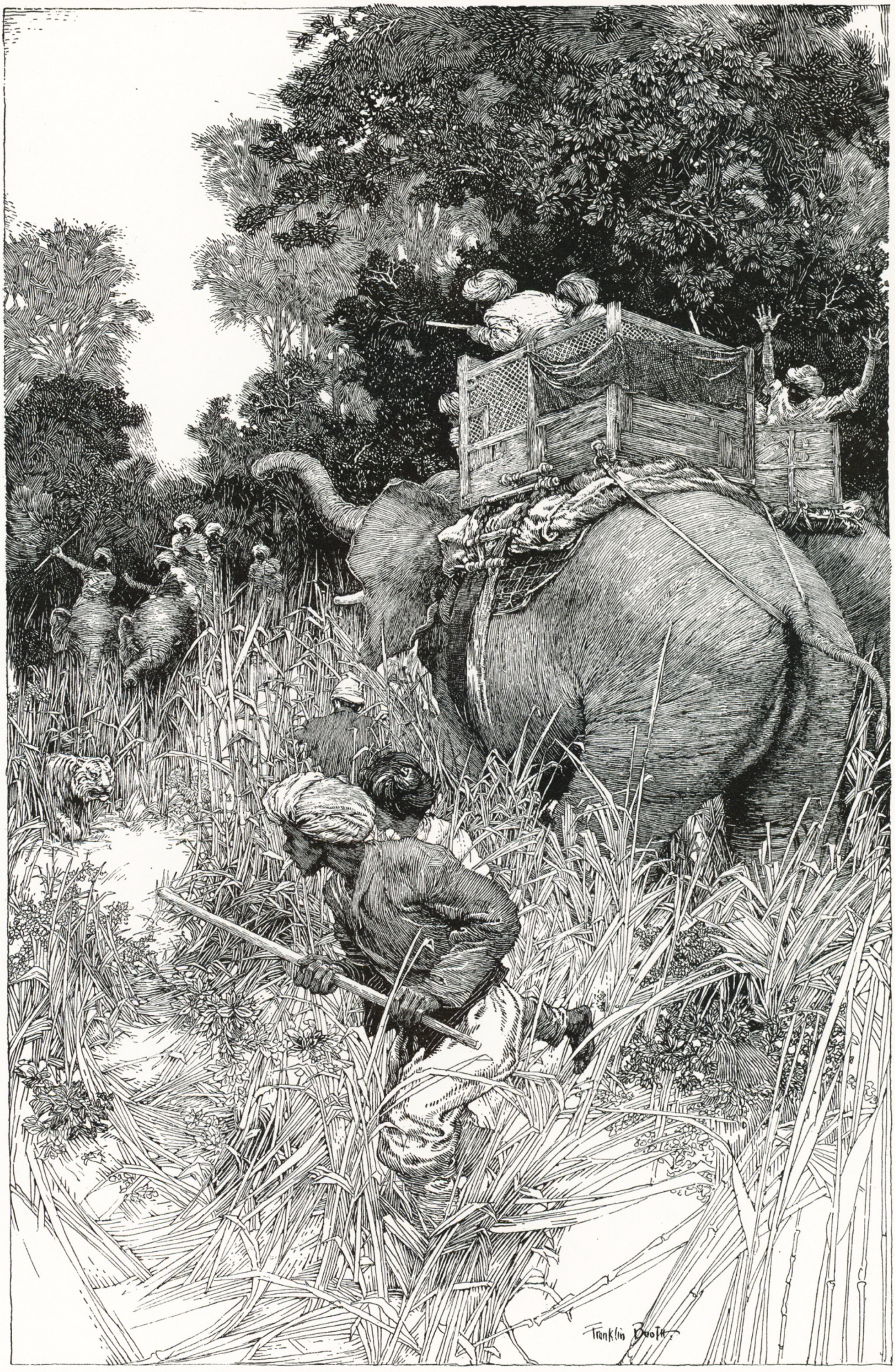
Kerkow continues: "It is natural for a man to see in tone and mass mainly, although the fundamental appearance in nature is the horizontal and vertical structural line effect. This is fundamental, and in the more specific aspect also, everything in nature moves toward whatever mass and solidity appears by and through the progression of line. This line quality before the eye of the artist is as natural and real as is color and form. In any line drawing the technique becomes a decidedly apparent part of the picture: it becomes a thing of attraction and attention in itself, over and beside the primary content of the picture. In any line drawing, technique may be a thing comparable to a beautiful piano accompaniment to a song, which, of itself, may be listened to with a full measure of contentment: it is like the play of full color, through and by which the painter has projected some noble conception."

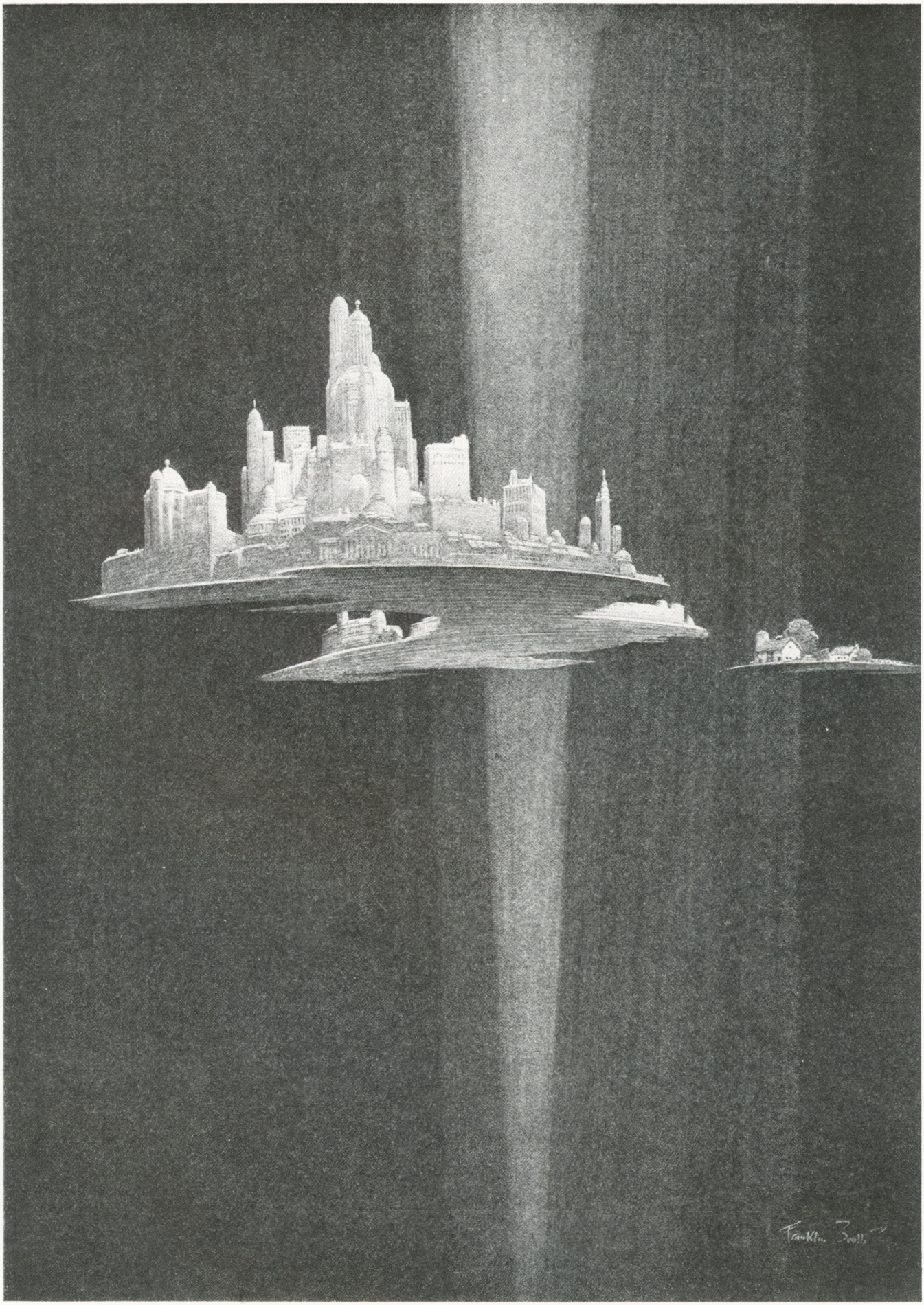
Booth's influence on the developing styles of many fantasy and science fiction illustrators of the twenties and thirties seems obvious now, in retrospect. It is easy to see the inspiration of his technique reflected in the work of Bok (and most certainly the art of Finlay), as well as Lawrence, St. John, Krupa, Morey, Wesso and other artists of the Pulp era. There are also obvious influences in Alex Raymond's (and much later, Al Williamson's) work on *Flash Gordon,* their rendering techniques, architectural designs and panel compositions strongly reminiscent of Booth's romanticized approach to his subject matter. This is also true of Hal Foster's concise, yet luxurious sense of detail and form of approach to his work on *Prince Valiant.* Franklin Booth's continued influence is strongly evident in the work of Roy Krenkel. His beautiful art book, *Cities and Scenes from the Ancient World,* (Owlswick Press, P.O. Box 8234, Philadelphia, PA 19101, 1974, $16.00) is dedicated to Booth and is a loving tribute to his infuence on Krenkel. (Roy is a well-known Booth scholar and art collector, having managed to rescue a number of Booth originals from the dustbin of history.) And any student of modern fantasy illustration cannot deny Booth's shadow on the pen and ink work of Frank Frazetta.

As a painter with a pen, Franklin Booth had a profound effect on many an artist of his time. As a major influence on modern fantasy illustration today, his long-range effect can only be speculated upon but his recent "rediscovery" by Nostalgia Press, and to a much lesser extent, this magazine, will, hopefully, lead to a larger Booth revival and to his much deserved and long overdue recognition as a true Master of Fantasy. □

LIST OF PLATES

[Editor's note: I would like to thank Sam Glavas for providing the inspiration, some six years ago, to begin this project. (Events conspired to delay the appearance of this feature until this issue.) Sam was also quite helpful in providing his rare copy of the original 1926 edition of *The Art of Franklin Booth,* from which the plates that accompany this article were reproduced (via precision, high quality film negatives to assure the finest reproduction). As a long-time Booth fan and collector of Booth originals, Sam would like to hear from those individuals that share his interest, especially fellow Booth art collectors. You may contact him at 1 East 54th Street, Kansas City, Missouri 64112. —*Ken Keller*]


Franklin Booth




PLASTICS..?..
...PLASTICS!
'TWA
EFORE C
TMA
ALL
OUSE
ST
HE UN
TONNED HER B
VIKKI MARSHALL

FICTION

It Can't Happen Here!

by Ronald Anthony Cross

Illustrated by Vikki Marshall

'Twas the night before Christmas
And all through the house
Not a creature was stirring
He unbuttoned her blouse.

"Relax, baby, Santa can't get in here, this is Orange County. We've got the greatest little police force in the world. Besides, it's after curfew, they'll annihilate anything that moves."

Her luscious breasts spilled out of her blouse and quivered like a pair of hyperactive waterbeds. The nipples were flourescent green spikes that glowed in the dark. He flipped them admiringly.

"Fantastico," he said. "The very latest thing. I've seen them advertised on TV, but this is the first time I've actually seen any. Aren't they called 'twisters'?"

"Rightaroonie," she winked knowingly. "Twisters® by Playtex. Unbreakable. In a few months you won't see outasight swingers in anything else. Go ahead, try me."

He took hold of a nipple, stood up, and ran with it across the room, then let go of it. It stretched out and snapped back like silly putty, where it lay jiggling and bouncing on her chest.

"Great; just great," he said. "Plastics?"

"Plastics!" she affirmed.

He went back to the couch and pulled her breasts about until he felt a cramp developing in his right hand; all the time both of them issuing the standard series of little moans and grunts as outlined in *The Orange County Swingers Manual of Highly Erotic Signals for Young Lovers.*

Then they both sat back with a sigh. They had passed the first barrier, and all according to proper procedure.

"You okay?" he said.

"Fine," she said. "How about you?"

"Great," he said. "Just great. Got a little cramp in my hand is all, but just A-okay." He flexed his hand for her.

Suddenly he cried out a nameless cry of passion and quickly ran his hand up her thigh to the very garden of her womanhood.

"Was that executed properly?" he asked.

"Fine," she said. "Just like everybody else, exactly."

"I appreciate that," he said. "I've been working on it for weeks."

"Right out of the book," she complimented him.

Now she moved her hand to his crotch. His magnificent manhood sprang to life. It burst through the crotch of his Levis Burstopants® and waved free in the air, gigantic.

"Plastics?" she asked.

"Plastics," he affirmed. "Now for the final step."

He pressed her belly button, then felt between her legs.

Suddenly he jumped back, his towering manhood quivering in astonishment.

"Something's wrong with your system," he said. "You didn't lubricate. I pressed your button and you didn't lubricate. I did everything right. I didn't deviate. For Christ sake, what's wrong?"

"I don't know, honey. I guess I'm just nervous. What if he gets in here? He's a wild man you know. With that awful beard and that bright red suit."

"Jesus Christ, baby, he can't get in here. This is Orange County. No bearded hippy is going down nobody's chimney in Orange County and live to boast about it. We all got guns, and we know how to use 'em, too." He ran over to the wall and turned his manhood slightly sideways so he could get close enough to take down his bright, shiny, red, white and blue plastic shotgun. He turned toward her and went through a quick drill of present arms, menace the stranger, and strut your mechanical stuff. He had to hold the gun higher than usual to keep from whacking his manhood.

"See that, baby, right outta the book. The chimney's boarded up, the police are on patrol. Try and relax." He cuddled up—"Let's have a little nookie."

Again he pressed her button, and again she didn't respond.

"I'm just too nervous, honey—and we don't call it nookie anymore, all the swingers say 'ball.' After all, it's 2001, we have to keep hep."

"Now listen, baby, just relax. I told you it's after curfew and the county fuzz is patrolling the streets in tanks. Every patriotic, God-fearing, Christian swinger is safe as a bug in a plastic rug." He cocked his head. "Here comes one now."

They both snapped to their feet and saluted, standing straight and tall, as a heavy, grinding noise announced the approach of either a tank or a cement mixer.

"Red, white and blue, she is," he whispered. Although heavy drapes were drawn over the barred windows, they pictured in their mind's eye the tank, a red, white and blue glory with a clean-shaven God at the helm—but this time they had the wrong archetype.

To their astonishment the door exploded like a pair of Burstopants® and a tank rolled into the room and stopped. A bunch of wild-eyed hippy dwarfs in bright red suits piled out the top and lined up on either side of the tank.

Then from the turret, as if from some hideous parody of a chimney, popped the biggest, wildest, meanest-looking hippy they had ever seen.

"Ho, ho, ho, merry Xmas!" he boomed, holding his enormous belly.

"My God! Santa's captured a tank!" the Orange County swinger exclaimed. "But don't worry. American womanhood I shall guard with my life!"

He raised his gun and fired. The bullets struck Santa's belly and bounced off. Santa regarded him with a somewhat sympathetic smile.

"Plastics?" Santa inquired.

"Plastics," the Orange County patriot admitted.

The little dwarfs were jumping up and down, smoking funny cigarettes, when Santa dropped his red pajama bottoms.

"My God," Baby moaned under her breath. "It's real. It's little, but it's real." She began to breathe heavily. Santa climbed off the tank and moved toward her.

Afterward, the Orange County swinger found to his relief that he had forgotten most of it. He only remembered bits and pieces. The hands of the little men clutching at them, holding them down, her voice crying out in hysterical passion, phrases like: "Oh, my God! When he laughs it shakes like a bowlful of jelly."

Then he remembered their final confrontation. Santa dressed again in wild red pajamas, bearded and terrible, his dwarfs waiting in the tank. "Ho, ho, ho, merry Xmas," he boomed again, throwing a stocking of funny cigarettes on the floor.

"You've taken the Christ out of Christmas," the Orange County swinger complained.

"He only sneaked in by mistake. Try one of those joints anyway; it'll blow your plastic mind."

The swinger took one of the cigarettes from the floor and regarded it scornfully.

"Plastics?" he asked.

"You bet your sweet ass it ain't," Santa quipped. Then he swaggered over to the tank and out of their lives forever, four hundred pounds and all man.

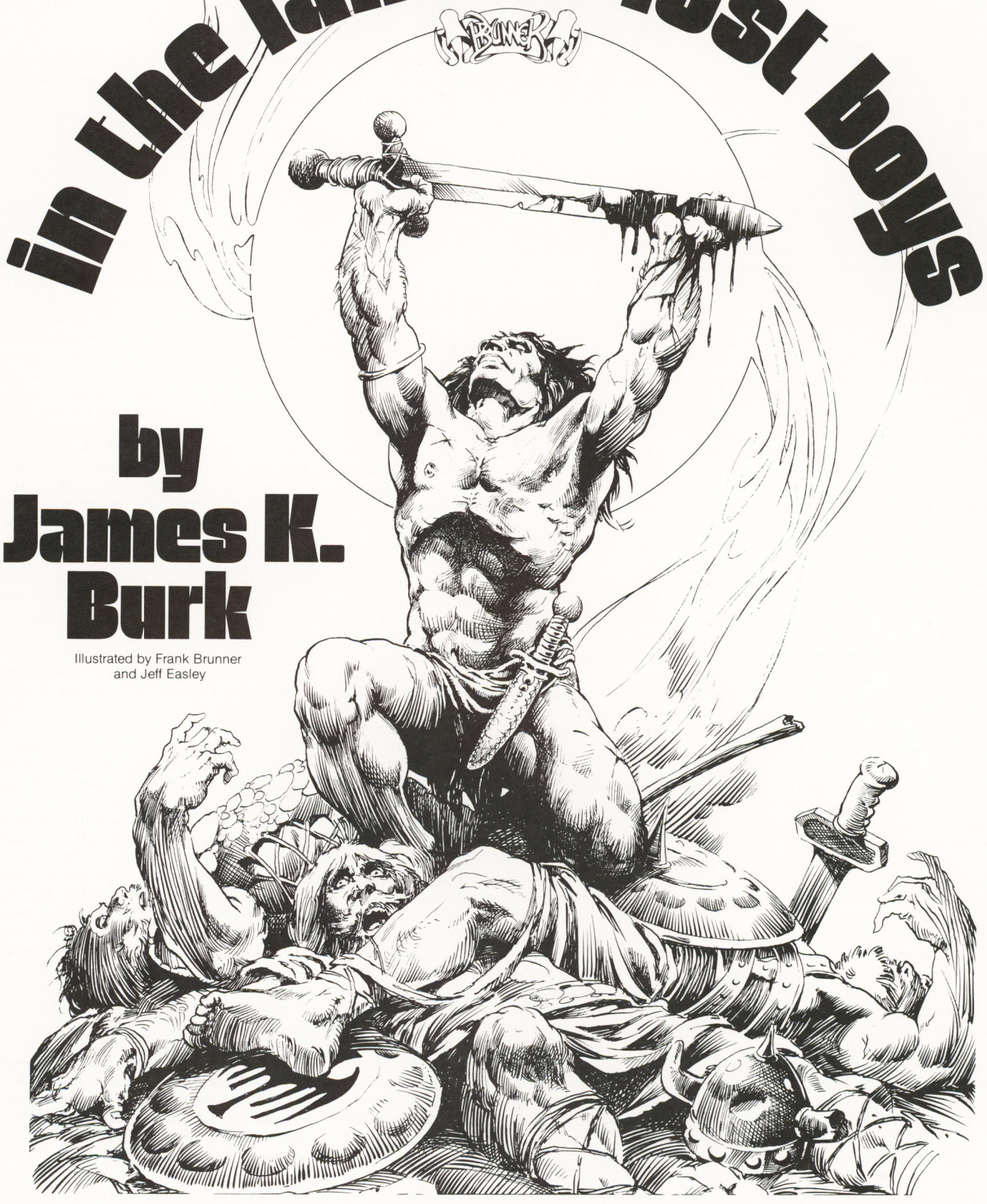
The tank ground into gear, backed out the shattered doorway, and cranked off down the street.

"They'll get him, don't you worry. They'll get him and put him behind bars for eternal life. Dirty hippy. You know what I think, I think these cigarettes are what they call 'Mary Jane.' I think he's hooked on Mary Jane, and that's why he behaves so crazy. Baby, for God's sake, put on your clothes. Don't just lie there naked. What's the matter with you anyway? My God, what are you doing?"

He watched in horror as Baby, naked and abandoned, with the lazy smile of a well-satisfied woman, took a joint from his stocking and fired up.

"Merry Xmas, creep," she said. □

lin carter in the land of lost boys



by James K. Burk

Illustrated by Frank Brunner and Jeff Easley

Even in the often incredible field of fantasy and science fiction Lin Carter is unique, as full of contradictions as one of his own stories. Although a convention of his admitted fans in organized fandom could probably be seated comfortably in a phone booth, with enough room left for a bartender, his output is prodigious and sales of his titles are apparently among the highest in the field, high enough that publishers keep the books in print almost indefinitely and blithely ignore the choral groans from most critics.

The latest editions of *Books in Print* list twenty-six titles either eidited or authored by Carter (compared to twenty titles for Harlan Ellison). One of Carter's books is in its *ninth* printing. This achievement is even greater than it appears, for Carter has accomplished this record with little taste, less talent, and in a condition of apparently cheerful semi-illiteracy.

Carter's editorship of the Ballantine Adult Fantasy Series was marked by its discrimination (or, in the opinions of some of his detractors, a lapse in tastelessness). He was responsible for reprinting the works of such authors as James Branch Cabell, Lord Dunsany, Mervyn Peake, E. R. Eddison, and others. The genre does owe a debt of gratitude to Carter for selecting the works of these men for reprinting, as well as for two anthologies he edited at that time, *Dragons, Elves and Heroes* and *The Young Magicians.* These latter volumes merited and received critical praise as showcases.

Dragons, Elves and Heroes is a treasure trove of the classic works from which epic fantasy has descended (some further than most). It includes selections from *Beowulf, Grettir's Saga, The Volsungers Saga,* the poem "Puck's Song" by Kipling, and even some Shakespeare, in addition to other works. *The Young Magicians* was an anthology that introduced many readers to the works of Eddison, Morris, Lord Dunsany, Cabell, Lovecraft, C. A. Smith, and others.

Conversely, he has also edited two volumes entitled *The. Year's Best Fantasy Stories.* The only undebatable word in the title, at least for the first volume, is *The.* Carter's seeming opinion to the contrary, sword-and-sorcery does not constitute the entire body of fantasy. It is even questionable whether these two books contain the best sword-and-sorcery of the year. Finally, the first volume lists a mixture of 1973 and 1974 copyright dates, making *Year* as suspect as *Best* and *Fantasy Stories.*

Most of the preceding is admittedly nit-picking, although one has a bumper crop of nits from which to pick. But Carter's greatest editorial sin (apart from his introductions–more of which later) is his exhibition of a literary tin ear. How else can one explain Gary Myers' "Xiurhu" and Paul Spencer's "The Guardian of the Vault" being displayed beside stories by Fritz Leiber and Pat McIntosh? The only other explanations are uncharitable.

I prefer to believe that Carter honestly cannot tell the difference between prime rib and Gainesburgers® and that his enthusiasm leads him to uncritical acceptance of anything remotely resembling epic fantasy.

Lest you think the above incident was a fluke confined to *The Year's Best Fantasy Stories: 2,* the same unevenness pervades the first volume of the series, and *Kingdoms of Sorcery,* an ambitious hardcover published by Doubleday. For this book Carter had all fantasy from which to choose, from Voltaire to Richard Adams, and he displayed the same tone-deafness. He included William Beckford's unreadable "The Palace of Subterranean Fire" and Robert H. Barlow's "The Tomb of the God" along with Clark Ashton Smith's exemplary "Fables from the Edge of Night" and Tolkien's "The Bridge of Khazad-Dum," excerpted from *The Fellowship of the Ring.*

With all the class of a contest judge who awards himself a prize, Carter cannot refrain from including his own poorple prose in his collections. The practice might be defensible in *Kingdoms of Sorcery.* "The Twelve Wizards of Ong" presents a strong argument that recency of publication is not necessarily a measure of quality.

Only chutzpah could account for Carter including "Black Hawk of Valkarth" and "The City in the Jewel" in any anthology labeled "best."

Chutzpah is not a crime. Nor is bad taste. But Carter indulges in a practice that approaches grave-robbing with his "posthumous collaborations" with Clark Ashton Smith. This is not the first time Carter has emulated Burke and Hare. With L. Sprague de Camp he had a forepaw in "developing" some of Robert E. Howard's Conan stories.

A digression: These pastiches are not always, but frequently, perpetrated by hacks with an ocean of self-confidence and half a thimbleful of talent. With few exceptions these ghouls haven't the imagination to conjure even the most hackneyed plot devices without glancing over another's work, and so they finish, as one finishes a cigarette, a story that Howard or Smith had envisioned. The most reprehensible aspect of this verbal *danse macabre* is that the creator of the idea is not alive to defend his reputation or his work.

If any doubt remains about Carter's wretched taste, he puts those doubts permanently to rest with many of his introductions, in which he vacillates between pompous reverence, condescension, and breezy familiarity. He fawns over Tolkien's memory and reputation like an overanxious mother sending her little boy off to summer camp (an unnecessary preoccupation, for Tolkien's reputation is secure, perhaps in spite of Carter).

In the first volume of *The Year's Best Fantasy Stories* he remarked on the unremarkability of Richard Adams' name and blathered interminably about *Watership Down* being "the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* of the rabbits. . .(–you heard me, rabbits: it's about rabbits; yes, I said rabbits. . .four hundred and twenty-nine pages of teensy-weensy type about rabbits. . ." In the second volume Carter exhibits 20-20 hindsight by stumbling over his feet carrying flowers to the shrine of Adams' genius. Obviously, Carter finds bears more respectable than rabbits. He also manages, in a mere two introductions, to reveal a lack of either insight or constancy.

While constancy and consistency have never been Carter's hallmarks as an editor, he's shown an amazing evenness in his writing. While he has presented the readers of his anthologies with both excellence and excrement, his own work is unremittingly awful, possessed with the grace and charm of a nearsighted Chihuahua trying to make it with a football.

Carter first appeared in print in the late '40s as Linwood Vrooman Carter, a pasticheur of Burroughs, Lovecraft, and Howard. He has shortened his name and enlarged his repertoire of mimicry, now occasionally banging out a pseudo-Brackett or even imitation Lester Dent, but seems to have improved not one whit.

Carter is presently doing a parody of the John Carter of Mars series (his Callisto books), the old Doc Savage pulps (the Prince Zarkon titles from Doubleday) and the Thongor series, which bears a remarkable resemblance to the Conan stories. He is also responsible for the Gondwanaland series, the Green Star books, and others owing much to A. Merritt, Leigh Brackett, Clark Ashton Smith, Burroughs, Lovecraft, Howard, and other sources. A complete genealogy, tracing literary lineages of dubious legitimacy, might require another article the length of this one.

Such aping is partly, perhaps, because of his honest admiration for these fictioneers of the past, but also, one suspects, because of Carter's own dearth of imagination. This shortage of originality is combined with a style, distinguished largely by mutually contradictory cliches. ("The gigantic, white, hulking monster was almost upon the boy now. He knew it for an *ulth,* a snow bear, but twice the girth and height of any *ulth* ever seen by mortal eyes before.")

If style is what distinguishes one's work from his contemporaries, the above quote suggests that Carter's style consists largely of frantic overwriting, calling a rabbit a smerp, verbosity, and imprecision. (We are told this polar bear/smerp is twice the size of the biggest one seen, but aren't told the dimensions of either the standard-size smerp *or* this one with a pituitary condition.)

Carter seems to have a primitive weakness for the primary colors, especially "crimson" and enthusiastically invokes the "rule of three" (". . .motionless black shapes. . .bodies of men and women and children. . .warriors and hunters and chieftains. . .fought with iron blade and wooden club and stone ax. . .thick black manes and virile, golden eyes. . .") The above was culled from the first two pages of "Black Hawk of Valkarth" in which he also described the setting three times. He seems unaware that "the rule of three" is best applied to comedy. Thus, Carter's work should not be read as dramatic failures but as masterpieces of unintentional farce. As such, they've been great fun to read aloud at parties, more laugh-provoking than George Carlin's albums.

Carter's heroes are more noted for their "mighty thews" than for brilliance of conversation and his women are the usual orna-


Easley ©
1978

ments of hack sagas, meaning that *their* conversation is generally confined to Fay Wray screams. His wizards, all too often, are less related to the Druids than to the Wizard of Oz. They are scams, fools with more education than intelligence.

His attempted pastiches draw only on the most obvious and accessible of the traits of Howard *et al.* The same insensitivity that causes him to lump Myers and Leiber together reduces his copies to mere caricatures.

But Carter's most persistent vice (and, to critics, the most galling/amusing) is the consummate dumbness of his prose. In "Black Hawk of Valkarth" (I know, I'm getting a lot of mileage out of it, but *I* wasn't the one who included it in a collection of "Year's Best") the women are described as "deep-breasted," conjuring up images of women with concave boobs. Thumithar (Carter's typewriter sometimes seems to lisp as well as limp) is dead and the "wife of his youth lay beside him"—although Thumithar, as nearly as I can gather from Carter's murky description of the scene, is standing, his back against a boulder—"her head resting lightly against his shoulder. They had cut her down with an ax." From the description, it sounds as though "they" had not only cut her down with an ax but had trimmed her and stacked her like cordwood.

Then we meet Thongor, "a scrawny boy, scarce fifteen. . ."—with broad shoulders and the obligatory deep chest and, the writer informs us, hair "yet untouched by gray." Apparently those Valkarthians age damned rapidly. We are also told that he has "strong arms seamed with scars, some of which were raw wounds." Really, Mr. Carter, they can't be both at the same time—and a "scrawny" boy with broad shoulders, a deep chest and strong arms must be quite an anatomical curiosity.

Thongor had fought in that last great battle. "When his old sword broke in his hands, he had fought on with the stub, then with rocks clawed up from the snowy ground—finally, with his bare fingers and strong white teeth." Carter fails to tell us what he'd done when he'd run out of fingers and teeth. Gummed them to death, I suppose.

All these idiocies, and a multitude more, occur in the first two chapters of a *short story,* less than half a dozen pages. Carter wastes no time in displaying a genius for incongruity.

One can find this sort of absent-minded sloppiness in almost everything Carter has written. Another example, perhaps outstanding even for Carter, appears in *Thongor and the Wizard of Lemuria* on page 44. Carter emphasizes at great length the absence of a visible trail to "the wizard's subterranean abode" while simultaneously describing what sounds like an interstate, lacking only the yellow stripes and a big blue sign saying, "Next Exit, The Wizard's Subterranean Abode."

With Carter guilty of perpetrating such crimes, why do publishers print his supercharged nonsense and readers buy it?

One reason, obviously, is that Burroughs, Howard, Smith, and Lovecraft are all dead now, their every story reprinted many times, their tiniest scrap of manuscript fought over by bibliophiles and writers like carcasses at a buzzard's banquet. The fields they have plowed have been fertilized by Carter and others.

Another reason, almost as obvious, lies in the reading skills, or lack of them, of most recent high school and college graduates, as illiterate as those shaggy, craggy barbarians. Carter's writing is scarcely a step up from Dick 'n' Jane, unchallenging, lacking any hint of complexity and devoid of theme. Carter's profligate use of adjectives translates into vividness to sterile minds, and his crude thud and blunder appeals to tasteless readers whose idea of excitement is a split skull in technicolor—with lots of *crimson* blood.

Carter's writing, like television, requires no participation by the reader/viewer. You can skim Carter's prose, confident that you will not stumble over an insight, a flash of poetry, or any character who did not come from central casting. It is not only written for a passive audience, but requires passivity; for no reader with a scintilla of critical judgement can long bear such hackwork.

Yet another reason for Carter's popularity is that he tells a story. One cannot imagine Malzberg or Ballard wanting Carter's audience of terminal acne cases, but Carter has a number of envious competitors who would like at least a share of his readers. They then forfeit their chances by writing to a mythical intellectual mass which does not exist in sufficient numbers to make book sales profitable and who, for the most part, don't read fantasy or sf anyway. Only writers of genius or rare skill can violate the basic rules of writing, which is a form of storytelling. Unfortunately, only a small percentage of Carter's detractors are so talented, and if they want a share of his market they must be prepared to do (preferably well) what he does (badly).

For most readers a story, no matter how hoary or hackneyed, is preferable to no story or, perhaps worse, social or political tracts trying to pass themselves off as stories. (If you want an example of the species, read Keith Laumer's "The Plague," whose title perfectly describes the "story." Better yet, don't read it and say that you did.)

Finally, Carter's writing does reveal an ebullience that, to a reader with his critical judgement locked in the cellar, is probably contagious. My original impression, that Carter is only in it for the money, has been replaced by the realization that he is simply, sincerely, indiscriminately, enamored of fantasy, a love affair that reminds one of *The Bride of Frankenstein.*

Carter, like Peter Pan, has succeeded in never growing up. He is caught up in a juvenile enthusiasm that extends to the worst as well as the best of fantasy. He is intrigued by the broad trappings of the Conan and John Carter stories the way a little boy is fascinated by the workings of a clock, with as little understanding of the underlying concepts. The notion of a truly alien or fantastic world is as incomprehensible to him as the notion of ever being thirty or sixty is to an eight-year-old. As a result, Carter has remained true to his first love, fantasy and sf as it was written in the thirties and forties, apparently unaware or unable to admit that the little girl has matured, that the naif has become a sophisticate.

Fantasy is ever-young, constantly finding the world anew (and new worlds), but repititions of Howard's or Lovecraft's fantasies merely apply rouge to sunken cheeks and wrap ancient, brittle bodies in pinafores and pink bows. Howard's work, or Lovecraft's, or that of any other fantascist, remains as valid or invalid as the day it was written. It becomes part of the body of fantasy. When that part is amputated and "cloned" the result is the sort of Frankenstein's monster that lurches and shambles through the pages of books written by Carter and his ilk.

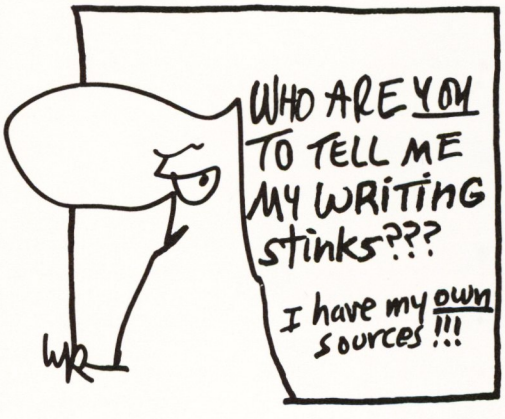
But what's the harm? Carter at least has the little cretins reading something besides comic books.

What, precisely, has Carter to offer that *Captain America* does not? Only a torrent of adjectives. Although I am loath to summon the senile arguments of cause and effect, it is difficult to see how a reader can appreciate fine writing when he is accustomed to garbage. And why should he ascend to better things? Unlike most of his fellow fantacists, Carter is probably able to churn out enough material to meet the demand.

A greater crime is his debasement of our literary coinage. The effect of his work and its success questions the value of all fantasy. If John Norman's latest S&M grotesquerie or Gene Lancour's killporn or Carter's ten-finger exercise in asininity is going to bring equal or greater rewards than the works of Cover or Disch or Crowley, why should any writer attempt to flex his muscles and examine the world around him or one coaxed out of his imagination? Why should any writer give a damn what sort of black marks he puts on white paper?

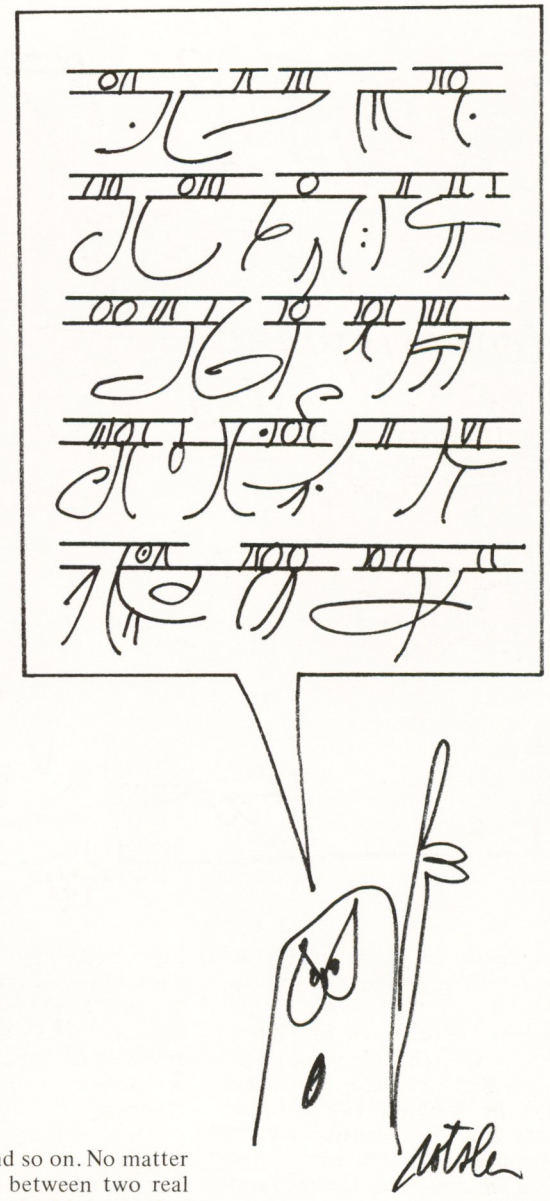
Carter's success seems symptomatic of a failure of the genre, of the field of publishing, and of the culture at large. His lessons have, because of the source, been largely ignored while his incompetence is not perceived by those who count—the readers who drop their money on the counter.

Yes, like Peter Pan, Carter has never grown up. But Peter Pan had magic. Lin Carter's magic seems to have been acquired by sending four bits and two box tops to Battle Creek, Mich. □



THE MUSTY, DUSTY LANGUAGE OF SCIENCE

by grant carrington



Illustrated by William Rotsler

"What do you eggheads do for fun?" the father asked his son home on vacation from a technical school.

"Oh, we go out, have a few beers, and tell a few off-color equations," the student said.

Unfortunately, scientific humor is often on just such a sophomoric level. I remember sharing an advanced calculus class with Larry Noble during my last semester at NYU. When we reached the proposition that "The set of all real numbers is everywhere dense," I was struck by genius: that night, on the way back to our dorm at University Heights, I proposed to Larry that the set of all mathematicians is everywhere dense. "Especially above the neck," he added, as a corollary to my theorem.

That was the beginning of a series of mathematical jokes. The meaning of that phrase, "The set of all real numbers is everywhere dense," is explained by stating it in another form: "Between every two real numbers, there is always a third real number." still confused? An example may show what I meant, though it by no means proves the statement. Consider the numbers 2 and 4. Obviously 3 lies between them. And between 2 and 3 lies the number 2½ or 5/2. And so on. No matter how small the difference between two real numbers, there is always a third lying in that tiny gap.[1]

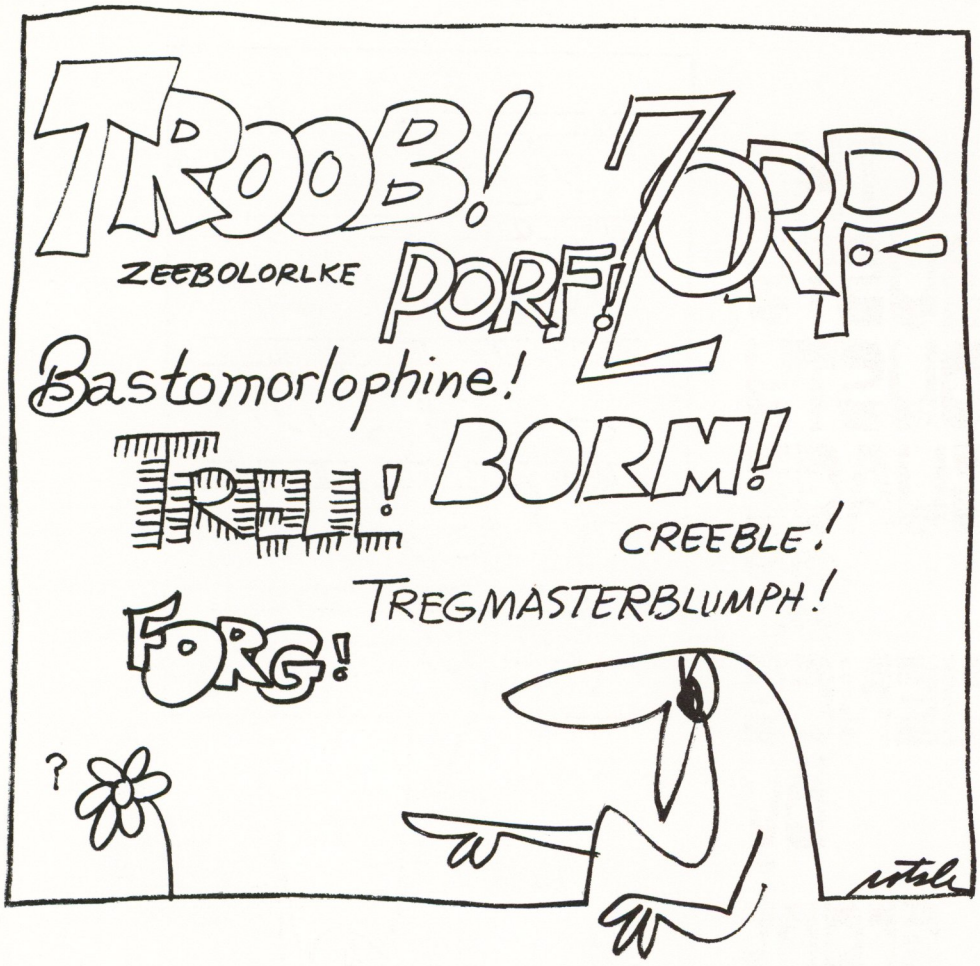
That was the inspiration for Larry's invention of "mathemagic." "Pick two real numbers, any two real numbers, and I'll find a real number between them," he said to me. Somehow, it lacked the bizazz of "Pick a card, any card. . ."

Such is the life of the scientist: full of "in" jokes that he finds difficult (if not impossible) to share with non-colleagues. (The Watergate scandal produced a large number of nonexistent computer programs: NIXON, which erases all your tapes; COX, which demands access to all your files; IMPEACH, which ousts the Executive; and so forth, on to more exotic and less comprehensible ones.)

The layman looks on the scientific life as a dull and dusty one; the language of science, mathematics, is incomprehensible and the words used by scientists are dreary and unimaginative. It is not so.

In particular, atomic scientists have introduced a whole spectrum of words to describe their concepts. The "jif" is a tiny increment of time, much smaller than a second, during which radioactive elements with extremely short half-lives can decompose at a rate that looks long on paper. The "barn" is a unit of pressure, expressing the number of particles (out of a stream of thousands) which hit the target. (It refers back to the old phrase, "He couldn't hit the broad side of a barn," which is quite appropriate when you consider that only two or three of those thousand particles may hit the target.)

Then there is the mythical particle, the "quark," which may be the substance of which protons, electrons, neutrons, and their antiparticles are made. The quark, you may remember, was an odd beastie in a Lewis Carroll poem. (And Carroll himself was in reality the mathematician Charles Dodgson.) And now, James Bjorken and Sheldon L. Glashow have proposed a new property for quarks, the property of charm. But it doesn't end with this invocation of witchcraft (who charmed my antiquark?): another theory proposes a property of color (your quark clashes with my antiquark) and still another



proposes the property of gentleness. (I'd like a housebroken charmed quark in mauve, please.)

The quark was hypothesized by Murray Gell-Mann, the Caltech physicist who invented a method of visualizing subnuclear particles which he dubbed "The Eightfold Way," after the Buddhist eightfold path to nirvana. This conceptualization was remarkably successful in predicting several previously unknown atomic particles. Several more that the Eightfold Way says must exist, have yet to be discovered.

(Gell-Mann is a friend of another Caltech physicist, Richard Feynman, who used to give a yearly lecture to Caltech freshmen on "The Physics of Playing the Bongo Drums.")

The October 1975 issue of *Scientific American* has an article in it, "Quarks With Color and Flavor," by Sheldon Lee Glashow, which I won't pretend to fully understand. But that's not germane to this essay, anyway.

What *is* relevant is that current theory predicts 12 quarks which come in combinations of three colors (red, blue, and yellow) and three flavors (u, d, and s, for "up," "down," and "sideways"—read the article in *Scientific American* for an explanation of *that*). In order to maintain symmetry, charm (which is actually a fourth "flavor" is added to the pot.

On top of that, we have the particle that carries the strong force (the force that holds nuclei together). These particles are called (are you ready?) gluons.

In addition, mesons can be interpreted as being made up of a charmed quark and an uncharmed antiquark. Thomas Applequist and H. David Politzer have named such a particle "charmonium." If charmonium exists, theory also gives us paracharmonium, orthocharmonium, and P-wave charmonium. Charming.

All good things come to an end, however, and it would appear that quarks may be the "ultimate particles," beyond which we cannot go. And with them goes a bunch of old SF stories in which the hero went through successively smaller "atomic universes," sometimes going in a circular pattern until he came back to the one in which he started. Sigh.

Then there's our good friend, the tachyon, postulated by Gerald Feinberg. SF readers are well acquainted with this faster-than-light particle. However, it created a small problem among scientists, for it left a whole class of particles unnamed: slower-than-light particles. There had been no need for a name for that class before: you simply called a particle a particle and it was automatically slower than light. This was no longer true. The problem was solved when some scientific wag dubbed them tardyons. The name stuck.

Nor are physicists the only scientists to have fun with their work. Gene Norris wrote me a letter while working for his Ph.D. in mathematics at the University of Florida that read in part: "I used to be amused at the flippancy of nuclear physicists... But currently I am rather more amused at certain mathematicians who have come up with terms (in a subject called knot theory[2]) such as trees, roofs, floors, wild knots, tame knots; these people write papers with titles like 'Groups of trees on one floor with finitely many tame knots,' etc. In another branch of mathematics, topological algebra, there are mobs, clans (connected mobs) and hanging parties (degenerate mobs). Very homey. It belies the announced intention of mathematicians of being as abstract as possible, perhaps to fill some deep need for experiencing reality." In a P.S., he asked, "Is a compact uniquely pseudocomplemented lattice totally disconnected?" (In answer to that, Gene, first let me make one thing perfectly clear. . .)

All this makes me wonder what units of measurement we would be using if the Paris committee that came up with grams, liters, and meters had been composed of men like Richard Feynman and Murray Gell-Mann. We might be measuring time in decablinks, distance with kilostrides, and weight in microblobs[3]. . .instead of such commonsense measurements as fortnights, feet, and stones.[4] □

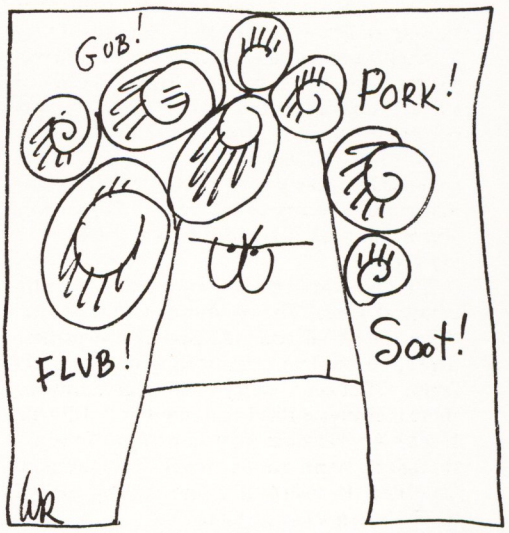
Footnotes

1. A sketch of this proof: all real numbers can be expressed as ratios of integers, p/m. (For example, 2 can be expressed as 2/1, 4/2, etc.) Take any two real numbers, p/m an q/n. If they are not different representations of the same real number, one is larger than the other, say q/n. Then their difference is q/n-p/m (or (qm-pn)/mn). Then p/m+½(q/n-p/m) is greater than p/m but less than q/n. It remains to show that this number, which can also be expressed as (2pn+qm-pn)/2mn (those of you who enjoy doing such things may fill in the intermediate steps), is also a real number, i.e., that the quotient and divisor are both integers.

2. This brings up the question: When is knot theory not theory?

3. And perhaps sound in microvelintys. (Norm Velinty was a rather loud sophomore at Caltech in 1956-57.)

4. An interesting book on humor in science is A Random Walk in Science, *compiled by Robert L. Weber and Eric Mendoza.*



THE SHUFFLER FROM THE STARS

(continued from page 27)

I puffed a few superior puffs on my cheroot and said, "Why in this bag is one of the most potent spells known to man, boy. I'm going to tell you all about it as soon as we get to the Devil's Outhouse."

"Mmmmm," said R 'Astus suspiciously.

The Devil's Outhouse is an odd rock formation in the Midabamboo Swamp, the funnel of an extinct volcano in the shape of a hideous and gigantic privy. Still emitting noxious sulphuric fumes, although the last eruption had occurred in pre-Columbian times, the site was widely known to be frequented by certain degenerate cults and utilized in the practice of their abdominal rites.

As we pushed on into the swamp, R 'Astus said, "Actually, old thing, I'm not certain I wish to accompany you on this necromantic errand—"

"Too late for that, boy, for here we are!" With that I sprang back with my fingers extended into the magical Bantu Elderly Sign, which is irresistible by denizens of the nether regions. R 'Astus fell to the ground.

"Please," he cried, gesturing frantically, but I kept him pinned down with one magically gesturing hand while with the other I reached into the black bag and pulled out thirty feet of stout hempen cord.

I threw a coil of rope over an overhanging limb and slipped the prepared noose around the neck of the helpless demon, who had begun to utter piteous cries harkening back to his first servile gibberings, and even presumed to call down on me the dreaded Curse of Kingfish. I laughed in his face. Again I saw the barbaric roll of eye, cringe of fear, and profusion of perspiration which had been his earlier trademarks, and as I hoisted his quivering body into the leafy bowers, I saw those enormous, clumsy feet kicking air in a parody of his infamous shuffle. I had remembered well the unfailing oriental method of dealing with uppity demons, and had practiced it now even as my far-wiser ancestors had. With aid of the can of gasoline I had previously secreted for this exact purpose, I completed the classical pattern of the ancient Chinese rite of Lin-Ching.

But as I sit here now in the midst of growing civil disorder, thinking back to that horror-haunted period of my life when I was served by the dark demon R 'Astus, I am apprehensive of the future. *They* can now eat in the same establishments as us, and who is to say what the future will bring in the way of more terrifying interminglings of racial stocks which can have no possible relationship other than that of master and slave? I know I should feel some security in knowing that I have tried to do my part to halt the creeping advance of those mongrel hordes, but even as I write this manuscript, a thrill of fear passes through my body, and I shudder to contemplate what that chanting, subhuman throng had in mind when it passed along the Rue De Vudu below my garret room so many hours ago, for now I half-fancy I can hear *certain hideous sounds, the sounds of many pairs of gigantic feet doing a slow, horribly rhythmic soft-shoe shuffle on my roof!* □

THE DEEP WORLD . . . NIGHT LAND

(continued from page 18)

30. Ibid., p. 485.
31. Ibid., p. 489.
32. Ibid., p. 501.
33. Ibid., p. 503.
34. Ibid., p. 504.
35. Ibid., p. 495.
36. Ibid., pp. 512-513.
37. P. 329.
38. Other possible influences ought to be mentioned. The Bible is perhaps too obvious an influence to be mentioned. John Bunyan is another possibility. Hodgson, in all four of his novels and in many of his short stories, used besiegement and questing, and he combined them whenever he could, as here,—as if an episode of Bunyan's *The Holy War* turned into his *Pilgrim's Progress.* The feeling seems to be present, but the only evidence that Hodgson read Bunyan seems to be Hodgson's use—once—of the unusual compound "mansoul" in *The Night Land,* and that might be a typographical error. Moskowitz shows that Hodgson admired both Poe (who might be considered a pervasive but indefinite influence) and Wells (who is a very definite one, though not so strongly as in Hodgson's earlier work). Verne's *Journey to the Center of the Earth* should be considered, for the setting and the journey itself; Lord Lytton's *The Coming Race* (which derives in part from Verne's *Journey,* as well as from Robert Paltock's *Peter Wilkins*), for the setting; William Morris's fantastic novels, for their archaism and structure, and particularly his *The Well at the World's End;* George du Maurier's *Peter Ibbetson,* for the frame, the psychic time-travel and the eschatological concern; and Gabriel de Tardé's *Underground Man,* for the setting, again. . . . But Hodgson did not take anything from these writers or these works the way he took the last episode of Flammarion's *Omega* for his over-all plot. As for that, it is interesting to note that the pattern also appears in Hodgson's first novel and in some of his short stories without any resemblance to *Omega.*
39. Proctor, op. cit., pp. 289-290.
40. Ibid., pp. 300-301.
41. Ibid., p. 300. □

TOM, TOM! A REMINISCENCE

(continued from page 6)

his screenplays was going to be filmed that brough him back to Texas.

December 1972: I was in Dallas at some sort of comic book/movie convention held in the basement of a roadside motel on I-35. Things were arranged so that, sitting at the registration desk, you face these wide stairs coming down from the real world into the closed one of the convention. People appeared like out of a mirage, only wrong end first. Tom had been gone from Dallas for almost two years, doing nobody knew what.

Anyway, I was looking at the steps when some blue deck shoes appeared, then a pair of straight-legged pants. I held my breath. When the pants widened out and a nondescript tan workshirt hove into view, I was sure.

"Tom, Tom!" I yelled, and jumped over the table, scattering badges and attendees in my path.

As the rest of him appeared on the stairway, other voices took up the chant behind me.

"Tom, Tom!"

I've never seen a more surprised look on the face of a human being in my life.

He moved out to Woodson, Texas after Christmas, and I started getting this marvelous series of letters from him. Most importantly, he had begun to write stories.

The first few months in 1973 were crazy ones for a lot of us in the Turkey City SF Writer's group. We were all—Steve Utley, Joe Pumilia, Lisa Tuttle, Jake Saunders, George Proctor, Bruce Sterling, Bud Simons, me—determined to sell stories everywhere, storm the field, eat all the dinners, break all the plates. We were all from Texas, and we had all started writing about the same time. We had one thing in common: when it came to Tom's work, we were in awe, and most of us felt we were fighting for second place. We were as proud of him as if he were our own big brother.

Half the things that Tom and I talked about doing we never did, or we put them aside, or transmogrified them into unrecognizable things. Other stories, other things took their places. We did our work. In 1974, Tom moved to Kansas City, founded Nickelodeon Graphics with Ken Keller, published *Nickelodeon,* wrote his Nebula and Hugo nominated novel, *Blind Voices,* and other stories, edited the MidAmeriCon Progress Reports and Program Book for the Kansas City Worldcon Committee, ran the film program at that Worldcon, was up for awards.

He was looking forward to moving back to Texas or California and doing nothing but writing full time. One early November morning in 1977, he was found dead at his typewriter, seven pages into a new story. He was 42 years old.

It's been two years now, and I can't think of Tom being gone. I miss him and keep looking around for him.

I'll leave you with the happiest memory. It is 1976, at MidAmeriCon. Tom has won the Nebula earlier in the year for "San Diego Lightfoot Sue." He is now up for the Hugo for that story, and for the John W. Campbell Award for best new author.

I have seen Tom earlier in his hotel room. He is so nervous he can hardly talk, the first time I've ever seen him that way. He finally has to ask all us well-wishers to leave, because our enthusiasm is getting to him, and he has to take a shower and change. He has shown us his outfit for the evening. It is an incredible powder-blue tuxedo, with tails, the kind that Kurt Vonnegut calls a clawhammer suit. It has a white boiled shirt with a ruffled braincoral front and narrow black patent leather shoes that look like obsidian mortar trowels.

And now, an hour later, Tom comes into the auditorium to take his place with the other nominees. Spontaneous applause breaks out.

The ceremony begins, and they get to the Campbell Award. It is Tom's last eligible year. The competition is stiff and there is a palpable tension in the air, more than I've seen at awards like this before.

The nominees are read, and MC Bob Tucker opens the envelope.

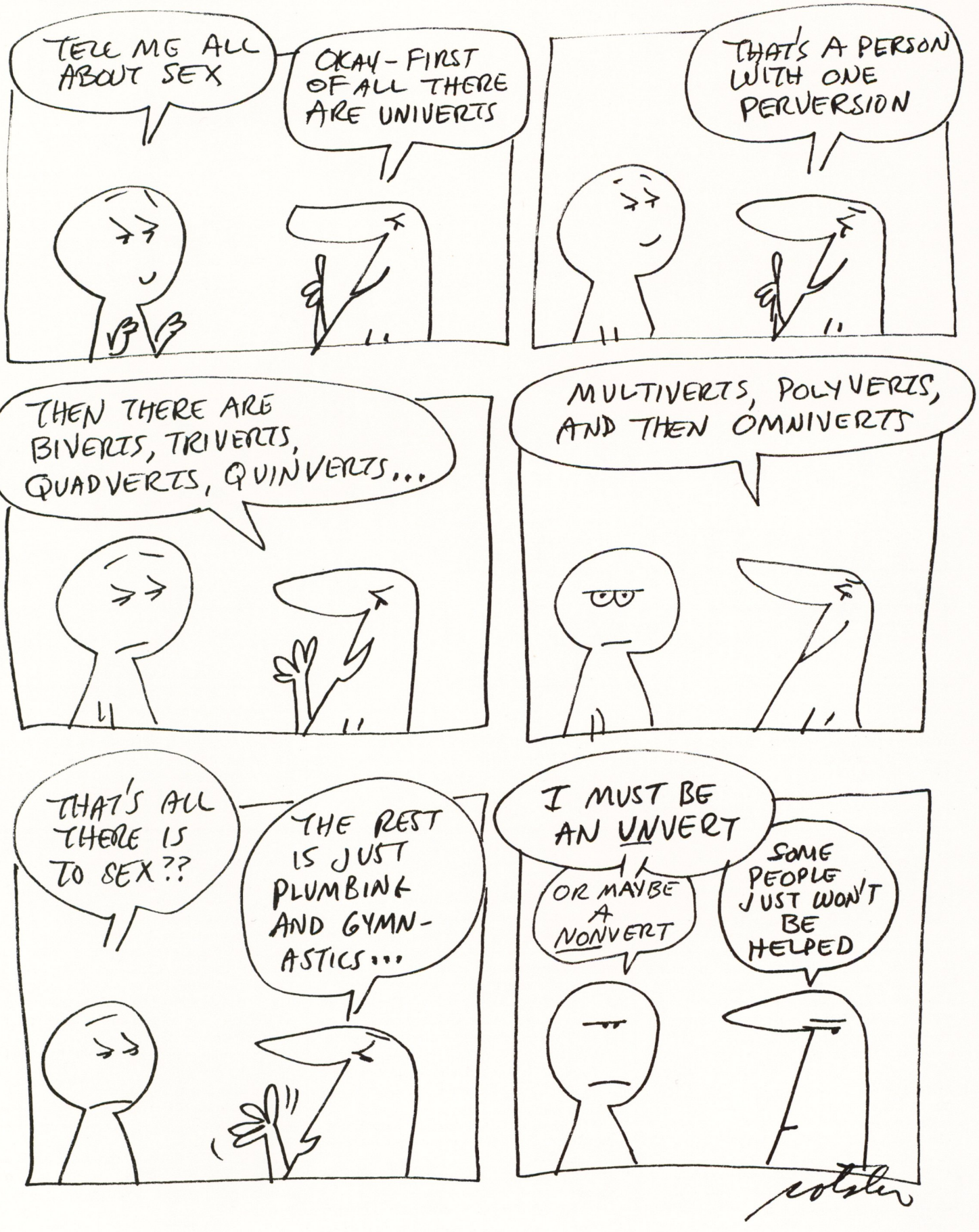
And says the magic name.

Applause comes in waves, and Tom rises, magnificent in the blue tux, and makes his way toward the stage.

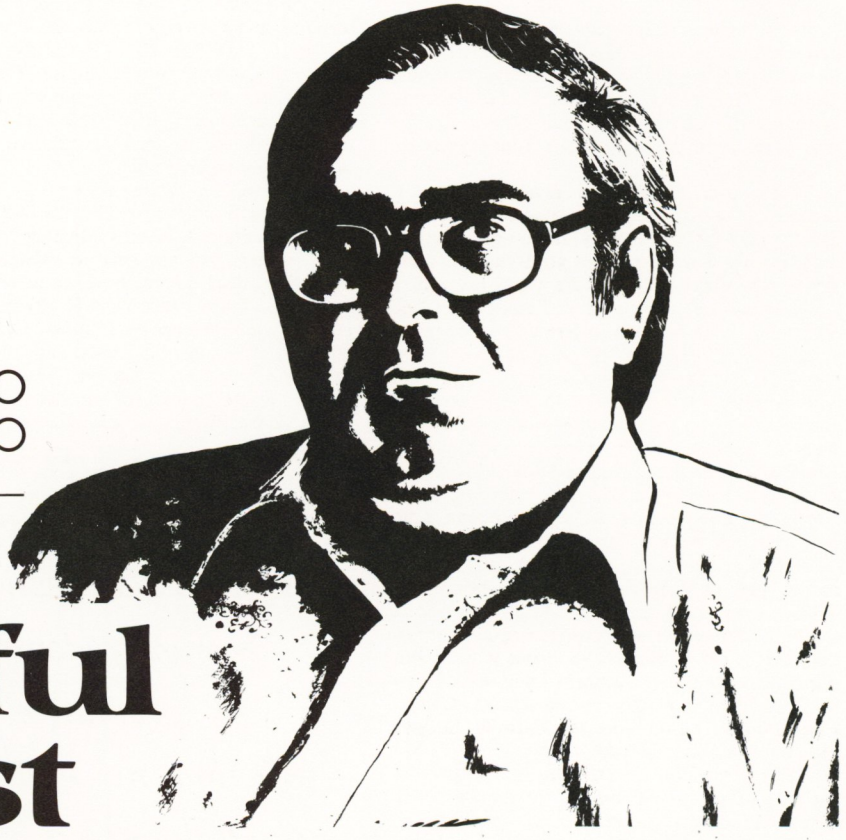
As he walks through the hall, he is accompanied by a chant, which comes from me, from his friends, from other writers around us.

It goes:

"Tom, Tom!" □


TELL ME ALL ABOUT SEX
OKAY - FIRST OF ALL THERE ARE UNIVERTS
THAT'S A PERSON WITH ONE PERVERSION
THEN THERE ARE BIVERTS, TRIVERTS, QUADVERTS, QUINVERTS...
MULTIVERTS, POLYVERTS, AND THEN OMNIVERTS
THAT'S ALL THERE IS TO SEX??
THE REST IS JUST PLUMBING AND GYMNASTICS...
I MUST BE AN UNVERT
OR MAYBE A NONVERT
SOME PEOPLE JUST WON'T BE HELPED
rotsler

Tom Reamy: a rare & masterful fantasist



Editor's Note: As this issue was going to press, I acquired the following essay by Algis Budrys, an insightful appraisal of Tom Reamy's writing and his place in fantasy fiction. Because this comeback issue of Trumpet *is partially centered around Tom (for reasons noted elsewhere) it seemed like a fitting way to close out this issue.*

This essay will be appearing in George R. R. Martin's New Voices IV *anthology (the Campbell Award winner and nominees for 1976) which will appear this coming September from Berkeley Books. It will serve as an afterword to Tom's story, "M Is for the Million Things," one of his two remaining unpublished stories.*

I want to thank George Martin, for bringing this piece to my attention, and Algis Budrys and Victoria Schochet (sf editor of Berkeley Books) for their kind permission in allowing me to present this essay for the first time anywhere. Their kindness and cooperation is greatly appreciated.—KK

Photo by Jack Stone

by Algis Budrys

This isn't a memoir of Tom Reamy, or an obituary. Those are to be found in *San Diego Lightfoot Sue and Other Stories*, the excellent posthumous collection from Earthlight Publishers, a small but very capable press located at 5539 Jackson, Kansas City, MO, 64130. The trade edition is $14.95 and the value is there. The memoir is by Howard Waldrop, who knew Tom very well. The obituary—the eulogy, to be strict about it—is disguised as an introduction by Harlan Ellison It may very well be the most usefully analytical piece of nonfiction writing Harlan has ever done.

My essay here is an appraisal of Tom Reamy's work, which, whether good, bad or indifferent in specific cases, had a rare and masterly touch to it. I hardly knew Tom himself.

We met once, in my back yard, at a writers' workshop, to which he had submitted a manuscript that needed more work. After a while, the workshop degenerated into a picnic with beer, on into the gloaming and then the starshine, and details blur.

I met him for the second and last time at a Chicago SF convention. I was deathly ill with the flu until the day before I was scheduled on a panel. Weak as only a bear-sized kitten can be, I staggered in, and somehow my wife and I found ourselves eating lunch with Tom, whom I'd invited over to our table because he had struck me as a friendly person.

I remember nothing of our conversation; I can't recall the sound of his voice. What I remember from these brief occasions is a large, shaggy man who looked as if he'd been outdoors a great deal in his life; a weathered man who could fix your truck, break your horse, cook for a crew, and would always be careful to latch the door behind him when he left your property.

And that's what I know about Tom Reamy the individual, firsthand. Secondhand, I know he was an active member of the SF fan community for many years, doing excellent work as an amateur magazine publisher, convention organizer and artist. This is what makes his writing even more remarkable. Many fans graduate into professional SF writing. It can usually be seen in

their work. They—we—tend to spend their first professional years in producing new versions of stories read in younger days, in one or another of the traditional styles.

Reamy's style, or rather his expression, has had some antecedents in speculative fiction; not many, and almost none in genre magazine SF. R. A. Lafferty, I think, comes from where Tom comes from, but there is really no one like Lafferty, either. Here and there, other famous genre bylines have produced sporadic examples of work that might be tune-detectived to find "sources" for Reamy, particularly if the detective is tone-deaf. But it's not really there, in the magazines or in the paperbacks from magazine-trained writers.

Tom's novel, *Blind Voices*, is almost certainly the work of someone who has read *The Circus of Doctor Lao*, by Jack Finney—a non-genre writer whose other work betrays a youth spent somewhere where the railroads are single-tracked. I don't know any of the immediately preceding assertions for a fact. Even less surely, there's a tinge in *Blind Voices* of the Ray Bradbury who had left the SF pulp magazines behind and started selling to media like *Mademoiselle*. But that may not be true; perhaps both of them go back to Thomas Wolfe, more or less together, Bradbury from the Midwest of Waukegan, Illinois, and Reamy of Kansas, where the Midwest is not quite the same but both versions relate in a variety of ways to Asheville in the Carolinas.

Faulkner. Faulkner, too, with his ear for names and his penchant for listing them; then Wolfe, who loved lists, and then such Reamy stories as *Sting*—an abandoned, hopeless beginning for a novel made over from a dreadful, cheapo-horror screen scenario—whose first few hundred words introduce us to Aaron Hibbits, Elias Pinker, Lester and Ira Tidwell, Belinda Hancks and Callie Overcash.

But you see how quickly and inescapably we moved out of the SF milieu for Tom's precedents. Good, bad or indifferent—and like all good writers when he was bad he was horrid, and when you tried to guide him he became indifferent—good, bad or indifferent he was always as much himself as any artist can possibly be. Magazine SF—of which he must have read a great deal, and enjoyed, and taken some comfort in—had entertained and nurtured him in his youth, but it had left few marks on his writing.

He appears to have done that difficult thing which most writers eventually come to if they're any good—the breaking away from doing new syntheses of material in the existing literature, and the turning toward doing expressions of actual life actually observed. "Write what you know," they tell you in the academies. Most young SF writers know very little besides SF. Tom appears to have known so much about life at so early an age that no one ever saw him in an apprenticeship.

He was older than the average novice when he began submitting stories for publication: in his thirties. Old friends nevertheless assure us that he had been writing the same way for years, during a time when he was too diffident to mail submissions to the market. This appraisal may be objectively true. Tom was a remarkably easy person to grow fond of, and memories now will be fonder still. But there may be something to it.

In the *San Diego Lightfoot Sue* collection there's one story, "Dinosaurs," which reads as if its author were aware of the popular SF market, in a distant way; it reads more as if he were aware of E. M. Forster's "The Machine Stops," which has been in the literature of England since the days when Aldous Huxley was recruiting mobs to drum H. G. Wells out of town. The remainder of everything else we have preserved from Tom's prose comes from both before and after "Dinosaurs," and there just isn't any Huxleyan SF in it, nor any Wellsian, either, which means in the latter case that it steadfastly ignores all opportunities to have visibly sprung from American newsstand science fiction.

American newsstand science fiction, dominated by the neo-Wellsian visions of editor John W. Campbell, Jr., is what is usually referred to in popular American discussions of "science fiction," or "sci-fi," that pervasive false neologism which all good SF people despise. This requires some writers to deny they write science fiction, and to resent having their work sold in the sci-fi media, because not all speculative fiction is Wellsian, or technological.

That's another discussion entirely, and won't be elaborated much here. But the fact is that, as Ellison points out, Reamy wasn't a "science fiction" writer, yet appeared consistently in SF magazines, had his posthumous novel reviewed in SF media and sold on the SF shelves in bookstores, wrote screenplays for what Hollywood at least considers mainline sci-fi, and is here in this anthology of science fiction. Furthermore, he won an award named for the editor with whom he is specifically not connected. Another award was the Nebula, from the Science Fiction Writers of America, for the novelette which is specifically singled out in *San Diego Lightfoot Sue.*

"Reamy's style, or rather his expression, has antecedents in speculative fiction; not many, and almost none in genre magazine SF."

Why is he here?

In part, because he was beyond doubt a New Voice. In part because most of these categorizations are false. There is a thing called speculative fiction, which subsumes science fiction and fantasy, and all their sub-generic compartmentalizations, and is a branch of world literature coeval with nonspeculative fiction, which is the only other kind of fiction there is. Both kinds can be "realistic," or not, according to their authors' bent.

So the usual SF community label for the other kind is "mundane" fiction; generally, fiction in which characters move through a setting with an actual counterpart in the world, or in the known history of the world. The normal use for mundane fiction is to illuminate some aspect of humanity by moving an unusual character through such a setting. The usual use for speculative fiction is to illuminate some aspect of humanity by moving a reasonably familiar character through a social setting that never was, and perhaps never will be, and following how he reacts.

Well, now, you say, most of Reamy's stories are set in Kansas, or the Carolinas, or West Texas, or Southern California. How are these places 'a social setting that never was, and perhaps never will be'?

Are they not, as Tom depicts them? They *seem* real; that's the good SF writer at work, playing on what little we actually know about such places. But in each case, Tom intrudes an element that never was: demons, stinging menaces from the sky, a traveling circus whose "freaks" are actual creatures from mythology, children transmogrified into an inexplicable new race which attacks and devours its elders. . . .

Think about it. Blatantly in some cases, subtly in others, Tom rummaged through the used furniture of conventional science fiction or fantasy to select analogues of the real fears of small town America, or, even more tellingly, the secret desires. Never was, never will be. But is true, is true, in a way that "naturalism" or "realism" cannot ever attain.

The "feel" of speculative fiction is unmistakable, whether it be couched in fantasy or in science fiction. This is so despite the fact that speculative and mundane fiction both can display large sections of material which, taken word for word or paragraph for paragraph, seems fully appropriate to their sister kinds. Editors and writers know the one from the other, and so do readers. The gap is rarely bridged.

There is no place else for Tom Reamy's work to appear except in the SF media. It is pure speculative fiction. If it appears in media labelled "science fiction," when in fact it has no recognizable 'science' in it, that's because publishers work in narrow categories but most modern editors, thank God, have a clearer idea of just how broad the main stream of SF can run. And exactly the same applies when it appears in media labelled "fantasy." Or, as happened with much of Tom's work, in a medium called *The Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction*, whose very existence and enduring prestige over the past thirty years ought to tell you something about just how restrictive these marketplace tags really are when it comes down to the intimacy between writer and reader.

An SF reader whose first preference is for technology stories will nevertheless, if pressed, read fantasy . . . sometimes when hardly pressed at all. An SF reader whose first preference is for dark, wizard-ridden fantasy will nevertheless, provided he can understand some of the vocabulary, read science fiction on a sunny afternoon. So Tom Reamy doesn't have to fit in any narrow spaces. He can just be, and we can let the marketing departments of the publishing houses grapple with exactly what to call it all. That's the level at which the problem belongs, and may it consume many luncheon conferences. The people who vote on the Campbell Award have a better thing to do.

* * * * *

All right—what is Tom Reamy's place in literature? Somewhere over there with the populists, I think; that rambling Steamboat Gothic hostel with the gallused gentlemen leaning back in straight chairs on the porch, puffing stogies and sending out for more bourbon and branchwater, generally ignoring each other's remarks but willing to get up a game of horseshoes at which surprising intensity will surface.

Over under the cottonwood is the Model A Ford pickup with the leaky radiator and sagging doors; John Steinbeck drove up in it and just parked it there. I can't quite make out who that is sitting on the running board with his knees up near his chest, but he moved off the end of the porch where Erskine Caldwell started telling ethnic jokes, and he sits where he is now with his broad back up against the warm black metal and the silvery dust, chain-smoking.

By and large, Tom belongs away from cities. Cities are places where people pass a package around, charging fees at each step, and when the package has been painted red and gotten back to the person who first brought it in, its value has risen 500% and everyone has earned a week's pay. Out in the rest of the world, where the feed has to be spread and the manure has to be shoveled, everyone no matter how intrinsically stupid understands that much about how the world works.

Tom is of the people who can go to no city except Hollywood. City people don't know how to fix their own elevators, find the shutoff valves on their own plumbing, or distribute their own food; i.e., city people practice an insane dependency. In a sense, it doesn't matter if they get up in the morning on time, because if the grocer's warehouse delivery truck driver didn't, it's all over anyhow. Only in Hollywood, which doesn't exist, is this fact irrelevant.

The thing to understand about Tom's characters is that people named Aaron Hibbits or Callie Overcash know from childhood that they'll be immediately affected if the crops fail and, worse than that, only systematic, unremitting and essentially repetitious work will affect the speed with which the crops fail. But they might fail anyway, even though you always put more work into each day than your body can make up for overnight.

The people of central Kansas and western Texas, like the people of Waukegan or of Asheville, North Carolina, know this equation. A life directly based on agriculture consists of evaluating how much must be done, and also of how much must be left to slide because while any damned fool can see it needs doing, a smarter head can see it won't pay.

You talk about a Global Village, and in truth the people out in the panhandles of this world see the same TV shows at the same time city people do. But city people see life as a series of transactions, while the people Tom knew see life as a holding action. They know that people are rather simply motivated.

American newsstand SF is city writing. It assumes you can break even or perhaps gain; that there potentially is immortality. A personal immortality in which you, as you are, might be extended indefinitely into the future, with time to nurture and refine a great many elaborations of what the human nervous system can come up with to keep itself entertained.

Out where the dust is full of dead earthworm particles, it is understood that the only immortality is theoretical and involves a complete metamorphosis. There are things to do on the basis that they must be accomplished within a limited time, because after that you have been translated, and will no longer be in a position to affect your situation. Every moment of temptation assumes great importance, because it's fleeting, and the time may come when you will bitterly regret not having given in to it. Similarly with moments of beauty and opportunities for love. And then there is the day-to-day business of making life mutually tolerable; the sip, sip, sip in the juke joint or the blind pig, with its rigidly structured chaffering among the participants, or the churchly politicking and its rigidly structured gossip; either way, it's a means of keeping yourself usefully busy.

The reason I can't make this more clear is because it really has to be shown to you in stories, unless you were involved in this sort of life yourself at some extended time. I thought I might be able to do it in expository prose, but all I can do is hint at it.

Fortunately, Tom has provided the stories; I hope I've provided some basis for understanding in what essential way they're realistic about a milieu not many SF people can assimilate, and how this makes them feel different . . . how it is that Tom's stories are of a rare sort, because the usual kind of SF rarely explores into that aspect of reality. Most "bucolic" SF is couched to be understandable to city people; most of its principal characters are city-oriented people who admire the sound of crickets in the hush of twilight and like to go fishing in the streams. They're tourists, and we tour with them through their eyes. To Tom, such people are aliens making a fundamental error.

* * * * *

Leaving the land is something that many country people have to do. It's a way of giving in to temptation, and it's also a way of acknowledging that the land life now requires a certain proportion of emissaries, to move among the city people and make sure that at least a minimal quantity of goods and services—such as encouraging messages—gets sent back. It's very difficult to decide, if you're one of those people, whether your decision is in accord with ultimately useful motives or whether you've just decided to make the ultimately futile move of opting out. In the cities, you quickly fall in with all the other sorts of people to whom life is a holding action; it's the only touch of home.

"His strength is not in his craftsmanship, better than average though it is. His strength is in how he looked at the world and conveyed that view in his stories."

So Tom's "urban" fiction is country fiction in urban settings. The people in it can't be sure of why they do things they do, but they have a very clear idea of what must be done if it can, and they know that whatever they're doing can't be done forever. They are not a guerilla army with ambitions to seize the megalithic sprawl; they are a separate race who did not pile these stones but are bivouaced among them, who must be constantly aware of the running changes the proprietors are making, and who know that most collisions with the immortality freaks will be misfortunate.

The central thing to remember is that there are two kinds of action, and only two. One of them is the following of routine, which is routine because it has been proven safest and most effective in a dangerous and ultimately overpowering world.

Urbanized, or still on the land, routine is one of the courses of action, and is the mandatory one. The other course is to do something for the hell of it. Under the pressure of the mandatory, the temptation to break out can become overwhelming. When that fleeting moment arrives, the need to seize it prevails.

It *is* a fleeting moment, and it must present itself. It's not possible to decide to break routine, or it wouldn't be routine. A fortunate chance must occur. And things being the way they are in the world, it may be a chance to do good, or it may be a chance to do bad, but it's essentially the same temptation. Furthermore, who truly knows the Ultimate Plan? Might it in the end be good to do bad now? Or might it be the other way around. So doing either good or bad are seen as incredible risks . . . and irresistible risks. Man is born to trouble as the sparks fly upward, the Good Book says; it says specifically that you just can't get away from that.

* * * * *

In certain cases, the awareness of all this produces maniacs like the James boys, Bonnie and Clyde, and John Dillinger. City people will tell you these rural folk heroes were nurtured and sheltered out in the sticks because they stole from the rich and gave to the poor. This is urban transactional thinking. They were sheltered for the same reason you let a dog come up on your porch in the rain; you know that in God's eyes you could just as well have been a dog, and that only almost unbearable attention to details of dress and roof-mending prevents you from being as a dog.

In all cases, this produces an underlying melancholy as well as a great deal of caution.

In a certain few cases, it produces a sweet gentleness that goes right down to the core of what you are, and is thus invincible.

That, I think, is the secret of Tom Reamy the individual as well as Tom Reamy the writer. He knew what people are, and he loved it. Not because he didn't know any better; he was a man full grown, probably full grown at an earlier age than most, and he knew all the sides of being human. He loved us anyway, and we should feel flattered; the verdict was rendered by someone competent to judge.

As for what literary history will make of his role in it:

No one can tell. He was more than average proficient; he would have gotten better. *Blind Voices* is a good novel, in a field which produces far fewer novels than it does book-length fiction. It's not a great one. It could have used another draft. His strength is not in his craftsmanship, better than average though it is. His strength is in how he looked at the world and conveyed that view in his stories. But that view has been seen before in literature. The unique thing about Tom was that it hasn't been seen very much at all in any kind of SF, and never with such consistency and intensity in U.S. magazine SF.

I don't know who there is to follow him. If he had stayed with us, he could have made the mode viable all by himself, gradually attracting apprentices, inspiring others to produce variations—could, in short, have melded his kind of work into the continually evolving body which attracts new persons to SF fandom and then into professional SF writing. Then, looking back from a time when he was, say, in his late fifties or sixties, we would honor him for having accomplished the thing we now praise him for having avoided.

As it is, he may stand by himself for quite a while. What usually happens in such cases is that literary history doesn't render a verdict; it loses it in the files. The water may close over this person's work, though it might take longer for the man himself to be forgotten by those who knew him, or by those who have heard what's said about him by those who knew him.

But if there are any country people out there who have been thinking about giving it a whirl, please do. There are shoes to be filled. Not Tom's; your own. □

"Paths were few and winding, and led them often to the edge of some sheer fall. . ."

—THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE RING