

***SF/Fan* Origins #74**

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The Journal of the National Fantasy Fan Federation's History and Research Bureau
Edited by Samuel Lubell



100 Years of Amazing Stories
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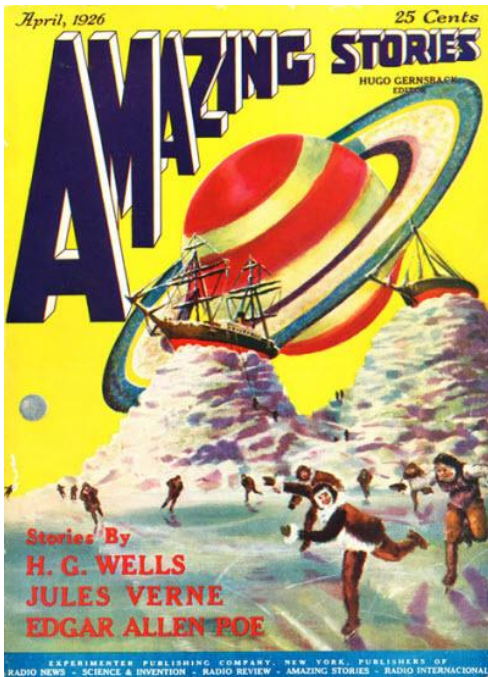
From Wizard to Scientist:
Changing Views toward the
Scientist From Hawthorne to
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Editorial Note

Welcome to issue #74 of *Origins*, a National Fantasy Fan Federation (N3F) publication of N3F's Historical and Research Bureau. *Origins* covers the history of science fiction/fantasy, fandom, and related science focusing on pre-21st century content. Note that reviews and summaries may have spoilers. I urge people to send in articles, letters, reviews of older SF, and anything relevant to SamJLubell@gmail.com. I would be interested in stories on how people discovered fandom and what they did. I am also interested in articles about SF and fandom in other countries. I also welcome art. Thanks to Jose Sanchez for the cover and interior illustrations (pages 4 & 9).

Please support N3F by joining and paying annual dues, which are only \$6 (for Electronic Members, \$18 for a Regular Membership that gives you a mailed paper version of *The National Fantasy Fan*). Paid members can vote for the Neffy Awards and N3F officers. Visit <https://tnfff.org/to-join/>

Literary Fandom: 100 Years of Amazing Stories By Samuel Lubell



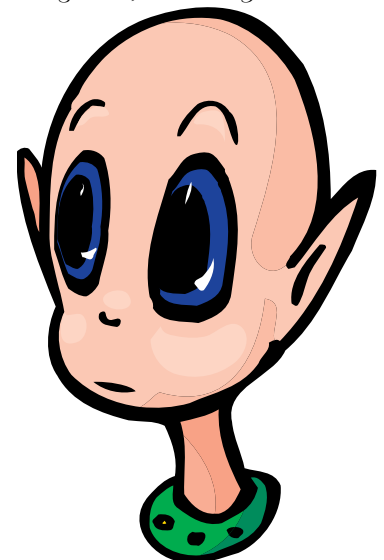
Pinning down the start of science fiction is difficult. I like to use the publication of *Frankenstein* in 1818. But *Frankenstein* could also be called a Gothic or a Horror novel. And one can cite the occasional earlier works that could be considered science fiction, including *Somnium* by Johannes Kepler in 1634. For science fiction as a genre, a frequently cited date is March 1926 (100 years ago this year), when the first issue of *Amazing Stories* hit the newsstands (cover date of April). Before this, pulp magazines like *Argosy* published the occasional science fiction story. And *Weird Tales*, which launched in March 1923, certainly published some science fiction, but it was more focused on horror and dark fantasy. Still, *Amazing Stories* was the first (of many) science fiction magazines.

Hugo Gernsback, the publisher of *Modern Electronics* (1908) and *Electrical Experimenter* (1913) published some science fiction in those publications, which were mainly focused on non-fiction and science for hobbyists. He wanted to do an all-science fiction magazine and came up with *Amazing Stories*, originally edited by Thomas O'Connor Sloane. At first the magazine mostly reprinted what was then called scientification stories, but gradually printed more and more

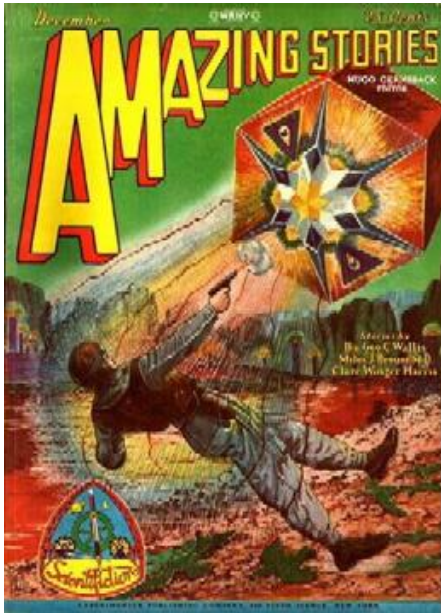
new stories. Within a year, it had a circulation of 150,000. This led to a sister magazine, *Amazing Stories Quarterly*. The first issue of *Amazing* included:

- "Off on a Comet-or Hector Servadac," by Jules Verne
- "The New Accelerator," by H. G. Wells
- "The Man From the Atom," by G. Peyton Wertenbaker
- "The Thing From-Outside," by George Allen England
- "The Man Who Saved the Earth," by Austin Hall
- "The Facts in the Case of Mr. Valdemar," by Edgar Allan Poe

Gernsback, while a visionary, was not always practical when it came to paying his authors and printers. He lost control of the magazine in March 1929 and his company declared bankruptcy. The magazine was sold to Teck Publications, a subsidiary of McFadden Publications, a business magazine group. While it survived the Great Depression, sales dropped and the magazine went bimonthly. In 1933 it shrunk to pulp magazine size. In 1939, Ziff-Davis bought the magazine and made fan Raymond Palmer its editor. Palmer restored profitability but at the expense of quality and the magazine's reputation went downhill with the publication of the so-called Shaver Mysteries, starting with Richard Shaver's "I Remember Lemuria"



(March 1945). Shaver claimed the stories about a secret underground civilization were not fiction but true, resulting in substantial debate in fandom.



An attempt by new editor Howard Browne in 1949 to turn *Amazing Stories* into a higher quality slick publication (as the pulp magazines were dying) failed. Instead, *Amazing Stories* became a digest bimonthly publication in April-May 1953. It became *Amazing Science Fiction* in 1958 for an issue and then *Amazing Science Fiction Stories*. Circulation declined so that by 1964, the magazine had under 30,000 copies sold, and for a while was mostly a reprint magazine (getting in trouble since it frequently failed to pay the original authors for the reprints). In 1960, it restored its original name and then in 1965, it went bimonthly. By 1969, when Ted White took over as editor, *Amazing's* circulation was 38,500 with just 4% being subscribers (with the other issues sold at newsstands (remember them?). In 1970, he renamed the magazine *Amazing Science Fiction Stories*. Circulation continued to fall to just 23,000 by October 1975 and the magazine went quarterly in 1976.

In 1980, *Amazing* merged with sister magazine *Fantastic* and went bimonthly again, although circulation dropped even more. In May 1982, game company TSR bought the magazine for the name, and stopped publishing in January 1995. When Wizards of the Coast bought TSR, they began publishing *Amazing* again with the July 1998 issue, with some licensed tie-in fiction. The quarterly issues ended in Summer 2000 with their 600th issue. There were occasional attempts to restart the magazine in the 21st century, none producing regular issues for more than a couple of years. Currently, the magazine exists as a website.

Amazing published the first story by several important writers including John W. Campbell, Isaac Asimov, Howard Fast, Ursula K. Le Guin, Roger Zelazny, Piers Anthony, Michael P. Kube-McDowell, John E. Stith, Richard Paul Russo, and Thomas M. Disch. But after its first few years, the magazine was eclipsed by Campbell's *Astounding* and never recaptured its former glory.

Literary: Author Spotlight: Jack Williamson (1908-2006) By Samuel Lubell



Born John Stewart Williamson, Jack Williamson had a long career in science fiction for which he was nicknamed the dean of science fiction writers. He was born in the Arizona territories and travelled with his family to New Mexico via a covered wagon pulled by a horse just like the original pioneers. He sold his first story "The Metal Men" to Hugo Gernsback who published it in *Amazing Stories* (December 1928). He shortly afterwards sold stories to pulps like *Science Wonder Stories*. He soon found a mentor in Miles J. Breuer and collaborated on stories and his first novel, *Birth of a New Republic*, which was published in *Amazing Stories Quarterly*, Winter 1931. His career stretched to 77 years with the publication of his last novel, "The Stonehenge Gate" in 2005.

Williamson taught at the Eastern New Mexico University from 1960 to 1977, although he did not finish his PhD until 1964. It houses the Jack Williamson Science Fiction Library, one of the premier science fiction collections in the US.



He is probably best known for his Humanoids series (starting in 1947) and his Legion of Space series (1947) and his many collaborations with Frederick Pohl including the *Undersea Trilogy* (1954), *Starchild Trilogy* (1964), and the *Saga of Cuckoo* (1975). Williamson invented the terms “terraforming,” “psionics,” “genetic engineering,” and “spaceport”. His early work had some of the dreamlike texture of A Merritt, but he soon learned how to incorporate a more scientific style.

He won a Hugo in 1985 for his biography “Wonder’s Child” and his 2001 novella “The Ultimate Earth” won a Hugo (best novella) and a Nebula (best novella). He won the Science Fiction Writers of America’s Grand Master Award in 1976, the World Fantasy Award in 1994, and the Horror Writer of America’s Bram Stoker Award for Lifetime Achievement in 1997.

Readers new to Williamson may want to start with his collection, “The Best of Jack Williamson” (1978), which is out of print. I’d also recommend his Legion of Space series for those who like classic space opera and his Starchild trilogy with Fred Pohl. A few of his shorts are in the public domain (<https://gutenberg.org/ebooks/search/?query=Jack+Williamson>). Haffner Press did a complete eight-volume Collected Stories of Jack Williamson that are mostly out of print.

**Literary: Review of John Wyndham (1903–1969). *Trouble with Lichen* (1960)
Reviewed by Mark Nelson**

It was Diana Brackley who put the milk out of the cat; who dropped a speck of lichen in it by mistake; who noticed how the

lichen stopped the milk turning.

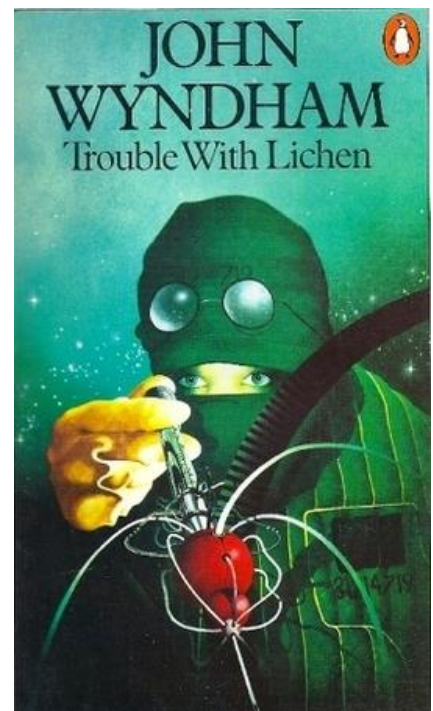
But it was Francis Saxover, the famous biochemist, who carried on from there; who developed Antigerone, the cure for aging; who then tried to suppress a discovery which certainly in the megaton range.

And so it was Diana Brackley who went to down with Antigerone in one of John Wyndham’s gayest and most satirical forays into the fantastic.

– Blurb from back cover of the 1969 Penguin paperback edition of *Trouble with Lichen*.

The essential idea of *Trouble with Lichen* is that Diane Brackley, a biochemist, discovers an extremely rare lichen that can be used to slow down the aging process, enabling people to live around 200-300 years. Given that only small quantities of the lichen can be cultivated, who should receive its benefits to minimise social upheaval?

It might be said of this novel that it does finish with the end of the story. Neither does it finish at the beginning of the end. Rather, it perhaps finishes





at the end of the beginning of the story. If this book had been published in the 21st century would the author have been pressured to release an endless sequence of novels that develop the basic ideas over the decades, and perhaps centuries, to come? Would that be an improvement on the slim volume, 204 pages, to hand?

Some random musings:

- “Incidentally, did you see that he’s now produced a virus that produces sterility in the male locust?” This is not just a science fiction idea. There has been experimental work, and associated mathematical modelling, on associated ideas. For instance, releasing sterile males into the environment reduces the likelihood that the wild, fertile males, can reproduce. There’s also the use of the *Wolbachia* bacterium, not a virus, to combat the spread of mosquito-borne diseases such as dengue, Zika, and chikungunya.

- Two things came to mind whilst reading this novel. Firstly, Rosalind Franklin’s work using X-ray diffraction was critical to understanding the structure of DNA. She passed away in 1958 and so was not eligible so share the Nobel Prize with Watson and Crick in 1962. Instead, they shared the prize with Maurice Wilkins, her colleague at King’s College London, who often shared her data with Watson and Crick, sometimes without her knowledge or consent. It’s recognised that she did not receive the recognition that she deserved, either in her life time or for many years afterwards.

Secondly, in 1974 Anthony Hewish and Martin Ryle received the 1974 Nobel Prize in Physics for the discovery of pulsars. The discovery of pulsars had only been made in 1967, an unusually rapid award of the Nobel. However, the discovery was actually due to Hewish’s PhD student: Jocelyn Bell Burnell. We can add insult to injury by noting that although the Nobel Prize can be awarded to no more than three individuals, in 1974 it was awarded to only two.

- The discovery of the ‘magic’ properties of the lichen is very reminiscent of Alexander Fleming’s discovery of penicillin in 1928. (This similarity is remarked upon by one of the characters).

- “Does our generation care about the misery it is bequeathing?” A rhetorical question as true today as it was when it was written.

- “She sat down gracefully. Diana offered her the cigarette box, and flicked the table-lighter. Janet Tewley blew out a plume of smoke, and leant back a little.” In 1960 nothing would have thought about a character smoking in a novel, it was acceptable social behaviour. I wonder how the portrayal of smokers and smoking in contemporary fiction has changed since then?

- In 1960 people still read newspapers. Different national newspapers appealed to different strata of society. Wyndham has fun thinking how each of the following newspapers would cover the evolving news about Antigerone. In particular, who should be eligible to receive the very limited supplies. The newspapers are: the Mirror, the Daily Sketch (ceased publication on 11th May 1971, merging with the Daily Mail), the Daily Mail, the Daily Express, the News Chronicle (ceased publication on 17th October 1960, being absorbed into the Daily Mail), the Trumpeter (that’s one that Wyndham invented), The Manchester Guardian, the Times, the Telegraph and the Gazette (another Wyndham invention I think).



TV Fandom: Martin Luther King Jr. and Star Trek

By Samuel Lubell



In the USA, February is Black History Month. Now, most people would not consider *Star Trek* to be part of black history, but it was. In the late 1960s, when the original series first aired, there were few roles for blacks, especially black women, on television. When they did appear, it was usually as the maid. The role of Lt. Uhura, played by Nichelle Nichols, was different. She was a highly trained officer who played a major role on the ship. This was deliberate; the original crew included Sulu, of Japanese heritage, and Chekov, a Russian.

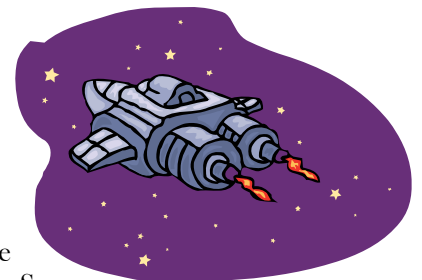
After the first season, Nichelle Nichols considered leaving the show. She was a singer and dancer and hoped for a role on Broadway that would use more of her musical talents. And there were numerous slights that went with being a prominent black woman in a segregated society such as guards at the front entrance refusing her admission and her fan mail not being delivered. Gene Roddenberry, the show's creator, asked her to take a weekend to think it over. That weekend, at a NAACP fundraiser, she met a fan who turned out to be Martin Luther King Jr. King said he was her greatest fan and that *Star Trek* was the only show he let his kids stay up past their bedtime to watch.

When he found out she might leave the show, King told her not to do that. King told her that she was the premier example of Black civil rights progress on television and evidence that in the future true equality was possible. "He said, 'Don't you understand what this man [Roddenberry] has achieved? For the first time on television, we will be seen as we should be seen every day, as intelligent, quality, beautiful people who can sing and dance, yes, but who can go into space, who can be lawyers and teachers, who can be professors — who are in this day, yet you don't see it on television until now.'" This convinced her to stay. Then, in "Plato's Stepchildren" (Nov 22, 1968) she and Captain Kirk (William Shatner) kissed, often called the first interracial kiss on television (although there had been previous kisses between white and Asian characters and white and Hispanic character, this was almost certainly was the first **scripted** kiss between a black person and a white person).

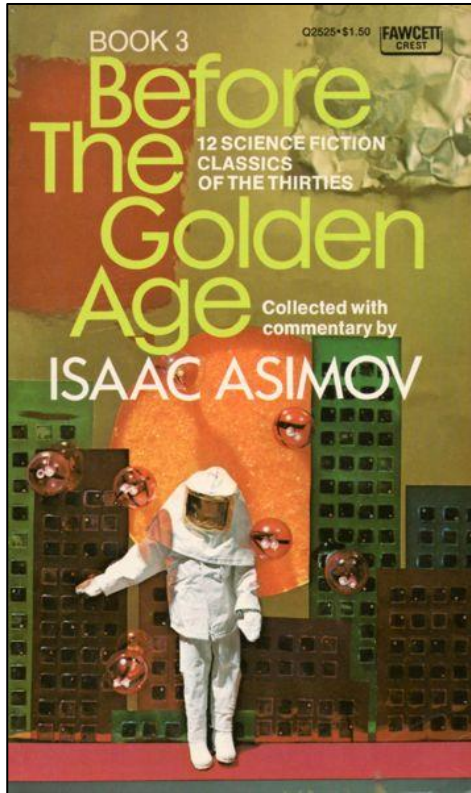
Literary Fandom: Review of Isaac Asimov's *Before the Golden Age* Part 3

By Samuel Lubell

Before the Golden Age (1974) was a huge (915 page) hardback was split into three paperback volumes. This review covers the last of the three (which at 400 pages was rather sizable by 1974 standards). This book picks up Asimov's autobiographical notes with his graduation from high school at the age of 15 in 1935. The notes describe Asimov's journey from reader of science fiction, to a fan who wrote letters to magazines, to a writer. In 1938, Asimov started attending meetings of the Queens (or maybe NY) Science Fiction League, making this fan history. And he writes about how reading these stories influenced his own writing.



Asimov admits to being a dedicated *Astounding Stories* reader and not caring if he missed an issue of the "declining steadily" *Wonder Stories* and *Amazing Stories*. So, this anthology of the stories Asimov loved as a kid does not include Stanley G Weinbaum's ground-breaking "A Martian Odyssey," which in 1970 was voted the second best SF story of all time by the Science Fiction Writers of America (in a footnote, Asimov wrote "My cheerful self-appreciation simply won't let me pass up this chance. That one story that was considered to have surpassed it was 'Nightfall,' by Isaac Asimov.") So, this anthology has Weinbaum's "The Parasite Planet" instead.

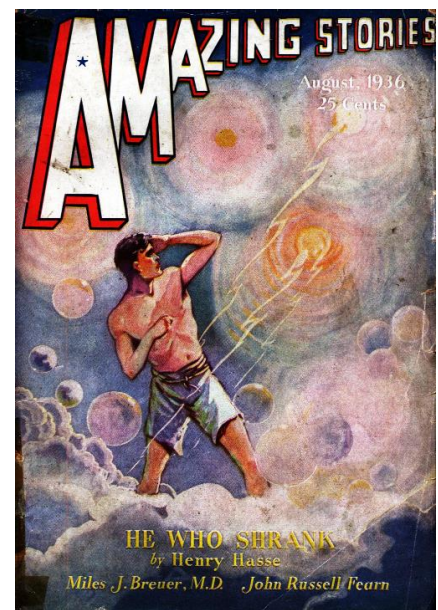


- “The Parasite Planet,” by Stanley G. Weinbaum (*Astounding Stories*, February 1935) – Ham Hammond is a trader on a Venus with an abundance of water and often dangerous life. He trades with natives for the pods that contain chemicals that restore the appearance of youth. He encounters another Earthling who insults him and has to be forced to let him into her hut. He is surprised to see the person he thought was a male trader turned out to be a female biologist. She insists she does not need the help of an American poacher. The two fight and argue, save each other’s life and at the end he announces they will get married and she replies meekly “Quite clear!” This story is memorable for its richly described alien creatures. While very sexist by modern standards, Patricia is far from a helpless female and holds her own in surviving the dangers of Venus and bantering with Ham. Still, I think this very inferior to “A Martian Odyssey” and a modern reader should read that one instead.

- “Proxima Centauri,” by Murray Leinster (*Astounding Stories*, March 1935) – The first voyage to Proxima Centaur divides into officers and Muts. Helen, daughter of the commander, is in love with Jack Gary, a Mut engineer. But the second in command wants to marry Helen as part of becoming the next commander. Gary discovers that signals they are trying to interpret are not coming from a space station but from a space ship moving toward them at four times their own speed. He says the fact that the aliens are pretending that the signals are coming from further away indicates they are preparing to fight. But when the commander dies, Alastair is forced to rely on Jack and

acknowledge his good work while Jack is forced to recognize Alastair’s competence in emergencies. The aliens turn out to be descendants of carnivorous plants. Humans quickly figure out their language. The crew of the *Adastra* must defeat or make peace with the aliens before the next Earth ship can be taken unaware. Jack becomes communications officer and ambassador to the aliens. This story is notable for acknowledging that travel to even the nearest star will take years. I thought the ending was rushed and the idea that the ship’s disintegration field could be so powerful that it could destroy a whole planet seems very convenient for plot but unrealistic. I did like the relationship of Alastair and Jack as two people who hate each other but recognize the other’s abilities. This is science fiction almost ready to become something more than pulp, but not quite yet.

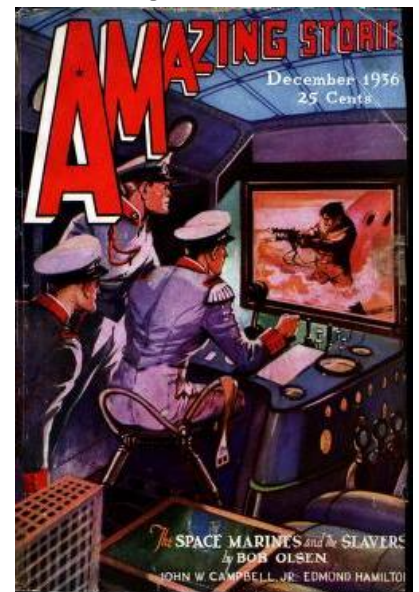
- “The Accursed Galaxy,” by Edmond Hamilton (*Astounding Stories*, July 1935)—Garry Adams, a reporter taking summer vacation in the Adirondacks encounters what he thinks is a meteorite but turns into a crashed polyhedron from outer space. He contacts Dr. Ferdinand Peters of Manhattan University Observatory who comes to investigate. It turns out to be a prison for an alien intelligence that can control minds as they get near it. The imprisoned force creature claims to have created a disease of matter called life and be punished by the other force creatures for doing this. This fear of life is the reason why all the other galaxies are moving away from ours. With the help of the two humans, the creature escapes. This seems more like the setup for a story than a story itself.
- “He Who Shrank,” by Henry Hasse (*Amazing Stories*, August 1936)—A Professor injects his assistant with a formula that causes him to shrink. The Professor (and the story) takes the premise that our solar system is an atom of a larger molecule and that atoms of objects in our universe are their own solar systems to beings living in them. When the assistant calls him mad, the Professor injects him with his Shrink formula making him constantly shrink into new worlds with new intelligent life (most of which seem to be humanoid), some primitive, some more advanced than



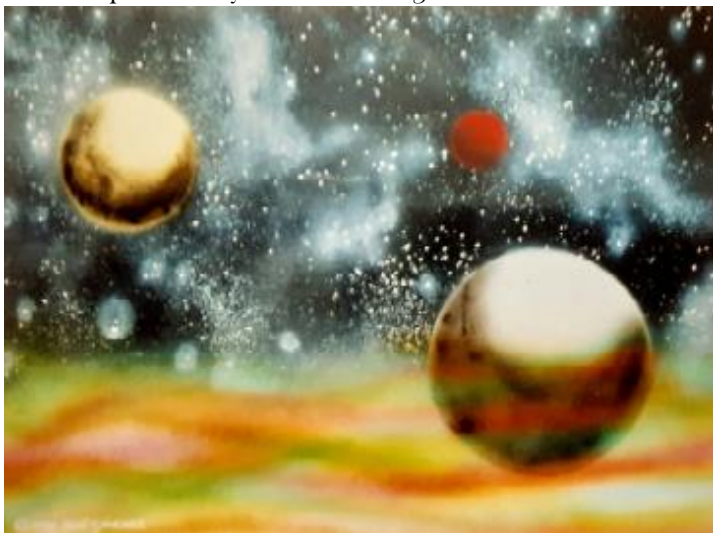
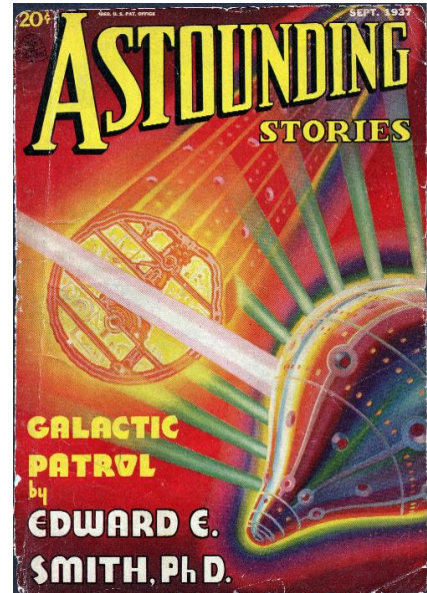


ours. But he keeps shrinking with little time to do much more than observe. The conceit is that the shrinking being makes mental contact with a writer who then writes his story. I liked the shrinking idea, but thought it highly unrealistic that there would be intelligent life everywhere he travels by shrinking. I did like the part of the story about the writer in our world trying to figure out what happened after the contact with the shrinking being ended.

- “The Human Pets of Mars,” by Leslie F. Stone (*Amazing Stories*, October 1936) - A strange machine lands in Washington, DC with alien decapods exiting the ship and capturing several humans including a police officer, a small girl, and even a dog. They are taken to Mars and treated as pets. But the humans figure out a way to escape their masters, capture a space ship, and defeat the bigger ship the aliens sent after them. Even Asimov admits that the story does not hold up on rereading (especially the “simple-minded portrayal of the Blacks”). It exhibits a flaw common to much early science fiction of having the humans always win over aliens, even aliens with more advanced technology.
- “The Brain Stealers of Mars,” by John W. Campbell, Jr. (*Thrilling Wonder Stories*, December 1936) - Rod Blake and Ted Penton invent atomic power and become the first people to reach Mars. They encounter alien life capable of mimicking them. They also encounter centaurs who claim that their ancestors visited Earth and who claim to know of ten planets. At the end of the story, Blake and Penton have to find a way to determine which of them are the real Earthmen and who the Martian copies. Asimov did not use Campbell’s Don A Stuart stories, which used a pseudonym to separate three more literary stories with his pulp super-science stories, because he did not like them. Asimov wrote, “The fault was mine. I have reread some of them since, and I am ashamed of myself for having remained stuck at the lower level. I had found them too quiet, too downbeat, too moving. I wanted action and adventure, and I was simply incapable of following Campbell up to the Stuart level.” Campbell reworked the idea into “Who Goes There,” that was filmed as *The Thing*.
- “Devolution,” by Edmond Hamilton (*Amazing Stories*, December 1936) - Three biologists in the wilds of North Quebec discover translucent jelly creatures resembling the earliest forms of life. They speculate that evolution happened on earth due to radioactive deposits causing mutations and that on other planets without this radiation, evolution might not have happened. The alien Arctarians kill two humans and telepathically communicate with the remaining one. They want to control all matter in the cosmos. While they had sent colonists to Earth, the home planet never received communications from them. So now the Arctarians are on Earth to find out what happened. They probe the biologist and find that the original Arctarians had mutated into all the various forms of life. The story ends with the Arctarians saying they would avoid this poisoned world and the human protesting that devolution story has to be a lie since humans are the product of upward evolution. I found this story’s idea of devolution to be fascinating although I thought having the biologists speculate on planets where life did not evolve to be unnecessary foreshadowing.
- “Big Game,” by Isaac Asimov (First publication, written Nov 18, 1941) - This is a very early Asimov story that was never published and only discovered in his papers stored at Boston University. Hornby claims to have invented a time machine and went back to find out what killed the dinosaurs, saying it was not climate. He claims that were killed by a breed of intelligent dinosaurs that killed off the rest because they liked to hunt big game. When someone asked what happened to the intelligent dinosaurs, he says that when there was no more big game, they started killing each other. “Why not? Aren’t men doing the same thing?” This is a cute idea but it takes just a moment to see all the problems with this idea (what happened to the smaller dinosaurs, why do all the dinosaur fossils not show signs of weapons killing them, why didn’t the traveler show the world his time machine).



- “Other Eyes Watching,” nonfiction essay by John W. Campbell, Jr. (Astounding Stories, February 1937)— This essay on Jupiter is part of Campbell’s 18 essays “A Study of the Solar System”. This is of historic interest only since our knowledge of Jupiter has grown enormously since 1937. Still, the inclusion of science essays in early science fiction magazines shows that science was not just the background settings for adventure stories, but a key component of **science** fiction.
- “Minus Planet,” by John D. Clark (Astounding Stories, April 1937) – By 2156, the number of mutations has grown. Astrophysicist Dr. James Carter at the Mt. McKinley observatory noticed light throughout the spectrum from Polaris. Carter and his colleague Mike Poggenpohl determine that the light source was moving toward Earth and would hit it in two years. They take a rocket to investigate and find it is about the size of the Moon yet weighs as much as Jupiter. They guess that it may be coming from a reverse universe and would annihilate the Earth and any other positive mass it encounters. They come up with a plan to hit it with the Moon. When this is publicized Obidiah Miller, a religious fanatic, claimed that the destruction of the Earth was the judgment of God and the Moon should not be moved. He wrecks the remote-control apparatus on the Moon so Mike and Jimmy have to go to the moon, fight Obidiah and set the Moon in motion, barely escaping with their lives. Asimov says this is the first SF story about anti-matter. The story is dated with the heroes risking their lives without any characterization.
- “Past, Present and Future,” by Nat Schachner (Astounding Stories, September 1937) – Asimov wrote that this is his favorite of the several Schachner stories he wanted to include. In this story, Kleon, a Greek leader under Alexander the Great, faces a mutiny of Egyptian sailors from Thebes who burned their ship rather than go back to sea. He immures himself in a cavern and uses magic (and radium) to sleep for ten thousand years. Sam Ward, in modern-day Guatemala, discovers what he thinks is the god Quetzal in a hidden pyramid, but falls asleep too due to the embalming gas. The two wake in a highly class-oriented society of Workers, Technicians, and Olgarchs. At first Kleon approves of the hierarchy while Sam calls it slavery. The two, joined by a rebel Olgarch, escape and move forward. This is another story that seems like the beginning of an adventure. And more could have been done by comparing their three societies.
- “The Men and the Mirror,” by Ross Rocklynne (Astounding Science-Fiction, July 1938) In this story, lawman John Colbie chases criminal Edward Deverel throughout the solar system. He catches him on a new wandering planet Cyclops only because Deverel gets sick. Colbie nurses him back to help and the two extend their truce to explore the planet’s giant mirror. But the two fall over its rim and because the mirror’s surface is nearly frictionless, they cannot stop bouncing from one side to the other. They have to use complex math to escape. This is what will become known as an *Analog* story in which characters get into a mess and have to use science and engineering to solve their way out of trouble. With some minor editing, this story could appear in a present day issue of *Analog*.



In the notes, Asimov tells the story how he was sent to Columbia’s Seth Low Junior College (created to prevent Columbia College from being too Jewish), because he interviewed as too immature and too talkative. Even when Low closed and Asimov attended classes at Columbia’s main campus, he was categorized as a “University Undergraduate,” not a Columbia College student and his degree was a Bachelor of Science, not Columbia College’s A.B. degree.

Okay, that’s the last of pre-Golden Age science fiction. Next issue, I will start another massive anthology, *Adventures in Time and Space* (1946)

edited by Raymond J. Healy and J. Francis McComas which covers the early years of the Golden Age of Science Fiction. It has 35 stories in 997 pages.

Comics Fandom: Early Legion of Super Heroes (Part 4)

By Samuel Lubell

Comics always overlapped with science fiction. Many early comics had science fiction stories and even when superheroes took over comics, most had science fiction origins (aliens, strange experiments, super-science, and of course mutations of various kinds). The Legion of Super-Heroes (LSH) comics were especially science fictional since their adventures took place in the future (with occasional time travel) with spaceships, aliens, and advanced technology. Since these stories were light-hearted action stories aimed at young children, it was a big shock when a major character, Lightning Lad, died in their 20th appearance (Adventure 304) and stayed dead for multiple issues.



26—*Adventure Comics* #310 (July 1963), “The Doom of the Super-Heroes.” LSH is the lead story with two parts but not the cover. This issue introduces the Legion Oath, “I pledge always to use my super-power only for the good of all people, and never for selfish purposes.” In this issue a masked man with multiple powers vows to destroy every member and begins by killing Ultra-Boy and the others in various ways until only Super Boy is left with an unfinished Reverser instrument that Brainiac 5 had been working on. Naturally the reader expects this to work and reverse all the deaths, but it does not. Super-Boy traces Masked Man to his trophy world with the moons spelling out MXYZPTLK, which Superboy recognizes means Masked Man is a descendent of Mr. MXYZPTLK, a fifth dimensional imp who had played practical jokes on Superboy/man many times before. Superboy tricks him into saying his name backwards which not only sends the imp

back to the 5th dimension but undoes all the magic. Only Superboy remembers everyone dying. Making everything the work of a Mr. MXYZPTLK descendent seems like an easy out and the way the story handled all the deaths casually and quickly actually cheapens Lightning Lad’s death a few issues ago in my opinion.

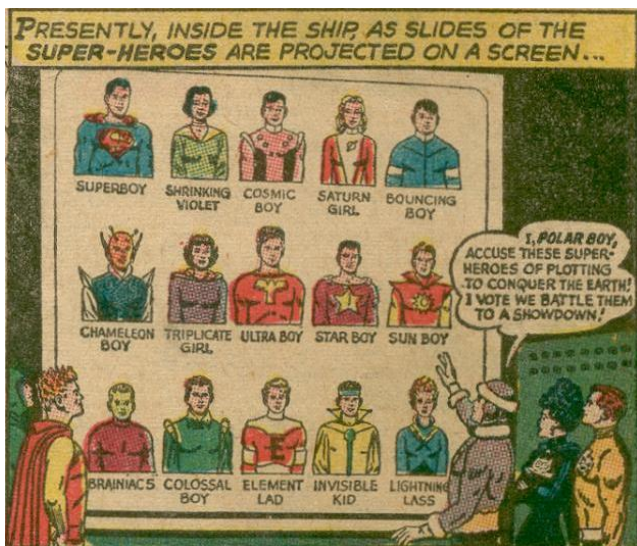
27-*Adventure* #311 (August 1963), “The War Between the Substitute Heroes and the Legionnaires.” This is the lead story and the cover story. It was written by science fiction great Edmond Hamilton, who created the Legion of Substitute Heroes. When the LSH answers a call for help, the Subs prepare to defend Earth in their absence (unknown to the LSH who do not know about the Subs). The Subs investigate an alien digging machine that was stealing rare ores from Earth and send a message to the LSH warning of the danger. But the LSH calls them amateur incompetents who must not meddle. They demand the subs disband and instead create defensive machines and turn them against the Subs. Polar Boy, the Subs leader, calls the LSH impostures since the real Super-Heroes would not try to kill them. This twist seemed obvious because the LSH was not only way out of character but also were not using their powers. The letter column says they received hundreds of letters from fans saying that Lightning Lad could not really be dead since early stories set in the LSH’s future showed a grown-up Lightning Man. This may be the first effort by fans to enforce continuity on a comics publisher. The column says that the next issue will be the return of Lightning Lad, but for him to be revived, one of the other legionnaires must sacrifice his/her life.

28-*Adventure* #312 (September 1963), “The Super-Sacrifice of the Legionnaires.” LSH is the lead story and has the cover. The LSH, including Chameleon Boy and his shape-shifting (and telepathic) pet



Proty, has been searching the universe for a way to revive the dead Lightning Lad. Saturn Girl can tell with her telepathy that Mon-El (a Daximite with Superboy equivalent powers) and tricks him into taking her to his planet where she learns that they may have a way to revive the remaining spark of life in Lightning Lad. Mon-El says it will only work if a human sacrifices himself to channel lightning through his/her body. Mon-El was going to do this himself secretly, but the other LSH also volunteer. Superboy says they should all take a metal wand and leave it to chance who dies. But Saturn Girl secretly uses a special metal to attract the lightning to her wand. But before she arrives at Lightning Lad's tomb, she has to chase after Proty. She is still in time for the sacrifice and the lightning goes down her gimmicked wand, killing her. Lightning Lad is restored to life and the Legionnaires are shocked that the body is not Saturn Girl but Proty the shape changer who had taken her place.

This is a major story in LSH history that will have major repercussions in the future. But there are two major problems. Everyone was willing to let Superboy sacrifice his life, even though that would mean he never grows up to be Superman, changing history for the worse considering that Superman saves the Earth twice a month or so. (Yes, this is a problem with including Superboy in any potentially fatal adventure, but this is an unnecessary risk). The second problem is the status of Proty as a "pet" considering his actions demonstrate human-level understanding and planning.



29-*Adventure* #313 (October 1963), "The Condemned Legionnaires". LSH has the cover and is the lead story. After all the women in the Legion are infected with a crimson virus that turns their faces red, Satan Girl, in a lead mask, offers to join the LSH to take their place but soon reveals herself as the cause of the virus. Supergirl shows up to fight Satan Girl, but is defeated. She calls for help from the Legion of Super Pets (yes really, including Krypto, Super Horse, and Streaky (Supergirl's cat). It turns out that Satan Girl is a duplicate of Supergirl formed by exposure to red kryptonite. At the end the two are merged back together. After last issue's serious story, this is much lighter.

30-*Superman's Pal Jimmy Olsen* #72 (October 1963). Yes, Jimmy Olsen once had his own comic. In this issue he is attacked by several of his former identities (Wolf man, Human Porcupine, Turtleman, and Elastic Lad) who turn out to be Legionnaires in disguise. Since Jimmy figured this out, they say he passed his initiation and is now an honorary member of the LSH. This issue would be skippable except that Jimmy Olsen being an honorary member does come up in the future.

Literary SF: From Wizard to Scientist: Changing Views toward the Scientist From Hawthorne to Twain (Part 4)

By Samuel Lubell



Image from Pixelbay

I printed this excerpt from my 1989 undergraduate History and Literature thesis in my personal zine, Samizdat, in Ish 23. So if you read it there, I apologize for the duplication. But it fits here as it has to do with what I was careful not to tell Harvard was 19th century science fiction.

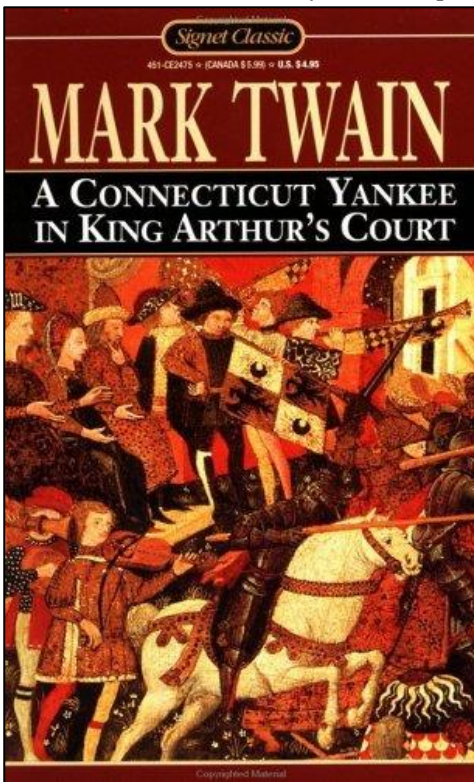
Mark Twain's Connecticut Yankee: Benevolent Science

In the works of Nathaniel Hawthorne, the scientists themselves are disguised sorcerers, using magic and pseudo-science to achieve control over others. Mark Twain's 1889 novel, *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court*, written almost forty years after

Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter*, reverses this formula. Although the Connecticut Yankee, Hank Morgan, pretends to be a wizard using magic, he is really an engineer using science. While Hawthorne's scientists mingle science and magic; Twain's Yankee opposes the whole sixth century system of magic and superstition. The Yankee's science easily defeats the magic of the wizard Merlin. "Somehow," Hank reasons, "every time the magic of fol-de-rol tried conclusions with the magic of science, the magic of fol-de-rol got left."¹ Twain does not reject science even in the Yankee's defeat at the end of the book.

Mark Twain had a positive outlook towards science in his own life. He took a deep personal interest in inventions and devised several of his own, including a self-pasting notebook and a memorization device.² In addition, he spent thousands of dollars on a machine to set typographical print, the Paige typesetter, which he funded while writing *A Connecticut Yankee*. This machine found its way into the book; Twain makes the Yankee a foreman at the Colt Arms factory, the factory where Paige worked.³ Twain also read extensively in scientific literature: more than sixty scientific books, comprising "a roll call of the major contemporary scientists and philosophers of science," have been identified in his library.⁴ Although he occasionally lampooned excesses of science, Twain valued science and invention for their human possibilities. For Twain:

The inventor/poet was a "liberating god." Twain's enthusiastic response to and extensive involvement in inventions of all sorts was motivated not just by the profits he hoped to realize, but by the new perspectives they symbolized. They represented for Twain new historical milestones, not just in technological progress but in human stature... [and] power of creativity.⁵



Mark Twain's own life mirrored the Yankee's industrialization of Arthurian England, through his progression from his boyhood home in the pre-industrial Hannibal, Missouri, to the more highly mechanized city of Hartford, Connecticut. By casting Hank Morgan as a Connecticut Yankee, Twain deliberately identifies him with this more scientific world.

Although Twain never directly calls Hank Morgan a scientist; the Yankee represents science and technological progress in the struggle against sixth century superstition; and the Yankee himself specifically identifies his methods as being science. [507 & 538]. This was possible because, by Twain's time, 'science, invention and technology had become intertwined in the popular mind. Robert Bruce, in his *The Launching of Modern American Science*, summarizes the development of this belief:

The notion that science might sometimes yield material benefit was, of course, far from new... What was new was the dubious but spreading popular assumption that everything in technology was rooted in science.⁶

This assumption enabled the people of the nineteenth century to envision the engineer/inventor as the embodiment of science and progress. Since science contributed to the new inventions, even those produced by mechanical engineering, Hank's technology would have been considered "practical

¹ Samuel Clemens, *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court: A Facsimile of the First Edition* (NY: Charles L. Webster & Company, 1889; Chandler Publishing Company, 1963) pp. 507. All quotes in brackets are from this edition.

² Twain also owned one of the first telephones and an early 1874 typewriter. Milton Meltzer, *Mark Twain Himself* (New York: Thomas Crowell Company. 1960) p. 190-2

³ James Williams, "The Use of History in Mark Twain's *A Connecticut Yankee*", *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court: Norton Critical Edition*, (New York: W.W. Norton and Co. 1982) p. 387

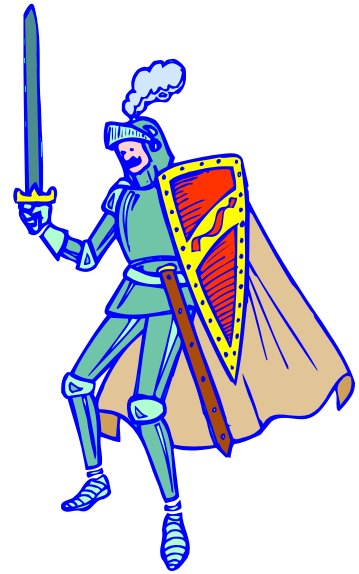
⁴ Sherwood Cummings, "Mark Twain's Acceptance of Science," *Centennial Review*. Spring 1962; p.253

⁵ James Johnson. *Mark Twain and the Limits of Power* (Knoxville Tennessee, University of Tennessee Press 1982); p. 123

⁶ Robert Bruce *The Launching of Modern American Science*. (NY: Alfred A Knopf 1987) p. 128

science". Introducing himself to the reader, Hank Morgan boasts of his ability to make "anything in the world," and stresses his inventive talent: "and if there wasn't any quick new-fangled way to make a thing, I could invent one- and do it as easy as rolling off a log." [20] In addition to recreating nineteenth-century technology, the Yankee originates his own, devises a form of insulation "of my own invention." [121]

Twain devotes the bulk of *A Connecticut Yankee* to the positive elements of Yankee's nineteenth century civilization, the benefits of his "practical science". He describes the people of King Arthur's court as mindless children, even "animals" [65], who wear uncomfortable armor, and quest for pigs. Writing in a time when science was transforming civilization, Twain's novel uses the Yankee to show that science would inevitably bring progress. Because of its celebration of science and technology, Louis Budd labels Twain's novel as "virtually a manifesto summing up the Gilded Age just before times changed with a vengeance. It assumed progress as a booming fact; and... gloated over the rise of science and political freedom."⁷



The Yankee always favors the abolition of sixth century concepts and their replacement by the more scientific nineteenth-century techniques. He tries to reform the aristocracy, selecting men for army positions "on the basis of mere efficiency." [328] In an attempt to establish a modern mechanical civilization, he introduces the telegraph, the telephone, the phonograph, the typewriter, and the sewing machine, innovations which met with great success: "and all the thousand willing and handy servants of steam and electricity were working their way into favor." [513] Most important of all to Mark Twain, himself a patent-holder, the Yankee founds a patent office. When the Yankee visits a Hermit's cave and discovers one of his telephone operators already there, he contrasts the achievements of the sixth and nineteenth centuries, "Now what a radical reversal of things this was., what a fantastic conjunction of opposites and irreconcilables- the home of the bogus miracle become the home of a real one, the den of a medieval hermit turned into a telephone office." (303)

Although the novel is written in the first person from Hank Morgan's viewpoint, Twain frequently communicates his own views. He clearly identifies with Hank Morgan, even to the extent of accidentally giving his Connecticut Yankee pieces of Twain's own Mississippi River background, and many of Hank Morgan's speeches are paraphrases of Twain's notebooks and letters.⁸ Twain's philosophical tone often drowns out the Yankee's vernacular in these speeches, which echo Twain's own ideas about science. Like Twain, the Yankee criticizes the Church, slavery, feudalism, superstition, and ignorance. In his autobiography, Mark Twain states his purpose in writing *A Connecticut Yankee* as:

An attempt to imagine and after a fashion set forth, the hard conditions of life for the laboring and defenseless poor in bygone times in England, and incidentally contrast these conditions with those under which the civil and ecclesiastical pets of privilege and high fortune level lived in those times., contrast that English life., with the life of modern Christendom and modern civilization, to the advantage of the latter of course.⁹

This contrast shows Twain's faith in the "secular theology" of scientific progress, and his use of the Yankee for its spokesman.

Because of Twain's more positive view of science, the Yankee's control of others is not the soul-destroying control of Hawthorne's scientists, but instead a liberating force. The Yankee forces Morgan Le Fay to free her prisoners, creates Protestant churches independent of the "Established Church", sets up schools, works to destroy the feudal

⁷ Louis J. Budd, "Uncle Sam" in *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court: Norton Critical Edition*. Ensor, ed. p.407

⁸ Everett Carter "The Meaning of A Connecticut Yankee," in *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court: Norton Critical Edition*. Ensor, ed. p. 443

⁹ Mark Twain, *The Autobiography of Mark Twain*, quoted in *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court: Norton Critical Edition*. Ensor, ed. p. 304

system, and ultimately frees the slaves. After Arthur's death he issues his proclamation declaring England a free republic:

...all political power has reverted to its original source, the people of the nation. With the monarchy, its several adjuncts died also; wherefore there is no longer a nobility, no longer a privileged class, no longer an Established Church: all men are become exactly equal, they are upon one common level. [544]

While he occasionally abuses his power, for instance where he kills a humorist and burns his books, his rule is mostly benevolent, producing new education and new freedom. As the Boss, he cares more for the serfs than the king ever did, even disguising himself as one of them to learn how they see the world. This is a major difference from Hawthorne's scientists who consistently use their power for their own selfish ends.

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