

Introduction
by
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With the publication of *THE WORLDS OF H. BEAM PIPER*, all the *known* short stories of H. Beam Piper will be in print. Until the Piper revival of the mid-1970s (when the legal difficulties surrounding Piper's estate were cleared up and Ace Books, under the editorship of Jim Baen, began publishing his long-out-of-print novels, such as *LORD KALVAN OF OTHERWHEN*, *SPACE VIKING*, and *LITTLE FUZZY*), none of Piper's short fiction was even in print, much less collected together.

Now, Piper's Terro-Human Future History stories have been published in *FEDERATION* and *EMPIRE*, while the Paratime Police yarns can be found in *PARATIME!* *THE WORLDS OF H. BEAM PIPER* includes all the remaining stories that did not fit into either series or somehow slipped between the cracks. Some of them had been virtually unobtainable ("Flight From Tomorrow," "The Answer," "Genesis"), having appeared in such obscure publications as *Fantastic Universe* and *Future Science Fiction Stories*, available only to collectors. "Dearest," Piper's only true fantasy story, appeared in *Weird Tales*, and was unknown even to many collectors.

As is common to science fiction writers, when Piper coined a new term or invented a new artifact, he tended to reuse it in later stories. This helped fuel the debate about whether Piper's stories constituted one very broad series or several. John Clute, addressing the issue in *The Science Fiction Encyclopedia*, in 1979 wrote: "Many of his (Piper's) novels and stories, including the 'Fuzzy' sequence, are set in a common future history, but are insufficiently connected to be regarded as a coherent series." It is now becoming clear that we have two distinct series, which coexist in the same universe.

Due to Piper's untimely death, there are still a number of large gaps in his Terro-Human Future History series. Jerry Pournelle and I, having rediscovered Piper's overall historical template, intend to write several "linking novels," including the long-awaited sequel to SPACE VIKING—THE RETURN OF SPACE VIKING.

Jerry and I spent several years studying Jerry's correspondence with Piper, a few existing notes, and several of Piper's favorite books before we suddenly discovered the key to bridging the gaps in Piper's chronology—how to explain the disappearance of Merlin, why the League of Civilized Worlds was destined to fail, how and why Odin was to become the capital of the First Galactic Empire, and many other seeming inconsistencies.

There should be a few surprises for everyone interested in Piper's history of the future.

There are five major themes that run through the fiction of H. Beam Piper, and they are more apparent in the stories of this volume than anywhere else.

Piper's concept of *self-reliant* man is probably the most pervasive theme. Piper himself was a good example of the self-reliant man; Jerry Pournelle and others have described him as a courtly gentleman, aloof but friendly, an independent thinker who knew his own mind.

In "Oomphel in the Sky," Piper gives one of the best summations of the self-reliant man: He's the man who "actually knows what has to be done and how to do it, and he's

going right ahead and doing it, without holding a dozen conferences and round-table discussions and giving everybody a fair and equal chance to foul things up for him."

It is true that Piper's self-reliant man greatly resembled John W. Campbell's *Citizen*—the man who knows his rights, as well as his obligations, and acts upon them. As with many of the early *Astounding* writers, it is difficult to appraise the extent of Campbell's influence. The real question is: Did H. Beam Piper write about self-reliant heroes because he knew that Campbell would buy the stories, or did Campbell buy his stories because Piper wrote about the kind of characters Campbell liked to feature in *Astounding*?

Most of Piper's friends would say the latter hypothesis was more true. The prominence of the self-reliant man throughout Piper's fiction (characters such as Allan Hartley and his father in "Time and Time Again," Piper's first published science fiction) would indicate that Piper, certainly influenced by Alfred Korzybski (the Polish-born father of General Semantics) and John W. Campbell, wrote about the kind of men he believed in.

John H. Costello, who wrote a three-part series about H. Beam Piper for *Renaissance* (a highly regarded fanzine published quarterly by John J. Pierce in the 1960s) made the following statement in his introduction:

Into his stories he (Piper) put a great deal of philosophy—of the Campbellian sort—and, this writer thinks, a great deal of himself. Which is fortunate, as he was in life a most private man, and other than reminiscences from some of the people who knew him there is little to put down on paper that Piper did not state, either explicitly or between the lines, in his published works.

This contention is further bolstered by some autobiographical comments Piper made in his only published mystery novel, *MURDER IN THE GUNROOM*, in which one of the characters, a science fiction writer named Pierre Jarret, expresses some of Piper's own feelings about the field and his

writing when answering the question "What are you writing?":

Science-fiction. I do a lot of stories for the pulps . . . *Space Trails*, and *Other Worlds*, *Wonder Stories*; mags like that. Most of it's standardized formula-stuff; what's known in the trade as space-operas. My best stuff goes to *Astonishing*. Parenthetically, you mustn't judge any of these magazines by their names. It seems to be a convention to use hyperbolic names for science-fiction magazines; a heritage from what might be called an earlier and ruder day. What I do for *Astonishing* is really hard work, and I enjoy it. I'm working now on one of them, based on J.W. Dunne's time-theories, if you know what they are.

Certainly, Robert A. Heinlein did not quit writing about his *competent man* when he stopped writing for Campbell in the 1950s, and I doubt that Piper would have changed his viewpoint had he stopped writing for Campbell. More light should be shed upon the subject when Perry Chapdelaine and George Hay finally publish the John W. Campbell letters and we can study the Piper/Campbell correspondence.

Jack Holloway of the "Fuzzy" novels, Conn Maxwell of *THE COSMIC COMPUTER*, Verkan Vall of the Paratime Police, and Lucas Trask of *SPACE VIKING* were the embodiments of Piper's idealized self-reliant man. Their foils were the fools, the misguided, the incompetent, and the mad King-John figures, such as the psychotic Andray Dunnan and Zasparr Makann of *SPACE VIKING*.

However, their greatest opponent was not the crazed or the corrupt, but most often society itself. This brings us to another of Piper's most important themes: The fragility of civilization, and its correlate, the threat of barbarism, both from within and without.

Piper was not happy with the course of modern civilization; in a number of letters he admitted a longing for the sanity and simplicity of the Christian Era (Sixteenth Century). Nazism and the nuclear bomb had shaken his faith in

the rationality of man. He much preferred a simpler era of universal faith and limited warfare.

Most of Piper's later work is laced with references about the instability of man's political institutions and civilizations. *The Terro-Human Future History* is the chronicle of the rise and fall of galaxy-spanning civilizations. "It may just be that there is something fundamentally unworkable about government itself . . . maybe a workable system of government is a political-science impossibility . . ." comments Lucas Trask, close to the end of *SPACE VIKING*, one of Piper's last works.

In every society there is always the threat of the Barbarian, from within or without—the un-noble savage. In *SPACE VIKING*, it is the Space Vikings themselves who are the barbarians, overturning tombstones in the graveyard of the old Terran Federation. Yet, even at their worst, they are engaged in honest butchery compared to the nefarious do-gooders and do-nothings who conspire to bring down the Mardukan Monarchy.

The barbarians are rising . . . Every Society rests on a barbarian base. The people who don't understand civilization, and wouldn't like it if they did. The hitchhikers. The people who create nothing, and who don't appreciate what others have created for them, and who think civilization is something that just exists and that all they need to do is enjoy what they can understand of it—luxuries, a high living standard, and easy work for high pay . . .

It wasn't the war that put Hitler into power. It was the fact that the ruling class of his nation, the people who kept things running, were discredited. The masses, the homemade barbarians, didn't have anybody to take their responsibilities for them.

While Piper was an advocate of representative government in his early fiction, before his death he appeared to be leaning toward monarchy as the best form of human government. In letters and conversations with Jerry Pournelle, he mentioned

a growing disenchantment with representative democracy; he saw it becoming a sinecure for bureaucrats, fat-cat politicians, and welfarers.

But even a self-reliant monarch had to be aware of the barbarians within. "You have to learn, too, that a ruler cannot afford to be guided by his fears of what people will say about him. Not even what history will say about him. A ruler's only judge is himself," says Lucas Trask in *SPACE VIKING* to Prince Bentrik, the surviving heir of the Mardukan throne after a Hitler-style revolution.

The Cold War and the nuclear arms race played a large part in Piper's growing pessimism. In a 1963 letter to Charles and Marcia Brown he said, "You will undoubtedly see me at the Discon, if we are all alive by then, and Washington hasn't been H-bombed in the meantime."

Nuclear power and its awesome destructive force is another major theme running through most of his novels and short stories. The Terran Federation is born in the nuclear hellfire of the Thirty Days War; *ULLER UPRISING* is about an alien race of sepoys who secretly build a nuclear bomb to rid themselves of their human overlords; and many of his short stories are concerned with the threat of nuclear war or its aftermath.

FIRST CYCLE, a posthumous novel, edited and expanded by Michael Kurland, is a slightly fleshed-out polemic on the danger of an East-West confrontation and nuclear war. Long after the binary worlds have been devastated by atomic warfare a Terran Federation survey craft arrives. One of the crew gives us Piper's final warning about nuclear warfare: "It's obvious that the rockets must have been launched simultaneously from both planets . . . You know, that wasn't really a war. That was a suicide pact."

His early optimism for nuclear power, and the belief that man could adapt to the effects of radiation quickly dissipated when the Russians developed their own atomic bomb and the Cold War began to heat up. A year before his death he wrote: "It must have been lovely, living in an era when the Clausewitzian 'extension of politics by other means' was ac-

complished with nothing more lethal or expensive . . . than black powder."

Piper's love of history and growing disenchantment with the modern world lead him further and further into a romantic vision of the past. In a letter to Jerry Pournelle, where he comments on a Chicago convention speech that Jerry gave on *Thermonuclear Grand Strategy*, Piper said, "I live either in the Fifth to Twentieth Centuries, Atomic Era (*Piper History of the Future*), or in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries, so-called Christian Era, and as far as possible I boycott the contemporary scene."

His lifelong interest in firearms (Piper was an expert marksman and a well-known gun collector) and history culminated in his major—and unfortunately lost—historical novel about the Christian Era, *ONLY THE ARQUEBUS*. As he mentions in a letter to Jerry Pournelle, "Having just finished a story in the Seventh Century A.E. (*FUZZY SAPIENS*), I have now dug out the historical novel on which I have been working intermittently, when I have not been pressed by necessity to get something quickly saleable done, for the last couple of years. This is early Sixteenth Century C.E. (Christian Era)—1502–1503, to be exact—and Ferdinand of Spain and Louis XII of France are fighting over the Kingdom of Naples."

He never lived to complete *ONLY THE ARQUEBUS*, but he did use his expertise on the early days of black powder and Renaissance military history to good effect in *LORD KALVAN OF OTHERWHEN*—the story of a Pennsylvania State Trooper who is mistakenly vaulted into a parallel world where gunpowder has recently been invented and its production is kept secret and monopolized by an unsavory religious cult.

Not all of Piper's stories and themes were concerned with nuclear war or the fall of civilization. He was also fascinated by the idea of lost races—especially the Old Martians—a theme that dominated a good part of the science fiction of Piper's youth. H. Rider Haggard, Edgar Rice Burroughs,

Grant Allen, A. Merritt, and many others wrote exciting adventures about lost races, civilizations, and worlds in inaccessible regions of the globe—Africa, the North and South Poles, the Himalayas, or the Amazon Basin.

He incorporates this theme most poignantly in "Omnilingual," (reprinted in *FEDERATION*) where an archaeological expedition travels to Mars and discovers the ruins of the Old Martians, and in "The Keeper," (reprinted in *EMPIRE*) where it is man himself—at least on Terra—whose own past has become lost in the heavy mist of history.

A final important theme in Piper's work was life after death. His first published story, "Time and Time Again," is about a soldier killed on the battlefield who *awakens*, as a child back at home again with his parents. Reincarnation is an important element in many of his early Paratime stories, especially "Last Enemy," which takes place on the Second Level Akor-Neb Sector where reincarnation is so important it becomes a political issue: What happens to property and inheritance rights when you can trace your previous incarnations?

Piper, certainly in his early stories, took these ideas very seriously, and on more than one occasion remarked that this was not his first life. If so, I would like to believe that on some alternative time-line—a Fourth Level Europo-American Sector, of course—another H. Beam Piper is hard at work finishing the sequel to *LORD KALVAN OF OTHERWHEN* or filling in the final centuries of his *Terro-Human Future History Chronology*.

TIME AND TIME AGAIN

"Time and Time Again," Piper's first published story, is appropriately a time-travel story. Unlike many of his later stories, this is less a cautionary tale, and more a story of hope.

BLINDED BY THE BOMB-FLASH and numbed by the narcotic injection, he could not estimate the extent of his injuries, but he knew that he was dying. Around him, in the darkness, voices sounded as through a thick wall.

"They mighta left mosta these Joes where they was. Half of them won't even last till the truck comes."

"No matter; so long as they're alive, they must be treated," another voice, crisp and cultivated, rebuked. "Better start taking names, while we're waiting."

"Yes, sir." Fingers fumbled at his identity badge. "Hartley, Allan; Captain, G5, Chem. Research AN/73/D. Serial, SO-23869403J."

"Allan Hartley!" The medic officer spoke in shocked surprise. "Why, he's the man who wrote 'Children of the Mist,' 'Rose of Death,' and 'Conqueror's Road!'"

one," he said. "I can scrape up about five thousand for that— Yes; in ten years— Any other little operations you have in mind?" he asked.

"About 1950, we start building a political organization, here in Pennsylvania. In 1960, I think we can elect you President. The world situation will be crucial, then. I think President Hartley can be trusted to take a strong line of policy. In the meantime, you can read Machiavelli."

"That's my little boy, talking!" Blake Hartley said softly. "All right, son; I'll do just what you tell me, and when you grow up, I'll be president. . . . Let's go get supper, now."

THE MERCENARIES

In "The Mercenaries," Piper came up with one of his most intriguing ideas: bands of Free Scientists who sell their work and expertise to various governments, like bands of condottiere. As political neutrals and outsiders, the Free Scientists must never take sides in a national conflict. "The Mercenaries" is the story of what happens when Duncan MacLeod discovers a traitor among the MacLeod Team. Not only is their work threatened, but so is the integrity of the MacLeod Team.

Jerry Pournelle believes "The Mercenaries" is one of Piper's strongest stories and one with great series potential. I agree, and I think you will too.

DUNCAN MACLEOD hung up the suit he had taken off, and sealed his shirt, socks and underwear in a laundry envelope bearing his name and identity-number, tossing this into one of the wire baskets provided for the purpose. Then, naked except for the plastic identity disk around his neck, he went over to the desk, turned in his locker key, and passed into the big room beyond.

Four or five young men, probably soldiers on their way to

DEAREST

Although he was a lifelong agnostic, there is a great deal of evidence that Piper believed in reincarnation. He certainly wrote a number of stories about life after death. In "Dearest," which appeared in Weir Tales, he takes this speculation into another realm.

COLONEL ASHLEY HAMPTON chewed his cigar and forced himself to relax, his glance slowly traveling the room, lingering on the mosaic of book-spines in the tall cases, the sunlight splashed on the faded pastel colors of the carpet, the soft-tinted autumn landscape outside the French windows, the trophies of Indian and Filipino and German weapons on the walls. He could easily feign relaxation here in the library of Greyrock, as long as he looked only at these familiar inanimate things and avoided the five people gathered in the room with him, for all of them were enemies.

There was his nephew, Stephen Hampton, greying at the temples but youthfully dressed in sports-clothes, leaning with obvious if slightly premature proprietorship against the fireplace, a whiskey-and-soda in his hand. There was Myra,

HUNTER PATROL

By H. BEAM PIPER and JOHN J. McGUIRE

From his works and letters we know that H. Beam Piper was no utopian and had little faith in the permanence of any form of human government. If he had any preference, it was for monarchies in which the rulers had some investment in the future (the continuance of their line, if nothing else) and were able to diminish the influence of fools and bunglers, but he always realized that nothing guaranteed that any single monarch might not turn out to be a fool!

Yet, in "Hunter Patrol," written with John J. McGuire, Piper does set forth his own version of the utopia that might be created by one of his self-reliant men. But, as you might expect, all is not well in this future-world of peace and tranquility. As the Principle of Perversity would lead one to predict, this utopia harbors a group of revolutionaries who go fishing in the past for a needed ingredient in their scheme, and come up with a fish much bigger than they had bargained on . . .

At the crest of the ridge, Benson stopped for an instant, glancing first at his wristwatch and then back over his shoulder. It was 0539; the barrage was due in eleven minutes, at

FLIGHT FROM TOMORROW

Piper, throughout his body of work, created a number of lasting images: the Old Martian ruins of "Omnilingual"; Merlin, the big brain, in *COSMIC COMPUTER*; the frozen earth of "The Keeper"; and the fuzzies. One of the most distinctive images is The Ancient Spaceport—a concrete-filled valley, set between mountains, in "Flight From Tomorrow."

In a number of ways, "Flight From Tomorrow" is also the precursor of Piper's *Terro-Human Future History*. Here we find the first mention of Atomic Era dating—a system based upon the date the first uranium pile went into operation and used extensively in his future history until the First Galactic Empire. The story is also notable for including a panoramic sweep of history, the hallmark of Piper's later fiction.

The theme is nuclear destruction. His view of Terra as an atomic graveyard appears throughout his future history, as well as in other stories, such as "The Return." The scientific premise—that man could, in time, adapt to radiation—seems quaint today; in the late 1940s, when this story was written, it was more plausible. However, the grasping ambition and treachery that form the basis of the plot are as contemporary as today's newspaper.

Prince Burvanny clapped him on the shoulder. "Tobbh, man! You've hit it!"

"You mean . . . ?" Kradzy Zago began.

"Yes. You all know of it. It's stood for nobody knows how many millennia, and nobody's ever decided what it was, to begin with, except that somebody, once, filled a valley with concrete, level from mountain-top to mountain-top. The accepted theory is that it was done for a firing-stand for the first Moon-rocket. But gentlemen, our friend Tobbh's explained it. It is the tomb of Hradzka, and it has been the tomb of Hradzka for ten thousand years before Hradzka was born!"

OPERATION R.S.V.P.

In "Operation R.S.V.P.," Piper again examines the theme of nuclear power, but with a different emphasis. Thirty years of further study have taught us much about nuclear physics, but Piper was second-to-none on the subject of nuclear brinkmanship.

Vladmir N. Dzhebinsky, Foreign Minister, Union of East European Soviet Republics, to Wu Fung Tung, Foreign Minister, United People's Republics of East Asia:

15 Jan., 1984

Honored Sir:

Pursuant to our well-known policy of exchanging military and scientific information with the Governments of friendly Powers, my Government takes great pleasure in announcing the completely successful final tests of our new nuclear-rocket guided missile *Marxist Victory*. The test launching was made from a position south of Lake Balkash; the target was located in the East Siberian Sea.

In order to assist you in appreciating the range of the new guided missile *Marxist Victory*, let me point out that the distance from launching-site to target is some-

From N.Y. Times, Oct. 30, 1984:

MOUZORGIN, SUNG LI-YIN,
FETED AT KABUL
Confer With Ameer;
Discuss Peace Plans
Surprise Developments Seen . . .

GENESIS

In his Paratime series, Piper divided the Paratime alternate worlds into five different levels, based on the Martians' varying degrees of success in their attempt to colonize Terra, 75,000 to 100,000 years ago. For example, they were completely successful on Level One—the only level possessing the secret of Paratime travel to alternate worlds.

The Euro-American Sector—our own time line—is located on the maximum probability time-line, the Fourth Level. It is on this level that a disaster occurred of such magnitude that all Martian technology and civilization were completely lost. Most Fourth Level inhabitants believe they are an indigenous race with a long history of savagery.

"Genesis" is the long-unavailable story of the disaster that struck these Martian colonists, and their fight for survival.

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ABOARD THE SHIP, there was neither day nor night; the hours slipped gently by, as vistas of star-gemmed blackness slid across the visiscreens. For the crew, time had some

jaggedly against the sky. He pointed with his father's axe.

"We go down that way," he said.

So they went, down, and on, and on, and on. The last cartridge was fired; the last silver of Doorshan metal wore out or rusted away. By then, however, they had learned to make chipped stone, and bone, and reindeer-horn serve their needs. Century after century, millennium after millennium, they followed the game-herds from birth to death, and birth replenished their numbers faster than death depleted. Bands grew in numbers and split; young men rebelled against the rule of the old and took their women and children elsewhere.

They hunted down the hairy Neanderthals, and exterminated them ruthlessly, the origin of their implacable hatred lost in legend. All that they remembered, in the misty, confused, way that one remembers a dream, was that there had once been a time of happiness and plenty, and that there was a goal to which they would some day attain. They left the mountains—were they the Caucasus? The Alps? The Pamirs?—and spread outward, conquering as they went.

We find their bones, and their stone weapons, and their crude paintings, in the caves of Cro-Magnon and Grimaldi and Altimira and Mas-d'Azil; the deep layers of horse and reindeer and mammoth bones at their feasting-place at Solutre. We wonder how and whence a race so like our own came into a world of brutish sub-humans.

Just as we wonder, too, at the network of canals which radiate from the polar caps of our sister planet, and speculate on the possibility that they were the work of hands like our own. And we concoct elaborate jokes about the "Men From Mars"—ourselves.

THE ANSWER

In most of Piper's stories—including those in his Terro-Human Future History—man does survive the nuclear holocaust, although not in the areas where civilization thrives today. Instead, the Southern Hemisphere becomes the new cradle of civilization.

In "The Answer," we learn what happens to two survivors—one Russian, one American—who are now working for the Argentines on an investigation of negative matter. Unfortunately, as often happens when the genie of science is summoned, they learn far more than they wanted to know . . .

FOR A MOMENT, after the screen door snapped and wakened him, Lee Richardson sat breathless and motionless, his eyes still closed, trying desperately to cling to the dream and print it upon his conscious memory before it faded.

"Are you there, Lee?" he heard Alexis Pitov's voice.

"Yes, I'm here. What time is it?" he asked, and then added, "I fell asleep. I was dreaming."

It was all right; he was going to be able to remember. He could still see the slim woman with the graying blonde hair,

CROSSROADS OF DESTINY

In this nifty little tale, Piper again weaves a new pattern into one of his favorite themes, parallel worlds. In the process, he creates a television show that might have rivaled Twilight Zone.

I STILL HAVE the dollar bill. It's in my box at the bank, and I think that's where it will stay. I simply won't destroy it, but I can think of nobody to whom I'd be willing to show it—certainly nobody at the college, my History Department colleagues least of all. Merely to tell the story would brand me irredeemably as a crackpot, but crackpots are tolerated, even on college faculties. It's only when they begin producing physical evidence that they get themselves actively resented.

When I went into the club-car for a nightcap before going back to my compartment to turn in, there were five men there, sitting together.

One was an Army officer, with the insignia and badges of a Staff Intelligence colonel. Next to him was a man of about

DAY OF THE MORON

In light of the Three-Mile Island incident, this story is topical enough—other than the dates—for a current issue of Analog. As we are beginning to learn, it is not the nuclear piles, but rather the people who run them that pose the greatest threat.

In "Day of the Moron," Piper shows us that in a centralized civilization such as ours, we can no longer tolerate the mistakes of half-wits and blunderers—no matter how well-intentioned.

THERE WERE STILL, in 1968, a few people who were afraid of the nuclear power plant. Oldsters, in whom the term "atomic energy" produced semantic reactions associated with Hiroshima. Those who saw, in the towering steam-column above it, a tempting target for enemy—which still meant Soviet—bombers and guided missiles. Some of the Central Intelligence and F.B.I. people, who realized how futile even the most elaborate security measures were against a resourceful and suicidally determined saboteur. And a minority of engineers and nuclear physicists who remained unpersuaded that accidental blowups at nuclear-reaction plants were impossible.