Kuttner's Ganelon, Zelazny's conceals a secret identity. Kuttner's Ganelon passes for the latter portion of the novel as Edward Bond, fooling Bond's allies in order to gain his revenge on the Coven. Zelazny's Ganelon is the guise that Oberon, King of Amber, adopts in order to learn about Corwin and then to gain secret access into Amber. In both stories, the character of Ganelon is associated with shifting identity in a fashion not found in the original Carolingian material.

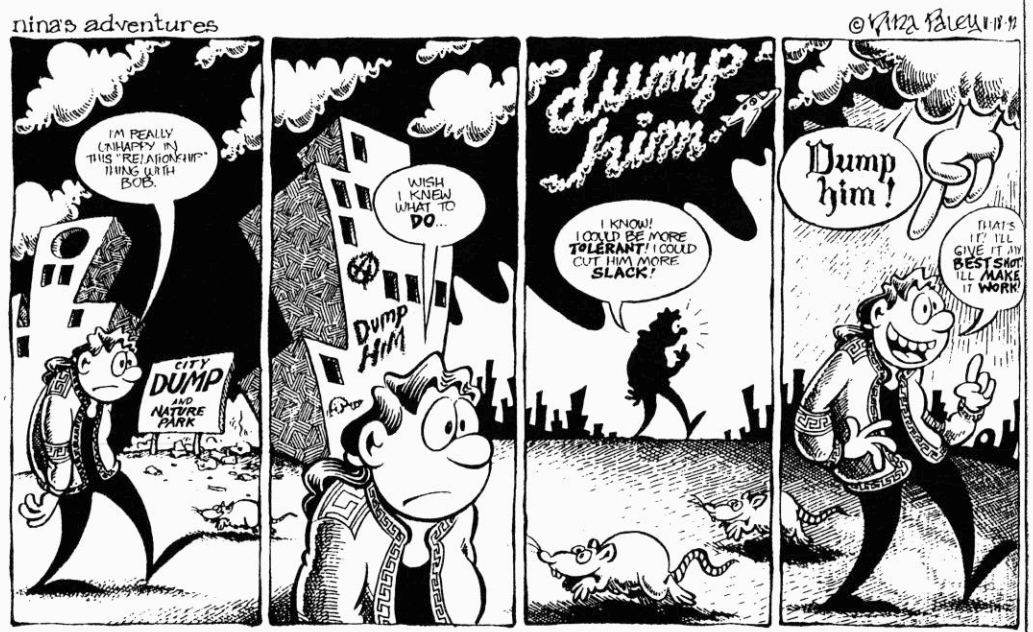
At the end of *Sign of the Unicorn* Corwin, Random, and Ganelon discover that there is a Primal Pattern and that their Amber is merely the first Shadow. For me, Kuttner's *The Dark World* provides something like a primal pattern for the Amber novels. Zelazny has refined Kuttner's original ideas and made them his own, but the Dark World remains in the background of Amber, a pervasive and definite influence on the later work.

Works Cited

"Forever Amber" (interview). Locus. October 1991.

Zelazny, Roger. The Chronicles of Amber. 2 vols. New York: Nelson, Doubleday, Inc., 1970-1978.

Dr. Jane M. Lindskold, PhD. is hard at work proofing her new book, *Roger Zelazny*, a critical/literary biography.



Henry Kuttner: A Neglected Master

by Ray Bradbury

Move around in high schools and colleges, in various semi-intellectual circles high and low, and listen to the names spoken there when books come into the conversation. A great deal of the time you'll hear:

Tolkien, Lovecraft, Heinlein, Sturgeon, Wells, Verne, Orwell, Vonnegut. And, you should excuse the expression, Bradbury.

But not often enough—Kuttner.

Why is this so?

Why has Henry Kuttner been so unfairly neglected since his death back in the late fifties?

Was he as good a writer as the others?

Yes.

Did he write as much?

In some cases more.

Was he a pomegranate writer—popping with seeds, full of ideas?

He was.

Was he as flamboyant as the others mentioned?

Perhaps not enough.

Did he sound his own horn?

Rarely.

Perhaps he was too diversified, working in too many sub-areas of the science-fiction and fantasy genres.

That may well be.

In any case, this book will remedy the need for a collection that can be handed around in and out of schools and will cause the name Kuttner to be spoken more frequently in the years ahead.

But before we consider all the reasons for Kuttner's temporary obscurity, I must lapse into the personal and linger there awhile.

This introduction to Henry Kuttner *must* be very personal or it will be meaningless. I will not burden you with endless intellectual weighings and assayings of his stories. That is for you to do as you move along through this fascinating book, realizing that you have come upon the work of a man who helped shape science fiction and fantasy in its most important years—years which included the decline of *Weird Tales*, the growth of *Astounding Science Fiction*, and the amazing birth of *Unknown*, and *The Magazine of Fantasy*

and Science Fiction. I speak roughly of the time between 1938 and 1950, when most of the truly important writers in the field erupted on the scene, many of them encouraged by John W. Campbell, *Astounding*'s editor.

Kuttner was one of those writers.

If you will allow the blasphemy, I will not soon forgive God for taking Kuttner out of this world in 1958. His death alone made that year a bad one for remembrance. It was especially bad, because his talent was peculiar and special.

We would like to pretend that the populations of our world are full of undiscovered geniuses. From what I have seen, that simply is not true. The genetically intuitive talents are rare. Creative people are few and far between.

It is the rustiest of cliches to say, upon the death of most people, that they were irreplaceable. Save on a personal and loving level, this is just not so. Hundreds of writers, one not distinguishable from the next, might be replaced tomorrow without changing our universal culture in any way.

Because we are surrounded by oceans of the noncreative, and open fields of unprocreative mulch, I much admire the intuitive Henry Kuttner. He was indeed special, peculiar and, in his own mild way, manically creative.

I would like to be able to recall all sorts of wondrous things about Henry Kuttner. The facts are otherwise, however. He was a shy man who gazed at you and thought his private thoughts.

I am sure that he found me ridiculous and amusing a good deal of the time. At our first meeting I was seventeen, which means—in my case, anyway—-I was so unsure of myself that I did a lot of running around, shouting, and speechifying to hide my confusions and private despairs. Kuttner put up with this for an inordinate number of years and then gave me the best piece of creative advice I ever got.

"Ray," he said one day, "do me a favor?"

"What?" I asked.

"Shut up," he said.

"I beg your pardon?"

"You're always running around, grabbing people's elbows, pulling their lapels, shouting your ideas," Kuttner replied. "You give away all your steam. No wonder you never finish your stories. You talk them all out. Shut up."

And shut up I did.

Instead of giving my stories away free, by mouth, I began to write a story a week. Since that time I have never spoken about my ideas until, in their final form, they were on their way East via airmail.

If shut was Bradbury, then shut indeed was Kuttner.

Frank Lloyd Wright once described himself as an old man mad about architecture. Kuttner, in his twenties and thirties, was a young man mad about writing. Other people's, first; his own, finally. His was not an ebullient and loud madness, as mine has been. Henry played a muffled drum to his own tune and marched quietly and steadily after his Muse.

Along the way, he helped edit, write, and publish his own fantasy fan magazine *Sweetness and Light*, about the same time that I was editing and publishing my own fairly dreadful mimeographed *Futuria Fantasia*, with occasional articles by Kuttner and Heinlein.

Along the way, he also sneaked me the names of people who might influence my life. Try Katherine Anne Porter, he said, she's great. Have you read Eudora Welty? he suggested, and if not, why not? Have you re-read Thorne Smith? Get to it. How about the short stories of Faulkner, or—here's one you never heard of—John Collier.

He lent me copies of various mystery writers and advised me, as did Leigh Brackett, whom he was helping, too, to try James Cain, Dashiell Hammett, and Raymond Chandler. I obeyed.

It always seemed, to Brackett and me, that every time we looked up there was Kuttner half a block ahead on the road, going in or coming out of libraries. The last time I saw him was on a bus headed for UCLA and the vast library there, where he swam in the stacks with a beatific and quiet smile.

He wrote steadily, but I wish he had yelled on occasion—as I have yelled—to call attention to himself. It is time now for us to pay attention, to draw near, to look at the quiet patterns in the wallpaper and find Kuttner out.

Leafing through the contents of this present volume, I find, to my dismay, that there are no convenient handles by which to pick Kuttner up. He wrote serious stories and light stories. He was not a science-fiction writers or a fantasist or a humorist, and yet he was all of these. If he had lived much longer he might have been troublesome to critics and librarians who like to slap precise labels on authors and file then neatly on shelves.

Kuttner was also troublesome to himself. His first published story, "The Graveyard Rats," became an instant classic when it appeared in *Weird Tales* when he was still a teen-ager. This swift fame for what is in essence a grisly, but finally brilliant, story caused Henry to fall into uneasy silences in later years when the story was mentioned. He did not really want to become a minor-league Lovecraft.

He went through a long period of trying and testing himself.

During this time he wrote dozens of undistinguished tales for the various science-fiction pulps, until Thorne Smith out of John Collier out of Robert E. Howard became the at-last-remarkable Henry Kuttner.

Where was the turning point? When did the pulp writer became the writer of quality? I imagine we could point to a half dozen stores that appeared in Campbell's incredible magazine *Unknown*. But I prefer to select two which popped our eyes and dropped our mouths agape in *Astounding*. I feel a deep personal response to them because, in the weeks during which he was finishing "The Twonky" and "Mimsy Were the Borogoves," Kuttner gave me copies of the stories to take home, read, and study. I knew then what everyone else knows now; I was reading two stories that would become very special in their field.

It would be hard to guess the impact of these two stories on other writers in the gene. But in all probability hundreds of imitations were written by struggling as well as by published authors. I count myself among them. I very much doubt that my "Zero Hour," or for that matter "The Veldt," would ever have leaped out of my typewriter if Kuttner's imagination had not led the way.

All of this makes it dreadfully sad to consider Henry Kuttner's early death. He had what we all admire and respond to: a love of ideas and a love of literature. He was not one of those easy cynics who move into magazines or television for the fast buck. When he did write for money, he was not happy. He was truly happy moving about through libraries, discovering new writers, finding new angles on human activity put forward by psychologists or scientists in any field. He was beginning to experiment with stories, some of which you will find in this collection, having to do with robot personalities, computerized intellects, and men lost among those machines.

I wish he could have lived into the Kennedy-Johnson-Nixon years, the years when the computers really arrived on-scene, the years of incredible paradox when we footprinted the moon and inched toward the stars. Kuttner, being nonpolitical, thank God, would have given us insights into our political-technological cultures that most of our "in" writers lack because they lean right or left. Kuttner never belonged to anything. He belonged, finally, to all of us. In a polarized world, we need fewer Mailers and many more Kuttners.

This brings me back to the problems of why Kuttner's name remains semi-obscure in our genre.

Apolitics is certainly part of the answer. When you mention Vonnegut, you polarize on the instant. Orwell, similarly. And Heinlein and Wells, and even Verne. Verne, after all, invented mad

Nemo, the mirror-image reversal of mad Ahab. Nemo prowled the world teaching moral lessons to even madder militarists. Beyond this, Verne was a superpropagandist for the humanities who said: you have a head, use it to guide your heart; you have a heart, use it to guide your head; you have hands with which to change the world. Head, heart, hands—sum up all three, and remake Eden.

Most science-fiction writers are moral revolutionaries on some level or another, instructing us for our own good. When Bernard Shaw and Bertrand Russell ventured into the field it could have been predicted (and I did so predict with Lord Russell) that they would pop up as moral revolutionists teaching lessons and pontificating therefrom. Shaw was better at it, of course. Russell came late to the short story, but it *was* science fiction, and was odorous with morality.

Here, I think, we may find Kuttner's flaw—if flaw it is, and I for one do not consider it so. One cannot be polarized all the time, one cannot think politically from noon to night. That way is the way of the True Believer—that is to say, finally, the Mad Man.

Kuttner is not mad, nor especially kicking up his heels with joie de vivre. He is wryly calm. If he celebrates anything, it is within his head.

I cannot recall any particularly violent ideas he put forth on politics or politicians. He seemed never to have gone through one of those nineteenth or twentieth summers when we all go a bit amok on Technocracy or Socialism or Scientology. When the fever passes and the smoke clears we wonder what happened to us and are puzzled when our friends don't speak to us for a time, until they discover that the hair has fallen off us and we have given up being a political gorilla and are back being human again. If Kuttner had such a year, or month, I never knew it. And it doesn't show in his work.

So because much of what he wrote is not, in modern terminology, Relevant with a capital R, his is probably graded by some as ten degrees down from Orwell, and twenty below Vonnegut—which is, needless to say, a damned and awful shame. What we need is not more political cant and polarized bias, but more traffic engineers, with no particular traffic in mind save survival, to stand on the highroads leading toward the future, waving us on creatively but not necessarily banging our ears when we, children that we are, misbehave.

Kuttner, then, was no moral revolutionary or political reformer. he was an entertaining writer. His stories are seeded with ideas and moralities, yes, but these do not cry out, shout, shriek, or necessarily ask for change. This is the way we are, Kuttner says, what do you think of us?

And so, the more I think of it, the more I feel Kuttner has been cursed by the great curse of our time. People have too often asked: Well, how do we *use* Kuttner? What is he good for? What kind of tool is he? Where does he fit? What is the appropriate label? Will people look up to me if I carry "Mimsy Were the Borogoves" around campus rather than *The Gulag Archipelago?*

If this is not the complete explanation, it leans toward it, in any event. In what tends to be a practical Kleenex culture, if you can't clean out your ears with an author, you tend, because others bully you about it, to leave him alone.

So if you have arrived at this book and look to Kuttner for religious instruction, secular improvement, or moral renovation, save with certain exceptions you had best retreat to *Siddhartha* and other forms of literate navel-lint plucking with which the sophomores of the world bug each other. Kuttner will not kick, bite, beat, much less kiss, hug, stroke, or improve you. And thank God for that. I have had enough improvement, just as I have had too much cotton candy at too many circuses.

If you will allow a final, very small, very personal note, here it is:

Back in 1942 you will find my first horror story, published in the November issue of *Weird Tales*. Its title is "The Candle," and the last three hundred words were written by Henry Kuttner. I had trouble with the story, sent it to Hank, and he responded with a complete ending. It was good. I couldn't top it. I asked permission to use it. Hank said yes. That ending, today, is the only good part of that long-lost and deservedly well-buried story. It's nice to be able to say Henry Kuttner once collaborated with me.

Well, here's the collection. It represents only a small part of the hundreds of stores he wrote. Kuttner had no family, but...

His children live here in this book.

They are lovely and special and fine.

I want you to meet them.

Ray Bradbury
Los Angeles, California
July 11, 1974