

# THEODORE STURGEON

no more than human

By SAM MOSKOWITZ



*IT walked in the woods. "It was never born. It existed. Under the pine needles the fires burn, deep and smokeless in the mold. In heat and in darkness and decay there is growth. It grew, but it was not alive. It walked unbreathing through the woods, and thought and saw and was hideous and strong, and it was not born and it did not live. It grew and moved about without living."*

Those were the opening paragraphs of one of the most remarkable stories to appear in the canon of science-fantasy. *It* was the title of the story, and it appeared in the Aug., 1940, issue of UNKNOWN, a magazine dedicated to the publication of tales that would be different from any of

the conventional science-fiction or weird-fiction magazines.

The intonations of the opening passages set the mood for the introduction of a monstrous life form, a mass of putrescence and slime coating the skeleton of a dead man that spontaneously became instinct with awareness: "It had no mercy, no laughter, no beauty. It had strength and great intelligence. And—perhaps it could not be destroyed."

Authors had created monsters before, many whose names became synonyms for terror, but none of them had been treated with such objectivity or presented with such incredible mastery of style.

"Styles" would have been the better term, for the author was a



virtuoso, possessing absolute pitch for the cadence of words, altering the mood and beat of his phraseology with the emotional deliberateness of background music in a moving picture.

The question was as universal as it was inevitable: Who is Theodore Sturgeon?

It was not that Theodore Sturgeon was unknown to the science-fiction world. Four stories had appeared previously, the first of them *Ether Breather* in the Sept., 1939, issue of *ASTOUNDING SCIENCE-FICTION*, winning first place by reader vote over all stories in that number. *Ether Breather* was a clever spoof at the television industry, in a year when there was virtually no such industry, involving "etheric" intelligences that humorously altered television transmission. Lightly, almost frothily written, it invited examination of style to no greater a degree than a theatrical bedroom farce.

The same slick, lightweight prose and superficially bubbling good humor dominated *A God in the Garden*, which was presented in the November, 1939, *UNKNOWN*, wherein a pre-historic "God" grants a man the handy attribute of having every word he utters come factually true, even if it were not so before he opened his mouth; *Derm Fool* (*UNKNOWN*, March, 1940) is built about the plight of several

people who shed their skin every 24 hours as the result of a poisonous snake bite, while *He Shuttles* (*UNKNOWN*, April, 1940) is a deviant on the old saw of a man granted three wishes and ending up in a situation where the wishes are in such contradiction that he must back up in time and perpetually repeat his actions.

Sturgeon's first four stories were written, apparently, by a lighthearted young man with a facile style, and intended to do no more than entertain. *It*, however, displayed that an extraordinary talent was at work, capable of producing serious work of a lasting nature. The 22-year-old man who had written *It*, handsome, sensitive and whimsical of features, with a trim build and a captivating manner, was destined to become a giant in the fields of science fiction and fantasy.

**T**HEODORE Sturgeon was born Edward Hamilton Waldo, Feb. 26, 1918, in St. George, Staten Island, N. Y. His father was in the retail paint business and was of Dutch-French ancestry, a line unbroken back to 1640 in the New World. His literary and artistic inclinations seem to stem from his mother, a Canadian-English poetess who taught literature and produced amateur plays.

An Episcopalian by birth,



Sturgeon's background was heavily weighted with the pressures of the ministry, with eight ministers on his father's side, one of them an Archbishop of the West Indies and another a Bishop of Quebec. Young Edward and brother Peter, who was 15 months older, attended church and Sunday school regularly until the age of 12. Since their parents liked to sleep late, the two boys made an occasional exception to this routine and would duck church every time they could get their hands on a copy of *BALLYHOO*, a popular humor magazine during the Thirties. On completing their reading, they would return home with a vivid and detailed account of the religious services, which effectively reassured their parents.

While their early home life was happy enough, all was not well with their parents' marriage. Sturgeon's father did not live at home after the boy was five years of age. His parents were divorced in 1927, when he was barely turned nine; and his father remarried and went to live in Baltimore.

Edward ran into trouble when his mother remarried in 1929. His stepfather had been an instructor of English in Scottish schools. An immensely accomplished scholar and linguist, his stepfather revered anyone who took learning seriously. It was

obvious that both his stepsons were highly intelligent, yet they were very poor students, attaching little importance to knowledge. Edward was more than lackadaisical; he was perverse in high school, requiring constant discipline. The stepfather found himself psychologically incapable of excusing this attitude; and while he supported the youths and stood up for them in time of trouble, there were no allowances or special kindnesses forthcoming. He did, however, make it possible for Theodore Sturgeon to carry his present name. The old Scotsman was named Sturgeon, and young Edward had always wanted to be called "Ted"; so when he was baptized his name officially became Theodore Hamilton Sturgeon, and that is his legal name today.

STURGEON went to a private seminary in Staten Island up until the fourth grade. Then he entered a boys' preparatory school in Pennsylvania. When he enrolled in high school, at the age of 12, his family was living in Philadelphia. Young Theodore was an emaciated weakling, a suitable subject for the "before" physical culture advertisements. High school proved a place of horror. His mother forced him to wear short pants and he arrived for registration with golden, fuzzy hair, riding on a scooter. Most



of the kids, then, wore knickers, and Sturgeon used to hide from them. Whenever he showed himself bullies hazed him unmercifully, despite gallant attempts to fight back. To top it off he had virtually no interest in study.

Then, one day, he watched an exhibition of gymnastics on the school's parallel bars. The sport thrilled him. He begged for a chance to participate and drilled with fanatical enthusiasm, getting up at five in the morning and leaving hours after the school day. In 12 months he had gained 6 pounds and developed powerful arms and a heavy chest. His schoolmates' contempt turned to respect. The second year he became captain of the gym team, and at the ages of 13 and 14 was permitted to instruct the class. Sturgeon's consuming ambition, now, was to become a career gymnast with Barnum & Bailey's circus. Temple University in Philadelphia, offered him a two-year athletic scholarship. Life now had a purpose.

When Sturgeon was 15 he became ill with rheumatic fever. Before he recovered there was a 16% enlargement of the heart. That was the end of gymnastics, forever. Sturgeon's entire life came crashing down. He never was going to be a flyer in Barnum & Bailey. He grew angry at the world, began to give everyone trouble. Never a good student, he

neglected his subjects still further and began dressing in weird outfits just to be annoying.

TO make things worse, Sturgeon's stepfather enforced seemingly harsh home conditions. Though they had a radio, the boys were not permitted to listen to it. Every evening Ted and his brother were required to attend a one-and-one-half-hour reading in his stepfather's library. The books, both fiction and non-fiction, covered an inspiring selection of subjects and the readings were sustained for many years. It was here that he first became acquainted with *The Time Machine* and *Twenty Thousand Leagues Beneath the Sea*. But Ted had no appreciation of the literary background he was getting. Exercising a prescribed right that the boys could ask any question they wished concerning the material read, Ted Sturgeon showed an unholy and recurring delight in innocently requesting an explanation for the word "orgy."

The stepfather demanded that the boys earn their own spending money. Yet when he caught Ted enterprisingly selling newspapers on a corner one block away from Drexel University where he taught languages, he quickly put a stop to it. Ted went out and got a job collecting garbage for an apartment house, and failed com-



pletely to understand his stepfather's explosion regarding *that*. Ted pleaded to be permitted to attend college, but his stepfather, suspecting that campus frivolity was Ted's motive, refused. Ted settled for Penn State Nautical School, whose two-year course ended in the granting of a third mate's papers. A \$100 graduation present from his grandmother took care of most of the \$125 tuition fee. In Nautical School Ted encountered discipline and hazing on an undreamed of and unprecedented scale. He stuck it out until the end of the term. Then, at 17 he went to sea as a wiper.

**D**URING his three years at sea Sturgeon began to write. He sold a short-short story to McClure's Syndicate, in 1937. McClure's paid \$5 for the story and it was published in dozens of newspapers throughout the United States. During the next two years he sold 40 short stories to this market, none of which were fantasy and all of which were published under the name of Theodore Sturgeon. (One newspaper that carried them all was THE MILWAUKEE JOURNAL.) These were not intended as hack work; Sturgeon did his best in each of them. During this period he lived with an Italian shipmate in the Hell's Kitchen section of New York. The years were punc-

tuated by stints at sea, and it was while trying to find a ship out of a Texas port that Sturgeon made a deal with a small-town politician who owned a general store. Sturgeon wrote the man's campaign speeches. In payment, Sturgeon received day-old cup cakes, which literally were all that stood between him and starvation at the time. (The politician won the election.)

One science-fiction story, written about then, was titled *Helix the Cat* and concerned a scientist and his cat. The story never sold and the manuscript has been misplaced. But Sturgeon's decision to try to sell to the fantasy magazines came as the result of a friendship with a Brooklyn couple. The wife was a leading writer for true confession magazines. One day, her husband slapped the first (March, 1939) UNKNOWN down in front of Sturgeon and said: "This is the kind of thing you ought to try to write." Sturgeon was enchanted. This was not his first acquaintance with science-fiction and fantasy. Though one of the strict taboos insisted upon by his stepfather was "No Science-Fiction!", Sturgeon had since 1930 intermittently read AMAZING STORIES, WONDER STORIES, ASTOUNDING STORIES and WEIRD TALES. As a youngster his favorite characters were Anthony Gilmore's Hawk Carse and John W. Campbell's Arcot-Wade-



Morey trio. In the line of pure fantasy he had been deeply impressed by *The Charwoman's Shadow* by Lord Dunsany, *Green Mansions* by W. H. Hudson, *Alice in Wonderland* and *Through the Looking Glass* by Lewis Carroll. Before he began serious writing of fiction Sturgeon composed a good amount of poetry and occasionally, a bit of verse, of very high quality, appears in his short stories. His poetic idols were William Blake, famed for *The Tiger*, and William Morris. One poem by Theodore Sturgeon, *Look About You!* which appeared illustrated in the January, 1940 UNKNOWN, is exceptional enough to warrant consideration in any substantial anthology of modern poems by American authors. He abandoned most serious attempts at verse after he began to sell fiction commercially.

WITH this as his background and a copy of UNKNOWN in his foreground, Sturgeon wrote a story minutely delineating the feelings of a man about to be hit by a subway train. Editor John W. Campbell ripped the story apart on the basis that when the protagonist is the same at the ending as he was at the beginning of the narrative, the result is not a story but an anecdote. Fortified with this erudition, Sturgeon went home and wrote *The God in the Garden*, which

was the first story he sold to Campbell. This success caused him to quit the sea and settle down to work as a professional writer.

While trying to write more stories for Campbell he found himself persistently distracted by a bizarre notion that kept creeping into his thoughts. Unable to continue with his regular work until he disposed of it, he interrupted the story he was working on and in four hours wrote *Bianca's Hands*, a horrifying tale of a man so enamored by the expressive hands of an idiot woman that he marries her, only to die in ecstasy at the thrill of having those superb hands choke the life from him. Sturgeon thrust the tale back in the drawer with no immediate intention of selling it and continued with the story he had been working on.

With sales being made regularly to UNKNOWN and ASTOUNDING, Sturgeon decided to marry his high-school sweetheart, Dorothy Fillingame. Her parents violently objected to Sturgeon's occupation and background, but a week after the girl turned 21 parental objections were defied, and the couple married. In 10 consecutive hours of inspiration, on their honeymoon, Sturgeon wrote the nightmarish masterpiece that created his first reputation—*It*.

He was now a fully accepted



member of Campbell's "stable" of writers, which included names as prominent as Heinlein, van Vogt, L. Ron Hubbard, L. Sprague de Camp, E. E. Smith, Lester del Rey. In this capacity, Ted was sometimes given a chance at a special assignment. Sturgeon rewrote several stories which had strong plots but which were inadequately written. These appeared as *Hag Seleen*, a superbly written Cajun story of a girl-child who turns a witch's magic against her (UNKNOWN WORLDS, Dec., 1942) and *The Bones*, a clever fantasy about a machine that permits the viewer actually to experience the final events that happened to fragments of matter placed in it (UNKNOWN WORLDS, Aug., 1943). Both of these stories were written before June, 1940.

With his wife now pregnant, Sturgeon wrote steadily to support his family. *Butyl and the Breather* (ASTOUNDING, Oct., 1940) was a light-hearted farce and a sequel to *The Ether Breathers*; *Cargo* (UNKNOWN, Nov., 1940) told of all the brownies, fairies and various other "little people" shipping out of Europe during World War II; *Shottle Bop* (UNKNOWN, Feb., 1941) proved a very popular fantasy concerning a gnomelike owner of a shop who sold "bottles with things in them"; and by this time Sturgeon was so prolific

that *Ultimate Egoist* in the same issue appeared under the pen name of E. Hunter Waldo.

WHILE it made no special impact at the time of publication, *Poker Face* (ASTOUNDING, March, 1941) is historically important as one of the earliest science-fiction stories based on the notion that other-worldly aliens are living and working among us and at any moment may open the lid on that third eye or pull their extra hands from beneath their waistcoat. Readers may not have grasped the significance of *Poker Face*, but *Microcosmic God* (in the April, 1941, ASTOUNDING) had all the reaction of an atomic bomb. It was not that the idea was new; the concept of a microscopic world of intelligent creatures, producing inventions at an accelerated rate relative to their own time span, had been touched upon in *Out of the Sub-Universe* by R. F. Starzl, AMAZING STORIES QUARTERLY, Summer, 1928); had been defined in complete detail by Edmond Hamilton in *Fessenden's World* (WEIRD TALES, April, 1937) and registered as a poignant classic in Calvin Perego's *Short-Wave Castle* (ASTOUNDING STORIES, Feb., 1934)—but Sturgeon did it best.

The modest fame as master of fantasy which Sturgeon had attained with *It* was far transcended by the acclaim brought to him



by *Microcosmic God*. Far from being pleased, Sturgeon was first annoyed and then infuriated. The kindest thing he could say for *Microcosmic God* was that it was "fast-paced." He deplored the fact that it did not have the "literary cadence" of many of his other less-complimented works; and he deeply resented the fact that readers didn't even seem to get the point: that a superman need not be a powerful, commanding person. He failed to understand that he had struck the universal chord. Stories like *Shottle Bop*, where you got what you wanted by "wishing," were good fun, but nobody in this modern technological age believed them. To the contrary, a story like *Microcosmic God*, where a man could get anything he wanted by logical scientific means made possible the complete suspension of disbelief and utter absorption of the reader by the story. Therein rested its appeal.

THE Sturgeon name increasingly became a focus for the readership. One remarkably well done story, *Nightmare Island*, under the pseudonym of E. Waldo Hunter in the June, 1941, *ASTOUNDING* failed to achieve any special note. Derived from a reference in a 1910 edition of the *Encyclopedia Britannica* to a "Tube Worm", it dealt with a

Kingdom of Worms in which a castaway alcoholic was worshipped as a god.

Financial opportunity seemed to beckon to Sturgeon in the form of an offer to run a luxury hotel in the British West Indies. This sounded like a heavenly way to make a living, and seemed to offer a great deal more security than writing. So Sturgeon packed up his belongings, his wife and his six-month old baby girl, Patricia, and left the United States. He had barely ensconced himself in the hotel when Pearl Harbor was bombed and the United States entered the war. This meant the end of the tourist trade and the hotel. Sturgeon's wife took a secretarial job at Fort Symington and Sturgeon took to selling hosiery, door to door. He finally got to run three mess halls and 17 barracks buildings for the army, then worked into running a gas station and a tractor lubrication operation. The powerful tractors, bulldozers and cranes fascinated him, so he learned to operate them. He accepted a job in Puerto Rico as a Class A bulldozer and just loved it, moving his wife and child to that country.

In 1944, with the European phase of the war drawing to a close, the base and the job folded. Now there was a second child, Cynthia. Sturgeon rented a house in St. Croix, the Virgin



Islands, and desperately tried to make ends meet. There had been no writing in two-and-a-half years. Campbell wasn't too helpful or encouraging but, spurred by necessity, Sturgeon applied himself and wrote *Killdozer*, a 37,000 word novelette, in nine days. That story, about a primeval electronic intelligence that takes over a bulldozer clearing an airfield on a Pacific Island, embodied the vivid impressions of a sensitive artist of the power, sound, smell, and mortal danger of the mechanical behemoths. It became the cover story of the November, 1944, issue of *ASTOUNDING SCIENCE-FICTION*. He received \$545, the largest single amount he had earned by writing.

But the check didn't last long, and Sturgeon went into a writing funk that he was unable to snap. He took advantage of a clause in his government contract which would pay for his plane fare back to the United States. He was to fly to a friend in Chicago, then go to New York, get a literary agent and make arrangements to get his family back to the States. The entire trip was to take 10 days. But things didn't work out. He couldn't find an agent. He was unable to write. The 10 days stretched into eight months. During certain periods his main source of sustenance was the three meals a week he ate at the home of his half-sister.

Finally a letter arrived from his wife. She wanted a divorce. For two months he couldn't make up his mind what to do, but a job he had obtained as a copy editor for an advertising agency at \$75 a week made it possible for him to raise enough money to return to St. Croix. He and his wife talked things over, but her confidence in him was shattered. They were divorced in St. Thomas, V.I.

STURGEON returned to New York in 1946, moving into the bachelor apartments of L. Jerome Stanton, then assistant editor of *ASTOUNDING SCIENCE-FICTION*. Stanton had a near-empty apartment and Sturgeon had some furniture in storage, so they made a deal. As far as finances were concerned Sturgeon was able to contribute little. He operated in a constant daze for months. Campbell befriended him, having him as a house guest for weeks at a stretch.

Gradually, Campbell coaxed Sturgeon out of his depression. One day, in the basement of the editor's home, Ted sat down at a typewriter and wrote *The Chromium Helmet*. Campbell read the first draft out of the typewriter and accepted the story, which appeared in *ASTOUNDING*, June, 1946. Reading more like a television script than science-fiction, this novelette of a hair dryer that fished one's most wished-for de-



sires from the subconscious and left the subject convinced these yearnings had been fulfilled only superficially disguised its artifices, yet it seemed to sit well with the reader.

*Mewhu's Jet*, a long novelette which appeared later that year in the November ASTOUNDING was a much better story. Engrossingly, and with a style as clear as crystal, Sturgeon told of the landing of a space ship and an alien; the attempts to communicate with it; and the final wry realization that the outsider was a lost child with a super-toy who didn't even know where he came from, let alone the workings of his mechanism.

SOMETHING else happened during 1946. Sturgeon had peddled dozens of products door to door in the past in an effort to make a living. Now he decided to try his hand as a literary agent. In addition to handling his own efforts he worked up quite a prominent group of clients including A. Bertram Chandler, William Tenn, Judith Merrill, Frederik Pohl, Robert W. Lowndes, and Larry Shaw. This profession lasted precisely from January to December of 1946. For years after that Sturgeon would not have an agent himself because: "I wouldn't put my affairs in the hands of anyone in so much trouble."

AGENTING, however was the open sesame to a new world. Up to now Sturgeon had but a single market: John W. Campbell's magazines. Now he found his old rejections from UNKNOWN and ASTOUNDING SCIENCE-FICTION welcome at WEIRD TALES by editor Lamont Buchanan. Within the next few years he would resurrect *Cellmate*, *Deadly Ratio*, *The Professor's Teddy Bear*, *Abreaction*, *The Perfect Host* and *The Martian and the Moron* from the trunk, and enjoy an enthusiastic reception and new reputation at WEIRD TALES. THRILLING WONDER STORIES, which for years had followed a juvenile policy, went adult in 1947 and took *The Sky Was Full of Ships*, a tale of a warning of interplanetary invasion.

Through the years Sturgeon had tried to sell the nightmarish *Bianca's Hands*. Agents, editors, and friends were horrified by the concept. An editor told him he would never buy from an author whose mind could conceive notions like that. An agent told him he didn't want to be associated with an author whose bent carried him in such directions. Every magazine it was submitted to rejected it. Impelled by his recent good fortune in selling to new markets, Sturgeon mailed the story to the British ARGOSY.

Sturgeon won a \$1,000 prize with the story, edging out the



celebrated Graham Greene. (It appeared in *ARGOSY* for May, 1947.) More than just money was involved here, though. The various ups and downs of his literary career had severely shaken Sturgeon's estimate of himself. One of the most accomplished stylists in the field, he still doubted whether he could actually write well enough to be a sustained success at writing. The bulls-eye scored by this story, written at a very early stage in his career, convinced him that he had always possessed the literary qualifications of a good writer. His work immediately began to reflect this new confidence.

Campbell had pointedly anticipated the advent of atomic power. Now he chronically egged on his writers to explore the ramifications of this discovery. Sturgeon was scarcely immune from this insistence, and his first story of atomic doom, *Memorial*, was anything but memorable. Therefore, his second such story, *Thunder and Roses*, in the Nov., 1947, *ASTOUNDING*, routinely blurbed as an "atomic energy" story, suggested nothing special. It wasn't until anthologist August Derleth picked it up for *Strange Ports of Call* in 1948 that it had an almost delayed-action effect on the science-fiction world. Sturgeon had taken the most maudlin of themes: the United States, virtually de-

stroyed by an enemy nuclear attack, debated the ethics of striking back when the retaliatory weapons would raise the radiation level to the point where every higher organism would be eradicated, eliminating any hope for another creature to rise to a state of civilization. Yet, he pulled it off magnificently, even including a poem in the story which was later set to music.

STURGEON had now earned his first hard-cover selection, *Without Sorcery*, published by Prime Press, Philadelphia in 1948. It was distinguished by an introduction written especially for the volume by Ray Bradbury. That author was already gathering steam, building towards his present considerable reputation. He wrote: "Perhaps the best way I can tell you what I think of a Theodore Sturgeon story is to explain with what diligent interest, in the year 1940, I split every Sturgeon tale down the middle and fetched out its innards to see what made it function. At that time I had not sold one story, I was 20, I was feverish for the vast secrets of successful writers. I looked upon Sturgeon with a secret and gnawing jealousy." *Without Sorcery* was dedicated to Sturgeon's new love, Mary Mair: "Who in spite of the envy of the angels will live forever." However, the marriage that re-



sulted from their friendship in 1949 did not last forever. It was dissolved in 1951.

Accused of a "lack of maturity," Sturgeon had previously defended his outlook in a story titled, aptly enough, *Maturity*, originally published in the Feb., 1947 *ASTOUNDING*, but redone as virtually a new story for *Without Sorcery*. Robin English, hero of the story, (Robin is now the name of one of Sturgeon's sons) is an engaging but child-like man, whose doctor sweetheart, arranges to have him mentally raised to maturity by a series of chemical injections. Robin English becomes something unique, a literary superman with a series of phenomenally successful plays, novels and poems. The literary efforts eventually stop as the process of artificial maturity continues, and Sturgeon offers the candid suggestion that the child-like outlook is necessary to the production of works of art. A completely mature man does not engage in that type of preoccupation.

What is maturity? The closing lines of the story, where his "super-mature man" has willed himself to die, reveals Sturgeon's answer: "Enough is maturity."

**P**ERSONAL problems no longer inactivated Sturgeon. Throughout his short and ill-deserted marriage with Mary Mair,

his production was regular, displaying constantly higher standards of originality and technique. Through his friend Stanton he met his third wife, Marion McGahan. They were married in 1951. Ten years and four children later, through a kaleidoscopic series of economic ups and downs, they are still married. Sturgeon seemed to have found in Marion, a woman temperamentally suited to the inconsistencies of a full-time writer's life.

Perhaps she did not deserve all the credit, however, for there also appeared to be a change in Sturgeon's social outlook that contributed to stability. It began when the October, 1952, issue of *GALAXY* carried a novelette by Sturgeon titled *Baby is Three*. It concerned a 15-year-old youth who visits a psychiatrist to find out why he murdered a woman who befriended him and four other strange children, all gifted with one or more of the powers of telepathy, telekinesis and teleportation. Sturgeon, basing his story on the Gestalt philosophy that "a whole is more than the sum of its parts" admirably made his point when he wrote a 30,000 word preface, *The Fabulous Idiot*; and a 30,000 word epilogue, *Morality*. The three appeared as *More Than Human* in simultaneous hard-cover and paperback editions in 1953.

One of the most original and



artful productions ever to appear on the theme of extra-sensory powers, *More Than Human* won the International Fantasy Award for 1954. All the children who make up the symbiotic power relationship in *More Than Human* have been sorely abused in their formative years—particularly the hero who serves as the “ganglion” of the talented group. Though their lives are frequently far from comfortable, they gain courage from their mutuality. The denouement occurs when, with the passing of years, the nerve center of the group learns the meaning of morality and the desirability of channeling his powers into constructive channels.

WITH a writer as superbly gifted as Sturgeon, who strives in every story to be as differently and bizarrely off-trail as he is able; whose adroitness at altering the rhythm of his writing to conform to the subject gives him as many styles as stories (an artistic feat that has cost him the following that familiarity accrues), it is necessary to balance near to presumption in relating the subject matter of *More Than Human* to the personality of its author. Yet, the Gerard of *More Than Human* bears strong resemblance to his creator.

Theodore Sturgeon was a boy with a most difficult childhood, a first marriage of only temporary stability, followed by a period of great mental confusion, then a fling at frivolity, a brief second marriage, and finally the third marriage and the awakening of an acute awareness of moral responsibility. The feeling in the story that individuals in the gestalt relationship may be replaced without destroying the entity fits the pattern of Sturgeon's early changes; just as does the final decision of Gerard to keep the unity intact, supplementing his abilities with responsibility.

The steady literary production of Sturgeon ever since the appearance of *More Than Human*, with a continuous striving for higher achievement, lend strong credibility to the theory that, with his third wife and four children, Sturgeon finally established a “gestalt” arrangement in emotional harmony with the world, without sacrificing the naive freshness that made his literary creativity possible. That aspect of his sensitivity is best expressed in his poem, *Look About You*:

*“We each live in a wonderland;  
A blue to you is a red to me,  
A shade is seen, and we call it  
green—*

*I wonder what you see?”*

THE END