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The Great Thought

A Thought-variant

by K. Raymond

THOUGH metaphysics deals with reality, an air of the unreal hung over Harvard's hall of science on the evening of January 6, 1944, as Alexander Crayton, Ph.D., LL.D., professor of philosophy in Harvard University, began to address the tense gathering from the yellow-lighted stage.

"Fellow members of our American Metaphysical Society," Professor Crayton said nervously, a thin, elderly man in wrinkled black suit, leaning heavily on the black cane he always carried, "I—ah—have asked and received permission to make the opening—ah—speech of to-night's special meeting. I fear that what I am about to say will anger you. But gentlemen, this—er—attack you plan against earth's television broadcasting is useless folly. Again I warn you: television is not back of the—ah—scientific problem which mankind faces.

"Gentlemen, to earth I predict the coming of a complete experience of the universe. This experience will give us a complete metaphysics. Indeed, it will entirely do away with the—ah—need for metaphysics!"

Dynamite exploding within the old walls of the hall of science could not have made a greater uproar than did Professor Crayton's direct, astounding words.

But young Professor Guy Van Sohn, thirty, associate professor of philosophy in Yale, a tall, thin metaphysician in gray, by his shrill, cutting voice quieted the hall and challenged the seventy-year-old speaker.

"I say, Professor Crayton," he said,

great, dark eyes gleaming, jerkily twirling the ends of his trim, black mustache, "this is a bit thick, you know! Your idea that a *complete thought* rushes through the cosmos toward earth, like a gas cloud, was ridiculed at yesterday's discussion. Your theory that the first vibrating impulses of this thought cloud is the brain-paralyzing force that has repeatedly attacked all people of earth during the past month is absurd!

"Really, old boy," continued Professor Van Sohn, hatred of the aged scientist—who had often disproved his proudest metaphysical theories—showing in his insolence, "this meeting was called to plan a scientific attack on the problem of modern, high-powered television broadcast. Have we not already decided that television impulses, since the building of the mighty universal transmitting tower in New York, have been changing brain tissue, and are, therefore, the direct cause of humanity's brain storms?"

ANXIETY paled mild Professor Crayton's deep-lined face, as a loud roar of voices and shouts of "Hear, hear!" greeted Professor Van Sohn's snarled words. Professor Crayton leaned more heavily on his black cane, sadly shaking his gray-haired head.

Then, when all was again quiet, he said, "Professor Van Sohn, you, as well as all other gentlemen gathered here, misuse instinct and metaphysics. Naturally, your first instinct is to believe that humanity's increasing brain lapses are caused by something on earth.



And since to experience mentally is to think the experience—Professor Crayton thought himself (as did all humanity) a strange being in a strange universe.

Then, as metaphysicians, you manage to find a bad reason——”

“You say our reason is a bad one.” Professor Van Sohn’s thin lips curled. “Suppose you tell us why!”

“Surgeons can detect no—ah—change in brain tissue, as would be the case if high-powered television impulses were attacking man’s brain.”

“Bah! The breakdown of tissue cells could easily remain unseen, even with post-mortem ultramicroscopic examination!”

“Well then, my young colleague, there are people who—ah—work where ether is absolutely free from the powerful television impulses; yet they have suffered from the same repeated—brain storms—I believe you termed them—as the rest of us.”

Professor Van Sohn’s hollow cheeks flushed red, as Harvard’s hall of science buzzed with the astonishment of the gathered philosophers.

“What!” he cried. “Impossible! Whom and where are such people?”

“Underground workers of the thirty-mile-deep Arizona Interior Heat Bore. Two days ago, January 4, 1944, to be exact, I flew to Arizona by plane, solely to disprove this society’s television-impulse theory of humanity’s—ah—brain storms. My instruments could detect no television waves at the thirty-mile depth. Yet the men down there, including myself, were seized by each of the two dozen, fifteen-minute attacks of brain paralysis which came that day. So you see, the television-power idea of brain change is worthless.”

Professor Van Sohn stiffened with anger and annoyance. “Indeed! And by what supermetaphysics was born your mad dream of the complete-thought impulse whirling through the solar system like a gas cloud?”

“My—ah—dear young philosopher”—Professor Crayton made a halting step forward to the platform’s edge. He bent down earnestly, chest almost touch-

ing his two hands atop the black cane—“so unusual a problem needed an urge of thought far above actual experience for its solving. You younger scientists smile at the intuitive method of thinking which I use as the key to deep philosophical questions. You prefer the mathematical or machinelike use of the mind. You use mass logic, forgetting that metaphysics is the science of the—ah—*individual* mind——”

“Oh, I see!” interrupted Professor Van Sohn. He turned to the rows of assembled scientists behind him. “Gentlemen, the great thought flood, soon to wash earth as Professor Crayton believes, is his individual brain wave!”

A GREAT ROAR of laughter echoed within the yellow-lighted hall of science.

“Please—please, gentlemen!” Professor Crayton faltered. “Laugh at me if you wish. I still say that a vast thought is flowing through the heavens toward earth. It is close at hand—for strength and number of humanity’s brain attacks have steadily increased. I warn you: either a mighty communication of thought comes, or else a thought will bent on conquering all alien wills——

“Gentlemen—an attack—another brain attack—begins!”

Into Professor Crayton’s brain was flowing a paralyzing stream of pure consciousness. And he knew—as he always knew in such attacks before the last impulses of his own ego had been washed under—that all humanity, all conscious organisms upon earth, were being gripped by the same astounding power: *a vast, cosmic essence of will.*

In Professor Crayton’s brain the flowing consciousness hummed as the power of a television carrier wave hums. And for one hour, longest period of the many, many transcendent brain attacks of the past month, he stood as turned to stone, waiting—waiting——

Waiting for what?

For a mighty thought, it seemed. A thought that would bring a wonderful message—or an all-conquering alien will that—

Then, as though but another of the first splashes of a rolling wave, the flow of pure consciousness passed—for its humming stopped. Once again, Professor Crayton's ego, freed from greater powers, jerked him out of a waking trance. He found himself still leaning on his black cane, staring down at a suddenly milling, shouting turmoil of metaphysicians who, like he, had just got back mental self-control.

"Gentlemen, we—we must be calm," Professor Crayton begged haltingly. "We must plan. The inner life of a mighty being—or of a physical event—will soon be upon us. Will it be a wonderful message? Or will evil vibrations shatter the brains of all earth organisms? Let us make the—ah—best scientific preparation for—"

Tall, lean Professor Van Sohn interrupted by leaping to the platform, dark face crimson with anger. "I say, gentlemen!" he cried, and his shrill, cutting voice quieted the crowded hall of science, "we've had enough of Crayton's nonsense—indeed! I call it insanity! Our psychical estimate of these brain storms is that the universal transmitting tower, New York's center of earth-circling television, is to blame! Why, the first day it was in operation, broadcasting its ultra-powerful ether vibrations, the brain attacks began. And does not the brain hum sound exactly like that of television waves?"

"Only—ah—coincidental," faltered Professor Crayton.

But Professor Van Sohn continued: "So! The problem is a simple one of earth. Gentlemen, we have great power in New York's government; we shall have the tower torn down!"

"This—this is sheer madness! You shall see—"

Professor Van Sohn said fiercely: "I shall see that you resign from the American Metaphysical Society—after I am proved correct in this matter! We cannot have one whose judgment is unsound—whose beliefs are those of insanity—in our midst!"

Deep silence within the yellow-lighted hall of science—

Then a mighty roar of approval. Gray-haired Professor Crayton trembled, would have fallen but for his cane. Bent lower than ever, tears coming into his faded blue eyes, he began to slowly limp off the platform amid jeering shouts and harsh laughter, when—

Again a sweeping flood of pure consciousness—now a mighty roar of inner sound—burst into his brain—into the brains of the gathered metaphysicians—into every brain of earth.

Professor Crayton stiffened like a statue. The roaring tide of consciousness was bringing its first great thought—an irresistible will to believe—a promise of *fulfillment*—of purpose—of the coming of knowledge accidentally hurled throughout the cosmos—

The roar within Professor Crayton's skull died away. His brain filled with thought—*thought* as cold as space between the stars, chill with absolute reality and truth. Mentally, he was experiencing the complete thought, and since to experience mentally is to think the experience—Professor Crayton thought himself (as did all humanity) a—*strange being in a strange universe.*

HE WAS the scientific starfish, a vast five-armed being of thin fluid that glowed with faint white light. Large as the stellar cosmos visible from earth, he was, nevertheless, but a tiny organism floating in his supra-world of limitless ether. From his five arms, sensitive to forces in the bluish ocean around him, came the unseen power that gave him motion, controlled his world.

The scientific starfish's brain was

a huge, nervous system amazingly complicated. He was wildly excited; for within that brilliant ring of white fluid near by—which he could not know as the whirling earth cosmos with its countless stars and planets held together by the denser universes of the Milky Way—no bigger than the tip of one of his five arms, a life impulse had beat.

A life impulse in supposedly lifeless matter!

Throughout his supra-world, the scientific starfish flashed the amazing news that life had come to the tiny gelatine ring he had toiled to form—

He—the scientific starfish—had created life!

Swiftly toward him, swimming through the vast ocean of blue-glowing ether, thousands of the mighty starfish came. Pulsing thought speech, they gathered around the scientific starfish.

"Life in that jelly ring?" vibrated the first starfish. "Nonsense! The thing is but psychical in origin!"

"No! It is vegetable life," came the oscillating thought of the second starfish. "It cannot move!"

The scientific starfish spoke mildly. "The creature is now an entirely normal being of living thought—formed by the scientific change-of-thought method. And where others failed with mechanical shock, chemical irritation and other worthless ways of bringing life into thought gelatine, I did it by will stimulation of nerve fibers telepathically formed within the jelly."

THE gathered starfish pulsed with mixed emotions—but fear and anger were strongest.

"You have put science to base uses," said the first starfish angrily. "We have no right to create life. But since you have brought this gelatine ring of living thought into being, what use do you intend to make of it?"

"As a key to explain the queer waves

of consciousness that have flooded our brains and reflex systems at various times lately," answered the scientific starfish slowly.

"How?" came a mighty chorus.

"You see, this white jelly ring is now a hyper-excitable creature of living thought, and when its tiny cells—the scientific starfish could not know them as stars and planets—"have increased to the proper number, the ring will vibrate to intense emotional thought far beyond our limited senses. It will, I hope, re-vibrate these ultra-thoughts in our own thought range, thus telling us the secret of these strange waves of pure consciousness. And it is barely possible that we will learn the secret of all things!"

Because the first starfish was very big, and formed of a denser, brighter white fluid than any of the others, his mocking laughter was loudest.

"And how," he pulsed scornfully, "will you get in touch with this simple form of life you have made?"

"To tell you in detail would be difficult," said the scientific starfish mildly. "But it was made by will, and its reflected thought waves—its thinking aloud in any key, as it were—can be understood through willed reception."

In a few supra-moments—like countless billions of years in the tiny Milky Way ring of starry universes, whose suns and planets were nerve cells in the quivering earth cosmos—the little white-glowing circle grew in brightness. Its light drove away the blue of the ether ocean in which it floated, brightened the lower, sharp tip of the scientific starfish's controlling arm. And then—

A colorful corona of rainbow fluids formed around the gelatine ring, as the latter's fluid surface wrinkled. The wrinkles deepened—as density of the Milky Way increased with the explosive birth of countless new universes.

"How swiftly its nervous system grows!" exclaimed the scientific starfish

softly. "See how the jelly circle begins to tremble to the striking of thought vibrations in the ether fluid! Look how its beautiful corona of colors shimmers in our thoughts! Soon it will reflect thought waves of any length, changing their vibrations to fit our limited scale. Then shall we learn why great thought impulses have often paralyzed our brain and reflex systems lately—perhaps we will learn all that was hitherto unknowable!"

"This is an unholy experiment!" flared the first starfish, tips of his five arms white with anger. "It must be stopped! With a single thought impulse from my force arm, I shall melt that hoop of gelatine——"

"No, no!" came the scientific starfish's shrieking vibrations. "See! The tiny thought brain—it begins to think aloud! Will—*will* to hear its reflected ether thoughts!"

A sudden wave of many-colored thought bursting from the quivering jelly ring, shocked the many gathered starfish into stillness. As the prismatic tide swept over their white-fluid bodies, the starfish vibrated to a sensed humming——

Familiar humming of the oft-repeated brain attacks of late.

But this time the humming grew into a mighty roar. Then into receptive centers of the starfish flowed knowledge, knowledge that held them spellbound.

For the colorful ring of living thought—the strange thing *willed* by the scientific starfish in a queer flash of intuition—radiated a mighty secret.

The secret of all things that are.

But to the scientific starfish—he that floated nearest to the glowing ring, and he who had strongly willed to know its awesome message—came the clearest thought images.

His fluid brain was cold, cold as the ocean of blue-glowing thought in which he and countless other starfish floated out their supra-universe lives. A chill

thought of the complete consciousness came to him. Since living that thought made him live that consciousness, the scientific starfish strangely—*saw himself as the creative power.*

HE WAS the stupendous will that controlled all. A will formed of everything and nothing. Oddly, he was aware that a brief pause in his willed evolving of things had come. A serious pause, though not one bringing any threat of ending his will.

But he knew that, because of its unusual activity, a tiny area of his will was worn to exhaustion. Though but a little black dot in the cold, white flame of the will, it loomed gigantic to the supra-universe, and completely dwarfed the earth cosmos into a comparative microscopic invisibility. Fatigue was the only possible damage which the will could know.

The will decided that a short rest—though billions of years in the supra-universe, and almost eternity to the earth cosmos—was needed.

Of course time stopped while the will rested.

The will was now directed to flowing new energy into the supra-cosmos cell that had tired. For it was no part of his will that a single supra-cosmos cell should melt through weariness into the void gas in which the will flamed cold-white——

The will must remain sensitive to all things great or small.

Momentarily, the will thought over everything the brief pause had already done. Billions of tiny wills, impulse cogs of his will, had been given a glimpse of things beyond themselves. For, with the tiring of a supra-cosmos cell, the nearest cell (supra-cosmos cell within which was the earth cosmos) was made overactive, and, therefore, oversensitive.

But it was not good that one supra-cosmos cell of the will should see far

beyond itself. So its destruction had been willed.

In an instant—though supra-geological ages to the supra-cosmos cell, had not time ceased for that instant—trillions of tiny wills would scientifically weld stars, planets and universes of the sensitive cell into a swelling supra-cosmos of matter. Internal pressure would explode the overactive cell, release its flowing energy, and give new will to the tired, dark cell next to it.

Such was the fate of the supra-cosmos that held the earth cosmos. But it was not tragic—for it was all part of the will.

Let understanding spread throughout the supra-cosmos cell that was doomed. Let it receive a flowing consciousness of things outside itself.

For with that understanding went joy and happiness in knowledge that the flaming white will guided all. And the countless tiny wills of the supra-cosmos cell would rejoice in their very doom, for they would understand that—death is but the birth of new life.

In each world, decided the will, one superior will should receive the first intuitive flash, and thus prepare the wills of the wisest around them to fulfill their destiny.

Wills of the doomed supra-cosmos in glimpsing truth—and the way truth was revealed would vary in each world—would wonder to find the dynamic system of the scheme of things based upon nothing—and that even the flaming white will was nothing. But they would also learn that nothing is everything—

For only nothing is eternal. Only nothing will make everything possible. And only nothing may—*begin and end itself*—

IN the supra-universe the scientific starfish shook his five-armed body, and it was as the shaking of a thousand earth cosmos. His thin fluid substance—ten times lighter than a similar fluid

of earth—was dim, diffuse, as was the white phosphorescence of all the gathered starfish—now waking as from a mighty dream. For one queer second, he—like the other starfish—had thought the will. Good that time, controlled by the will, had been stopped—else that unimaginable second had equaled 10^{22} supra-seconds or a thousand billion supra-years!

The scientific starfish's sight impulses stared around the bluish ether ocean. Near by he saw the tiny ring—the Milky Way, dense outer shell of the earth cosmos—with its jelly of starry universes, slowly sinking downward in the vast blue. It was gray now, rainbow colors gone; for the ring no longer vibrated to strangely active impulses.

For a long time, ether of the supra-cosmos was still. Finally, the scientific starfish vibrated weighty thoughts—and now none among the many gathered starfish opposed him. His awed thoughts were received in silence and with respect.

"From highest to lowest on the scale of cosmos size has the will permitted this glimpse of things beyond. That our supra-cosmos cell is doomed, because of this glimpse, and because its will energy is needed to refresh an adjoining cell, matters not—for we know now that one and all are part of the will."

Then came very mild and very respectful thought impulses from the first starfish. "And as the will guides the will of all, so should wiser wills among lesser wills lead. You, through whom came the first intuitive flash of truth, must lead us on. This we now know."

"Though we were the first to glimpse things beyond," said the scientific starfish, scarce aware that the first starfish had spoken, "the great thought will sweep down to the tiniest universes. And its wave will grow larger with the thought of each cosmos through which it passes. That gray ring, small to us,

but—as we now know—really a mighty cosmos of stars, suns, planets and nebular universes, must needs know of our supra-cosmos, and what took place here, before they may glimpse the will and—

“And so down the relative scale of size, throughout the giant, yet tiny, supra-cosmos cell of the will, shall the great thought go on—”

CRAYTON suddenly awoke to the reality around him. The roaring consciousness in his brain had ebbed. Again he knew himself as the thin, bent scientist in a black suit, who stood on a platform and leaned on a black cane. Again he saw the gathered metaphysicians sitting or standing amid the rows of chairs in yellow-lighted hall of science—newly awakened from the strange glimpse into the *scheme of things*.

And beside him on the platform, Professor Van Sohn was passing a trembling hand across dark, oddly moist eyes.

Upon each face, Professor Crayton saw a profound awe—awe which he knew was likewise seen in his own features.

For many minutes all was silence within Harvard's hall of science. Then Professor Crayton spoke in hushed tones.

“Fellow metaphysicians, for one second—eternity to us of earth, had not time been stilled—we have known the will. Beyond our limited senses have we been taken, shown that all is one and the same unity. Now we may carry on our destiny without fear of the far stars and vast heavens. We know that everything is rooted in firm eternity, and that back of all things is the guiding will. Everything has eternal life and value, for everything is part of the will—is the will.”

The gaunt, gray-clad form of Pro-

fessor Van Sohn turned toward Professor Crayton. Professor Van Sohn had changed greatly. Harshness was gone from his dark features. His great black eyes now shone with a soft light, and his thin, mustached lip no longer curled with scorn as he reverently spoke to his once-ridiculed scientific enemy.

“Alone, the one scientist of earth,” he said softly, “you foresaw the coming of the ‘Complete Experience.’ And you correctly predicted that we would receive a complete metaphysics; that the *need* for metaphysics would forever be done away with! Professor Crayton, forgive us—we fools of so little intuitive imagination that we thought man-made forces—television waves—lay back of this mighty happening!”

Professor Crayton nodded absently. For now he was slowly speaking—scarcely aware of repentant Professor Van Sohn.

“Onward must earth science march to uphold man's part in the one totality—to fulfill the wondrous desire of the will—”

“But you who first received intuitive knowledge of the great thought”—Professor Van Sohn was saying earnestly—“must guide our lesser wills—as he guides them all. Was not that *revealed* to us?”

“Professor Crayton, I speak for the American Metaphysical Society, yes, for the cosmos—which will some day be as one—when I say that *you*, the wisest of us all—*must lead the way!*”

Professor Crayton scarcely heard the mighty roar of approval. He was as one seized by wondrous vision. Slowly, his bent form straightened; black cane fell to the platform floor. And his wrinkled old face suddenly smoothed with a look of strange joy.

“I foresee an incredibly glorious future,” he said happily, amid awed quiet. “A future which the will is creating. Queerly enough, it is of nothing—yet of everything—”