THE "TRANSPORTER"

ITEM: Recent experiments have identified the sections of the brain which control the various sensations—sight, sound, smell, feel, etc. During surgical operations, these areas have been artificially stimulated by mild electric currents, resulting in highly realistic hallucinations. (One patient "saw" his long dead mother; another reached out to pick up a non-existent purring kitten.) Eventually it may be possible to stimulate the brain without surgery by means of ultra-high frequency radiations. Properly directed and controlled they would transport the recipient to another world, to him a very real world of color, sound, and action—all controlled by the stimulating device.

The proposed story is of the invention of the "Transporter"—a device which is television, smellevision, soundvision, all rolled into one. A device which creates an artificial world for the user, capable of duplicating delight, sensation, contentment, adventure—all beyond the reach of the ordinary person living the ordinary life. With it you can voyage to far-off lands, argue with Socrates, earn and spend a million dollars, or lay Marilyn Monroe. Take your choice.

And this is the story of the inventor who, after achieving this miracle, suddenly realizes that a commercial, greedy, sometimes inhuman world would take over his miracle. And it might be used as they have used the miracle of radio, television, the motion pictures—with much more devastating results. It could become the most powerful totalitarian enslaveing device; it could become the most powerful opiate; it could create wants and desires for which the world would destroy itself—a dying race sitting at their "transporters".

We leave the ultimate question unanswered. Will he destroy the "transporter"—or will someday, somewhere the "transporter" appear. Sooner or later we will have learned enough about the brain to create it.