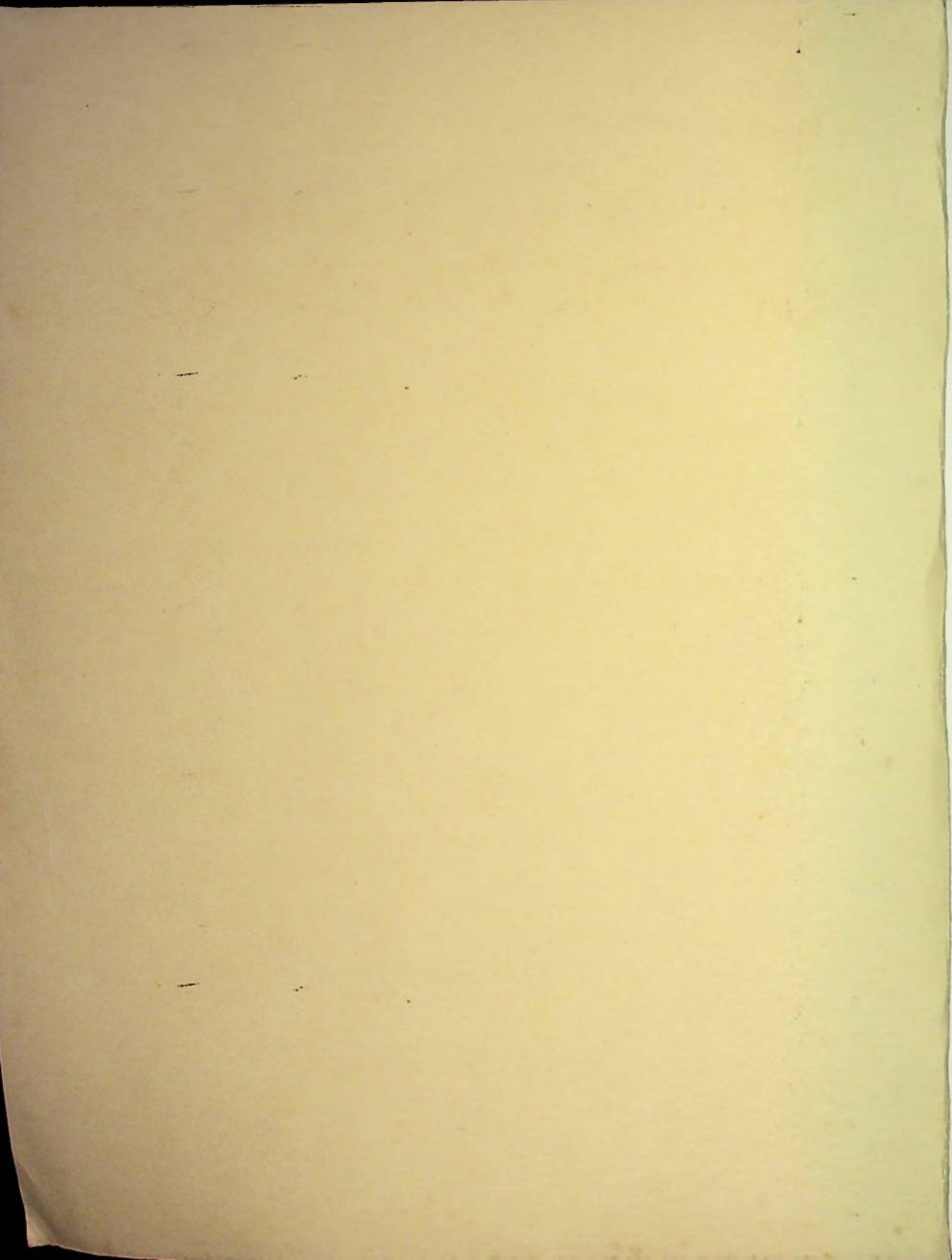
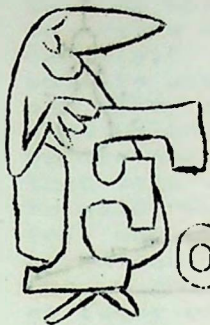


the
Dourrier's
children





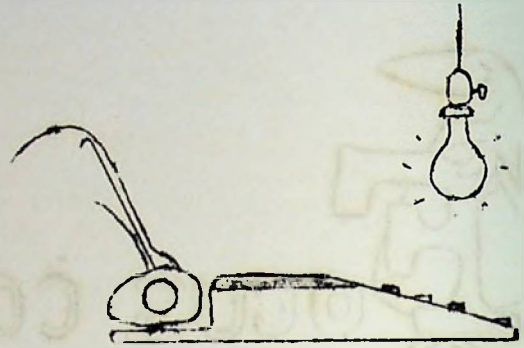
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from
barrett's
garrett...



THE MELBOURNE SCENE

I reached Australia at the beginning of Dec. 1960 just as a business recession the country was having was getting into full swing. I sort of bummed around for about two weeks looking for work and eventually landed a job with the Meyer Emporium. I'm still working for them in fact. This is a very big outfit; they employ 7,500 in their two city shops and own large stores in other cities as well. I got put to selling garden tools and along with them this department harbours a selection of plaster gnomes - you know, those horrible effigies that people who are slightly nuts sometimes have standing on their lawns. Maybe people keep them to stop the birds from eating new seed or something - I don't know. Anyhow, I told John Baxter that I was in the Plaster Gnomes section of Myer's and this kind of impressed him. I think because he was telling everyone about it. I even heard of it from Alan Dodd. Later on I was transferred down to the heavy hardware section which suited me OK because there is commission to be made in these departments. One Saturday morning Bob Smith came looking for me with a copy of FOCUS under his arm. 'Twas unfortunate that I had chosen that day to be away from work because of an infected knee. My meeting with him was thus delayed for a month or so but I sometimes like to ponder upon what a momentous thing it might have been had it but taken place. The activities of a mighty Emporium come to a halt while sales staff and customers alike look on in awe at the spectacle of two fans touching typewriter calloused tentacles for the first time. Stanley and Livingstone wouldn't have been in it...

In Melbourne summer is hot, hot, HOT. The were temperatures in the nineties practically all the time and several times the reading was above the 100° mark. This should have been great for old beach loving me but the whole deal was ruined by a plague of flies. They were everywhere and as far as I was concerned it put paid to the beach scene and getting lots of suntan and all

that Jazz. I'd never seen so many flies and nobody could tell me why there were so many but all and sundry hastened to assure me that, "It's nowhere nearly as bad as this usually." Many times I found myself wishing I could emulate one of the Highbens and make a sort of ray come out of my eyes that would kill insects. Due to my presence here Melbourne has had its mildest winter on record. Even before Autumn had hit it's stride I was telling people that this was to be a very mild winter. Those I told this to said, "Gawn, how do you know what the weather's going to be?" and similar scoffing type remarks then I'd tell them how I can control the weather and they wouldn't believe me. But we got our mild winter just as I decided it would be so foey on them. Only twice during the winter months was it necessary for me to wear my goloshes which shows just how non-wet it's really been here.

WEST SIDE STORY was running here when I returned. It had an American cast and the leading player was a talented cat named Bob Kole who impressed me like anything. Before leaving New Zealand my original cast tape had been one of the most played items in my collection and so naturally it was a must for me. The show was an absolute gas but the ultra square Australian audiences - most of whom are still living in the DESERT SONG era as far as entertainment goes - stayed away in droves and the show folded much sooner than it should have. It's Sydney run was even shorter than it's Melbourne season. THE SOUND OF MUSIC has been running for a few months now and it looks as though it will last for quite a long time yet. It'll probably have twice the season WEST SIDE had. As some one remarked of "Sound", "It's every bit as good as THE MERRY WIDOW."

This is how I got to be a Federal Case. A U.S. fan sent me a parcel of books and magazines. There were some ANALOGS, some aeronautics mags, a few PLAYBOY type things and some sexy story type paperbacks. I had to collect the mags from the Customs office and they opened the parcel while I was there. They took the books and two of the mags for "an opinion." After waiting for six weeks with no word about them I woofled up to the P.O. to find out what the Hell had happened and after much searching around they discovered that my stuff had been sent up to Canberra - the commonwealth Capitol - for censorship. Three months had gone by before I finally got the word that I wasn't going to be allowed to have them. I wonder which of the gutless wonders employed by the Australian Government finally plucked up enough courage to actually make a decision. It must have been Hell for him....

I live in a madly historical little suburb called Jolimont. Victoria's first Governor General - LaTrobe - lived here when he first came to the state and all over

the neighborhood there are signs saying, "To Victoria's First Government House" but there are no signs which actually tell you which house it is. I used to wander around gazing at the larger and more well preserved looking houses of the suburb trying to pick out which one had once had a Vice Regal function. It was the local storekeeper who straightened me out on the matter and told me that the first Government House is a little old cottage that crouches inconspicuously behind a shoe factory near where I live. The house has a little, quite well kept garden in front of it and nailed on to it's unpainted walls are photos of LaTrobe, the town councillors of the day, tools that were used in the places construction and similar historic bric-a-brac. The shoe company owns the ground the cottage stands on and have lost all interest in maintaining the cottage so it sits there looking all forlorn and ramshackle; a pity. A lot of the Melbourne suburbs have serious and/or delightful names. This suburb got it's name when LaTrobe's wife, who was Swiss or something, alighting from some craft that had brought her up the Yarra river, looked over in the direction of the raised area of ground that this suburb is built on and exclaimed, "Ah, what a joli mont!"

Dick Jensen is a book collecting member of the Melbourne Science Fiction Club and he works for the local Met. Office. A few weeks ago after a meeting a few of us trooped up to Melbourne University with him to have a look at the College's home mad computer. He fed in a paper tape for a game he calls "Telepathy" and we fought out a titanic struggle of Man vs. Machine. Man came out ahead, I'm happy to say. The next tape fed in for our benefit and enlightenment was one that had been prepared by one of the Music Faculty and the computer, via a bit of additional gadgetry and a loudspeaker, played for us the traditional song, LUCY LONG and followed it up with a series of variations on the melody. It impressed me like anything and I couldn't help thinking that if more of the worlds computers were used for playing tunes on the world would be a much nicer place.

NEWS FROM HOME

News from home reaches me in various ways. Most of it comes to me in letters from friends or from New Zealanders that I occasionally run into in Australia. Sometimes though the local papers will print the odd thing about New Zealand. There was the item a few months ago that New Zealand had been swept by lousy weather - floods and stuff like that - and this had interfered with the tour of the visiting French Rugby team. Normally this bad weather would have been accepted quite philosophically but in this case it really got people aroused and

upset. I mean, interfering with Rugby..... Another piece of New Zealand news that rated a picture and about three inches of story was the death of Sir Sidney Holland - a former Prime Minister. Sid wasn't much of a statesman and even the party he bossed wasn't too mad about him but to me he had a couple of characteristics that redeemed him to some extent. He was a complete and utterly unself-conscious camera-hog and he had a hide like a rhinoceros. I have fond recollections of a film of the Coronation of Queen Elizabeth in which a shot of Buckingham Palace taken after the event showed, amongst a dignified crowd of the Empire's senior ministers, our beloved then Prime Minister leaning over the balcony on which they were standing, with his hands clenched above his head like a prizefighter, waving frenziedly to the crowd. He was a completely unabashed name dropper and frequently made both sides of the House wince with such references as, "my friend, the Queen..." He could also take his waistcoat off without removing his jacket. Although I never saw him do this I did here a departing Governor General refer to it with some awe and respect. The man who replaced Sidney Holland as leader of the National Party has no redeeming features that I can think of; he is merely hopelessly incompetent and with his party carrying the majority of seats in the house of Parliament he is at present engaged in ruining the country.

The news received in letters is usually of a more personal nature. Richard has written telling me about his wife, home and baby daughter and mentions a former Circle member who has also married and now lives the quiet life of a "normal" New Zealand male - house in the suburbs, football games watched Saturday afternoon with the boys ...that type thing. Victor sends me news of his successes as a cartoonist and includes clippings from local papers and magazines that he thinks will be of interest to me. Trevor has written about Television only just now being introduced into Wellington and explains why his household will be non-videoed for some time to come, " .. but Mavis doesn't like Robin Hood so it doesn't look as though...." Most frequent and most important were the letters Jill wrote to me while she was still in New Zealand. She kept me informed about the local Jazz scene, parties, the emotional and physical entanglements of friends and acquaintances, and who'd been before the courts recently. There was quite a bit written to me both by Jill and other friends about the visit of the M.J.Q.. They were brought over for the Auckland Arts Festival and played concerts in Wellington and Christchurch as well. Since I left New Zealand the country has been visited by Ralph Pena and Pete Jolly, Dizzy, Sarah, and now the aforementioned Quartette. I think it nothing,

short of damned unfairness that these people should wait until I who, through many lean and Jazzless years held high the torch of true something or other, had left the country before they came this way. Since I left New Zealand a lot of my friends have done likewise and just about every letter contains news of some one who has moved off overseas. Wellington may soon become a ghost town, I fear. Sometimes there is sad news too, as for instance the news of the sale of the Royal Oak Hotel. Some of my most inspired beer drinking was done in this pub and it was certainly one of the best known places of it's kind in the world. It was one of the two places in town where really good beer could be purchased at the bar and on Saturday afternoons we would gather for an hour or so to consume vast quantities of it at high speed and when at closing time it's patrons were disgorged on to Dixon St. there was always a gallery of perhaps a 100 people standing opposite who had come to observe the bits of drama that often developed. There were always too, a black maria, several policemen and a couple of police dogs standing by, just in case. The "Oak" has been sold to Leopard Breweries of Hastings who will be retailing their vile product in glasses that once carried glorious, cool, Waitamata. Wellington can never be quite the same. I had the feeling that things might fall apart a bit once I left but I didn't think they would get this bad.

OF FANNING THINGS

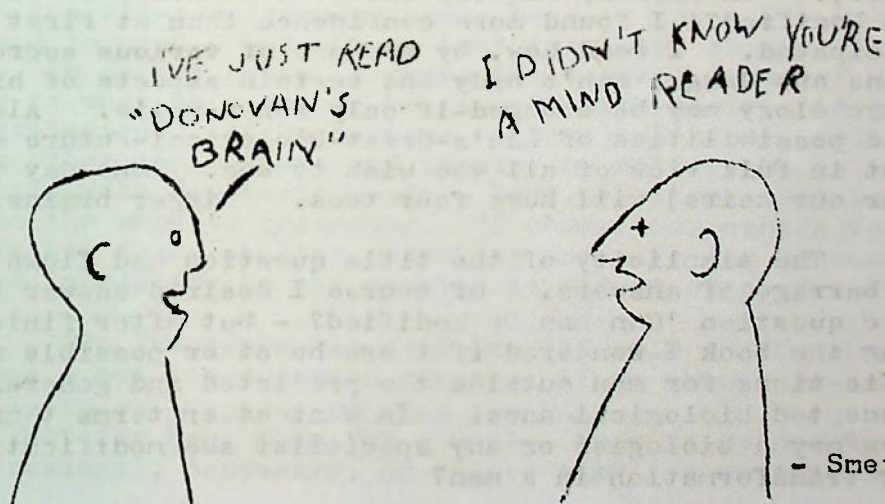
Fanac from this quarter has been practically a minus quantity. I've written about four articles for fen but none of them have yet seen print. One of them was the first part of what was to be a thing about my travels that I was writing for John Baxter. This hasn't shown any sign at all of appearing yet and at this rate by the time the rest of it is required I'll have forgotten all the details. If any one wants a series on my trip to Hong Kong and environs I might be prepared to consider any seriois and worthwhile offer. John Foyster published a zine called EXANATION and Chris Bennie hopes to get something going for him soon. On one of Bob Smith's visits to the city he and Chris and John and Margaret Puce got together up at Chris Bennie's and produced a rather grisly little one-shot which got called THE SHALLCON SLUDGE. I'm not mad about one-shots; I think that usually they're pretty dull and kind of un-inspired. Sometimes they will contain some good cartooning but unless you're lucky enough to have a BurBee or a Bloch writing the stuff there's not much show of it being of lasting interest to the compilers - or even of momentary interest to the non-contributor. There

were no writers of the quality of Burbee or Bloch present that evening (sob) and so THE SMALLCON SMUDGE was a rather sad kinda thing. I had a few copies given to me to mail but I kinda of chickened out on the deal. I didn't destroy them but neither did I mail them out. The Melbourne Science Fiction Club has shifted it's premises and the new room is the top floor of an old building in the city. It's very large and it has good acoustics and is ideal for screening films in. It has a higher rental than the old place though and so members have to fork out a greater amount each meeting in order to keep the club solvent.

On the eve of Bruce Burn's departure from Wellington I gave him a tape I had recorded to be delivered personally into the hands of Alan Dodd. This he did and while at Alan's he and Alan re-recorded it and sent it back to me. Due to wrong addressing it had zoomed around the world a couple of times before I finally got the thing and then there was a wait of several months before I could organize a tape recorder to play it on. Eventually though, this was organized and a group of local fen assembled here to listen to these voices from far away. It was kind of weird hearing Bruce's voice under these circumstances. He and Alan talked about things in general and Bruce told us how he'd attended a meeting of the London Circle and of the multitude of accents and dialects he had heard there. "I was the only one speaking English," said Bruce.

Due to my general lack of fannish activity my over the last year and a half my contact with fandom has fallen to a very low point. I hope this zine will go some way towards getting some communication going again along this line.

November 1961.



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Richard Paris has several assets. He has a sensitive good looking fannish face, a super looking blonde wife (who is also nice) and he knows lots and lots of things. Although he no longer has any interest in science fiction or science fiction fans as such he remains President of The Wellington Science Fiction Circle - a now somewhat dispersed organization - but this is mainly due to the fact that we never voted him out. When I asked him for an article for FOCUS he pleaded lack of a subject to write on and so I suggested one to him which inspired him to write about something entirely diferent. This is what he wrote....

Can man be modified ?

.....by RICHARD PARIS

'Can Man Be Modified?' is the title of a recent book mainly of interest to the amateur biologist and evolutionist.

Another book of interest to a wider range of people is 'The Transformations of Man'.

I mention both bopks together - not that they have any common subject or point of view apart from their titles, but merely because they gave me a title and subject for this article.

The title of the first book is a question, of the second book, a statement, an announcement, so human its confident pose of 'Herein lie the facts' (Please turn over). On further enquiry into the contents of 'Can Man Be Modified?' I found more confidence than at first anticipated. I read how, by the use of various secretions and drugs, man's body and certain aspects of his psychology may be changed-if only for a while. Also the possibilities of Man's-Great-Biological-Future open out in full view of all who wish to see. One day we (or our heirs) will have four toes. Bigger brains.

The simplicity of the title question had flown under a barrage of answers. Of course I desired answer to the question 'Can Man Be Modified? - but after finishing the book I wondered if there be other possible modifications for man outside the predicted and generally accepted biological ones. In what other terms than his own may a biologist or any specialist see modification or transformation in a man?

So the biologist answers his own question in the only way he can. that is, from a biological point of view, with but little but deductive understanding of an answer in terms of psychology.

There is something very unsatisfying about this sort of book.

If I turn for a moment from the many and various pictures of Man presented by the specialists - the Man, physical, chemical, biological, psychological - and look at him, if that be possible, as one Whole - what is he? What if, any, are his real possibilities - present as well as future, awaiting actualisation?

Can Man Be Modified?

Can I, or anyone, answer 'There is A transformation possible for a man'? Strangely, or perhaps not, almost everyone can give some answers. Are there any 'objective' answers-apart from imagined ones in human heads?

Looking apart again from the possibilities of Man given us by the specialists - the evolutionary possibilities along the line of time - let us see the answers provided by the unscientific public.

- To some he is a political animal, with political possibilities: Utopia, a perfect civilization, a perfect citizen. Here stand Aristotle, Confucius, Marx, etc - and many of the two billion today, half-knowing or unknowingly.

- To some, he is a religious being - an animal with a 'soul'; freely given to do with as he wishes so to do; his possibilities; A heaven, a hell, perhaps a purgatory.

- To yet others, he is viewed through the coloured glassas of a thousand cults, societies, ideas and beliefs; his possibilities are infinite, yet all created in the all-too-(common) human head. Ideas fly from head to head - but who or what initiates them?

- To others again, perhaps the largest group of all, he is what he seems to be, a body with desires to be satisfied. If he happens to have political, religious or other aspirations and ideals, no matter, he is a thing with few basic needs - Food, shelter, clothing, and the urge to procreate. Of course may aspire to modify his food, shelter, clothing and wife (or husband)... but in reality he has nothing to aim at or aspire to.

The Transformations of Man (if only in thought) are many - but the question remains, if we choose to ask it, - Is there a transformation for Man? If not for Man, then for a man? Must it be merely an occasional, necessary, or chance aim? A modification

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which is real only for a particular person, and none else?

It must be, it has been, and it is now.

Aristotle tells us a man desires that which he thinks is good - (but, he adds, it need not be the greatest good) a thief arries on his occupation with this very conviction. Nobody desires what is bad for himself - only unknowingly. Each man desires the greatest good - whatever he may imagine it to be.

A man is transformed by his desire or by his environment; he may become a clown, an invalid, a learned man - but what is the best possible transformation - in which lies the greatest good?

One answer to this question is involved in the fact of a man's consciousness.

'Consciousness' means 'Knowing altogether.' To be conscious is to know 'altogether' many things. Thus a man's consciousness may be said to be his awareness of existence - the universe outside of him, and of himself. One strange fact about his consciousness is that it is not a constant, it alters, and may be altered. It has been said that in this fact lie a man's real possibilities for transformation. It has also been said that man's consciousness has been studied
ception. The ancient Hindu Rihis stated that a man is his consciousness - to change, to be modified, this is what he must transform.

Russell Brain, an eminent contemporary neurologist tells us in a book called 'Mind, Perception and Science', that our self-aware nervous system has its awareness (or consciousness) of itself and all else because of itself.

Freud taught three states of consciousness available to a man - 'Deep Sleep' in which he knows nothing; 'Dreaming or Light Sleep' in which imagination and the third state are mixed, and the third or 'Waking State', in which we live from bedtime to bedtime.

Modification for Freud is the sublimation of the Libido with the aim of 'social adjustment within the limits of the waking state of consciousness.

Jung, his pupil, went further into investigating the 'proper' adjustment or modification of a man's forces into the state of Individuation - thus making him happy and free from all pathological traumata. Also, instead of accepting man as automatically being a spiritual animal, he sent him in search of a soul.

He studied accounts of higher states of consciousness above the three accepted by his master. These were called by a certain, Dr. Bucke as 'Cosmic Consciousness'. This state, (or states - as it may vary in intensity) he said, is also available to men, but only rarely and by accident.

Bucke sees the great Future of Mankind not only in the usual evolutionary terms - new bodies and virtues - but also in a new psychology, in a complete change of consciousness. But - to Bucke, this state will automatically 'grow' on Mankind. The apotheosis of Mankind remains in the distant future - the ultimate transformation of all men into supermen.

For another writer, P.D. Ouspensky, this is never to be. For him the transformation of consciousness is available to men, but only to individuals; never for the masses, and certainly there will be no 'growth' of consciousness for future mankind as Bucke dreamed of. To Ouspensky, transformation of consciousness is for him who first knows of it, wants it, and is prepared to work for it. The Great Brain we are told our heirs are to be endowed with will never know 'Cosmic Consciousness', and all that this implies, unless they too first know of it, want it, and work for it in the correct manner.

A mechanical evolution of consciousness is not to be.

Both Bucke (in his book 'Cosmic Consciousness') and Ouspensky (in his books 'Tertium Organum' and 'Psychology of Man's Possible Evolution') quote descriptions of higher states of consciousness. It may be described (if that be possible) as a widening of awareness to include Space, Time, and the Universe, and its higher dimensions - with the understanding of them in a greater of lesser degree. One sees meaning in one's environment not seen before; small events, have cosmic significance; design, purpose, intelligence and consciousness are to be seen in everything. Love, goodness and beauty may be included in this list. One is warned, though, to beware all descriptions of these higher states. Words fall away.

A pupil of Jung - Maurice Nicoll - tells in a book called 'Living Time', how, after investigating in practice for a long time certain ideas connected with the transformation of consciousness, he came to the conclusion that no adjustment, no sublimation, no individuation no completion of a man's usual waking state could be achieved without a higher level of consciousness.

Change of being, to Nicoll, cannot be a patch work process - it must involve the whole of a man - it entails

the transformation of his very consciousness. Only then does his intellect, emotions and actions come under his own will - only then is there any transformation. He maintains that the extension of consciousness to higher states has been known and practiced in many times and places. That all religious, philosophic and psychological systems had, at one time, this idea of the transformation of man as their aim.

According to Nicoll (in 'Living Time' - while writing on higher dimensions) as well as to others, not only does the possibility of extending consciousness exist but from another aspect, higher consciousness is an actuality for each and every man. Thus is the kingdom within, so Heaven, Nirvana, Samadhi, Satori and the Self are present; now. The highest possible state is here, awaiting realization.

For the ancient Rihis of India as for some men and women today, the only modification, the only transformation that can be real for a man, is the extension of his own consciousness.

'Mind, Perception and Science' Brain (Oxford)

'Cosmic Consciousness' Bucke (Uncertain If in
Print)

'Tertium Organum' and Psychology of Man's Possible
Evolution' Ouspensky (Routledge, Kegan Paul) and
(Hodder and Stoughton)

'Living Time' Nicoll (Stuart)
'The Mark ' " " " "

NEWS ITEM

Recently, sixty people in the town of Millaa Millaa, North Queensland, watched with interest the planet Venus as it hung, looking like a silver-red sphere, in the clear sky above them. After a period of three hours the planet Venus turned until it looked cone shaped and then, after moving slowly at first, it suddenly accelerated right across the sky to the East.

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Roger Horrocks edited a zine named KIWI FAN. He may do so again if he can ever find time to drag himself away from his studies and his involvement in University life. This could well be the first fannish thing that he has done for over a year. Like most fans he seems to be pretty interested in the film and this review cum evaluation serves as an example of the depth of that interest and the perceptiveness which he applies to it.

hiroshima mon amour

.....a review by ROGER HORROCKS

'Hiroshima Mon Amour' is a film about the injustices of war. War harms not only the bodies but the minds of human beings; and this film explores the damage that a wartime tragedy has caused to the life of a (nameless) Frenchwoman. The damage in both cases is so unjust and so lasting that it must affect whatever future is born afterwards.

This international film to promote peace, is directed by Alain Renais and written by a French novelist, Marguerite Duras, who has remarked: 'Renais and I felt that all that could be done....to show the horrors of Hiroshima by horror had been done - and very well done - by the Japanese themselves in 'Children of Hiroshima'. So (we) tried something different.'

A French actress has an affair with a young Japanese architect (symbolic profession;) while she is in Hiroshima on location for a film. The first sequence, their night of love, is linked with five dream-like commentaries about the bomb. 'The fate of Hiroshima has always made me cry' she tells the architect. But he is puzzled by her concern; 'He...why should you have cried?' As the film unfolds, we come to understand the woman's reasons. In the story of Hiroshima she sees, symbolised, her own sufferings at the end of the war. These aspects of Hiroshima which obsess her most - the hands and eyes of the victims, the loss of hair, the rain, the river, the exodus from the city - all have their counterpart in her own tragedy.

But their horror is overcome in the climax of love. The relationship between love and pain is central to the film. In the first sequence, the nakedness of the lovers is linked with the exposed skin of those stricken by the bomb, and love involves sharing another's pain. Through her love for the Japanese, the woman realises the injustice of Hiroshima; through his love for her, he discovers how much she has suffered in the war. Until meeting each other, both had gone on living 'by habit', sunk in lies

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and 'indifference'. The woman had been trying to forget what had happened at Nevers, just as the world has been trying to forget Hiroshima. However, this is not the right solution. ('I never go back to Nevers. At the same time it's the town I think about the least - and dream about the most.') There is a demon here which must exorcised.

Next morning there are the troubled beginnings of the exorcism. The architect's hand, moving in sleep, wakes conscious memories of Nevers. Then, she goes against her better judgement by saying: 'I should like to see you again.' She is leaving by plane the next day, but they are able to meet again at the film site. Watch the perfect catching of emotions in this scene: he removes her cap, not realising that he arouses memories of Nevers. She kneels to stroke the cat (which also recalls Nevers). He: 'You give me a great desire to fall in love.'

At the architect's home and at a riverside cafe, the story of Nevers is gradually recreated. The lighting and photography in these scenes are very beautiful. One remembers particularly the slow fadeouts and the series of superb tracking shots of the girl cycling to meet the German soldier. (These should recall the crumpled bicycle in the Hiroshima museum, and later the eerie shots of the girl cycling to Paris in complete darkness.) During the cafe sequence, the woman completely identifies the Japanese with the German lover. ('Would you have felt cold if we had made love in that cellar at Nevers?' not yet knowing that 'cellar holds other associations for her. A moment later she replies: 'You are dead. Oh, it is terrible!')

As the evocation continues, and the woman hevers between past and present, the Nevers scenes grow brighter and the cafe lighting becomes darker. (This coincides with the passing of winter in the cellar.) When the soldier is killed, the architect has to slap her face to bring her back to the present. Abruptly the sounds return, and when she looks out of the window at the alien river scene, the seance is ended. But notice the look of pain and affection on her face as she is struck.

'I have told our story' she thinks. 'For 14 years (since she arrived in Paris, on the day of Hiroshima) I have had no desire for an impossible love. One thinks one knows, but one doesn't ever. You were not quite dead - but I have told our story, it can be told.' She adds 'I am going to stay in Hiroshima.'

This is as unrealistic as trying to stay in the past. The woman has responsibilities to her family (i.e. to the future). What horrifies her, however, is that neither of

the things which gave life it's seriousness - love and suffering - can be sustained for very long. But this is the human condition and one must adjust to it. What matters is that experience be properly understood before it is forgotten. For example, in respect to the suffering at Hiroshima, we must not be satisfied with, 'explanations for lack of other things' (i.e. of how, but not why.)

The last section of the film, a set of variations on the theme of forgetfulness, completes the exorcism. At first the lovers are reluctant to part. ('The night will never end.') Now the woman has awakened to the darkness and learnt to face the horrors of the past, she waits, terrified, for the cold dawn which will make her forget everything that she has seen and felt. ('How I love cities where one is always awake at night.') Yet she comes to realize that soon her love for the Japanese must be forgotten. A time is coming when we shall no longer know what unites us - it will have disappeared entirely.' (At these words the camera swings to a deserted street.)

She expresses a wish to return to her home town - something she has been avoiding for fourteen years. ('Nevers that I had forgotten, I'd like to see you again this evening. I have burned you in my thoughts for months, while my body burned at your memory.') But this is also wishful thinking. Nevers (or Hiroshima) can never be the same city that it was fourteen years ago.

At last the woman is ready to view the past objectively. ('Graceful poplars of the Nevers, I consign you to oblivion. Little girl from Nevers, little flirt from Nevers, little nobody from Nevers - cheap novelettish stuff!') Now she can bear the pain of having to lose something of such importance.

One aspect of the film still troubles me. Real photographs are used in the Hiroshima sequence, and the effect is too disturbing for the fictional tragedy which follows. Resnais seems to be aware of this, because there is a conscious attempt to 'stylize' the images of Hiroshima. One is reminded of Margaret Duras's remarks about 'not showing horror by horror'. Nevertheless the result of this stylization is to make these scenes even more terrifying. What we expect to see is shown in a new and sinister light. The lovers' bodies glisten with 'Sweat, ashes and dew'. While they talk of forgetfulness, we see Hiroshima gift shops, rows of postcards and a bus on an 'atonic sightseeing tour'. At the museum, fused bottle caps are juxtaposed with 'fragments of skin' - still alive - retaining the full impact of their torment. We hear that 'Hiroshima was covered in flowers', but the screen shows mutilated victims. 'Ten thousand degrees on peace square' - the camera moves over a human head. We see a man writhing as he burns, but hear

(continued on page 20)

when "pleasant dreams" become "NIGHTMARES"

.....by ALAN DODD

Now that Robert Bloch is deservedly esconced in the more rewarding pastures of motion picture and television writing it is always doubly pleasant to have the opportunity of seeing one or more of his books, now perforce by lack of time, more rare. In a more lucrative field there is of course less temptation to return to another field which although possibly more satisfying isn't by any means as remunerative as witness the fact that the entire royalties from PSYCHO would amount over three years to little more than the same amount payable for three half hour television plays. wiol

I mention this to illustrate that any paperback or book contribution from Bloch in the near future must therefore be rarer and perhaps the more welcome because of the other count-attractions. In circulation you will find currently the paperbacks KILL FOR KALI, FIREBUG, and a subtly entitled thriller THE DEAD BEAT. Plus a unique collection of stories by what Belmont Books call 'one of the last of the old Lovecraft circle still writing'. Somehow I never thought of Bloch as part of any old circle at all, some authors remain perpetually young in their stories and personality.

Robert Bloch is I think a much under-rated writer, not fully appreciated by even those who know him as a personal friend through the pages of fandom or fanzines or from personal contact, he himself would most likely not mention the fact but he is the winner of a considerable number of literary prizes and awards in the past, prizes from THE ELLERY QUEEN MYSTERY MAGAZINE, from ALFRED HITCHCOCK'S MYSTERY MAGAZINE and even the fannish 'Hugo' award for the year's best short story. He has the E.E. Evans Memorial Award and as a tribute from his fellow also the Edgar Allan Poe Special Award from the Mystery Writers of America. His PSYCHO has become a classic in motion picture terror - although I myself consider this was in spite of

Hitchcock, rather than due to him and the film is likely to gross more money than any black and white picture since the days of D.W.Griffith's BIRTH OF A NATION.

He I think would doubly appreciate the subtlety of the title change in his latest selection. The original volume of Bloch stories from Arkham House in hard-cover of course was called PLEASANT DREAMS the paperback is entitled NIGHTMARES!

Undoubtedly there is some delightful significance in that a hardcover can sell to an audience as PLEASANT DREAMS but those who buy paperbacks want NIGHTMARES...

'You have nothing to fear but fear itself' says Bloch himself chidingly at the beginning of his book, and I believe he's right. The first three stories have all one thing in common- they are written in first person with Bloch as narrator forming the central character. In the superbly appropriately titled SORCERER'S APPRENTICE he is Hugo, a freak and unwanted insane youth, one who fleeing from an asylum becomes the assistant to a stage magician the time being in the days of vaudeville when the travelling magicians went from one town theatre to another. The Good Old Days. Hugo is made the pawn of the Sorcerer's wife who uses him to kill her husband so that she can have another man in the show. Hugo dutifully beats the magician to death with a lead pipe and is then about to be turned over to the police by the magician's wife - except her lover warns him in time. Hugo doesn't believe - so he kills her too with the same pipe and takes the wife to the circular saw. The only thing is - Hugo really believes the wans he's carrying will put her together again.

In, I KISS YOUR SHADOW he becomes the brother of a girl who is killed by her fiance, and then returns as a succubus - and keeps returning at night, in human form, And keeps returning.....until one night he goes down to her grave in the cemetery.....

As a girl in MR. STEINWAY he becomes the admirer of a famed pianist, a pianist who has become great because he and the piano - MR STEINWAY - of the title, are as one. The piano is treated as a human being, and in fact takes and draws life from the pianist itself, until one day the girl comes between the strange pair and the piano kills his master and starts after the girl.

Ronald Cavendish in THE PROPER SPIRIT is troubled

by ghosts - or rather he enjoys them. He enjoys the spirits of great men and women around him, on the astral planes in his old house he can talk with Ceasar and Napoleon, and Cleopatra (A much over-rated woman) and with many others. Which is all very well unless you happen to have greedy relatives who want your money, and want it badly enough to have you certified insane - when that happens things have to be done, and the help of at least one spirit friend is needed.

Her name is Lucretia.

CATNIP centres around a hideously mannered bully of a schoolboy given to nasty practical jokes and twisted cruelty which he perpetrates upon all and sundry until one day he callously sets fire to the grass around the house of an old lady they call a witch. She dies in the flames but he cat follows the boy around and finally gives new meaning to the expression - 'Has the cat got your tongue?'

HUNGARIAN RHAPSODY is a rich, exotic piece of two people who want to be left alone. Gangster Solly Vincent is in hiding in a remote cottage because of his past, his new neighbour is a luscious red-haired countess who moves in and can be seen at her bedroom window, nude on her bed save for piles of golden coins which she filters and squirms about in. Solly, naturally interested in both invites himself in forcibly one night after being rebuffed in the daytime, and then realises why he shouldn't have chosen the night time of all things to visit his new neighbour.

Edgar Allan Poe left among his many unfinished things, an unfinished short story, - THE LIGHTHOUSE in this volume Bloch himself continues the story in the exact style of Poe and finishes the tale. I guarantee no student of Poe will detect where Poe left off and Bloch begins. It is truly a perfect example of how to copy one author's style by an author who himself has never needed it copy anyone. The result is something I think Poe himself would have approved of and worthy of the man who has won an award based on the original authors name too.

Again writing in the first person, that of a man seeking solitude in a lighthouse away from the world. Aman who is glad of his prison -- at first. Then brings a fresh rose into the lighthouse - yet they are miles from any land capable of bearing such a rose.....

There is a visitor from the depths, and the storm builds up, the rose wilts and suddenly it seems as though the storm itself is growing to a new fury, to a new crescendo...

The haunted house story can be found in THE HUNGRY HOUSE - the house where there are no mirrors, at least none on the walls, but up in the attic there is a small room which is filled with mirrors of every description. The new mirrors put up in the house seem to have another person always in them. No one real - a figment of the imagination - a shadow perhaps? Or is there something more? The mirrors go. But there is still the glass in the window which acts as a mirror, and one night - as it did many years ago - it becomes broken, and red - and the hungry house can only watch the growing reflection on the floor.

SLEEPING BEAUTY is a rich, baroque story, filled with the luxury of old plush and red velvet and silk and perfumes of a bygone age, it is, one would like to believe a remnant of the 1951 Nolacon when Robert Bloch was in New Orleans. The setting is modern New Orleans - a saddened place longing for the past - 'in the Vieux Carre they killed off your old Southern mammy and installed a laudromat!' Even Bourbon Street plays only imitation Dixieland. The visitor is disenchanted, nothing is like he had hoped. Storyville has gone and the steamroller of civilization has made New Orleans like any other American city.

So one night Morgan gets drunk, trying to find the real New Orleans of the song and stories, the city of Bolden and Oliver and a kid named Satch. He drifts and dreams and drinks until he finds in a little old bar in a fog riddled part of the town an old man, an old man who has kept in his place one of the real gals from Storeyville, hidden away. He takes Morgan back for the night of his life, yet when Morgan wakes next morning on the pavement his wallet is gone and so has the old man. He goes to the police to try and track down the old man, his place and the plush room upstairs with the gal from Storeyville. He finds the old man, and the place - but the room upstairs is bolted and locked for twenty years.

He opens it and wishes he had not found what he does inside.

SWEET SIXTEEN is the final story of the collect-

ion, deeply more horrifying because it is way up to date in California of the beats and the hoodlums on motor cycles. These, says Bloch, are really the reincarnations of the old demons. He cites the crimes committed for no reason at all by teenagers and young people, he relates the apparent lack of motive behind the crimes and sets the story in a small California town a la Brando's WILD ONE. And unlike the citizens of that town, he has one man try and get help from the police.

His friend loses him, but comes across a bunch of kids with their usual bonfire in the hills. Blazing away.

Then he sees what they are burning...

Yes indeed, as Bloch says - the only thing we have to fear is fear itself. Or is it????

***** THE END *****

HIROSHIMA MON AMOUR (Continued)

ragtime music. The effect is surrealistic, bizarre and ironic.

In contrast the use of natural sound in the film shows the realism aimed at by the New Wave: The noise of trains, riverboats, bells, dogs barking, telephones, people coughing. Parting outside the hotel some of the woman's words are drowned by the passing of a lorry. And notice in the Nevers sequence there is only one remembered sound - a terrible cry. We do not hear the Marsellaise or the abuse hurled at her by the people who cut her hair. ('I am too absorbed in my suffering.')

Hiroshima Mon Amour is a complex film but its message is plain. (Whole towns rise in anger. Against whom is this anger directed? Against the injustice practised in principle by certain peoples against others... by certain races against others... by certain classes against others.) It leaves the audience with this disturbing question unanswered: 'If one A-bomb equals 20,000 ordinary bombs, and one H-bomb equals 1,500 A-bombs, then what is the destructive power of the 40,000 A- and H-bombs now in existance?'

The manufacture of nuclear weapons must be stopped!

.....Roger Horrocks.

A few last words before I fold up my tent and...

Alan Dodd must, I think, be the most prolific and prompt letter writer in fandom. Where other fen (he included) seems to take weeks or even months in answering letters Alan seems to get his stuff answered within days. This promptness extends to his fan writing as well and the Dodd opus printed here-in was received by me within a couple of weeks of asking for it. One of my New Year Resolutions is to adopt as much as possible these virtues of A. Dodd.

Fen who received a Christmas card from should find somewhere within the covers of this zine a New Zealand Christmas stamp. My reason for mailing the cards from New Zealand was not the mercenary one of cheaper postal rates but rather one of philatelic preference. I wanted my Christmas cards to have posh looking New Zealand Christmas stamps on rather than the crummy looking Australian variety. My New Zealand agent goofed, though, and put ordinary stamps on the envelopes. Adopting a better late than never attitude I've rounded up enough of these stamps to send out with FOCUS.

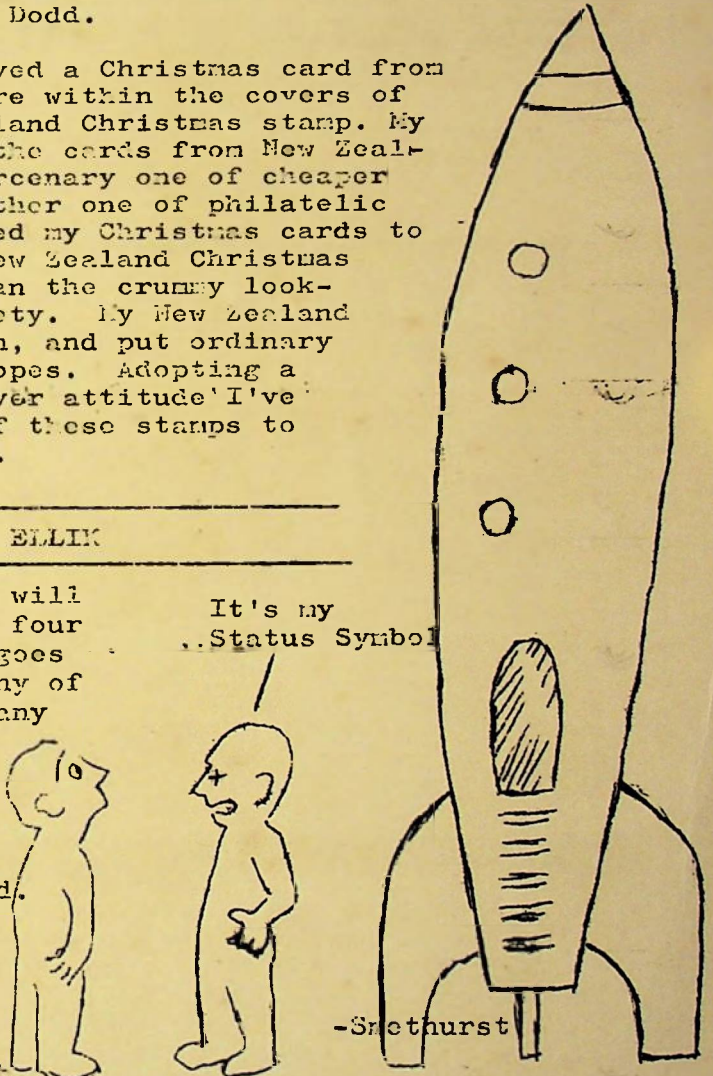
CONGRATULATIONS RON ELLIK

The next FOCUS will come along in about four months time if all goes to plan and so if any of you out there have any material you think might suit ...

Anything not used will be returned and all material will be acknowledged.

Just about to the end and no space left for detailing the hospitality we received from John Baxter and Bob Smith

when we visited Sydney at the beginning of this month. Oh well, this has been FOCUS. A little bit more serious than usual but I hope, enjoyable. Please write and tell me what you thought of it but even though it's a year and a half since the last issue don't chide me for gaffiating. I've been thinking about fandom an awful lot and I don't think it's gaffiating if you've been thinking about fandom..... Mervyn Barrett. Jan. '62.





Faute Couture