

Etherline.

Science Fiction Journal.

FEATURING...
OFFICIAL
OLYMPICON
REPORT
NUMBER
O O O O
FINAL ISSUE
FOR 3 MONTHS



OLYMPICON 1956

A SECTION OF THE EXCELLENT DISPLAYS.
FEATURING THE M.G.M. BOARD FOR
FORBIDDEN PLANET
REVIEW OF WHICH IS FOUND IN THIS ISSUE.

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ISSUE No. 80

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MATTER
ONLY

To.....

"ETHERLINE"

An Apology

For reasons outside of our control, The Convention Committee are forced into the step of having this issue of ETHERLINE double as the official Convention Report.

Therefore, the following account of the proceedings are reported factually, without any comments.

We apologise for the delay in having this report out, but those of you who have been connected with Convention organising will understand the letdown after the event is over.

Furthermore, the members of AFPA have decided that, as ETHERLINE has been running for close on four years now without an appreciable break, that they deserve a holiday. So this issue of ETHERLINE will be the last for some weeks.

The next issue will be out early in April, and we have been forced to make some changes. First off, there will be a price rise. I'm sure you will go along with us on this, as although paper, ink, and finally postage have risen, ETHERLINE has remained the same price since its inception. Plus of course, the many improvements we have made in the journal. The final price has not yet been decided on, but we will let you know all the gory details in the next issue. Schedules may be slightly altered as well, while new features will be incorporated and some dead items dropped.

Well, we hope you enjoy this report, as many of you enjoyed the event itself, and we'll see you around 10 weeks time.

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J
C

REGISTRATIONS

| | | |
|-----|---------------------|-----------------|
| 1. | J. Williamson | United States |
| 2. | Forrest J. Ackerman | United States |
| 3. | Carl Dill | United States |
| 4. | Graham Stone | New South Wales |
| 5. | James Ferguson | Victoria |
| 6. | R. J. McCubbin | Victoria |
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| 8. | H. Brook | New South Wales |
| 9. | I. J. Crozier | Victoria |
| 10. | Miss M. Finch | South Australia |
| 11. | A. A. Santos | Victoria |
| 12. | K. McLelland | Victoria |
| 13. | J. Ben Stark | United States |
| 14. | L. Conly | Victoria |
| 15. | M. Binns | Victoria |
| 16. | J. Keating | Victoria |
| 17. | V. Morton | Victoria |
| 18. | R. Smith | Victoria |
| 19. | F. B. Bryning | Queensland |
| 20. | N. McDonald | Victoria |
| 21. | B. Cronin | Victoria |
| 22. | Miss Coral Smith | United States |
| 23. | D. Latimer | Victoria |
| 24. | Anthony Boucher | United States |
| 25. | R. B. Martin | Victoria |
| 26. | H. H. Rippon | Victoria |
| 27. | W. Patey | Victoria |
| 28. | Rex Meyer | New South Wales |
| 29. | J. Cleary | Victoria |
| 30. | Don H. Tuck | Tasmania |
| 31. | R. D. Nicholson | New South Wales |
| 32. | H. Styles | Victoria |

| | | |
|-----|----------------|-----------------|
| 33. | D. Davies | Victoria |
| 34. | W. Hubble | New South Wales |
| 35. | M. Baldwin | New South Wales |
| 36. | B. Salgram | Victoria |
| 37. | Stuart Boland | United States |
| 38. | David A Kyle | United States |
| 39. | J. Leggett | New South Wales |
| 40. | L. Smith | New South Wales |
| 41. | W. Veney | New South Wales |
| 42. | H. Blanks | Victoria |
| 43. | F. Hasler | Tasmania |
| 44. | K. M. Carlson | United States |
| 45. | E. Rayner | Tasmania |
| 46. | N. R. Wheeler | New South Wales |
| 47. | G. N. Raybin | United States |
| 48. | B. Heron | Victoria |
| 49. | C. Edlund | Victoria |
| 50. | J. S. Buntine | Victoria |
| 51. | P. Jefferson | New South Wales |
| 52. | B. Whelan | Victoria |
| 53. | C. Mustchin | Queensland |
| 54. | D. C. Potter | United Kingdom |
| 55. | R. Parlanti | Victoria |
| 56. | R. Morton | Victoria |
| 57. | J. Schmidt | Victoria |
| 58. | Ralph Holland | United States |
| 59. | L. Harding | Victoria |
| 60. | Bruce Burn | New Zealand |
| 61. | John Eyre | Victoria |
| 62. | I. McMillan | Victoria |
| 63. | Calvin T. Beck | United States |
| 64. | K. Wheelahan | Victoria |
| 65. | A. R. Weaver | Queensland |
| 66. | Mrs. J. Joyce | South Australia |
| 67. | Stan Woolstan | United States |
| 68. | Graham Lyell | Victoria |

| | | |
|------|------------------|-----------------|
| 69. | G. Metzger | United States |
| 70. | A. J. Hutchins | New South Wales |
| 71. | O. Childs | Victoria |
| 72. | John Podger | Victoria |
| 73. | I. Ward | Victoria |
| 74. | F. Bristowe | Victoria |
| 75. | J. Bristowe | Victoria |
| 76. | Dick Harrison | Victoria |
| 77. | George Maltby | Victoria |
| 78. | E. Stilson | Victoria |
| 79. | Barry Bristowe | Victoria |
| 80. | Les Ward | Victoria |
| 81. | S. Wingate | Victoria |
| 82. | Ted Murphey | Victoria |
| 83. | Larry Jones | Victoria |
| 84. | Mrs. M. McCubbin | Victoria |
| 85. | Ian McCubbin | Victoria |
| 86. | John A. Vile | New South Wales |
| 87. | Dennis Campbell | Canada |
| 88. | Eva Firestone | United States |
| 89. | A. Warring | Tasmania |
| 90. | G. Bennett | Canberra |
| 91. | G. Wetzel | United States |
| 92. | H. Eggleton | Victoria |
| 93. | John Gregor | Queensland |
| 94. | Stuart Hoffman | United States |
| 95. | Winifred McGill | United States |
| 96. | E. Wheatley | United States |
| 97. | Jesse J. Leaf | United States |
| 98. | Ray Barrett | Victoria |
| 99. | Bruce Harrison | Victoria |
| 100. | Dan Bicknell | Victoria |
| 101. | Dr. J. Clyne | Victoria |
| 102. | G. Dunstan | Victoria |
| 103. | Mrs. G. Dunstan | Victoria |
| 104. | Dick Ellington | United States |

| | | |
|------|-----------------------|-----------------|
| 105. | Walter Connell | Victoria |
| 106. | Lorna Mainka | Victoria |
| 107. | Bruce Mainka | Victoria |
| 108. | Barry Markby | Victoria |
| 109. | Dr. J. Lewis | Victoria |
| 110. | J. E. L. Wardrop | Victoria |
| 111. | Mrs. D. T. Barnes | Victoria |
| 112. | Dr. I. M. Quinn-Young | Victoria |
| 113. | Mrs. M. Quinn-Young | Victoria |
| 114. | James Taurasi | United States |
| 115. | Ray Van Houten | United States |
| 116. | Brigham Young | Victoria |
| 117. | F. Frederickson | New South Wales |
| 118. | L. A. Nelson | Victoria |
| 119. | Mrs. L. A. Nelson | Victoria |
| 120. | A. Linklater | Victoria |
| 121. | Miss M. Dent | Victoria |
| 122. | Mrs. G. Salgram | Victoria |
| 123. | Arthur Haddon | New South Wales |
| 124. | Clifford McKay | Victoria |
| 125. | Marjorie Santos | Victoria |
| 126. | C. Rowley | Victoria |
| 127. | Steven Ager | United States |
| 128. | A. Bertram Chandler | New South Wales |
| 129. | J. Evans | Victoria |
| 130. | J. E. Henry | Victoria |
| 131. | Miss N. Hemming | New South Wales |
| 132. | W. Fisher | Victoria |
| 133. | D. Jenssen | Victoria |
| 134. | T. G. L. Cockcroft | New Zealand |
| 135. | Miss J. Bowen | Victoria |
| 136. | M. M. Hutchison | Victoria |
| 137. | Race Mathews | Victoria |
| 138. | Geraldine Mathews | Victoria |
| 139. | A. Eggleton | Victoria |
| 140. | J. Czynski | Victoria |

| | | |
|------|-------------------|-----------------|
| 141. | Brian Finch | New South Wales |
| 142. | G. Sansom | Victoria |
| 143. | Peter Sinclair | Victoria |
| 144. | W. Whiteford | Victoria |
| 145. | Bruce Wilson | Victoria |
| 146. | W. Maynard | Victoria |
| 147. | Dr. D. L. Barrett | Victoria |

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GEOGRAPHICAL BREAK UP

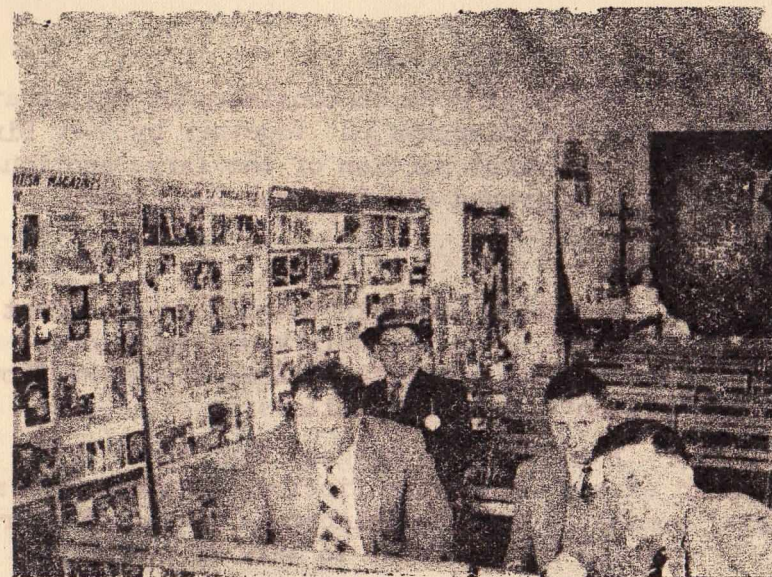
| | |
|-----------------|----|
| Victoria | 87 |
| United States | 24 |
| New South Wales | 19 |
| Queensland | 5 |
| Tasmania | 4 |
| South Australia | 2 |
| New Zealand | 2 |
| United Kingdom | 1 |
| Canberra | 1 |
| Canada | 1 |

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SESSION ATTENDANCES

| | |
|--------------------|-----|
| Saturday Morning | 31 |
| Saturday Afternoon | 37 |
| Saturday Evening | 83 |
| Sunday Morning | 26 |
| Sunday Afternoon | 26 |
| Sunday Evening | 112 |

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"SMILE
PLEASE"

SECTION
OF
THE
DISPLAYS



SATURDAY MORNING

The first session consisted of registration period, inspection of the fine displays put together by Merv Binns and Keith McLelland, and the first portion of the large auction. A fairly small attendance paid around £12 for over 200 items.

SATURDAY AFTERNOON.

Organizer McCubbin introduced the Guest of Honor, Frank Bryning, Australian author well known to readers of FANTASTIC UNIVERSE. His address was titled 'Some Things We Should Expect From Science Fiction' and ran as follows:

I am going to suggest that there are six main things we should expect of science fiction. I propose to name them - with a brief comment - and then elaborate on each in turn.

But I would like to make it clear at the very beginning that I do not want to suggest that every story or novel which we may want to call 'a good Science Fiction story', or any particular story must necessarily measure up to all my expectations.

Although I have some very definite ideas about what is Science Fiction as distinct from other kinds of fiction -- and I hope to make some of these ideas clear on this occasion -- I must admit that I often find it hard to draw the line of demarcation in regard to certain stories.

So I should say now that these six main requirements are to be expected of the main mass of Science Fiction as a whole, rather than of any one sample picked out at random.

First, it should provide entertainment to a high and satisfying degree.

Secondly, it should have a distinct scientific flavour, or content.

Thirdly, it should put forward some rather specific ideas of what the future may hold for us.

Fourthly, it should have some social criticism or commentary.

Fifthly, whether we approve or not, it should be, to some people, an escape literature.

Lastly, we may expect SF to make a satisfying, mature and significant contribution to the world's literature.

It was not my intention to embark on the none-too-easy task of producing an acceptable definition of Science Fiction, nor am I anxious to tread on the delicate ground of the Fantasy versus Science Fiction discussion, and try and draw a strict line of demarcation between them. But I have found it impossible to avoid both these sensitive matters entirely. So I hope those who have traversed the same ground too often already will be patient with me while I try and make my point of view clear - if not convincing.

It has always seemed somewhat paradoxical to me that what we call Fantasy and what we call Science Fiction can go so closely hand in hand. In some ways their differences seem diametrically opposed, while in others they are very similar. I can only conclude that their similarities outweigh their differences.

I propose to dwell rather more on their differences than their similarities -- and I think that what we expect of Science Fiction will be found amongst the differences.

FANTASY

First let us look at fantasy. I think it is worth observing that, in a sense, ALL FICTION, OF WHATEVER KIND, IS FANTASY. All speculation is Fantasy. Any written account of something happening or of someone doing something which is not a strictly factual report is a figment of the imagination, and is therefore fantasy. It does not matter whether the fiction is 'realist', or is based on fact. It doesn't matter whether it deals with every-day real things, with 'real' and 'every-day' people, problems or situations. If it is not an accurate, factual

report of actual people having performed actual things, it is a fiction and therefore a fantasy.

In this sense, what we may wish to separate out and call Science Fiction is also Fantasy.

However, this is saying that the words 'Fiction' and 'Fantasy' are interchangeable. And these are the meanings we are seeking, and I want to exclude them completely.

My meaning of fantasy, on this occasion, is that type of fiction which deals in the supernatural -- with such nonfactual creatures as fairies, demons, witches, werewolves, legendary animals and strange and inexplicable powers for which no natural explanation can be assumed.

I want to make it clear that I have always enjoyed this kind of fantasy myself, and even the modernised versions set in modern times and contexts -- and even many which use such props borrowed from science fiction as space ships and so forth. But if it dealing in the supernatural, it is, in my opinion, properly termed fantasy.

SCIENCE FICTION

On the other hand, there is science fiction -- the particular type of fiction in which this Convention is specially interested. The one ideal and universally accepted definition of SF has not yet been formulated -- and I am not going to attempt it today. Instead, I shall refer to certain characteristics of SF as I understand it, and then call some of the world's leading exponents of SF to give their testimony, in selected quotations.

By then you will, I hope, be aware of the distinctive characteristics and qualities which, in my opinion at least and I fancy in the opinion of most of its devotees, set SF off as a distinctive variety of fiction.

Briefly, I would say that SF is a type of fiction wherein scientific concepts are developed in some way or another, and in which the events are explicable according

to what we know, or what we can reasonably anticipate, to be consistent with the laws of nature.

Such fiction as this, in short story or novel form, is the kind of fiction known as Science Fiction. Provided it is good fiction, the more consistent it is with known scientific facts, or with a sound and reasonable extrapolation of established scientific knowledge, the better SF it is likely to be.

In support of this contention, and to add a few more viewpoints to our idea of what the better kinds of SF ought to be, I would like to quote a few experts.

First -- Hugo Gernsback -- founder of modern SF, publisher of the first specialized magazine of SF, and author of the classic SF novel, *RAPLH 124041+*, of which he said:

"This story which plays in the year 2660, will run serially during the coming year in *MODERN ELECTRICS*. It is intended to give the reader as accurate a prophecy of the future as is consistent with the present marvellous growth of science. The author wishes to call especial attention to the fact that while there may be extremely strange and improbable devices and scenes in this narrative, all are not impossible, or outside the reach of science."

In the 1950 edition of *RAPLH*, SF author Fletcher Pratt, in a foreward, names about 20 items which Gernsback predicted in specific detail in 1941, and which had come true by 1950 -- 39 years later. Amongst them was Radar, the essential principle of which Gernsback described correctly in what he called the *Actinoscope*.

It was according to such tenets that Gernsback edited his early SF magazines, and judged the stories he used. Since those days SF has become much better written, better fiction and much more suave and sophisticated. During the intervening years much of it also strayed from Gernsback's tenets and became hard to distinguish from fantasy. On this, Gernsback's own comment, in his address before the 10th World SF Convention in Chicago, on August 11th, 1952, was as follows:

"Let me clarify the term Science Fiction. When I speak of it, I mean truly scientific, prophetic Science Fiction, with the

full accent of Science. I emphatically do not mean the fairy tale brand, the weird or fantastic type of what mistakenly masquerades under the name of Science Fiction. I find no fault with fairy tales, weird or fantastic stories. Some of them are excellent for their entertainment value, as amply proved by Edgar Allen Poe and other masters, but when they are advertised as SF, then I must firmly protest."

Although the literary and story -- telling quality has developed greatly since Gernsback's day, it is worth noting that leading exponents of the genre still agree with his basic disciplines.

John W. Campbell, editor since 1937 of ASTOUNDING, says: " Science Fiction is fiction, purely fiction, and makes no claim to be fact. But it does claim - and with a provable truth - that many of its stories are extrapolations of known science into possible future engineering....

In fantasy, the author knows it isn't true, the reader knows it isn't true, knows it didn't happen and can't ever happen - and everybody is agreed."

Robert A. Heinlein, one of the recognised top flight authors, in his contribution to a symposium on the writing of 'speculative fiction', concludes with:

"And lastly, no established fact shall be violated and furthermore, when the story requires that a theory contrary to present accepted theory be used, the new theory should be rendered reasonable plausible and it must include and explain established facts as satisfactorily as that the author saw fit to junk. It may be far fetched, it may seem fantastic, but it must NOT be at variance with observed facts, i.e. if you are going to assume that the human race descended from Martians, then you've got to explain our apparent close relationship to terrestrial anthropoid apes as well."

By now, I think any visitor here who may not have known just in what way SF is distinct from other kinds of fiction, will have some idea of it.

Now what about those six main things that we should expect of science fiction?

First was Entertainment.

One could sum this point up, perhaps, by saying that the type of story which has already been more or less defined as SF happens to interest and entertain us -- the SF fans -- particularly well.

Adventurous stories, philosophical stories, psychological stories, humorous stories, horror stories, etc., in this context seem to please us very well.

To take it a little deeper, in my case:

I have a certain amount of interest in the world about me, and in 'the way it seems to be heading'.

I resent the fact that even if I exceed the normal three score and ten, it will not be by very much, and I shall never know what the world may be like in a few hundred years from now -- a few thousand years -- or a hundred thousand years....

I would very much like to know. I doubt greatly that there is any chance that I shall enjoy an after-life for all eternity, during which, from a suitably elevated altitude I might be able to observe the world of the future.

BUT, whether or not I may have that chance, SF has already given me a number of more or less well worked out pictures of the future, and I have been vastly entertained in viewing them.

I have already, in truth, lived in imagination in a number of conceivable futures, of a variety and liveliness of speculation which I could have not have achieved for myself.

Some have been bright and desirable, some dark and depressing and undesirable, some reasonable in my judgment and some unreasonable....

But I have enjoyed going there, and I look forward to more such experiences, and I know where to find them.

I think it is the main element of Science Fiction's special kind of Entertainment.

Second, we were to expect a distinct scientific flavour or content.

Third, we were to expect some rather specific ideas of what the future may hold for us.

Both these requirements have been discussed fully enough, I feel, in the quotations I have given from the authors.

Fourth, we were to expect some social criticism or commentary.

I think it is quite evident that there is a note of social protest of criticism in SF, and I think it is increasing.

In the main, the protest seems to be against three things:

1. The protest in recent years against the imposition of secrecy upon scientific discovery and research -- whether that secrecy be imposed by 'security' requirements of Governments who fear their increasingly potent weapons may be copied, improved upon, or anticipated. (The high brass and military men are frequently caricatured in the stultifying attitudes.)

2. The protest against the frustration of really significant research possibilities by scientists and research workers who are, instead, obliged to devote themselves to the development of marketable gadgetry for big companies.

3. The protest and warning against economic, commercial, industrial and political trends. This is often done by postulating a society in which some of today's trends are extrapolated to their ultimate conclusions. Then, with more or less success, picturing the effects upon everybody's 'way of life' and the struggle to defeat and overthrow the reign. Recent examples being THE SPACE MERCHANTS, PLAYER PIANO, PREFERRED RISK LIMBO 90, ANIMAL FARM and 1980.

The fifth expectation was that SF would provide an escape literature for some people.

I think it is quite certain that SF does provide a form of escape literature for some people. You can condemn or endorse it, according to whether the temporary escape it provides from the harsh realities of existence, from the oppressive or monotonous daily grind, is beneficial or detrimental.

If it permits the trapped and imprisoned individual to survive -- to come refreshed and relieved to face another day, it might be good. But if it holds him like a drug, progressively gaining a hold on him so that he lives in an unreal world, then it may well be bad.

In any event however, the condemnation should really be of the conditions which bring about the need for escape. If escape into a world of make-believe permits the subject to avoid facing his environment and altering it by rebellion or other means, then the escape mechanism is not a good thing.

However, I am prepared to assert that there is no kind of literature -- from the most highbrow to the most lowbrow, from the most sacred to the most secular -- which is not used by someone as an escape literature.

I submit that amongst the most high-brow devotees of Shakespeare are many who are devoted because of the chance to commit vicarious murder with Macbeth, enjoy the aphrodisiac effects of Measure by Measure or the Rape of Lucrece, turn the tables for a time by joining in the Taming of the Shrew.

And I submit that not all regular readers of the Scriptures read them for the purposes of worship, for here is an escape mechanism par excellence for those who feel oppressed by the injustices of the poverty and hardships and humiliations that they have to bear, while others much less worthy can 'get away with it'.

And so with SF. Like all other forms of literature it is, in part, an escape literature and don't let us pretend otherwise.

Let us acknowledge it. But we can, I think, claim that it is not an inferior type of escape literature. It can provide for those who are not able to drift off into illogical fantasies, a reasoned and plausible road out of the impasses of today.

My sixth expectation is that SF will make a satisfying, mature and significant contribution to the world's literature.

In SF I think there will be found some writing worthy to stand on its merits as literature, by the accepted standards. (This has probably happened already with the works of Wells, Stapledon, Capek and others.)

Of an increasing number of SF items we should be able to say: "Here is a fine story." without feeling that it is only a fine example of SF.

And we can expect, I think, that SF will continue to develop as a literary genre of its own specialised kind. It will get better and more mature as a literature, gaining acceptance amongst a wider and increasingly discerning readership.

It will continue to appeal strongly to the youth, and to point the way to high adventure in the most forward lines of human endeavour. It will continue to tell of the things yet to be achieved by Man in his struggle to modify and to conquer his environment.

And as time goes on, and new scientific achievements are consummated, there will be found, looking back along the way, certain literary items which must be classified as SF, which for many years before were pointing the way to those achievements.

Frank B. Bryning.

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Telegrams of CONGRATULATIONS to the Convention were received from:

| | |
|----------------|-----------------|
| Bill Veney | New South Wales |
| Doug Nicholson | New South Wales |
| Tom Cockcroft | New Zealand |
| Adelaide Group | South Australia |
| Rex Meyer | New South Wales |

Second speaker on the syllabus item, Science Fiction, was Melbourne author Wynne Whiteford, whose address was as follows:

Perhaps we'd better begin by establishing just what we mean by Science Fiction. This isn't as easy as it looks at first sight -- the field is very wide and diffuse, so that in all probability no two people would include exactly the same list of stories within the boundary of SF.

Not that boundaries matter much. Broadly speaking though, it was pointed out a long time ago that fiction could be divided into two classes -

1. realistic work, giving as nearly as possible photographic reproduction of some aspect of life, and
2. imaginative writing, which uses some part of real life as a springboard to leap off on a voyage of exploration of what might happen.

It's the second of these classes that is now mainly represented by SF. Yet it's a class of writing as old as literature - works such as the Iliad of Homer followed the same pattern, the same dominant motive of making credible a story just on the edge of agreed-upon possibility.

This idea of telling a story at the margin of possibility probably goes back as far as campfire tales spun during the Stone Age. It seems to be a very basic human habit.

Today, the imaginative type of fiction is gaining ground over the realistic form in many fields. Why?

Perhaps the clearest, most immediate way of seeing why is to glance for a moment at the parallel field of art. Here, too, for centuries there have been two basic schools of thought, two opposed methods of attack.

One was accurate representation of person and scene, with the accuracy extending to every detail. The other, a deliberate distortion or simplification of the subject to get a special effect, to get some idea across to the spectator.

Today, the first type of art has been rendered obsolete by the advance of photography - hence the rise of abstract, fantastic and frankly experimental forms of painting and sculpture.

Much the same trend has taken place in fiction through the introduction of more palatable forms of non-fiction - the documentary type of article, for example. The 'slice of life' story has become more and more replaced by attractively presented fact.

Yet there has always been a demand for fiction. And with ever-widening horizons of scientific fact presented to the general reader of newspapers and magazines and digests, so the thirst for stories exploiting new possibilities arising from these facts continues to grow. And this is where SF fits in to the picture.

Roughly speaking, SF today falls into 4 classes:

1. Stories dealing with relatively short-range prediction from known trends. This was largely the field in which Jules Verne and H.G. Wells largely worked, and today it is represented well by Frank Bryning. This type of prediction, generally based on recent scientific developments, is often surprisingly accurate - remember Terence Rattigan's film, THE SOUND BARRIER, an imaginative piece of SF which had come true in its essentials by the time the film reached Australia, so that many of us who saw it here believed it to be founded on fact.
2. The 'space opera' type of yarn, set far in the future, with the characters travelling with gay abandon from Arcturus 13 to the Lagoon Nebula not thinking twice about it, despite the 4000 light years between. This variety of story sometimes retains surprising credibility, as in the hands of Asimov. You may, however, consider probability

to be stretched too far by writers such as Wallace of Van Vogt - and yet, think of it this way: Think of our world 100 years ago. A thinking man in those days might have accepted the idea of the aeroplane or the submarine - people were already groping towards them - but would he ever in his wildest dreams have conceived radar or the transistor or a satellite station endlessly circling the Earth? Or, to come closer to the present, a dozen years ago all of us would have agreed that Mankind would probably release the forces within the atom some day - in a hundred, in five hundred or maybe in a thousand years. Then, one evening in 1945, we bought a paper and discovered that the Atomic Age had overtaken us in a stride. So we see - the future might hold anything.

3. Then there's the story which sets a perfectly everyday scene, with everyday people, and suddenly jars us to our back teeth by introducing some shockingly alien note. Donald Wandrei and Simak do this superlatively well.
4. The psychological story dealing with possible 'next steps' in Man's evolutionary development - the expansion of new abilities, new mental powers and so forth. Ted Sturgeon's BABY IS THREE and his flesh--creeping WHEN YOU'RE SMILING are good examples of this type of story, which, if trends mean anything - SF writers are probably more trend-happy than anyone - looks like becoming SF at its best. Other unforgettable stories of this class are Walter M. Miller's COMMAND PERFORMANCE, and James A. Schmitz's THE TIES OF EARTH.

These groupings, as I've said at the outset, are broad and rough. They overlap sometimes, and often, as in Van Vogt, you have a blend of SF with fantasy. Personally, I feel it is a waste of effort being a 'purist' in these things. If a story is well-written and convincing, if its characters have life, vit-

ality of their own, if the whole thing has the irresistible pull of narrative that keeps you reading to the end, I like it whether or not I find it believable or not on cold analysis.

A while ago I was talking with Gordon Pittaway, Ray Davie and Trevor Robbins of AUSTRALASIAN POST on the subject of writing in general, and the question arose as to whether there was anyone writing in the present generation whose work would survive indefinitely - that is, any present writer who would still be in print hundreds of years later. They narrowed the field to one definite 'immortal' - Ray Bradbury. This surprised me at first - I know Bradbury is unpopular with many fans because he ignores the old rule of using a different pseudonym for different styles of writing, so that readers who have come to expect a definite type of writing under a given by-line are not disappointed by finding they are reading a straight story of Middle West American town life when they expected a tale of the colonisation of Mars. But no-one could doubt his sheer power of evocative writing. If you read his MEADOW OF THE WORLD, or his description of a Tyrannosaurus in the Mesozoic, 'towering above the trees like an evil god'; with its tremendous impression of power and movement and ferocity, you can forgive Bradbury a lot.

Heinlein, I think, is another writer who will last. Uneven perhaps, but some of his work such as THE GREEN HILLS OF EARTH is literature by any standards. He seems to have been incredibly thorough in his prediction of future development as back around 1940, an editor once noticed a huge chart on his study wall, in which the dates of his stories were arranged on a time scale, with columns showing the life-span of characters, technical developments of the period, sociological changes and other data. Some of the chart is reprinted in THE MAN WHO SOLD THE MOON, showing an extraordinary full picture of the many aspects of the future as it may well be, up to the period of interstellar expansion which he expects to begin in 150 years or so. Too soon you think? Maybe - but remember how far we've come in 10 years.

So there it is. Science fiction, I believe, will be with us 'from here on out'. There will always be new scientific facts coming to light. There will always be speculation on their possibilities. Moreover, these things will combine and multiply at an ever increasing rate.

Further, there will always be a hunger for fiction based on this material - more and more of it.

So far, SF has hardly scratched the surface of possibility, just as science has hardly scratched the surface of the physical universe.

So the best is yet to come. Happy reading!

Wynne Whiteford.

Final speaker of the afternoon on the subject of Science Fiction was Harvey Blanks, Melbourne radio script writer, who spoke of SF from a radio view. His address was as follows:-

Anything I've got to say about SF is on a much less-exalted scale than that of the previous speakers.

Because I'm writing a space-opera radio serial, CAPTAIN MIRACLE. (The title is the producers's unfortunate choice)

I'd been reading SF since 1933, and when I was approached by an Australian firm or radio merchants to write 208 (yes, that's right!) quarter-hour episodes, I reckoned this was my meat. I said 'yes'.

'Fine,' I was told. 'Here's the score. Every quarter-hour must be twelve minutes, forty seconds long. Rest of the time is made up with sponsor's announcements (ads to you) and station identification.'

I said I thought I could cope with that.

Producers were happy. They had only one final word to add. The serial must be called CAPTAIN MIRACLE, because it had already been sold under that title, its three main characters must be called Miracle, Lee (an American) and Paul (a fourteen year old boy, to give the kids a self-identification character).

I could use two additional characters per episode (not more, because it cost too much to hire additional actors

and please would I not blow up the Earth too frequently, as listeners might get tired of weekly H-bomb explosions on the sound -- track.

Apart from these provisos, the field w. s wide open, I was assured. Anything would go.

Great fun.

I managed to get some Martian Retloks in by episode 6.

Producers loved it. The sound effects man wasn't so happy. He rang me up at home (trunk call, too) round about midnight one Saturday wanting to know what in hell a Retlok sounded like when it was home. For that matter, what did it look like?

Stan Frebergish, I answered, 'oh, well, you know, sort of tentacly, maybe five or six.....you've seen one Retlok, you've seen 'em all.'

Sound effects man said he wasn't too sure, but he'd try.

I reckon he deserved the Galactic Medal, Third Class, for what he achieved. He spent Sunday afternoon at Port Melbourne recording seagulls on tape at three different speeds. Back in the studios, he superimposed them, then played them backwards through a sound chamber.

Sounded exactly like Retloks.

Another time the same guy rang me worried about sound effects for my revolt of the robots on Mars. Did they, he earnestly enquired, march in-step or out-of-step? I settled for in-step. He was relieved at that. His robot army took only half an hour to build. They were four or five dozen beer-bottle tops, loosely nailed to a wooden grating, which was then solemnly marched back and forth over an echoing metal plate. Put on tape and slowed down, it all sounded wonderfully ominous.

By this time, the sound effects man was beginning to get the hang of things. The Valley of the Singing Sands, which came alive at sunset every night, presented no trouble. Two Hawaiian 'pop' numbers superimposed, played in reverse and slowed down, sounded sufficiently weird and wonderful

A living brain planet was just an actor with a suitable deep voice, grunting his lines with his head jammed into a large empty acid carboy.

We ran into a real toughie though, with the crystalline creatures of Valgoth, and only solved it a couple of hours before we were due to record. Our Valgothians were all women with soprano voices. In desperation, we sent out and bought a couple of those tinkling glass things that you hang in the Christmas tree - the ones with the long glass strips that chime against each other in the breeze. Then every time a Valgothian spoke, a couple of the studio boys waved and clashed these things at varying distances from the microphone.

It looked slightly ridiculous in the studio, but sounded fine on the air.

I can't keep track of some of the other weird sounds we used in CAPTAIN MIRACLE - aircraft engines played backwards, dog barks recorded at 78 and played at 33, old-fashioned megaphones - they all played their part.

The most difficult job I tackled as the author was inventing an alien language, that sounded like one and yet made sense. For those episodes I wrote the aliens' speeches first in English, then allotted each word an equivalent value in my artificial language. Naturally, when the same word occurred several times in English, the equivalent sound was repeated in my 'double talk'.

The actual language was a weird synthesis of ancient aztec, modern Spanish and classical Greek. I hope the listeners were suitably impressed.

Writing space opera (or science fiction for the radio is not easy, because basically the medium is unsuitable. Ordinary serials happen against a background everyone recognises, such as a living room, a city street, an automobile or a ship. But space opera depends for its appeal on a constantly altering background of fantastic settings and characters. Describing alien scenes one after the other, using only six characters, within the time limit of twelve minutes, forty seconds without sounding like a refugee from James Fitzpatrick is a real headache.

Try it someday.

Harvey Blanks.

SATURDAY AFTERNOON

After the Speakers, a further segment of the auction was held. bidding being brisk, but low prices still holding.

SATURDAY EVENING

After tea, the gathering adjourned to the Congregational Hall, in Kent St., Richmond, a few hundred yards from the main hall, where producer Barry Salgram gathered his actors together to present Norma Hemming's *BALANCE OF POWER*.

All of the 100 odd attendees agreed that it was well worth seeing, and marked a milestone in amateur SF plays. Author Hemming and Producer Salgram are to be congratulated for their efforts.

A Further Apology

Due to the stupidity of the editor, please read 'Saturday Afternoon' for 'Sunday Afternoon' and vice versa. Owing to the time elapsed, and the trouble experienced with the tape recorder, the transcribing of this report was done under severe difficulties, and his memory is only hazy at the best of times.

After a break, we feel sure that he will regain his usual (?) accuracy once more.



MEMBERS
OF THE
CAST OF
*BALANCE
OF
POWER*



MEMBERS
REGISTERING
AT
THE
MAIN HALL

SUNDAY MORNING

The auction commenced at 10.00 AM, and bidding was fairly low. Over 500 American items were disposed of in this session, as well as the art work kindly donated by Nova Publications Ltd., of London.

Prices for the latter were quite good, and the covers especially brought good prices.

SUNDAY AFTERNOON

The second session commenced at 2:30 PM, being the business session. Reports were received as follows:

BRISBANE SCIENCE FICTION GROUP.

Delegate Frank Bryning reported that the official representative, Charles Mustshin was unable to attend at the last moment, so he had to fill in.

The Brisbane Group would like to extend its best wishes to the Convention, and hopes that everyone enjoys himself to the utmost. The Group is fairly small in numbers, but large in enthusiasm. Loosely organised, I suppose we have had a turn over of roughly 50 members in the 5 years of our existence. The monthly meeting would average about a dozen attendees. Meetings are entirely informal, with no chairman or minutes or calling to order.

From what I've gathered from Bill Veney, I think the average age of our Group is somewhat higher than those of the other States, a thing I can't account for. Our main interest is reading SF, talking about it, and we do not indulge in activities far removed from it. With chess players in a decided minority, we are not interrupted during our rather lazy evenings.

We have had several well known identities at some of the meetings, notably Arthur Clarke and Mike Wilson. Charles Mustchin, veteran Queensland collector, travels up from Coolangatta every now and then, while past members have included Harry Brook, Bill Veney, John Gregor, who is now in Cairns.

The Group started in 1952 shortly after a Sydney fan, who was in Brisbane, phoned me and wanted to meet me. He supplied me with a list of names, and I wrote to Graham Stone and received some more, which included John Gregor, and we sent out a few letters inviting people to meet. After about 12 months, we had a group of about 12, and shortly afterward, Bill Veney came up from Brisbane and found us a suitable place to meet.

That is about all I can say about the BSFG, except to mention that we are in contact with some fans in other parts of Queensland, but distances prevent them getting along to the meetings. In closing, I would like to extend an invitation to any fan who happens to find himself in Brisbane, to look us up, and he will be assured of a warm welcome.

.....
FUTURIAN SOCIETY OF SYDNEY

No report....

.....
SYDNEY BRIDGE CLUB GROUP

No report.....

.....
FUTURIAN SOCIETY OF CANBERRA

No report....

.....
TASMANIAN FANDOM

Mr. Frank Hasler presented a report of the activities of several Tasmanian fans, notably Donald Tuck, Eric Rayner and Frank himself. He stated that there was no organised meetings, due to the small number of fans, but occasionally they met at each other's homes for a pleasant evening's chat. Contact was maintained with the lone Northern Taswegian, Roy Gregory, another noted collector.

.....
WEST AUSTRALIAN FANDOM

No Report....

SOUTH AUSTRALIAN SCIENCE FICTION SOCIETY

A message was read from Mrs. J. Joyce, the secretary of the above society, wishing the Convention all the best wishes. No delegate was present.

.....

MELBOURNE SCIENCE FICTION GROUP

Mr. R. McCubbin, leading light of the above group, gave a brief report of the group's activities of the past two years, salient points of which are:

Due to the Convention organising no extra activities were started, life going on at its even tenor, with chess taking up the main part of the group nights. Difficulties are envisaged shortly regarding a clubroom, but we are sure that these will be overcome.

.....

AMATEUR FANTASY PUBLICATIONS OF AUSTRALIA

AFPA has functioned satisfactorily over the past two years, with many improvements seen in the layout of ETHERLINE, the issue of the second, and last, issue of BACCHANIALIA, and the rapid deterioration of the editorial staff.

Due to the latter, it has been decided that a 3months holiday will be enjoyed by all those connected with AFPA, so this report issue will be the last for that period.

Many changes are envisaged with the commencement of publication once again, not the least being a price rise.

.....

BUSINESS SESSION

Chairman Crozier reported that, as there were no motions or notices of discussion tabled, he would proceed to the standing business, that of the site of the Sixth Australian Science Fiction Convention.

Bids were invited from interested groups to hold the Convention, and as none were received, Mr. Salgram of Melbourne, seconded by Mr. Santos of Melbourne, proposed that the next Convention be held in Melbourne at Easter, 1958. He explained that the reason he proposed 1958 was the closeness to 1957 of the current Convention, and the fact that Easter was undoubtedly the best time. The motion was carried unanimously.

Mr. Baldwin, of Sydney, expressed agreement on the site of the next Convention, stating that in his opinion there was no responsible organization in Sydney able to carry out the organizing of the event. However, he intimated that he would like to see a 'conference' along the lines of that held at Canberra last Easter, held at Easter 1957. He said that he would sound out those interested on his return to Sydney, and contact the Melbourne committee. Mr. McCubbin replied that he thought the idea was a good one, and hoped that something along those lines could be arranged.

As no more business was listed, and there were no more motions from the floor, the Business session concluded.

.....

SUNDAY AFTERNOON.

The Auction was concluded on Sunday afternoon, with 100 hard covers among the items. Prices were reasonable and brisk bidding was the order of the day.

.....

SUNDAY EVENING

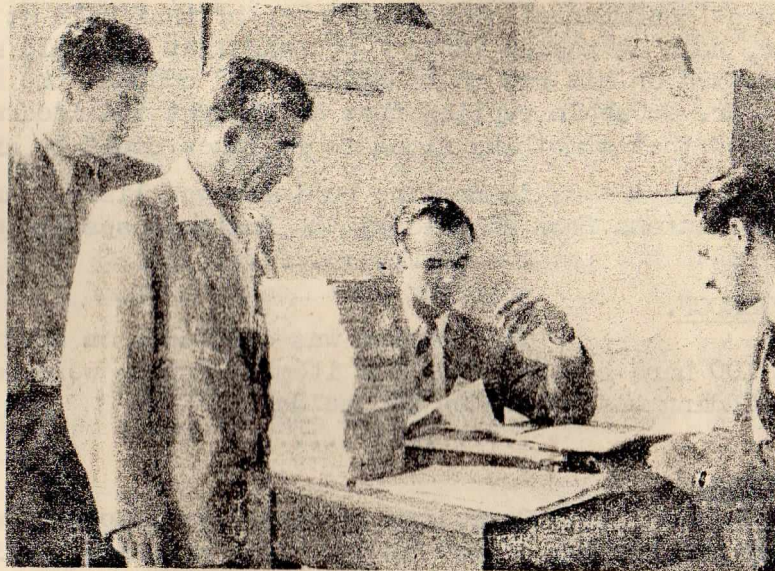
On Sunday evening, the attendees were entertained by the showing of two films, FIVE, starring William Phillips and Susan Douglas, and the Stanley Kramer classic, THE FIVE THOUSAND FINGERS OF DR. T, starring Peter Lind Hayes and Mary Healy. Both films were extremely well received by the 100+ audience, all voting it the best session of the Convention.

At the conclusion of the films, the Organizer, Mr. McCubbin arose and thanked all those who attended, and those who joined the Convention, but were unable to attend. He es-

pecially the 24 American fans who joined, knowing full well they had no hope of attending. This, by the way, is easily a record in the number of non-Australian registrations, and also the highest registration to date.

The Organising Committee trust that those of you who attended enjoyed yourselves, and we hope to see you along at Easter, 1958.

.....



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Directed by **FRED McLEOD WILCOX** · Produced by **NICHOLAS NAYFACK** · AN M-G-M PICTURE

I'm going to stick myself out on a limb again and say:- **FORBIDDEN PLANET IS THE BEST SF FILM YET SEEN.**

Now, before you jump to the typewriter, let me hasten to explain that this is only my humble opinion, but to support it, I feel sure that you must agree that never have we seen such technical effects, used to such an advantage.

Sure, I agree that the story was infantile tripe, and I still can't see any reason for putting Anne Francis in it, but we've had almost the same from every SF film yet seen out here, and therefore the only yardstick we can use in judging them is the effects.

Colour was used to great advantage, this film being the exact opposite in the use of colour to **WAR OF THE WORLDS** which had it slapped on where the story got weak, with the result that there was colour in abundance all the time..

But getting back to my pet like, MGM are to be congratulated on the time taken, and money put into the background used in the film. It was truly colossal. The Krell cities were a marvel of miniature building, and I think that here is where Walt Disney came into it. There's no doubt about this chap

when it comes to animation. The invisible monster was a flash of genius on someone's part, as it set the stage for some terrific scenes of suspense.

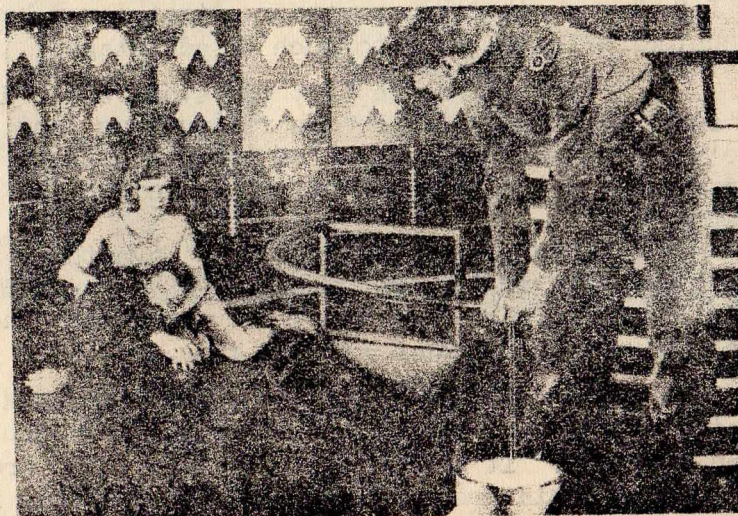
By the way, a lot of people have been heard to remark that the couldn't understand why you could see the beast's footprints although it was invisible. Please explain to these that, despite it's invisibility, it must still have mass, and therefore leave tracks.

Most of the actors seemed a bit self-conscious in their roles, but, in looking back over the dialogue, we can't really blame them. 'Commercial' was stamped all over it.

Still, even MGM need to make the necessary sheckels, and we ARE in a minority.

Anyway, I still think it was the best SF film yet seen, so there !

Ian J. Crozier



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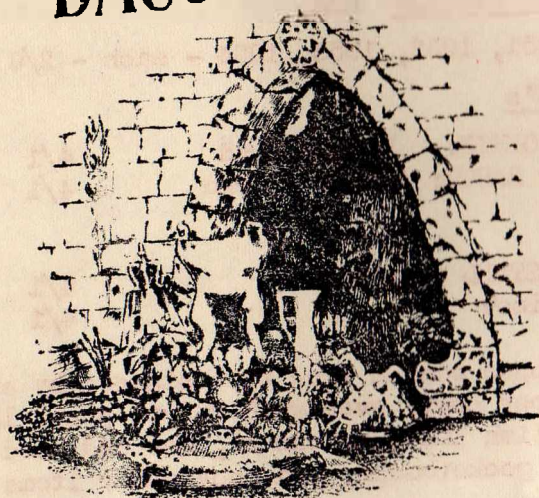
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