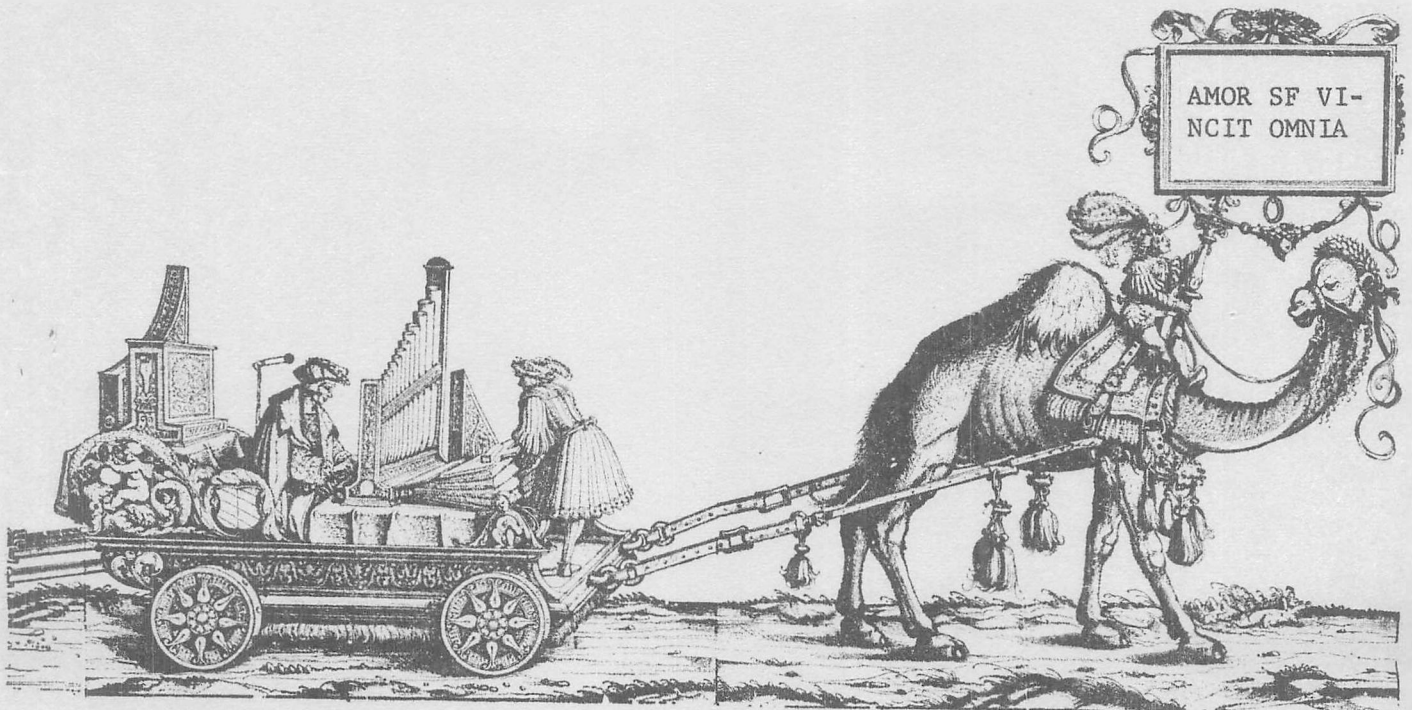


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Australian Science Fiction Review



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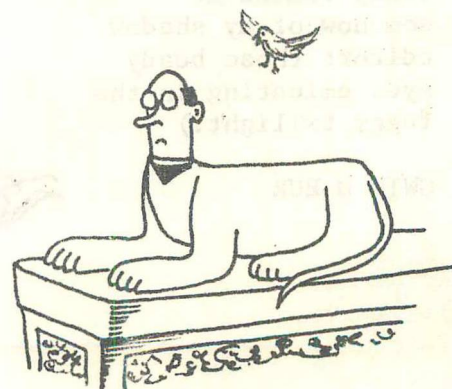
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IN VINO VERITAS (AMONG OTHER THINGS)

("That is nearly true," said the abbot, beginning to look resolute, as the rosebud at his nose-tip deepened into damask.

"A little more," said Seithenyn, "and it will become quite true.")

Last night I sat up over this typewriter until two a.m., writing a long and intellectually challenging editorial for you: in its entire length not a pun or witticism.

This morning I rose shortly after six, as is my wont; feebly pottered around making Diane's cup of tea; shaved and breakfasted by ear; somehow managed to pilot the car into town; deposited Diane at work, drove up to Roneo to have a photo-stencil made, then back to the Club, where, by the time Harding arrived, around ten, young Joe and I had collated half of ASFR 6.

For some reason, or lack of it, I invited Lee to read my editorials - yesterday afternoon's and last night's. To the second he objected. 'It should be an article, John: I miss the editor burbling on in his usual inane way.' 'You mean,' said I, 'that I have to write a third editorial?' 'Why not?' said he, 'By now you should be able to do one at the drop of a hat.'

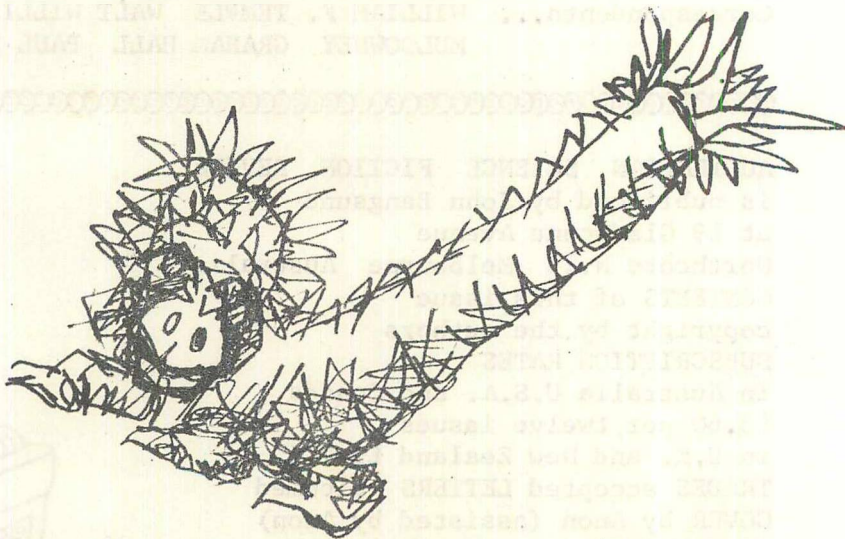
I thought he said something about a drop of arrack - so when I got home I had a snort of Giuseppe-over-the-road's grappa, and - Zowie! I can't even see the typewriter.

But, dauntless, I proceed: happy in the thought that, in my present state, this issue should turn out looking more like a fanzine than ever.

(But I'm not going on with this page. I'm sure there are little crawly things on it.)

(They remind me somehow of my shadow editor: those beady eyes emicating in the fuggy twilight.)

GWIN O EUR



THE PSALMS OF OLAF STAPLEDON

JOHN BANGSUND

You may have heard this story before, and the chances are that the version you heard was just as authentic as mine. You see, about three years ago I picked up very cheaply a quarter-leather bound copy of THE WORKS OF LORD BYRON, published 1828 in Paris. It was very well preserved: some foxing, but as strong as the day Mr. Beall bound it. On inspecting my purchase, I discovered in it - a letter written by Byron himself!

I am not jesting: the book is on my shelf, and anyone who cares to may inspect the letter.

You can imagine my feelings on finding a treasure like this. Though not a mad collector of autographs, I don't mind having them around!

Anyway, not to make too long a story of it, after circumspect enquiry I decided the letter was a replica - that it had, in all probability, been bound into every copy of that particular edition. Not to worry: I'm quite happy to have it, content that it is a minor collector's item. However, that experience has made me just a little wary of books purportedly signed by their authors, association copies, and all sorts of things like that which may or may not be valuable.

About nine months ago, I happened to be in Arthur Hyland's little bookshop in Flinders Street while he was conducting a half-price sale of his secondhand books. This kind of thing I can't resist, so I wandered about the shelves and benches, turning over piles of books - and not finding a single volume I wanted, even at half price. Finally I picked up what appeared to be a kind of small album or sketchbook and idly leafed through it from the back, thinking it might be useful in some way. Then, about half-way, the blank leaves ceased, to my annoyance. Someone had used it to copy out - religious poetry? I came to the front pages - and stood transfixed: for there was a carefully-drawn title page, and it read - Latter Day Psalms, by Olaf Stapledon - Liverpool, Henry Young and Sons, Limited. 1914.

Despite the Byron experience, wild thoughts raced through my head as Arthur rejected my proffered twenty cents ('Take it, with my compliments,' he said. He's like that.) and I walked out of the shop. Could it have been transcribed by Stapledon himself? On its inside front cover the book bears the inscription, 'H.B.Y. from the S.W. - July 5th 1915.' H.B.Y. - Henry Young, the publisher? If so, then why would a publisher be presented with a hand-written copy of a book that he himself has published? Surely this would be a useless, coals-to-Newcastle, kind of gift, unless...

Unless it is the original manuscript!

But let's come back to earth for a moment. For a start, this reasoning doesn't explain 'the S.W.' And there are plenty of other likely explanation's for the book's existence. For example: slim volumes of poetry go out of print rather quickly - someone may have possessed a copy of the printed book and transcribed it for a friend.

Well, I have this book - though exactly what it is that I have, I don't know. I will be pleased to hear from any reader who may be able to shed some light on the matter.

Now, let's look at the poems themselves. There are twenty-four of them, and - to be frank - they're no great shakes as literature. On the other hand, they give a valuable insight into the mind of the young man who one day would write *LAST AND FIRST MEN* and those other classics of philosophical science fiction.

Brian Aldiss has observed that all of Stapledon's books are 'engaged in putting homo sapiens into his proper perspective.' Aldiss further remarks that Stapledon was a great visionary, and mentions 'above all, his conception of the paradoxically combined greatness and insignificance of man.'

In the *LATTER DAY PSALMS* we see the visions beginning to take shape; the paradoxes are very much in evidence; but the 28-year-old Stapledon is groping desperately for perspective, struggling with conflicting attitudes and loyalties. There are poems addressed to God, Christ, Our Lady of Heaven; to Apollo, Artemis, Brahma; to Men; and to Satan. A poem called *My Cup Runneth Over* is followed by another called *The Rebel*. A poem called *War* ends with the lines, 'For the Most High God is within us, and him we will preserve' - while the next, called *Peace*, ends with the words, 'But the dead shall not come back.'

I call them poems. But, as the title indicates, they follow very closely that particular, and unusual, poetic form, the Hebrew psalm. They are usually in the first person; usually in the form of a hymn or an entreaty; all exhibit the characteristic device of reduplication. The psalms in the English Bible are exceptionally beautiful - agree with their theology or not - but the modern practitioner of this difficult literary form, if he is the least bit unskilful, can easily turn it into an arid array of dull repetition. Stapledon comes close to doing this.

His *PSALMS* are (if I may borrow the phrase the Editor of *THE BULLETIN* used in rejecting my 'poem', *A Noise On Dark Streets*, back when I was a mixed-up teenager) more philosophical than poetical. The philosophy comes through in the form of a dramatised agnosticism. There is no straight-out statement of 'I don't know the answer' - rather, there are alternating vigorous denials of God and equally strong affirmations of faith in him.

Though this tremendous soul-searching is alien to the mood of the older poet, there are striking similarities between Olaf Stapledon and Thomas Hardy. Both lived as if there were a God; and wrote as if there were not. But Stapledon was the more strenuous thinker of the two: Hardy found his own comfortable, if somewhat cynical, little niche and stayed there; Stapledon struggled on. In the poem *The Heavens Declare*, Hardy

might almost have written the phrase, 'thou art clinging to a little star that is like a mote flying on the storm' - but he would never have written, further on in the same poem, 'But what is thy loving to the loving of the heavens... whereby the past liveth in the future; whereby the future and the past are one.'

I think you will get the impression from these rambling comments that I am rather wrapped up in Olaf Stapledon. I am. Not only that, but I am fascinated with these PSALMS of his: I feel that this strange little book, so strangely come by, is rather vital reading for anyone who would understand this man and his thinking.

Let me conclude by myself in turn transcribing some of these poems for you. It's hard to give anything like the overall impression with these few examples, but you may find in them something of the paradox, the struggle for perspective, and the seeds of that vision which, full-grown, was to set Olaf Stapledon apart as one of the greatest masters of speculative literature.

T I M E

Wherefore hast thou made the world that it shall die,
and the heavens that they shall burn out like a flame?
What wilt thou do when the stars are all extinguished,
and there is no place for life?
The sons of men have builded for themselves a house of beauty.
It is continually embellished.
The last of the generations shall dwell therein and die;
and the beauty that was builded shall be no more.
A lover and his beloved have met together in the evening.
Evening shall return, but they return not.
The home that seemed eternal is broken up and scattered.
The children remember it, they die; it is no more.
I am heavy of heart because of fleeting time,
and because all things come to naught.

G O D

The voice of God spake out of his creation:
I have made a law, that is my law of beauty.
I have ordained my heavens that they
shall blossom and wither away.
The flower shall die, but the seed shall flourish.
Like a flower, the world shall perish,
but the spirit that is born therein shall live.
If the spirit has need, shall I not make other
universes for her sake,
to be ethereal according to her necessity?
As for you, O Men, out of lifelessness I made you to live.
Out of unconsciousness I gave you the glory of thought.

Have ye fear that I will let you slip again into nothingness?
Do ye hunger after eternity all your life long?
Be sure that if ye die utterly, it is best that ye die,
and if ye live for ever, it is best that ye live.
For I have made you to fulfil my purpose.
Nothing that is in you shall be lost from me.
I have made you that ye shall create love and victory.
That which ye create I shall not destroy.
That ye may be courageous, I have hidden the future from you.
That ye may conceive the light, I have laid
my hand over your eyes and covered you in darkness.
That ye may know hope and despair, I have tempted you
with many ideals, even while I resist all your striving
forever.
Yea, that ye may excel in fortitude, I will harass you all
the days of your life, and seem to defeat you forever.
That ye may love, I have tuned you together like music,
so that in loneliness ye fulfil not yourselves.
That ye may increase in love, I have given you the means
to sacrifice; that ye may sacrifice to love, and
know that love is best.
That ye may know the peace of love, I have set in each of you
the desire of a dear friend; that ye may look upon each
other in wonder and delight, and be sufficient each to
another.
That ye may know the glory of love, I have spoken to you in
your friend's voice; and in the eyes of your beloved
ye have seen me.
Thus shall ye join with all my creatures in creating for me
love. Its dearness and its splendour ye shall make
for me.
Thus only shall ye come into the knowledge of me.
Thus shall ye love me.
In each of my stars I have set a mighty spirit to increase
in beauty. The peoples that dwell upon the multitudes
of my stars are beyond number.
Exalted are they who look to Sirius and Aldebaran as ye
look to the sun. There are gentle people
who praise me out of the midst of the Pleiades.
In every part of my heaven there is life living together;
and out of its loving a spirit is born,
to be the soul of each star.
Behold, these are my ministers who do my pleasure;
who yearn towards one another across the great abyss;
Who fill my heaven with song,
as it were a little room bursting with voices;
Who shall draw near together and be one soul,
creating for me my heart's desire.

S A T A N

Thou who rebellest against the Almighty in all his dominion,
scorning to be a slave even under him;
Who puttest bitterness into the cup of his victory,
and laughest in his face out of Hell;
Who art for ever overpowered and never conquered,
who hast no hope and desirest no respite.
Who hast thine own wisdom, whereby thou hast
laid bare the treachery of the Almighty;
and thine own virtue, which is to be true
to the wisdom thou hast gained;
Who art God unto thyself,
preserving thyself with a strong will.
It is thou that makest the uprooted tree to sprout,
and the stag at bay to be terrible.
It is thou that puttest wrath into a man among his enemies,
and into him that stands up one against the world.
Thou art the god of heroes, and of those who battle against fate.
Teach us thy wisdom that we may scorn the Almighty;
and thy fortitude that we may not shrink to cast him off.
We hail thee, thou God in Man!
We magnify thee against God in Heaven.

T H E R E B E L

Thus spake the oppressed:
What have I to do with God? What has God done
for me?
He thrust me into the world hungry, and I could get
no food.
He made others to surfeit, that my mouth
might water.
He made me to desire pleasure and shun pain,
and overwhelmed me with heavy toil and grief.
He made me to love, and to hunger for love,
but what home for love have I?
He made me to guess that there is beauty,
and set his favoured ones to proclaim beauty
lest I should forget.
But the door of his heaven he fixed ajar,
that I might hear and not enter.
And ye speak to me of worship,
and of the joy of sacrifice!
Wherefore should I sacrifice to you
and to your tyrant God?
Mighty is your God, for he made the stars
and enslaved the peoples.
Loving he is not, for he made me.

I'd rather take his hand, knowing that he, and I, and you are all in the same jungle, and the jungle is only a small part of the universe.' And, sure enough, Angelo achieves moral maturity. So much for the problem of evil.

The theme is promising, as so many writers have found before. If Pangborn had simply told his story, letting his ideas develop naturally from the action and from the interplay of character, he might have written an excellent novel. In fact, he comes so close to success that it is almost painful to watch it slipping from his fingers. The trouble seems to be that he was determined to write one of the moral epics of our time.

The observers become blatantly angelic symbols (though the Martians are agnostics, and God himself is never raised in support of anything), while the renegades are the fallen angels, the devils. The struggle over Angelo is for his soul. This symbolism is reinforced more or less explicitly at many points, just in case we haven't noticed. What this means is that Pangborn's moral beliefs flow forth as products of Martian ethical maturity. It is virtually Pangborn himself who watches with love, tolerance and sympathy as mankind slips and slides uneasily towards his own blessed state. 'I see twentieth-century man as a rather nice fellow with weak legs, and a head in a bad condition from banging against a stone wall. Perhaps fairly soon he will cut that out, get sense, and go on about his human business, relying on the godlike in himself and in his brother.'

And in the general mood of warm humanism and overall niceness, it is easy not to notice that Pangborn's feet are weighted to the ground with a congealed mass of unanswered questions. The more explicit his ethical statements become, the more we are entitled to criticize the book on philosophical grounds, and the more obvious his question-begging appears. Good intentions are not enough.

But A MIRROR FOR OBSERVERS was written in 1953. Eleven years later, Pangborn is in print again. And suddenly his characters are men and women of robust flesh and blood. Angelo and Sharon were very likeable people, certainly, and fond of one another to the point of distraction. They were also sexless - two characters seen in an ivory tower by a 350-years-young Martian moralist. There is nothing sexless about DAVY. He is a full-living man who calls a fuck a fuck and appreciates it when a woman tells him he is well hung.

It is a few hundred years after World War Three. The eastern United States have emerged from the confusion as a number of loosely connected frontier states, under the domination of a dogmatic, intolerant Church. Davy is a bond-servant who runs away in search of his freedom and a better life. His values are simple: sex, music, comradeship, education and love, each coming to him in its turn as he enters manhood. He soon loses his faith in the Church as he discovers the straightforward enjoyment of his healthy body and the companionship of friends who share a rare freedom within an enclosed, organized society. The book is written as his free-wheeling autobiography.

Pangborn still makes his points, but there is nothing moralistic about DAVY. This is a story about people. Their ideas are presented only as aspects of their overall personalities. The tone varies from straight adventure to bawdy humour, and the whole story takes on colour from a curious blend of frontier society and the twentieth century.

Maintained in their ignorance by the Holy Murcan Church's educational system, the people look back with awe on the Old Time. Relics of the past must be exorcised and given an official stamp; Old Time books are prohibited. Entertainment and reliable news are dispensed along with quack medicine by travelling bands of minstrels and actors. Settlements are stockaded as protection against wild animals in the woods, and the land to the west, beyond the frontiers, is forbidden territory. Yet there are groups who work to discover and preserve Old Time knowledge. Davy finally joins one of them. The autobiography is written as these heretics spread out alone across the Atlantic in search of new land and freer people.

DAVY is a much more successful novel than A MIRROR FOR OBSERVERS. But there is a nagging doubt. Perhaps it succeeds because Pangborn is attempting so much less. DAVY is the story which I enjoyed the most on first reading. MIRROR is the one which I might, some day, read again.

STEPHEN COOK

HARRY HARRISON: MAKE ROOM! MAKE ROOM! (Doubleday: \$US3.95)

Ordinarily we don't review American editions in ASFR, but here's a book I can't wait to see published in Britain (or in a U.S. paperback: sorry if that's confusing) before reviewing. For Harry Harrison's new novel is an important book, and one that deserves the widest possible publicity. It is by no means a great novel or a faultless performance: its importance lies in the fact that it manages to extend considerably the preconceived editorial limitations of sf.

That MAKE ROOM! bids fair to being the outstanding sf novel of the year may come as a surprise to those fans who have come to regard Harrison's by-line as synonymous with mediocre ANALOG sf, and when I say it succeeds in this respect mainly on the principle of innovation I can understand your eyes boggling even further. BILL, THE GALACTIC HERO was a good laugh, but... there were those early stories for the lesser-grade American pulps, then the gradual elevation to the ANALOG hierarchy, and the deserved success of the exciting DEATHWORLD novels; but there has been nothing remarkable or earthshaking about Harry Harrison the sf writer, and I suppose some of us have been a bit bemused by his critical activities over the last few years. His convention speeches, his reviews in IMPULSE, and, more recently, his editorials in the same magazine, have all shown healthy signs of a happy renegade attitude to the follies and foibles of current sf. Now it is gratifying to have in our hands proof that not only does Harrison have very strong ideas about what is wrong with sf, and what it should be doing, but, unlike some of his fellow critics, he has also taken a gigantic step out of his own limitations - has, in short, put into practice what he preaches.

Harry Harrison the literary innovator? After his recent remarks in *IMPULSE* - 'There is room for everything in sf, all sorts of experimentation and fantastical dreaming' - one might expect something strange and Moorcockian. Not so. What Harry has done is to tell his story in the kind of documentary manner he does so well, but he has written with the thought of magazine restrictions well to the back of his mind. The result is challenging in style as well as in content. I found myself wanting to care much more for the people in this book than I actually did, and I had always thought this kind of involvement alien to the enjoyment of sf.

The characters are two-dimensional; that is, they enjoy one dimension more than most people in sf stories. They lack depth, but only by a whisker: Harry has come close to making them real people. This lack may mark Harry's limitations at the moment: if it's any indication of where he's heading, then his next book should be magnificent.

The target in this book is the ignorance and stupidity that continues to allow the human race to breed itself into extinction. In showing us a facet of a disastrously overcrowded future world, Harrison has opted out of scientific wonders. He does not seem to think that science will soften the Malthusian nightmare. If he did, it would perhaps invalidate the warning he gives us here - but it does seem strange that the battle against overpopulation should be as futile as Harry shows us here. Perhaps he has not been interested in waving a magic wand, and in eschewing the 'all's-well-don't-worry' attitude of our time he has drawn an uncomfortably pessimistic picture of our world a few decades from now.

Which brings me to one of the book's faults. To portray the world of 1995 is perhaps more difficult than to erect a completely imaginary society thousands of years in the future. Harrison's 1995 is not too different from our world of today: perhaps I'm asking too much, but surely the patterns of our social life will undergo tremendous changes in the next thirty years?

The novel just ends. It reaches no conclusions, unravels no loose ends, holds out no hope for the next millennium. As the half-mad Peter cries on the penultimate page: 'It must end... can this world go on for another thousand years, like this? LIKE THIS?'

The way Harry Harrison presents it, it very well could.

I strongly recommend this book to readers who ask more from sf than editors are currently giving them; to anyone at all who appreciates good quality fiction; and, most particularly, to anyone who enjoys 'good, solid, readable, middle-of-the-road' sf.

It will be some time before you read anything half so good. You may even have to wait until Harry Harrison publishes his next novel.

LEE HARDING

THOMAS M. DISCH: MANKIND UNDER THE LEASH
URSULA K. LeGUIN: PLANET OF EXILE
URSULA K. LeGUIN: ROCANNON'S WORLD

(Ace Double: \$0.65)

(Ace Double: \$0.65)

When I saw the first of these titles I groaned. Disch has given me the impression of having a morbid and anti-human outlook on life, and MANKIND UNDER THE LEASH conjured up a vision of Disch-the-Super-Masochist. But the title is somewhat misleading, and for a time while reading the book I felt I owed its author an apology.

A friend who read the book before me recommended it as a 'romp.' Up to a point it is that, but once stop and compare it with, say, Aldiss's LEGENDS OF SMITH'S BURST or Russell's PLUS X and it appears an almost elephantine romp. Almost as if Disch had been accused of having no sense of humour, and had written (or re-written) this story to disprove it. If this is the case, he has certainly proved to me that he has a sense of humour, but that it is quite peripheral to his major preoccupations.

The plot may be summarised thus: In 1970 an alien life-form quite incomprehensible to mankind (and to the reader) takes over Earth and 'domesticates' most of its inhabitants, making them into beautiful, cultured, faithful pets - in much the same way as man has domesticated dogs and other formerly wild animals. The Masters, as the aliens are called, maintain their hold over their pets by means of the Leash, a kind of super-telepathy. Some humans, however, are rejected by the Masters, and these are the Dingoes - the scum of humanity, the undomesticated scavengers. The book is the story of White Fang - or Dennis White (there's a Latin pun there, and more where that came from) - a happy, contented pet who finds himself abandoned by his Master, falls into the hands of the Dingoes, eventually is converted to their outlook, and spearheads a successful revolt against the Masters. (And if you've read Cordwainer Smith's MOTHER HITTON'S LITTUL KITTENS you'll have a pretty good idea of how he accomplishes that.)

If you can make the initial suspension of disbelief, that's not a bad story. But interlard it with fake-18th-Century-isms (e.g. chapter headings such as 'In which I am born, and my father is done in by Dingoes. '), uncalled-for literary and musical allusions (e.g. a melancholy 'bitch' who reads only Proust, without apparent benefit - or a system of asteroids with names like Chopin, Stravinsky, Milhaud, Nabokov, &c), and many other things, amusing in themselves, but in context facetious, frivolous, or tasteless - and the story starts falling apart at the seams.

Don't misunderstand me - there are some excellent things in this book. One episode in particular, which takes place in a concentration camp, starts off like something out of HOGAN'S HEROES and finishes with one of the most extravagantly comical scenes I've read: a grand performance of AIDA with, literally, a cast of thousands.

But, overall, the book doesn't hang together, doesn't go anywhere or say anything important. The corny title-page promises the reader, among other things, 'Reflections by the Author on the Nature of Art, Revolution & Theology,' but such of these reflections as there are are trite and unprovocative.

The one message that comes through the book is that man is an ugly, smelly, nasty, small-minded brute. Even when a superior power attempts to make his life a thing of beauty, he will fight to throw off his leash and return to his sordid, unlovely existence. This negative outlook is the leash that Thomas Disch must throw off if he is to achieve his true stature as a writer - for write he undoubtedly can.

In complete contrast is Ursula K. LeGuin's *PLANET OF EXILE*, the other half of this double-paperback. If I devote less space to this book it is not because it is less worthy of consideration than Disch's story, but because it has no faults worth mentioning. It is a beautifully-written, superbly-controlled piece of work which grips the reader from first page to last.

Attempting less than the Disch story, it achieves more. Here is no intergalactic epic or revolt against alien enslavement: it is simply an episode in which the survivors of an Earth colony on some far planet, in a time of mutual stress and danger, come to terms with their alien neighbours. Basically a tale of adventure, in its brief span it quietly displays most of the human attributes from folly, cowardice, mistrust and pigheadedness, to courage, wisdom and love. It leaves on the mind an impression of nobility and tenderness.

I feel sure Ursula K. LeGuin will go a long way. I thoroughly enjoyed this book and recommend it highly.

After *PLANET OF EXILE* I turned to Mrs. LeGuin's earlier story - a story which my colleague couldn't bring himself to read (*ASFR4*, p.32). I don't altogether blame him, since the publisher's blurbs make it sound awful.

It is not awful, in any sense of the word. It is an interesting, well-written story, marred only by an unsatisfactory ending. The opening, also, is not above criticism, but it might have come off quite well with a good ending to balance it. Basically, *ROCANNON'S WORLD* falls into three unequal parts: there is an introductory prologue (originally, I gather, a short story by itself), a long 'quest' story, and an abrupt ending. The 'quest' concerns Rocannon's efforts to get from Point A to Point B in order to foil a devilish scheme to undermine universal peace and security. This, the bulk of the story, is beautifully done, and justifies those people who compare the author with J.R.R. Tolkien.

However, a few pages from the end of the story, with the hero's main job - i.e. foiling the devilish scheme - still undone, the author resorts to a favourite device of the ancients and introduces a god-in-a-box (or *deus ex machina*, as they called it), who enables Rocannon to destroy the enemy effortlessly - and anti-climactically. Then there's a brief epilogue, in which the hero lives happily ever after, and you turn another page, somewhat bewildered at the sudden halt, and you're reading Avram Davidson upside down.

So, *ROCANNON'S WORLD* is one of those stories in which getting there is all the fun. Not up to the high standard of the later book but, for all that, recommended reading.

JOHN BANGSUND

<u>D. WOLLHEIM & T. CARR (ed):</u>	<u>WORLD'S BEST SF 1966</u>	(Ace: \$0.75)
<u>FREDERIK POHL (ed):</u>	<u>STAR FOURTEEN</u>	(Whiting: \$2.65)
<u>D. F. JONES:</u>	<u>COLOSSUS</u>	(Hart Davis: \$3.15)

WORLD'S BEST SF: with a title like that, you can't really win. Just about anyone picking it up will be able to think of better stories. Some of the authors completely missing from this collection are Cordwainer Smith, P.J. Farmer, Zelazny, Silverberg, Sheckley, Dickson, Ballard. And there's no doubt that you can think of others whose omission is surprising. It will be, of course, the old story of 'their material not being available...' If this is so, why not call the anthology BEST SF PUBLISHED IN 1965 THAT WASN'T GRABBED BY HIGHER-PAYING COMPANIES OR FOR HARD-COVER PUBLICATION OR WAS TOO PRICY OR... That's not a bad title.

The stories collected here are not a bad bunch, but your reviewer regrettably confesses his inability to do them justice. It is probably his failing faculties (produced by reading old and bleary copies of STARTLING STORIES) that have brought about this peculiar situation where he cannot quite understand some of the newer stories. Quite often it seems to him that the characters don't really do anything, and that at the end of the story everything is much as it was in the beginning, only more confused. It is certainly more confused in his mind. He rejects utterly the suggestion that it may in fact be the fault of writers who can't keep an idea straight in their heads for 5000 words. He has Faith in the editors of today...

Arthur Clarke's SUNJAMMER, reprinted in AMAZING STORIES, is pretty good sf, and typical Clarke. Unlikely, perhaps, but ACC can really carry this sort of thing off in style.

Ron Goulart's CALLING DR. CLOCKWORK is pretty weak, being based upon a fairly uninteresting joke ('This is your pilot speaking: you will be surprised to learn that takeoff was automatic and that in fact this is a recording: but do not worry - nothing can go wrong go wrong go wrong...') and Larry Niven's BECALMED IN HELL clings to the shirt-tails of Anderson's excellent BRAKE, rather weakly. The idea of a man being welded into a rocket is not entirely new.

Vernor Vinge's APARTNESS deals with cosmic justice, in a comic manner. Well, one has to laugh at his clumsiness, anyway. Simak's OVER THE RIVER AND THROUGH THE WOODS is a good yarn, and lifts this sagging collection just when it needs it. A quiet story, but very well written.

James Schmitz's PLANET OF FORGETTING is a routine adventure yarn, and though Harlan Ellison's 'REPENT, HARLEQUIN!' SAID THE TICKTOCKMAN won a Hugo for the best sf short of 1965, I can't help feeling that this was rather to shut Ellison up than to reward a great story of sf. It just isn't very good.

Joseph Green's THE DECISION MAKERS is a good treatment of the first-and-a-half contact theme, but if TRAVELLER'S REST is typical of David Masson's output, then I expect it will be the last story of his that strains these eyeballs. This is one of those stories which requires considerable reader-cooperation and, frankly, it isn't worth it.



Lin Carter's little sketch, *UNCOLLECTED WORKS*, makes for pleasant reading, but is not too strong on plot. Jonathan Brand's *VANISHING POINT* is even weaker on this vital ingredient.

At this stage the editors seem to have run short of moderate stories, and present some pretty bad ones. None of R.A. Lafferty's stories have hit me where it counts, and *IN OUR BLOCK* he maintains this record of unimpeachable mediocrity. I am told that there is a whole series of Fred Saberhagen's 'Berserker' stories. I feel that perhaps it would be unfair to trample too heavily upon his *MASQUE OF THE RED SHIFT*, for it obviously relies upon a knowledge of his other stories. By

itself, it has all the backbone of a jellyfish, and the characters are motivated by things and morals hidden from the readers' eyes. Christopher Anvil's *THE CAPTIVE DJINN* is another of those endless Campbell- (or Russell-) inspired yarns about the dumb aliens and the hyperintelligent earthmen. Someone has an inferiority complex, methinks!

Fritz Leiber, one of the four writers in this collection who'd even been heard of ten years ago, closes with a typically-pessimistic story of man's future in a world of increasing automation.

Overall, the collection may not seem too marvellous, but it is a lot better than a 60-cent magazine.

Fred Pohl's *STAR* anthologies, and his one issue of *STAR SF*, were rather better, and rather different in quality, from the magazines he now edits. *STAR FOURTEEN* contains some of the best stories published in *STAR*. Not the best, because editor Pohl has avoided frequently-reprinted stories. Some of the stories here must be regarded as bombs, but there are some very fine ones to offset these.

There is a story here by Henry Kuttner, possibly the best writer of sf. Kuttner was amazing in that he was able to write the best stories in any period. He wrote the 'Hollywood on the Moon' series with Arthur K. Barnes, at a time when that sort of story was popular. Later he wrote the sort of story which Campbell liked and published in the halcyon days of *ASTOUNDING*. He returned to *STARTLING* after the war to write some really great short novels, and later wrote such outstanding stories as *TWO-HANDED ENGINE* and the one reprinted here, *A CROSS OF CENTURIES*. The story has a fine beginning; obviously Kuttner conceived this as an opening and then found that he had to write the rest of it. Although the pages after the first are a letdown, the story is well worth the price of this book.

Arthur Clarke's *THE DEEP RANGE* had its genesis in the short story reprinted in this anthology: the story is by no means the best Clarke has ever written, but is very realistic.

The other really good stories in this collection would be Gold's THE MAN WITH ENGLISH, Morrison's COUNTRY DOCTOR, and Matheson's DANCE OF THE DEAD. The other stories are generally very readable, though non-sf writers Kersh, Borgese and Hyde don't seem up to their company.

The anthology as a whole seems to be one of the best ventures of recent years.

Average readers of sf, and indeed many who are not average, tend to shy away from novels written by previously unknown English authors. All too often the writer turns out to be John Russell Fearn in a clever plastic disguise, or someone with about as much ability as the late lamented Vargo Statten. 'D.F. Jones' is one of these unknowns, but unlike the work of some others his novel is worth reading. (One wishes that the same could be said for the magazine NEW WORLDS, whose pages are filled with stories written by unknowns; and unlikelies, for the reader must suspect that half of these writers cannot really exist. 'Jael Cracken,' I ask you! Perhaps Moorcock is trying to be a latter-day Ray Palmer.)

As a whole, Jones's novel is well written, but the plot is what you might call rather elderly: that of the machine which takes over the world.

Jones uses the ideas of recent American writers who have set their novels in a near future in which global war is about to start. The characters are all 'important' and the results of their actions affect the whole world. They seem to be mentally stunted, but then this class of novel does use only a sophisticated idiot plot. COLOSSUS seems better than some of its contemporaries however, in that there is some compulsion to read, some interest in the characters. One will only be able to judge Mr. Jones after the appearance of his second or third sf novel.

JOHN FOYSTER

RICK RAPHAEL: CODE THREE (Gollancz: \$2.65)

When I first glanced at the opening pages of this book I thought, 'Grief, another of these dreary technical stories one has to struggle through.' However as the story develops it becomes interesting, and quite gripping in parts.

The basic plot involves three characters charging along on a fantastic modern super-highway, trying to control the traffic - which now bowls along quite merrily at speeds from 80 to 500 miles per hour. In the team, wisely, is a doctor (a woman in this instance), and two men, the Sergeant and his assistant.

The story weaves its way through half of North America, meeting with near-accidents, accidents, and dramatic incidents in various climatic conditions. The idea of the Internationally Controlled Highway is well portrayed, and the running of the system is clearly, though not boringly, described. The whole concept is one which could possibly operate in the future - and which would be welcome to all road users even now.

In fact this thought caught my imagination throughout the book, and possibly was the reason for my not being able to resist reading on to the grim, and unfortunately rather predictable, end.

Rick Raphael handles his story well, and makes his characters quite believable, though dialogue and general conversation do not reach any great heights. Also boy meets girl, to provide a little romantic relief.

In all, the book is one with food for thought, if you are a motorist - or a traffic cop - but in the main is scarcely light entertainment. It just gets in as sf by being set in an unidentified future.

DIANA MARTIN

<u>KEITH LAUMER:</u>	<u>CATASTROPHE PLANET</u>	(Berkley)
<u>KEITH LAUMER:</u>	<u>A PLAGUE OF DEMONS</u>	(Berkley)
<u>ROGER ZELAZNY:</u>	<u>THE DREAM MASTER</u>	(Ace)
<u>MACK REYNOLDS:</u>	<u>OF GODLIKE POWER</u>	(Belmont)

Nowadays the most prolific sf novelists seem to fall into two categories: those who have been writing the stuff so darned long that they can do it with their left hand (and while they're asleep), and those who have discovered that they can write and sell sf paperbacks steadily though their background in the field is a fairly recent acquisition. Keith Laumer seems to belong to this latter category. At the moment he seems to be everywhere at once.

The hero of CATASTROPHE PLANET does everything but think and react like a normal human being. He gets top marks as a smooth survivor in a world riven by a geological catastrophe, discovers an ancient civilization embedded in the arctic ice (honest!) and a Secret Race which has infiltrated the higher ranks of world government. And a few more things along the way. The book is so old-fashioned as to defy criticism. Laumer slicks it up with a smooth style, and decks it out with some of the more obvious thriller symbols of our day (aqualungs and undersea diving, for one), but nowhere is it for a moment convincing. This is a poor book by any standard.

Utilizing many of the ideas of the pulp writers of yore, it is too disrespectful of the field ever to have been published there. It is also too contemporary in treatment to be greeted with the tolerance one reserves for Sax Rohmer or Doc Savage. One wonders how the book ever came to be published. Laumer is pretty much an also-ran, but this is the worst effort of his I've ever come across.

A far better story is A PLAGUE OF DEMONS. This one appeared as a serial in IF, and it bears all the marks of having been written to Pohl specifications. Certainly it reads remarkably like one of those tensely controlled GALAXY serials we have come to expect from Pohl. There is no wasted time, no padding, no sense of grabbing fresh rabbits from the hat at every turn of the page. There is a gradual, even, build-up of tension. Laumer's crisp style is well suited to this sort of sf thriller and, to his credit, he wrings the last ounce of horror and suspense from his tale. But I wonder how much of this is a result of the great Plot Doctor's work?

This is one book by Laumer that I can recommend wholeheartedly, if you're on the lookout for a scary adventure story for a one-sitting reading.

Roger Zelazny, as you should know, is rather Big at the moment. And justly so. He is one of the New Breed who have moved into sf recently, but, unlike Keith Laumer, Zelazny seems to have an abiding respect for the field, and something to say utilizing the tools of sf (whereas Laumer tends to milk it for its excitement value alone). His Hugo-winning novel has already been reviewed in these pages (ASFR4); readers who reacted enthusiastically to that book may be disappointed by THE DREAM MASTER.

It's fair to point out that this is an expansion of a short novel from AMAZING, called HE WHO SHAPES - which, incidentally, shared first place with Aldiss's SALIVA TREE for the Nebula Award in its category. Some short works have been expanded smoothly and successfully into full-length novels; THE DREAM MASTER is not one of them.

I haven't read the original, so I can't say whether the philosophical posturing seems uncomfortable because it is part of the padding, or if Zelazny hadn't quite refined his style at this early stage (CALL ME CONRAD must have been written a full six to twelve months later!) So, in sum, the book is uneven, but stuffed with enough vivid Zelazny imagery to make it worthwhile. Do buy this book for the good contained in it, and be patient with the faults: they are a beginner's.

Mack Reynolds has probably written more stories for ANALOG in the past decade than any other writer. Recently he has turned out a paperback quite unlike his usual self. OF GODLIKE POWER is one of the nuttiest and most enjoyable lightweight sfs I have read lately. Reynolds, perhaps relieved to be writing for other than Campbellian eyes, seems to have revelled in his freedom, and has allowed himself more scope with his characters than has been his wont. (One of them even talks in Campbellese!) The plot is almost a parody of some of the stuff Reynolds has provided for the ANALOG autocrat, and I found it all very amusing. I think some of you Out There might do so, too. It's worth shopping around for.

ALAN REYNARD

<u>CHARLES HARNESS:</u>	<u>THE ROSE</u>	(Compact: \$0.60)
<u>JAMES COLVIN:</u>	<u>THE DEEP FIX</u>	(Compact: \$0.60)
<u>CHRISTINE BROOKE-ROSE:</u>	<u>SUCH</u>	(Joseph: \$3.15)

Charles Harness has written one good story (FLIGHT INTO YESTERDAY), maybe a couple of moderate ones, and a few stinkers. THE ROSE fits very well into this last category. It is badly written, and the ideas in it (which are not really very worthwhile) are clumsily expressed.

I personally found this novel most annoying: partly because I expected something of the stature of FLIGHT INTO YESTERDAY, partly because the book has been given such a build-up by the publishers. The two combine, for I was able to believe the blurbs: I knew how good Harness's work could be.

Harness takes a good idea, the rivalry between Art and Science (that

is, it's a good idea for a story: it may not have any real meaning), and proceeds to deal with it in the most trivial manner possible. The characters hardly have time to play their parts, so constant is their posturing, all for the purpose of making sure we know what Harness is getting at. I guess John W. Campbell might have bought the yarn had it been submitted to him these days. The Sciomnia Equations - I ask you!

There are two short stories printed in the Compact edition. I liked the shorter of these, THE CHESSPLAYERS, and I'm told the other, THE NEW REALITY, is a very good yarn. I glanced at a page or two, but it looked too much like THE ROSE to con me into reading it.

Compact Books certainly try to produce a variety of sf in their collections, but one wonders whether it is entirely worthwhile to vary the quality as much as this. Compact's list is full of books which might be good on an English market, but poor in the U.S.A.: THE DEEP FIX would be pretty poor anywhere.

It is a collection of a half-dozen stories, some of which have been printed before and some which, mercifully, haven't. This is not to say that there isn't a good thing in the book: there are some good ideas. Compact could have picked up far more worthy collections for publication - Bill Temple's stories, for example - but I guess they'd be too expensive.

The title story is extremely gimmicky, using William Burroughs's name throughout, and rather unnecessarily. The story never seems to have any motivation.

PEACE ON EARTH deals with the discovery of the meaning of death. It isn't very well handled, but I suppose it would be acceptable to anyone who believes that immortals must of necessity act like two-year-olds.

THE LOVEBEAST demonstrates one of the difficulties the author has: that of giving his characters a reasonable amount of intelligence. In sf, too, it's not unreasonable to expect some sort of explanation of the function of the main character.

THE PLEASURE GARDEN OF FELIPE SAGITTARIUS is a poor piece of writing, in an alternate universe. In this, as in the next story, THE REAL LIFE OF MR. NEWMAN, the universe seems to have been created just so that the author can write his pointless little story. Nothing ever happens.

The closing piece, WOLF, is as pointless as the rest, but is mercifully brief.

I don't particularly care whether 'Colvin' is Moorcock or Burroughs: there's some bloody awful stuff in this book - a book that should never have been published.

Comparisons are odious. Comparisons with Kendall Foster Crossen, then, particularly unfavourable comparisons, must be doubly odious. But I doubt that Miss Brooke-Rose, author of SUCH, has heard of the honoured Crossen. However, he once wrote a guest editorial suggesting that it was time to take the science out of sf. He proceeded to do this himself, by

making the science in his stories preposterous - but it was at least meaningful. It is here that Miss Brooke-Rose fails.

The title of the novel comes from the sixth word of the fourteenth line on page 139. The novel attempts to discover something about the feelings and experience of a man who has 'temporarily' died. It employs scientific language in a distorted frame, so that words which seem familiar to us are actually used to mean something else, quite different, and quite uninteresting. For a decent use of the idea of confused senses, see Gold's *THE MAN WITH ENGLISH*; for adequate treatment of life after death, from a poetic point of view, see Cocteau's *ORPHEE*. For a badly-written, poorly thought out, semi-literate first draft, read *SUCH*.

K.U.F. WIDDERSHINS

JB: End of reviews, room for a quote. Try this, from Kurt Vonnegut Jr's *GOD BLESS YOU, MR. ROSEWATER*. Eliot Rosewater, multimillionaire, drunk, crashes a science fiction convention, addresses members as follows:

"I love you sons of bitches," Eliot said in Milford.
 "You're all I read any more. You're the only ones who'll talk about the really terrific changes going on, the only ones crazy enough to know that life is a space voyage, and not a short one, either, but one that'll last for billions of years. You're the only ones with guts enough to really care about the future, who really notice what machines do to us, what wars do to us, what cities do to us, what big, simple ideas do to us, what tremendous misunderstandings, mistakes, accidents and catastrophes do to us. You're the only ones zany enough to agonize over time and distances without limit, over mysteries that will never die, over the fact that we are right now determining whether the space voyage for the next billion years or so is going to be Heaven or Hell."

R

Eliot admitted later on that science-fiction writers couldn't write for sour apples, but he declared that it didn't matter. He said they were poets just the same, since they were more sensitive to important changes than anybody who was writing well. "The hell with the talented sparrowfarts who write delicately of one small piece of one mere lifetime, when the issues are galaxies, eons, and trillions of souls yet to be born."

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"I only wish Kilgore Trout were here," said Eliot, "so I could shake his hand and tell him that he is the greatest writer alive today...." Trout, the author of eighty-seven paperback books, was a very poor man, and unknown outside the science-fiction field.

(Kurt Vonnegut Jr: God Bless You, Mr. Rosewater. Dell:\$0.90)

THE G O G G L E B O X B E M S

P A U L S T E V E N S

The recent tenth anniversary of television in Australia prompted the thought that some sort of dissertation on the sf programmes presented during that period might be attempted. So with my pen in one hand, a stack of TV guides in the other, a rather patchy memory and a colossal gall, here goes.

I was fourteen, or thereabouts, at the time and I can remember seeing my first sf play on one such occasion. It was an hour-long drama series, and the hero had smashed his car into a flying saucer which a group of aliens had left parked on a road. Very careless of them, I thought. Anyway, the hero was packed off to hospital and kept in isolation due to his sense of hearing being affected. A couple of flies in his room sounded like Goering's Luftwaffe having another go at England. Of course, this enabled the aliens to talk to him (they conversed on very high frequencies). The doctors operated to restore normal hearing, despite the man's vigorous protests about invisible aliens. Result: no more communication and a bunch of disappointed aliens go home. Swell stuff - or at least I thought so.

There is hardly any need to discuss TWILIGHT ZONE's contribution to the medium. The series, presented by Rod Serling, is the longest-running show of its type, with ALFRED HITCHCOCK running a close second. Hitchcock, of course, favours the psychological murder story, but often features science fantasy of the Bradbury type.

episodes stand out in my mind. The humanoid robot with the computer hand who escaped through time and carried the last of humanity on a piece of wire, and the aliens who followed and tried to destroy him and the remnants of the human race. The four-dimensional TV that drew an alien being through into our world was the basis for another very good story. But to me, the best and most terrifying story featured Michael Ansara as the soldier from the 25th century, flung back into our time. The glimpse of a possible future, when men are robots trained to have the single purpose of killing the enemy; where mutant cats are the scouts of an army; a world where war rages incessantly, and man no longer knows love or family: this, to me, was the best of a magnificent series.

Its replacement was a disaster called LOST IN SPACE. A classic example of what can happen to a possible top-liner due to ignorance of basic space mechanics and proper technical advice. The ridiculous character of Dr. Smith didn't help, either. Irwin Allen's other series, VOYAGE TO THE BOTTOM OF THE SEA, sags rather conspicuously. This is due to bad scripting, in the main. The overabundance of spies, saboteurs and raving nuts makes most episodes exasperatingly predictable. The rather free use of clips from the 20th Century Fox film doesn't help, either - particularly in one episode where almost the entire hour was taken from the feature film, THE LOST WORLD. Anything to save on costs, I suppose. Allen's new series, TIME TUNNEL, is due for release in the near future. Advance reports indicate another bomb. We'll see.

Another American series, STAR TREK, due here soon, should be good. Also coming are THE GREEN HORNET and, of course, BATMAN.

A recent rash of half hour shows feature themes from old horror shows and the like. They are all comedy, and are made bearable by good casting, reasonable scripting, well-made sets, and excellent camera effects. Best is THE MUNSTERS; others are BEWITCHED, THE ADDAMS FAMILY and THE SMOTHERS BROTHERS; none worth discussing.

A straight horror mystery series was presented in THRILLER. Hosted by the old master himself, Boris Karloff, this hour-length series presented top-flight stories, good acting, and plenty of shivers down the old backbone. What more could you ask?

English sf shows are different from American, concentrating more on the serial than the half-hour or hour story. Probably the forerunner of sf serials in Britain, THE QUATERMASS EXPERIMENT ran for six episodes in 1953. A sequel, QUATERMASS II, followed in 1955, and in 1959 QUATERMASS AND THE PIT proved that London was the site of a Martian colonisation of Earth. Although not shown here as serials, feature-length films of the first two stories were released here with Brian Donleavy as Professor Quatermass. Watch for THE CREEPING UNKNOWN and ENEMY FROM SPACE.

Serialisation of two best-selling novels, A FOR ANDROMEDA and ANDROMEDA BREAKTHROUGH followed, and were apparently a marked success. The BBC's latest effort has been DR. WHO. Originally intended as a half-hour children's series, it scored well with the adult audience, and is now going strongly. The story concerns Dr. Who and his friends who are aboard a time machine, swinging uncontrollably through time and space, likely to

land at any time in Earth's past, or alternatively, in the future or on some strange planet. Their voyages into the past generally embroil them in the events of the time: Nero burning Rome, the French Revolution, the wooden horse of Troy, the Aztec civilization before Cortes - Dr. Who and his friends manage to get tangled up with them all. But it is their contact with various races of alien beings that is the most interesting. Humanoid, insect, mechanical - you name it - the aliens are credible, and that is half the battle in any successful sf series. One of the most fascinating races of aliens to come out of this series is the Daleks. These puny creatures, their bodies encased in cone-like mobile machines, keep cropping up every now and again in an effort to destroy the time travellers.

One of the most important developments on the English TVsf scene is the emergence of the puppet, and the use of models, in a new type of show for children. The best of these is THUNDERBIRDS. The models of a world fifty years in the future are simply terrific, the stories, scripting, and characters are believable, and the camera work is amongst the best I have seen. Earlier series along the same lines were FIREBALL XL5, STINGRAY, SPACE PATROL and SUPERCAR, all of them worth watching.

Always good, and well worth your viewing time, is the very occasional BBC teleplay of an sf story. I was lucky enough some years ago to catch their dramatization of John Lymington's NIGHT OF THE BIG HEAT. I only hope the ABC screens it again.

Australian TV has produced several sf series, mostly by G.K. Saunders. His latest effort, WANJINA, was presented recently. A seven-part serial, the first five episodes were very good. The tension built up and the viewer was kept guessing about the radio interference in outback Queensland. A strange flashing light on top of a range of hills, a mysterious disappearance over fifty years ago, the finding of a strangely-shaped skull - all these enigmas are answered when it becomes known that the crew of a crashed star ship are awaiting rescue. They had been waiting for two hundred and fifty years. Wow, I thought, beaut stuff this, and still two episodes to go. I should have watched the news-and-weather... The last two episodes lapsed into a mishmash of bad satire, with some woman giving her imitation of an Australian Honor Blackman. Amidst this hammy performance, the aliens were rescued and departed post-haste. I didn't blame them in the least.

I happened to notice that Artransa Park Studios have produced a children's sf series called INTERPRETARIS. I've only seen one episode so far, but it seems reasonable - for children, that is. Let's hope the advent of an Australian commercial company producing sf of any kind marks the start of the long-awaited sf-sf shows.

Well, that's it: forgive my omissions. My conclusion is that though the sf shows we see here have been pretty poor, they are improving. And, if even these poor shows lead young people to read sf, something of merit has been achieved. It is in the written word that, so far, the true worth of sf can be appreciated - and, perhaps, through sf a greater understanding of ourselves and our world can be attained.

WALT WILLIS 32 Warren Road Donaghadee Northern Ireland

ASFR has made such a cumulative impression on my worse self - as they say, constant stoning will wear away a drip - that I am awakening from my Christmas Day torpor to ask you not to send any more. I admire your magazine so much I hate to think of one being wasted, and I can read James White's copy. It's true that your fanzine, being as good of its kind as anything I have seen in my nineteen years in fandom, has made me think febrilely about reviving my own: but I'm cynical about my own good intentions and I doubt if trading with Hyphen will ever be a profitable deal for you. But if it's enough inducement to assure you that there are three people in Northern Ireland - James White, Bob Shaw and myself - who will read ASFR with very great interest and pleasure, I hope you will continue sending it to one of us.

I nearly wrote to you once before, in impassioned rebuttal of Aldiss's review of James's THE WATCH BELOW. But then on mature reflection, to which congenital laziness is a great aid, I realised that all Brian was doing was reproaching James, more in sorrow than in anger, for not writing more like himself. It is true, I thought, that James does not write like Brian Aldiss, and I'm glad I tell you glad. There are already too many people writing like Brian Aldiss, including Brian Aldiss.

There are so many of them, in fact, that I do not read sf much these days, and I stopped reading ANALOG quite a few years ago when the price went up. Or rather shortly afterwards, when I found the strain of not being able to throw borrowed copies across the room too great for my nervous system. So I'm very grateful for John Foyster filling me in on what my walls have been missing. I thought this article was almost too good for the subject matter, but then I suppose we owe JWC for all he did for sf up to dianetics, and must forgive him for doing for sf afterwards. It used to be my secret ambition to sneak into Campbell's office one night and file the exclamation mark off his typewriter. Now I think I'll rest easily if I have your assurance that you sent him a copy of this article.

On the argument about absolute immunity not corrupting God, I suppose you could argue that it has. There is quite a logical heresy based on this premise, of which perhaps the latest manifestation is the car sticker - or was it a fanzine interlineation: GOD IS NOT DEAD. HE IS ALIVE AND WELL IN ARGENTINA. Funny about the interlineation, incidentally. We had it to ourselves in fandom for years and suddenly it appears as a new art form in the mundane world as a car sticker.

Two small points in the review by K.U.F. Widdershins (come now). It has always seemed to me that while Sturgeon's definition of sf works very well for Sturgeon, it has been accepted by lesser writers as an excuse for passing off vapid and pretentious rubbish as a higher class of sf, on the grounds that it has the same vapidty and pretention which characterizes some mainstream literature and art. It is easier to write this sort of stuff and hope for the same abdication of critical standards which enables Andy Warhol to prosper than to extend the fringes of the imagination like Van Vogt used to do, however clumsily. It is simply not true, I suggest, that the human element is essential to sf: I instance George R. Stewart's STORM, or as a more extreme example the Bradbury story about the house which has no characters whatsoever. More simply, one can recall any sf story which has lingered in the memory and ask oneself just what

one does remember about it. Incidentally, the phoney realism bit about smoking was in one of my columns for NEBULA.

JB: I find it singularly appropriate that this our first issue with a green cover should be graced by the presence of the renowned Walt Willis. Thanks for your kind comments, me bhoy. The assurance that there are three people in Northern Ireland (birthplace, be it known, of my maternal great-grandmother) who can read ensures your continued supply of ASFR. But who's off-beam there in that bit about Brian Aldiss? I've no doubt taken you the wrong way, but since others might also I'd better mention that Brian's review appeared in an English publication. Yes, I sent Mr. Campbell a copy of ASFR4, much good it may do me. Hey, we've never had an interlineation in the Review: I'll put one on this page, especially for you. And I'm sad about HYPHEN. Here I am at last with something to trade and all the really great fanzines seem to be disappearing. Sad I tell you sad.

 "I don't care what star you're following - get those camels off my lawn."

What can I say to you, Bill Temple? There you are sitting down to write nice things about ASFR, and perhaps at that very moment we are publishing a review panning your latest book. Sir, we are all actors in a cosmic melodrama. Some of us, now and then, get our cues fumbled, that's all. Natheless I hope you will continue to read us: 'and take for Tribute what these lines express; you merit more; nor cou'd our Love do less.'

HARRY WARNER JR. 423 Summit Avenue Hagerstown Maryland 21740 U.S.A.

The review of sf writers from your continent (in ASFR3) covered a good many stories and a few names that are unfamiliar to me. But I feel that the article made its most important point when it praised indirectly A. Bertram Chandler for writing about familiar naval traditions. I've always felt that this is where most sf suffers: the writer cannot be expected to fill the story with matters completely drawn out of his imagination and possessing no real counterparts in the world on which we live; then he proceeds as a rule to transform real things into sf form at second hand, choosing matters which he knows from reading about them or seeing motion pictures about them. It doesn't matter too much if the Australian writers transform the particular things that are peculiar to Australia or choose things which transcend nationality like their own subconscious fears; the important thing is to create more sf as firmly grounded in reality when creative imagination has run short as THE MAN WHO SOLD THE MOON, for instance, was written with a sure knowledge of how 20th Century big business operates. In any event, after reading the survey, I conclude that Australian writers have come a great distance since I was fascinated in my early teens by A. Connell's DREAM'S END.

Brian Aldiss is wonderfully frank and outspoken throughout his article. The most important sentence might be: 'It's the old trouble: of all that was in my head, only ten percent has leaked through on to the paper.' This is the un verbalized thought that has deviled me all through my own writing efforts, whether it was in the year or two when I was selling to

the prozines, or the couple of decades of my journalism career, or the endless centuries as a fanzine contributor. I wonder what kind of literary standards might be raised, if the future produces some device for trapping and recording thoughts as they succeed one another, for later playback?

THE WATCH BELOW is analyzed superbly by Lee Harding. I suspect that its decline in merit as it went along was due in large part to a built-in weakness in sf stories: it's fairly easy to imagine what might develop tomorrow from the things we have today, but it is much less easy to figure out how the things we have assumed for tomorrow will be changed on the day after tomorrow. There might also be a moral here involving the general increase in dissatisfaction with contemporary sf, as it gets further and further away from the stories about basic new inventions and the very near future that predominated in the old days. Incidentally, a few in-group references in James's novel that were obvious to anyone who knows his fandom gave me the mistaken suspicion that this whole novel was some kind of allegory in which the trapped ship was the fandom from which so many of us can't break loose. And I still suspect that the story wouldn't have followed just that course if James hadn't been a member of Irish Fandom.

The photographic page is the best I've seen in any fan publication outside the continental European fanzines. I'm gratified to find you in Australia using existing light, in apparently five out of the six pictures; American fans, who seek to be so advanced and nonconformist in other respects, still insist on washing out faces and creating nasty black shadows on the background by taking everything with a flash. And of course, your reproduction is so fine that the reader really doesn't notice it, the best tribute that can be paid to any fanzine page. I hope the change doesn't produce so many financial complications that you lose the fine momentum you've obviously built out of ability and enthusiasm.

JB: It almost did, Harry: 3 and 4 set us back about \$250. We will not repeat the experiment. (Could've got ourselves a pretty classy duplicator for that amount...) Particularly now we find ourselves again with an extra five mouths to feed. We managed to find homes for the last lot, but Grushenka's done it again. Fix her? Would you believe it? - I tried - and struck the only RC vet for miles around.

GRAHAM HALL 57 Church Street Tewkesbury Gloucestershire U.K.

I could comment on Coulson's tit-bit that THE SALIVA TREE won a Nebula Award, since the collection of that name is the most recent piece of sf I've read. But perhaps it is the fact that it is so fresh in my mind that prompts me to dismiss it as an abysmal abortion, a travesty, and quite the worst story I've read this year. In conception, I'm certain, few people would deny that it was an interesting, but sterile, experiment. That as experienced an author as Aldiss couldn't have made a better job of it, I also hope few people would deny. His vocabulary and speech-rhythms are as authentic as Brummagem antiques; his narrative technique is blatantly flawed, even in the first few pages, where one might expect a little more scene-setting concentration. And when you take it as a failed experiment, it is hardly an outstanding story, is it? No, I really do think I should not comment on THE SALIVA TREE at present. Save perhaps to wonder where

the hell Aldiss thinks he's going. But to get back to ASFR: when one compares it with the latest VECTOR (no.41 of the Official Organ of the BSFA), one really wonders which comes from the backwoods of the Commonwealth (an exaggeration to illustrate a point). When the O.O. of the BSFA has departments entitled 'Editorrible', has not appeared for more than six months, and its material files are inaccessible, one can hardly blame a serious sf fan for considering emigration to Australia. The BSFA committee defend themselves by saying: we are in financial difficulties, members have no interest, workers are impossible to find. One wonders if they are not confusing cause and effect. ASFR is showing the way that serious sf appreciation should be following. Keep up the good work.

JB: When you come, Graham, bring the BSFA President, Edmund Crispin, with you - and you'll earn my wife's undying gratitude. Whatever else we Australian fans may be, we're democratic, fair-minded, easy-going (and modest). Why else would I let you say such wicked things about Brian Aldiss in ASFR? I think you may be being just a little hard on the BSFA - after all, you have a national organization there, whatever its shortcomings. We haven't. At this moment I know more about what's happening in fan circles in Albuquerque, New Mexico (hiya, Roy) than what's going on in Sydney, Australia.

PHIL MULDOWNNEY 7 The Elms Stoke Plymouth Devon U.K.

Trying to comment on all the material in four issues is too mammoth a task, so I'll just concentrate on the points that interested me. Much of the 'fierce' debate on sf initiated by Michael Moorcock and Co. seems puerile to me. 'Make no mistake about it - there is a war going on... etc.', Langdon Jones's comment in no.1, sounds like something out of BATMAN. One of the main attractions of sf to me is that the field is so wide. I think there is room in it both for Heinlein and Ballard. Maybe one of the main troubles with sf at the moment is that too many editors have their own hobby horses to ride. In one corner there is John Campbell beating his drum and printing stuff that makes me want to weep and yawn alternately; in the other corner there is the NEW WORLDS school of writing with its 'new images.' They are wide apart, but maybe the very diversity itself is valuable. I do not think that sf can be dominated by one particular style - I certainly hope it will not be. What has been valuable in the last few years is the development of better characterization, imagery and so on, things which are accepted as natural in mainstream fiction. To get back to NEW WORLDS: All people who do not like Ballard are not short-tempered. Many - and I include myself - find it impossible to understand Ballard's intensely personal style and imagery. This is especially true of his more recent work. In no.4, Lee Harding commented that England would have to scrape for a long time to support two monthly magazines and NEW WRITINGS. Did he mean financially or in material? I do not see why it should be so hard financially: there were far more British prozines in the fifties. Also, IMPULSE, NEW WORLDS and NEW WRITINGS are all benefitting from the sf paperback boom. Material is more difficult. Maybe they can obtain more U.S. material, or, for that matter, how about a lot more material from Australia? The articles on Australian sf writers were interesting. There does not seem to be a major sf author in Australia at the moment. Lee Harding, John Baxter and Co. have written several promising stories,

but as yet they seem to have made no major developments. Baxter's THE GOD KILLERS, for instance, was good in parts, but it only rose a little above the general morass. Perhaps they need experience. I may be wrong: is Lee Harding or some unknown Australian preparing some grand opus that will astound us all?

As you will gather from the letterhead I'm using, I have just taken over the International Contact Department of the BSFA from Doreen Parker. My aims for the ICD are similar to Doreen's. I think there is a tendency among fans to become too insular. I think this is wrong: sf is an international affair, and my aim is to bridge some of the gap between the various areas of fandom. We intend to keep the members of the BSFA in touch with what is going on overseas, and increase personal contacts. I also want to continue the policy of exchanging VECTOR for the official organs of other sf clubs.

JB: Phil, I'm glad you said that about editors. If you only knew how difficult it is to ride a hobby horse, beat a drum, and print stuff - all simultaneously - you would understand why the end product makes you weep and yawn alternately. With all these things to do, we lose concentration. I wish you luck with the ICD. Your remarks about contacting Australian fandom I have tactfully left out, because, buddy, Doreen made no headway with the Australian Science Fiction Association, and I doubt if you will. Although most of the members of the ASFA are fans, and have shown varying degrees of interest in this magazine, the organization itself exists for bibliographical purposes only and has no interest in fandom. A gentlemanly correspondence has gone on between myself and the ASFA secretary, Mr. Stone, and he has indicated quite clearly his feeling that the aims and interests of ASFR and the ASFA are incompatible. I think he's wrong, that his horizons aren't broad enough. I am pleased to belong to the ASFA, for the bibliographical service it provides: I just wish it went a little further, arranged meetings, conventions and so on - in a word, I wish it was a fan organization rather than a study group. ASFR fills some of the gaps, but not all of them.

PAUL STEVENS Flat 1 4 Irwell Street St. Kilda Victoria

Keep up the good work on ASFR - it's a great rag, although I must confess a violent disagreement on several points in past issues. The review of Avram Davidson's RORK, for instance. I thought it was great sf, while THE KAR-CHEE REIGN wasn't much and ROGUE DRAGON stank. MASTERS OF THE MAZE I liked. Then there was no.4, with John Foyster going on and on about how he disagreed with Campbell's ANALOG editorials. I like them, and read them every issue: so far my personal views have remained unchanged. However, Campbell has pointed out one very important fact in his article on the American Food and Drug Administration. Inflexible thinking of some government agencies or departments is an attitude of entrenched authority to accept or even investigate new ideas and practices that has haunted governments and the medical profession in particular for hundreds of years. If Campbell doesn't like the FDA, that's his business, and good cess to him if in writing about it he uncovers certain facts that the agency would like unsaid. Then there was his article on the recent New York blackout: it's a classic and should be read by everybody. My last

complaint is about the editorial in no.5. Please, oh please, no political comments in ASFR. I understand that you feel strongly over conscription: so do I. But regardless of the rights and wrongs, all comments should be reserved for the ballot box. As for the future, how about a regular feature giving news and views on the doings of fans overseas?

JB: I don't quite follow you, Paul. Why is it okay for Campbell to deplore the actions of his government, but not me mine? After all, for the time being at least, more people read ANALOG than ASFR, so his views enjoy more audience than mine. And it's no good reserving one's comments for the ballot box: only counters and scrutineers read them, they are not amused, and you've invalidated your vote into the bargain. Science fiction has a glorious tradition of subversive thinking about politics, religion, and almost every activity about which the masses remain apathetic or quiescent. Maybe you've got a point though. Maybe we should be above all that sort of thing. And die quietly like everyone else.

ANDREW ESCOT The Patch Victoria

One must remark about Miss Williams's article in ASFR5, that her motives seem honourable, but after that there is some room for question. I want to discuss two aspects of her article: her general attitude towards scientific truth, and her criticism of Michael Shaara's GRENVILLE'S PLANET.

One of the most frightening things about science today must be the information explosion, which has come to be of such magnitude that a scientist can only just keep up with his own field, if he is lucky. Pity, then, the poor sf writer who has to keep up with all the sciences, in order to please his readers - or to keep his stories 'accurate.' Now this is just not reasonable at all. What we want from an sf writer is a story with no obvious flaws ('But what do the rockets push against in a vacuum, Doc?'), not a story which is 'scientifically accurate.' It is not possible to write a 'scientifically accurate' story about the unknown.

This distinction is made clearer by the philosophy of the one big lie: suppose that such and such were true, what would happen then? I think this is acceptable: what is not acceptable, as sf, is the kind of story which pays no attention to scientific truth, and parades it.

I'd say, therefore, that Miss Williams has not chosen a good example in GRENVILLE'S PLANET. There are many many stories whose 'scientific accuracy' is far more questionable, published in the period from which these two stories have been selected. But why bother about this 'scientific accuracy': I don't read sf to improve my scientific knowledge or to reinforce any shakily-held understandings.

Miss Williams says, 'If either implicitly or explicitly he labels it sf, then it should not run counter to well-established scientific knowledge, unless he is prepared to give a really good and logical explanation for doing so.' Now I don't agree wholeheartedly with this: I don't see why anyone should explain anything: it has been my experience that the greater the amount of explanation, the greater the amount of boredom. The days of the scientific footnote have passed. But let's consider this particular story, GRENVILLE'S PLANET, and see how it jibes with Miss Williams's requirements.

I guess a story which appears in GALAXY has been labelled as sf by its author. This would be even more true of a story appearing in ANALOG SCIENCE FACT SCIENCE FICTION (though it is just here that most of the abuse creeps in). But THE MAGAZINE OF FANTASY AND SCIENCE FICTION is another matter: to my knowledge that magazine displays no Gernsbackian 'symbol of sf' indicating stories whose predictions will come true. In fact, little mention, if any, is ever made of a story being either sf or fantasy. And GRENVILLE'S PLANET was first published in F&SF, as Miss Williams acknowledges. Shaara did not, therefore, label his story as sf. But let's forget all this and get down to the matter of whether Shaara's story is unscientific.

The first point to be made, and one which does not come over at all clearly in the article, is that this is in the true sense a mystery story. At all times the protagonists, Wisher and Grenville, are unable to understand their environment. Eventually both are killed by it. They are also only on the planet (alive) for a short time, and have made only very brief, preliminary studies of a small area of its surface. It is hardly surprising that they are still unaware of the nature of the planet when they die. I honestly cannot see how a long dissertation on the origin of this particular planet could have been worked into the story, though doubtless there are those who would want this done, no matter what the damage to the story. There is, however, a clue in the story, suggesting that the island, besides containing animal traps, is itself a trap, for the sea people need space travel, and are 'not far behind Earth's (technology)'. It is not, therefore, beyond belief that they have so made these islands that they are unaffected by the tides.

Now Miss Williams admits that these islands are artificial, quite early in her piece. But she then asks where the sand comes from. I would contend that a race which can float a number of islands (up to 20 miles long) would not have much trouble fabricating a sand-like substance. This could be done for two reasons - (either the islands are very old and were formed while members of the race could remember real islands, assuming the condition to be relatively recent - or by extrapolation from the observation of Miss Williams's 'bucketful of sand') - and in two ways - either by replacement or by construction of preventive devices (ranging from seawalls to defensive domes covering the whole island at high tide, depending upon one's imagination). But none of this hard work is necessary, because these missing elements in the story do not spoil it.

As her article unfolds, Miss Williams makes it quite clear that when she thinks of 'planet' she automatically thinks of the Earth and its composition, so all her questions should be reframed, 'How could the Earth be like this?' And of course it can't. But there is no reason why Grenville's Planet should have the same structure as the Earth. It is extremely unlikely, in fact.

So when finally Miss Williams comes to ask whether perhaps Grenville's Planet has a 'vastly greater content of water' (why it should be vastly greater is not clear) than 'the general run of primeval planetary masses' (does Miss Williams have specialised information here? Where can I get this list of known primeval planetary masses and their compositions?) she seems to be getting around to the point - a point which should have been raised at the start of her article, not at its conclusion.

(continued, page 32.)

THE COSMOLOGICAL EYE

LEE HARDING

So it would seem that my return to peripheral fandom was uneventful, in that I did not recapture those magic moments of the past. The new friendships I forged were of different stuff than those of old, and my long association with John Foyster had hardly anything at all to do with sf until recently - when the Good Man went insane and decided to organize a Convention. The rest is history.

It would have been impossible to have lived through those three hectic days last Easter and remain unmoved in the direction of earlier loyalties. The sight of so many pulp magazines awakened a multitude of pleasant memories - and a select bundle of these prizes now reposes in a prominent position in my den. But a great deal of the excitement and enjoyment of that weekend came from meeting people like Stephen Cook, Wynne Whiteford, John Baxter (again) and Charles Higham - all professional men and somehow bound up in this strange world of writing I had made so much a part of my life. The films, the frenetic auction periods, the pulsating atmosphere of eager fandom was intoxicating, but for the most part my reactions were those of unabashed nostalgia, and I wallowed in them. Meeting old familiar faces again after almost a decade (like Bob McCubbin, walking up the stairs not looking a day older than when I last saw him), being conscious of people missing and people gone from us, but the eagerly anticipated rejuvenation remained elusive, the jaded sense of wonderment failed to burst into new life. Perhaps it was a price of age.

But there wasn't time to sit and ponder. The Convention was over, but ASFR had to be put into orbit (and sometime I hope your kindly editor will entertain you with the story of how he got lumbered with it). Now from the planning and actual production stage ASFR has been, from the very beginning, very much a professional business for me. If, of late, readers have begun to detect a cautious air of frivolity creeping into its pages, let me assure them that this is all very intentional and only signifies that most of the backbreaking work is behind us and we can enjoy the magazine now in a way that was quite out of the question for those first few months. But being a shadow editor is an extension of my professional status as a writer, and while it has been extremely rewarding working in this capacity so close to sf, a sense of wonder can hardly be found lodged in hard work, so while my rediscovered enthusiasm for sf has been carried over from that Easter weekend, it has still been, by and large, a matter of nostalgia. I have not leapt renewed from the fires of Dick Jenssen's auctioneering oratory to proclaim a Fourth Stage of fandom in Australia. I am here merely to enjoy myself: or so I thought,

Prior to the Convention I had been for some time in one of those grey periods when I find myself unable to write (only mug amateurs like myself seem able to afford that luxury), but the ensuing excitement, the publicity, and ASFR, have eased the log-jam a little. At least as far as the Review is concerned, a man has to write, dammit, has to - and I even found fiction writing more amenable than it had been. So, in a way, I was prepared for the great moment to come, the moment when I rediscovered my science fictional sense of wonder.

Of course a sense of wonder is not exclusive to sf. For myself it is a response to the new, the marvellous, the never-before-witnessed, that opens the mind like a palpitating flower. Once, when I was younger, my mind responded in this fashion to sf. But, we grow older, and, as Dr. Jenssen remarked, we look elsewhere for the new and the marvellous. I found it recently in a novel by Anthony Burgess but, no, not for a very long time have I found it in sf, for sf had become old and familiar and the magic had dissipated: it had become, simply, another genre among many.

Dick Jenssen's Moment of Truth came to him in an upstairs room half-way round the world, a room he might easily have never visited had the vagaries of life dictated otherwise, and I, miserable soul that I am, had begun to despair of ever recapturing that same careless rapture of early sf. Must I surround myself with several thousand pulp magazines, Finlay originals and Paul covers, to bring about this miracle? No. Such drastic catharsis was unnecessary. Instead...

I went to see a movie called FANTASTIC VOYAGE.

I came away from the theatre that evening in a state of rare euphoria. In the hour and a half that I had sat in that darkened theatre I had re-discovered my sense of wonder: my mind reacting in the same way it had to the first pulp magazines I held in my eager hands, the first hardcover sf novel I had read (THE VOYAGE OF THE SPACE BEAGLE). I relived the glory and the thrill that only sf can give to an eager young mind.

Afterwards, I went along to the Club and met people (Smith, Bangsund, Foyster, Cook... it was the Christmas Party... they couldn't understand why the festive air seemed strange to me) but my thoughts were far from socialising. I wanted to get away somewhere by myself and wallow in pulps and old fanzines and sit down at a typewriter and write the greatest goddam sf novel of all time.

But I didn't. I spent the evening with my friends, and when I got home at 1.30am the magic had all but disappeared, and I could have cried for the loss of something so valuable, something that comes only now and again, sometimes not at all. And you may well ask, in what way did an American sf movie bring about this marvellous transformation? I can only declare that mine was a purely personal reaction to what I consider a very good film, the best sf movie Hollywood has ever produced, and that this reaction had nothing whatsoever to do with the literary excellence of the script (which was as poor as we've come to expect), the technical accuracy (which it lacked), or the characterization (which was pathetic). These are the yardsticks by which we measure fiction, but they are the pleasant icing on the sf cake: they do not form the heart, or the kernel. The vital ingredient which makes sf, in the final analysis, irrevocably different from everything else (and I had thought it a myth) - this is what makes this film great. Its triumph is the triumph of HE WHO SHRANK and the other great stories of sf: a triumph of - oh, call it 'concept' for want of anything better - of concept over literary shortcomings. We have, of late, perhaps made too much fuss over improving the literary standards of sf. Dr. Jenssen has intimated that the emphasis should be equally upon improving the scientific imagination behind the fiction, and where is this being done today? Where is the romance of science which we used to find so breathtaking? You may find it in FANTASTIC VOYAGE, if you're prepared to wait for it.

The incredible fairy-tale visions of scientific romance have never been so beautifully realised as they have in this film. There is a feeling of awe, of wonder, in just about every foot of the film. The players breathe their corny lines, but with conviction. They must believe if we are to suspend our own disbelief, and this they do, superbly. (I particularly liked the ingenious way the director lulls away our dis-

belief, gently, utilizing a half-fanciful introduction, and then shooting the actual miniaturization process with painstaking care and attention to detail.) The technical work in this film is so good that one wonders how close we are to the day when Blish's SURFACE TENSION will be filmed.

Above all, FANTASTIC VOYAGE is a triumph of visual beauty. I went along more out of a feeling of duty than for any other reason, and sat there spellbound. Oh, it isn't a perfect movie - I think I've made that pretty clear. Its virtues are not in script, direction, or technological gimmickry: they are in yourself - you supply them. Can you sit back during the moment of the injection of the submarine into the bloodstream and see an incredible new universe explode into being and feel the sheer wonder of it? or will you be scanning the sidelines for the wires, the mattes, the little bits and pieces that make it work? If the latter, it won't work. You will have missed a remarkable experience.

I wonder what Mr. Average-Fan's reaction will be to the film? (Bearing in mind that mine is a distinctly personal approach.) Well, I do remember one (far from average) fan discussing (only half seriously, I'm sure) some of the technical discrepancies scattered throughout the film. 'They took more than sixty seconds to pass through the heart, y'know.' 'Hmm, is that elapsed or subjective time?' But these faults cannot detract from the overall splendour of it. So far, however, only Dr. Jenssen seems to share my enthusiasm. Are there any more of you out there?

I wonder. Years ago we found it in ourselves to overlook the calculated inanity of FORBIDDEN PLANET for the sake of a few seconds of interplanetary postcards, and a rather ambiguous monster: will we be hypercritical today? In the October IF, Fred Pohl remarks that FANTASTIC VOYAGE was almost unanimously well received at the World Convention, but how many people there saw the whole and not the parts?

Ah, we seem to have become, so many of us, professional moviegoers. Publishers supply us with a vast number of periodicals to familiarise us with the content, form, technique and philosophical angles of every new film. Through retrospective articles we have the chance to equate our own observations with those of the current clay idols of cinema criticism. We take our seats in the theatre with our brains saturated with this information, our eyes bloodshot from poring over the latest overseas reviews (the local ones are just for laughs, we say). In our numbed minds we already have so much of what are considered the essentials of the film we are about to see that when the lights dim we become no more than passive receptors of a parade of pretty (or not so pretty) pictures. We forget that a picture has a heart as well as an intellect. And so we simply act out the last part of a cycle. The lost, the vital, the very necessary response triggered by personal discovery (either emotional or intellectual) has been nine-tenths chipped away, and all we have are some useless fragments of misinformation handed on to us by jaded critics. Is it any wonder that in such a muddled artistic climate, more concerned with style than content, that we spurn the depths of a Bergmann for the candied superficiality of a Hitchcock?

And in the world of sf, too, have we become professional readers? Is

it important to become a Heinlein Acolyte or a Moorcockian Regular? Has our reading become an obligation, our enjoyment of sf something we do to 'keep up with the field?' Must we read everything to be erudite and know what goes on? Have we turned sf - a thing of delight and wonder - into a chore? Can we enjoy a guileless, wonderful movie like FANTASTIC VOYAGE, or will we go to the theatre armed with other people's knowledge and sit there to criticize or study the verisimilitude of the backdrops? If you must criticize then do so afterwards, but while you're there - just enjoy it.

I sometimes wonder if I enjoy sf more now because I read much less than I did a decade ago. Could it be that if some of us did not feel it our professional duty to read so much sf we would read more to please ourselves - and consequently get more from it? But where does that leave us, the people here on ASFR who turn out reviews for you? Well, we might occasionally run some very critical reviews, but at the same time we don't set out to examine a plot in detail unless this is absolutely essential to the critic's case. We're not partial to ripping the guts out of a good book - or a bad one - and our judgements shouldn't spoil your enjoyment of a story. (They are, simply, our judgements. We love to hear from people who disagree with us.) But, for some reason, we seem more easily put off a film than a book: familiarity with it, through reading reviews and criticism, seems more easily to strip the wonder from it.

Forget the reviews, forget the book-of-the-film, ignore the advertising, leave your stopwatch at home - and go and enjoy FANTASTIC VOYAGE.

MORLOCKS: Mr. Escot's letter continued from page 31...

It should certainly not be necessary for the author to describe the formation and 'geological' history of every world that he introduces. In this case, that of the world which has a larger percentage of water than the Earth (perhaps), Mr. Shaara has a fair precedent: many of the satellites of this Solar System are pure water.

Change of Address:

Mr. Mervyn Binns wishes to advise that from February 20th his address will be - Cnr. Warrigal & Farm Roads, Cheltenham S.22, Victoria.

People writing or sending material to Mervyn at 19 Somerset Place, Melbourne C.1, should note that this address remains unchanged.

ASFR CHECKLIST

of new and forthcoming books in the sf, fantasy, and related fields

ASIMOV Isaac	Fantastic voyage	Corgi	\$ 0.60
..	Foundation and empire	Avon	0.70
BEAUMONT Charles	The magic man	Coronet	0.60
BESTE R. Vernon	The moonbeams	Lancer	0.70
BLISH James (ed	New dreams this morning	Ballantine	0.60
BRACKETT Leigh	The sword of Rhiannon	Ace	0.50
CAMPBELL John W.	Invaders from the infinite	..	0.50
CARNELL John (ed	New writings in sf - 2	Bantam	
CHANDLER A. Bertram	Contraband from outer space	Ace	
+ HIGH Philip E.	Reality forbidden	Double	0.60
CHRISTOPHER John	The possessors	Avon	
CLARK Curt	Anarchos	Ace	0.50
CLARKE Arthur C.	Tales from the White Hart	Ballantine	0.60
CONKLIN Groff (ed	Science fiction oddities	Berkley	0.90
DERLETH August (ed	Far boundaries	Sphere	0.60
CORY Howard L.	The mind monsters	Ace	
+ DICK Philip K.	The unteleported man	Double	0.60
FARMER Philip J.	The gates of creation	Ace	0.50
GASKELL Jane	Atlan	Sphere	0.80
..	The serpent	..	0.80
..	The city	..	0.80
HERBERT Frank	The eyes of Heisenberg	Berkley	0.70
..	Dune	Ace	1.20
HOWARD Robert E.	Conan the adventurer	Lancer	0.70
JONES Neil R.	The planet of the double sun	Ace	0.50
KNIGHT Damon	Beyond the barrier	Corgi	0.60
.. (ed	Orbit one	Berkley	
MERRIL Judith (ed	Year's best sf - 10	Dell	0.90
MOORCOCK Michael	The sundered worlds	Pocketbook	0.60
MOSKOWITZ Sam (ed	Doorway into time	Macfadden	0.60
MUNN H. Warner	King of the world's edge	Ace	
NEVILLE Kris	The mutants		
NORTON Andre	The last planet	Ace	0.55
..	Star guard	..	0.55
PETAJA Emil	The star mill	..	0.50
REYNOLDS Mack	The earth war	Pyramid	
ROBESON Kenneth	Land of always night	Bantam	
..	The fantastic island	..	
SHAW Larry (ed	Terror!	Lancer	
SHECKLEY Robert	Shards of space	Corgi	0.60
SILVERBERG Robert	Needle in a timestack	Ballantine	0.60
SIMAK Clifford	All flesh is grass	Berkley	
SMITH E.E.	Skylark Duquesne	Pyramid	0.70
SWANN Thomas B.	The day of the minotaur	Ace	0.50
VAN VOGT A.E.	The weapon makers	Ace	0.55
VONNEGUT Kurt Jr	The sirens of Titan	Dell	0.90
..	God bless you, Mr. Rosewater	..	0.90
WEINBAUM Stanley	A Martian odyssey	Lancer	
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