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you will be cut off, notice being given in the form of the ever-
popular "So Long, Chollie" message from yours truly. Overseas
readers who have not yet replied will receive theirs with the next
issue, so reply AIRMAIL. Some will be receiving THE WILD COLONIAL
BOY 7 as a rider with this issue.*****

BARABBAS - by Frigyes Karinthy. (unashamedly filched from THE NEW
HUNGARIAN QUARTERLY)

And at sunset on the third day, He stepped out of the narrow
opening of the vault, and started quietly down the road. On either
side of the road were gutted ruins from which smoke was rising.
Sprawled on the bottom of the dry ditch He found the first of those
who outside the house of Pilate had shouted the name of Barabbas:
with blackened tongue, the man was howling at the ruddy clouds.

He stopped in front of the man, and softly said:

"I am here."

And the man looked up at Him, and broke into sobs.

"Rabbi! Rabbi!" he cried, weeping.

And gently the Master went on to say:

"Cry not. Arise and come with me. For I will now go back to
Jerusalem, and go to the house of Pilate, and I will ask a new law
upon myself and upon you who chose Barabbas and unto whom Barabbas
hath done these things."

And the wretch rose to his feet, and he clutched at His garment.

"Master!" he cried, choking with tears. "O Master, I am coming.
Tell me how I shall save myself! Tell me what I am to do! Tell me
what I am to say!"

"Say thou nothing," He said gently, "but what thou shouldst have
said three days ago when Pilate came out upon his porch and asked
you, 'Which of the twain will ye that I release unto you? Barabbas
the murderer, or the Nazarene?'"

"O, fool that I am!" cried the wretch, beating his head with his
fists. "O what a fool I was to cry Barabbas! Barabbas, who hath
reduced me to such plight!"

"It is well," the Master continued kindly. "Come thou with me to
the house of Pilate; and mind thou nothing and heed none but me, and
when I make a sign, cry out whole-heartedly and with all thy breath,
'The Nazarene!' as if thou criedst 'My life.'"

So the man followed him.

And on their way they found another unhappy creature, from whom
Barabbas had taken away his house, his wife and his child, and whose
eyes he had caused to be put out.

And gently He touched the man's brow with His hand, and said:

"I am he. Come with me to Jerusalem, and when I shall touch thee
with my hand, cry thou 'The Nazarene' as if thou criedst 'Give me my
house! my child! my sight!'"

Now the man burst into tears, and followed Him.

And they found yet another man, and this man had his hands and feet tied with a rope which was slung around his neck. This man Barabbas had thrust, face downward, into a putrid swamp, among lice and reptiles.

And He went up to him, and undid his bonds, and said unto him:

"I know thee. Thou wast a poet, and thou wouldst proclaim the rapturous soaring of the spirit. Come with me, and when I make a sign, cry out, saying, 'The Nazarene!' as if thou criedst, 'Let there be freedom of the Spirit and of Thought!'"

Now the man kissed His sandals, and did but plead with his eyes, for his mouth was yet filled with mud.

And they proceeded on their way, and more and more that were maimed and crippled and halt, as well as miserable lepers, joined them as they went - people whom Barabbas had ruined. And each of them, severally, beat his breast and wept, and beseeched Him to make a sign for them when they were to cry 'The Nazarene!' as if they cried 'Let there be peace! Peace upon Earth!'

And at nightfall they came to Jerusalem, and came to the house of Pilate.

Pilate was seated on his porch, and was supping in the company of Barabbas, the murderer.

There they sat, fat men with shining faces, drinking heavy wines and eating dainty meat from golden dishes; their scarlet robes shone far and wide.

And the Nazarene, at the head of the multitude which followed Him, went up to the porch, and, raising His transfixed hands, gently began to speak, saying:

"The feast of the passover is not yet ended, O Pilate. It is the custom and the law that at the passover thou release unto the people a prisoner whom they will. The people wanted Barabbas, and I was crucified. Yet I have had to rise from the dead, for I saw that the people knew not what they were doing. Now this multitude behind me have known Barabbas, and they now want a new law. Therefore shouldst thou ask them anew, as is written in our books of law."

And Pilate reflected, then shrugged his shoulder, and he went to the edge of the porch, marvelling as he saw the multitude, and spake:

"Whom, then, will ye that I release unto you? Barabbas, or the Nazarene?"

And now He made a sign.

And then there arose an uproar, and the cry went forth from the multitude like thunder.

And the multitude shouted, "Barabbas!"

And they looked on one another in alarm, for they had severally shouted "The Nazarene!"

And the Master became pale and, turning, looked upon the multitude.

And he did recognize of each and every one his countenance; but, in the twilight of the eve, those many faces merged in a single Visage, one enormous Head, which was grinning stupidly and malignantly and with impudence at His face. Its bloodshot eyes were blinking, and evil-smelling saliva was running from its mouth; and the grating roar

"Barabbas!" which issued from its throat sounded as if it were a rattle saying "Death!" "Death!"

And Pilate cast down his eyes in embarrassment, and said unto him, "Thou seest..."

And He nodded His head, and quietly went up the stairs, and stretched out His hands toward the executioner, that he might bind them.

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AUSTRALIAN FAN HISTORY (from FMZ DIGEST, June 1941)

The first Sydney Convention opened on Easter Sunday, 13th April, 1941. The convention committee of Vol Molesworth, William D. Veney, Russell Brothers and Allan Cordner marched in carrying banners. Following came the Melbourne and Newcastle fan groups. Castellari announced 67 fans present. Originals, manuscripts and books were auctioned. First speech by Molesworth told of the work to which the committee had gone. Guest of Honor David R. Evans gave a simple speech. A business session followed and thirty messages from Australians were read along with eleven from America and three from England. At 7.30 nearly everyone assembled at the Hotel Australia, where the banquet had been arranged. At 10 p.m. Molesworth declared the convention closed.

Unquote. This information was provided by the AUSTRALIAN SCIENCE FICTION NEWSERVICE LTD. It was, of course, a hoax, and I believe that it was perpetrated by Bill Veney, though this is only guesswork. The US fan didn't know a great deal about Aussie fandom, as is indicated by the reference to "Russell Brothers", instead of the Russell Brothers. But I suppose Joquel and Co. cannot be blamed as this must be about the first time that anyone in Australian fandom tried to be funny. And it was a hell of a long time after that until the next attempt. This is printed to show that even if you try a hoax, something will go wrong no matter what you do. I was born Easter Sunday, 13th April, 1941. Voltaire Molesworth with a banner, indeed.

Next issue, the Australian Fan History section will be a complete reprint of Bert Weaver's only fanzine (circulation:3), published 1961. Can you hardly wait?

MERVYN BARRETT, SOMETIME ASSISTANT EDITOR TO FOYSTER FANZINES, BUT OF LATE A RECLUSE, REPROBATE, AND ROTTER, ATTEMPTS TO WRITE A LETTER OF COMMENT ON SATURA

I thought, at last, here's an issue that I can comment on - I mean what with you and Bob Smith saying Deep Things and all but now on rereading I don't know. You and Bob seem to be spending a lot of time defining nothing. That's how it looks anyhow.

I remember when I first read that bit about the intellect not being satisfactorily expressed through music (you think) I thought,

So, here's something I can make some profound remark about but after long consideration of your statement (about 15 seconds) I've come to the conclusion that it's too vague to have a go at - I mean, what do you consider as a satisfactory expression of the intellect and to whom should it be satisfactory?

You got yourself off the hook nicely on this beauty kick of yours by coming on with this 'no young philosophers' bit. If setting up a whole lot of quotes and then knocking them over is the best you can do after six months of intensive study then I suggest that your time would have been better spent with some more serious project like an index to the appearances of the word "rosebud" in HYPHEN over the last ten years. If you're dead keen to get some sort of a definition going for you, why confine yourself to words? Why not look to mathematics and find a formula for it, or to chemistry - a piece of paper that turns pink in the presence of beauty would probably be a handy tool for art critics and people of similar calling. I know that as far as I'm concerned beauty is, and can be experienced, and horsing around with definition when none is needed can often lead to a barrier being interposed between the beautiful object and the beholder. The rosebush in my garden - with no help at all from me, has suddenly come into bloom and here I sit writing a lot of rubbish about beauty when I need only tilt my head a little and I can experience it. Be a philosopher and miss the world.

Talking of the world, I have written a poem of that name. Here it is:

THE WORLD

The world is filled with fat old bags;
Christ, but they make me sick.

The argument, dear Mervyn, is not in our minds, but in our words. It is hardly necessary to suppose that there exists a material and perfect expression when one is trying to show that a particular thing is not perfect in expression - at the most, an abstract one is required. And we agree about beauty too, but the rosebush does not have to assert itself.

PREFACE TO A LETTER FROM DON FITCH

For fairly obvious reasons, any letters from you lot overseas will be a little behind in any cross-correspondence. This cannot be helped, but it will mean that I'll probably have to cut such letters a little more than I should do with the home-grown product. I'll only do this when I remember it, so there's little danger of it happening.

CORFLU AROUND THE WORLD

Correcting fluid; correctine; liquido correttore; korrekturlack; korrekturlakken; liquido para correcciones; liquido corrector; correctielak; korrektionslak; correctine. Contributions invited.

DON FITCH(EVENTUALLY) WRITES

I tend to agree with your assay of fandom/fannish writing, in part; most of it is casual to the point of being careless, and .. er .. 'uninformed', as you say. Since I indulge in a great deal of this myself, I can hardly express regret or criticism concerning it, but must look for reasons, - or excuses. The Pressure of Hyperactivity seems to me a valid reason, or rather, a symptom of an acceptable, if not altogether desirable approach, if only because I recognize it in my own fanac. The basis of it is pure Greed; there are a lot of good fanzines published (well, interesting ones), and the only way to get many of them is to belong to a whole bunch of apas. This, combined with correspondence and in-person fanac (itself essentially Greedy, attempting to do more than one has time to do) produces much of the hasty, careless, ill-written, ill-thought-out material which abounds in fandom. Is this really so bad? It is if you look on anything 'published' (even if only by mineo, for 50 or 100 people) as being 'literature'. I think of fanzines as being conversation, and goodness knows that which is carried on in fandom is superior to the majority of that which I take part in in mundane daily life.

I guess the opinions of other people are particularly important, but I'm afraid I fail to see what connexion that has with the quotation you give, unless it's Chinese, or has a colloquial meaning unfamiliar to me - honrai muichimotsu would seem to mean something like 'fundamentally nothing', which might be a good fanzine title, but...

Much as I admire Bach and Mozart, I must concede that Blyth is sometimes way off his ass, or else detects much more in their music (or in music itself) than I can, and that is unthinkable.

Fortnightly fanzines are (or can be) a Good Thing, but the editors of them should be reminded that as long as they are going to all the work of addressing a stack of 'zines, they might just as well make the issues as thick as the minimum postage will permit.

The opinions of others matter not a jot. I have decided that it would be better to publish a larger 'zine, less often. Larry Crilly also sent a letter, but he didn't comment on SATURA directly. Ta anyhow. The remainder of this issue is devoted to the following item, though I might include a few letters which arrive in the next couple of weeks.

LETTERS IN EXILE PART IV

By 370.

.....Do send a pic of LJH with beard. Haven't had a laugh since the Frankenstein's monster execresced onto the silver screen. In return I'll send you (or should I risk losing 30¢?) a copy of the new pb, LAMBDA 1. With a story by LJH titled QUEST. WOW! WHISTLE!! STOMP!!! SHRIEK!!!! YELL! Haven't dared buy me one yet - I'm afraid I might like it and how could I face Lee then?

Final point on CLEOPATRA. I can see your point about it being more

enjoyable ... I'm sure that if I'd seen the one hour shorter version I, too, would have had a happier feeling on leaving. How could I help but be so, if I knew that I had 3.6×10^{12} nanosecond less to sit through? But as for a "good film" Sorry .. I seem to have misquoted you: what you actually wrote was "a good film to boot". And I would. Really John, how could you? I have (had?) a great deal of respect for your intelligence - after all you almost scored as high as I on the Penguin KNOW YOUR OWN IQ - and I thought that with a bit of maturity you might possibly outgrow your youthful errors of judgement. Which, on the whole, weren't too excessive. But now....tsk...tsk... Couple this with your dislike of HOW THE WEST WAS WON, JULES ET JIM, and I fear that you may forever remain outside the boundaries of the intelligent cineaste circle. And even, perhaps, outside the pseudo-intellectual movie-goer's coterie. Poor John, consigned to the pseudo-pseudo-intellectual group.

And if I fall in with the critics, John, how about I'll ole you-o? With LA NOTTE, eh? Boy, are you black, son....

Whilst we're on fillums, the enclosure is to show you how some of the better shows are advertised over here. Hoo-boy ... love all that bloody gore. The film, actually, was rather fun. Sick fun, sure, but fun for all that. Lovely neaty THUNKS as the ax(e) goes in ... and again ... and again ... and again ... and - but you get the idea. All the while Joan Crawford screaming on the soundtrack ... and her little daughter watching ... and blood ... and those THUNKS ... and the heads rolling (really) ... and that ax ... andURP! Not one, but 3 (THREE) bloody, juicy, THUNKFUL murders. None of it to be taken seriously, of course. The film, story-wise, was just as bad as PSYCHO, but was so much more in good taste (if that is the expression) in the manner of telling. Both films dealt with material which may best be likened to dung - piles of it. But whereas Hitchcock was in the position of an obviously coprophilic little boy making shit-pies, caressing the ordure gently, lovingly, gloatingly and licking his fingers from time to time, Castle merely used the excrement as a sort of raw material, and rather dispassionately (in fact, with tongue in cheek) moulded a horrid, but not too terrifying ogre. All Hitchcock produced was a larger than life copy of a turd.

This is not to disparage the old HC's talent for filmmaking. While I'm most certainly NOT one of the MOVIE crowd, I do admire his craft. Which was brought home recently by a 90% stupid, 9% silly and 1% entertaining bit of celluloid directed by Mark Robson - THE PRIZE. I can't decide whether the Ernest Lehmann script is to blame, or Robson. I suspect both. Lehmann, who scripted NORTH BY NORTHWEST, has, in THE PRIZE, a scene straight from the former film. Menaced by two hoods our hero (Newman/Grant) breaks up a nudist gathering/art auction by behaving in an obnoxiously demented manner. When the boys in powderblue arrive he says: "what took you boys so long?" and also "why do you think I sent for you?". Hustled past the frustrated crims, he cracks: "better luck next time..." Grant was much better than Newman, and HC handled the comics with so much more dash and lightheartedness. Of course HC has Herrmann's score to help. Listen to the music next time you see it. How much did HC aid, and Robson hinder, the script by changing lines, one wonders.

Caught up with the German anti-war film DIE BRUCKE. Quite good. Also saw VICTIM - v. good. But the films to see are Visconti's THE LEOPARD and Wise's THE HAUNTING. Since the critics in the main liked the former I daresay you'll con yourself into hating it. But you'll be foolish if you do, for in all departments it is intelligent, thoughtful and beautiful. There's a ball scene of great splendour in which most of the sociological comments scattered throughout the film are given a paradigmatic entelechy - a massive examination of our generation's (and the preceding ones') ills - in short, both an exegesis and an eisogesis of humanity under the superficial guise of the social pastime of the courtly dance.

And after that bit of crap, I'd better not say much about THE HAUNTING. This one the critics hated ... you may like it. Although marred somewhat by sensational tactics (people hanging themselves in the corner of the giant cinemascope screen) and 'adult' relationships (i.e. lesbianism) I think it belongs only a few notches below THE INNOCENTS. Julie Harris was excellent (I usually hate her) and Claire Bloom made the telepathic lesbian beautifully believable.

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While as a human being or a meteorologist, existence and the vagaries concomitant with being and becoming have yet to press my potentialities into their full entelechy, I can say that as a Science Fiction Fan I have truly lived. The world of SF can at best promise only anticlimaxes from this moment - only poor surrogates for the monumentality of emotion I now experience. For before me ... on my left ... I have, as I write, one of the most venerated and perhaps sacred objects of the tight and oftentimes ludicrous world which we, as SF-loving nuts, inhabit. I don't think it's entirely my i in imagination, or a strange confluence of light and surface, which could account for the charismatic aura surrounding the quasi-holy relic.

Of course, it could only be one thing: and it is: a copy of AMAZING STORIES for April 1926. That's right ... the first magazine to devote itself to SF exclusively ... and the first copy of that magazine! Let Hugo Gernsback tell you of this issue:

"Another fiction magazine!

"At first thought it does seem impossible that there could be room for another fiction magazine in this country. The reader may well wonder, "Aren't there enough already, with the several hundreds now being published?" True. But this is not "another fiction magazine"; AMAZING STORIES is a new kind of fiction magazine! It is entirely new - entirely different - something that has never been done before in this country. Therefore AMAZING STORIES deserves your interest and attention.

"There is the usual fiction magazine, the love story and the sex-appeal type of magazine, the adventure type, and so on, but a magazine of 'scientifiction' is a pioneer of its field in America.

"By 'scientifiction' I mean the Jules Verne, H.G. Wells, and Edgar

Allen Poe type of story - a charming romance mingled with scientific fact and prophetic vision."

So there you have the first definition of SF - the emphasis being mine.

And what's in it? Well ... Verne's OFF ON A COMET, Wells' THE NEW ACCELERATOR, Poe's THE FACTS IN THE CASE OF M. VALDEMAR, Hall's THE MAN WHO SAVED THE EARTH and stories by Peyton Wertenbaker and George Allan England. The cover? By (who else?) Frank R. Paul, illustrating the Verne story ... I haven't read the book (only seen the film) so I really can't tell whether artwork and prose are compatible or even consistent. Against a lemon-yellow sky hangs a bloated and candy-coloured Saturn: a peppermint-pole-striped body surrounded by brown, off-white, yellow and blue rings. On the left centre is one of its moons, and the foreground is thus obviously another of these peripatetic satellites:- frozen o'er into glacial immobility, a vast expanse of slick-smooth ice receds back, back to a not too distant horizon where twin mounts of fractured ice rear themselves upward to the honeyed sky. Perched on these breasts of Saturn's minion - and serving the function of technological nipples - are a pair of sailing-cum-steam ships. Laughing merrily, and delightedly, breathtakingly skimming on the ice of the foreground are many, many fur-clad natives. That they are natives is plain, since they wear no helmets. The names of Verne, Wells and Poe are prominently placed, in vibrato-vermilion, on the cover, together with the legend: "25 Cents".

What more could one ask? The second, third, fourthissues? Ah, they too are here. Wells, Poe, Verne and Paul are back for May '26 ... Poe is missing for June '26, and July and August and September ... but the other favourites remain. Issue 3: Leinster (THE RUNAWAY SKYSCRAPER) and Kline appear, Siodmak in number 4, Serviss (A COLUMBUS OF SPACE) in number 5..... BEMs are with us from May onward, disembodied brains have materialised with August, intelligent creatures from inner (sea) space bring their terrifying presence to grace the September cover.

You want more? How about PHANTOMS OF REALITY - a complete novelette of adventure in the fourth dimension - by Ray Cummings, in the first issue of ASTOUNDING STORIES OF SUPER-SCIENCE? Leinster also appears, and Harry Bates edits. Or, let's see ... STARTLING STORIES, Volume 1 Number 1, January 1939, with Weinbaum's THE BLACK FLAME, appearances by Kline & Binder, and a Picture-Story of A. Einstein's life.

FANTASTIC ADVENTURES, WONDER STORIES (AIR WONDER, SCIENCE WONDER, WONDER, THRILLING WONDER), FUTURE, GALAXY, STARTLING, F&SF, THRILLS INC., SUPER SCIENCE, NEW WORLDS, IMAGINATION, IF, GOLDEN FLEECE, etc.,etc.,etc. ... Take your pick, boy - they're all here.

And here ... where is here? Why, Stuart Hoffman's little Schloss. A modest three-storied building, with the upper floor almost wholly devoted to Stu's SF collection, and situated in a part of America's Dairyland picturesquely called Black Earth. (Looking through the window here I can see the ground softly rolling away: dark

- but not black - dirt showing occasionally through cold straw-brown grass, dotted in places with patches of still-frozen snow. On the hills, gaunt bare trees and small shrubs. The light is harsh and glares down sharply from the sky, so that over all a violent silver gleams and dazzles. It is so much like the Australian countryside on one of those oddly disturbing Spring days when light and shadow merge so gently into each other that it becomes difficult to isolate the smaller features.)

Mrs. Hoffman is bright, charming, -petite and thoughtful. Witness: Stu works at strange, odd hours, and, to give me the maximum chance of meeting and talking to him Mrs. H. invited me to spend the full weekend chez leur. The 'bus last night, of course, was delayed some 1½ hours - I mean, this is only to be expected when I travel - and I had visions of Mrs. H. sitting huddled in the corner of the filling station which doubles as the Greyhound terminal at Black Earth, for at least this 90 minutes. Well, I couldn't let that happen, could I? So, I hopped into a cab and taxied the 22 miles. As I had surmised, there was Mrs. Hoffman dejectedly twiddling her thumbs and wondering where in Hell that 'bus could have gotten to. Back at the establishment her first thought was "can I get you something to eat, 370?" Foot and hand, hand and foot, the waiting went on.

The Marvels of the Library would have been far more than adequate, but the attention I'm receiving is the nth degree of hospitality.

And as for the library ... not only the rare relics already mentioned, but such miracles of device as Genuine Finlay Illos, Freas, Dollens, etc. The Finlays are just unbelievable ... I'd always thought him to be one of the top illustrators in any field, but I had never imagined that his drawings, in their full size, would be but slightly larger than the magazine reproductions. They are incredible ... and it's a great pity that they lose so much when transformed into blocks and printed on the coarse lignar pap that serves the pulps as paper. The Freas paintings - two of his covers for ASTOUNDING - show also a great proficiency in his handling of the technical aspects - but I'm afraid that apart from this, F.K. Freas is no great shakes. The Morris Scott Dollens painting is highly imaginative, but.....

I haven't mentioned any of the books lining the walls - row upon row of them. I don't think it'll serve much purpose to do so, either ... you'll merely become jealous, or bored, or worse. If you do want these enumerated all you need do is ask, and your best slave 370 will jump at the chance of fulfilling. Providing, of course, that he is asked back to the Hoffman domicile.

All these goodies surrounding me have induced a state of mind, an emotional situation which I'd thought I had forever passed: I don't know quite how to describe it - it's a terribly withdrawn and confined feeling, and yet marvellously impregnated with wonder and freshness and delight. A kind of state that one would want to carry over into the real(?) world. As I said it isn't the type of feeling that I now experience readily - thanks to the process of growing older, and perhaps maturing slightly, the discovery of less emotionally wonderful things, better adjustment to the dullness and

stupidity of reality - but it is the type of feeling that I suspect one needs from time to time.

I've often wondered - more and more lately - whether I wasn't becoming too stodgy, too dull; whether I wasn't losing the precious gift of being able to will myself into that 'state of disbelief', losing that absolutely essential sense of wonder. I was frightened that my training (which is seemingly never going to be completed) as a scientist might hasten and perhaps even destroy utterly the freshness of vision that time was dimming. I am no longer quite so afraid. My sense of wonder is still there, just as strong as ever, (I hope), but merely channelled into other fields. There is still a strong residue for the spheres of fantasy and science fiction ... and this is not only nostalgia for the past remembered, not only the restimulation of faint cherished memories by the old, half-forgotten stories or by the smell and personality and geist of the pulps.

This plays a part, I know, but it's not the whole story. I've just completed reading a book on the Heroic Fantasy - SWORDS AND SORCERY or some such title. You know, the kind of story that Howard used to write, or Dunsany, or C.L. Moore ... and, in fact, they are all represented in the volume. While I thought some of these were just awful, not a few stirred my imagination. A few years ago, I'm sure, I would have liked all the yarns unqualifiedly, but now ... well, that's the penalty one has to pay when one's critical faculties improve and become more demanding: the sense of wonder remains, but is harder to satisfy. A story has to be so much better - better in every respect: logically, stylistically, emotionally, intellectually and so on (though any one of these criteria may swamp the others and yet produce a satisfying story) - before it can seduce one's belief into willingly overpowering one's natural cynical scepticism.

And this is, I think, what is wrong with SF today. Oh, I know that's not an original thought, but nonetheless it's true. Who, for example, needs to throw their cynicism into the part-time limbo when reading a story, so full of tiny, finicky detail that it sounds for all the world like a technical report, about Space Station USA Freedom Number 69?

The Science in SF should not to my mind be the dull cut-and-dried facts of today, not even a logical extrapolation of those same facts - unless something wonder-full us added. This element will not be composed of strange or bizarre characters, though they will help, nor flowing, rolling myth-rich prose (but that too is of use) but rather a method of communicating to the reader the breathless feel of something new, the unique discovery of those new facts. For example, consider Hasse's HE WHO SHRANK. What have we here? The old (but then new) idea that perhaps the atomic system was composed in the shape of a miniature solar system: planets forever circling a central nucleus. In itself that is nothing startling, nor breathtaking. But what Hasse does is. He shrinks his hero, and as he does lets marvellous unforeseen events take place. Who had ever thought of being chased by a germ? of slipping between the cracks of matter? of shrinking into solar systems? of falling for infinity into the

infinitesimal? The only other work I've come across which conveyed the sense of the macroscopic and the microscopic was an article 40 JUMPS THROUGH THE UNIVERSE, published in a UNESCO Courier some years ago. But what has happened to modern science and its concepts? They have fled from commonsense, have abandoned the convenient mental picture method of explanation. For one explains the new in terms of the old, in terms of the familiar, and as soon as a mathematical concept is found which replaces the pictorial ones all succeeding ones will be abstract as well. And more and more so. So now, if one wanted to write a story about a shrinking man, one would have to stop at the pre-nuclear stage, or have one's hero portrayed as a unit of certainty amongst clouds of probabilities. And who can stand on a cloud or grapple with chance?

This is not all that science has contributed to the death of Science Fiction. (Perhaps it is not yet dead, but it is certainly moribund, and the sooner the last rites are said the better. Of course, a Lazarus-miracle may yet occur.) How many new discoveries have been made in the past years? Discoveries which could compare with the Relativity theory, or the rise of Quantum Mechanics, or the widening of cosmological horizons, or the freshness of new technologies? These are part of the lifeblood of SF. And even should they occur in the next year or so, the time lag between science and its application in fiction will prevent the use of new ideas for many years. You see, no SF author has yet succeeded in outlining a story which depended on a totally new scientific idea. Even if he did it wouldn't be published because the science would be, by virtue of its newness, 'unscientific'. Science Fiction depends upon old scientific ideas: what appears new in the stories is merely an extrapolation of these old thoughts, extrapolations which any scientist could make if he wanted to: what makes an SF yarn of quality is its ability, as I've already pointed out, to convey the atmosphere of intellectual excitement which these new (now old) ideas engendered, and to show how they may affect the individual.

And there is one other reason for the plight of modern Science Fiction. There are virtually no new horizons. All the earth has been explored - Man has climbed the highest mountains, plummeted to the lowest depths of the oceans, travelled across all the continents - and there is no place where the words "Here there be Tygers" can be written onto a map. Tygers or dragons, koalas or hippogryffs, the unknown has vanished. Only Space remains. And that is sufficient. Or will be, once we venture into it: right now it is a new frontier, but is so new that it cannot be exciting. When the first man returns and tells us what space is like, how the stars appear, what fantastic new images are present there, then will the SF authors be able to attempt to convey this meaning and emotion to their readers. If something is totally unknown it is not exciting. Does Glück stimulate your imagination? Of course not. But if you knew more - but not too much - about it, it may prove to be immensely wonderful. Space is of the Glück variety: what does suggest itself as marvellous has already been written to death - only exploration and new discoveries

will reinstate its mystery.

And finally, SF is dull, and becoming more and more dull, because we are at fault. We are becoming too blasé with regard to technology and its progress (sic). And with over-familiarity, perhaps, 'contempt', for with technology there must be a contingent boredom with the more basic scientific researches.

How to save SF? I can only suggest the resurrection of the old-time pulps: new reprints, anthologies etc. From the vast number of E.R. Burroughs books which are springing, so to speak, spontaneously into being, I suspect that the I-swash-you-buckle school of SF is still a potent force. And if this is so, then why not some of the more 'scientific' romances? Perhaps Hugo Gernsback's definition of scientific fiction is not as outmoded as people would have us think?

O, well ... who knows?

.....
.....

Well, let's see ... censorship. Ah yes, do keep me informed of developments with regard to LOLITA and THE GROUP, for it may be of importance in deciding whether I should return to Australia. Whilst we're on the subject, perhaps I could mention something peripheral ... an article on H.I. Micheal but the Melbourne Spy in a recent issue of Nation (Australian, not US publication). Rather diverting and highly amusing group of well-chosen words - as always from the Spy - shedding some diffuse light on the contraceptive trade of Mr. Micheal's stores, and including a shattering experience undergone by the SFA (Seductive Female Agent). I passed the cutting 'round the Department here, and was interested to see the minor ripples of laughter which passed over the usually vacant but clever faces of the professorial staff. I'd prepared them well ... horrible tales of what was banned in our HOME, stories of the boys in blue intimidating the local 'brave, strong-willed booksellers', and of how almost five in six - or so it seems - films lose at least a few frames ... so that it was really no surprise when one of them looked up, his eyes with wonder visible behind the risible veil of tears filming them, and said "why wasn't this banned in Australia?" I had no answer, having wondered the same myself, and had to content him by muttering a half-remembered quote to the effect that pornography is a matter of geography, and that the issue probably would have been withdrawn from sale had the circulation been larger, or the audience less intelligent.

But Australia is not the only place where censorship flourishes: to my sorrow (and watering the seeds of disillusion already planted) I find that Madison, at least, objects to certain celluloid actions. THE VICTORS, for example, had the bedroom scenes removed, female wrestlers, GIs knifing negro GIs, soldiers singing "F*** 'em all" were absent, and the sequence mentioned by all the reviewers I'd read, that of the French boy who offers himself to G. Peppard and G. Hamilton, was nowhere in evidence. Again, the bedroom exercises in THE SMALL WORLD OF SAMMY LEE, some of TO BED OR NOT TO BED, and the worst British invective in HEAVEN'S ABOVE were all censored. A very

amusing shot in IRMA LA DOUCE which appeared in the trailer had inexplicably been relegated to limbo in the film, and I suspect some of LORD OF THE FLIES had been excised. Of course none of the locals believe me when I tell them that their films have lost their raison d'etre, and prefer to bury their heads in such platitudes as: "well, it would have been cut all over America" or "I think you're imagining things, 370" Christ! if this is part of Democracy - that is, unthinking acceptance of the premiss that this is the best of all possible worlds, or rather, that this is the only possible world - then give me anarchy (or Australia) any day. At least down under we know we suffer censorship and do kick (albeit feebly, feebly) from time to time.

Now for MARIENBAD. So you disagree with me, eh? Well, you've obviously misunderstood practically everything I wrote on the subject, and haven't been able to put some of my comments together, so I feel rather wary of even a few more words on this subject. But perhaps I may make myself clearer this time So, it was a beautiful film?? OK, but what do you mean by 'beautiful'? Your comments, or rather your quoting of other's opinions, in SATURA are all terribly clever and show great erudition, but hardly clarify your application of 'beauty' to the film. Personally (and here is your chance to marshall crushing arguments) I found MARIENBAD apart from such concepts: it was one of those rare human artifices which made me forget myself completely. For its duration I lost, virtually*, my identity, and was drawn into another world. (This is remarkable ... a book has recently been published, I believe, which gives prominent personalities' McLandress coefficients - I think that's the term - a number which supposedly is the time the subject to which it is applied can exist without thinking of himself. I'm sure that my McL coeff. is about 1 millisec.) Now read my notes on LAWRENCE OF ARABIA. "To analyse (a movie) destroys something ... it is sufficient merely to know that one knows, whether conceptualised or not ..." And also, "analysis can only prove how clever one is, and hardly ever touches anything human or worthwhile in the object under scrutiny". And "MARIENBAD is ... clever. The analysis is never final." And here I must apologise for I've used the word 'clever' and probably applied to it a meaning which you do not. It comes (quoting Partridge's ORIGINS) from OE clibber, ME cliven, OE clifan meaning to adhere, or from ME cliver, OE clifer meaning a claw. A clever person, then, is, to me, someone whose mind operates in a claw-like fashion, reaching out and grasping information (lacerating it in the process) and drawing it back to the adhesiveness of his memory. Someone who therefore has little originality and who masks this lack by the quality of his erudition - without understanding it - and by its quantity - without having digested it. Modern western society unfortunately is oriented (no pun) to this type of individual ... which no doubt accounts for its fast degenerating 'progress' towards annihilation. (And here I must confess I'm very much afraid that my training as a scientist puts me into the 'more-clever-than-intelligent' category. But this is a

*Good old 370, still master of the concealed pun.

tragedy about which I have insufficient guts to do anything.)

Thus when I call MARIENBAD clever, I am not praising it ... I am drawing attention to one of its faults ... I am pandering to the average western man who adores cleverness. And when I expound and explain it I am merely pointing out how clever I am (and please note that I said my framework for the film was an "explanation", quotes and all) ... I am letting my intelligence (quel assumption) be submerged beneath my smartness, a spurious facade of intelligence. If, on the other hand, I say that it "sandbagged me into a stupor", I mean that my identity was forced into abeyance. If I say that it is "the only outstanding film I saw (last year)" then I mean that in spite of its cleverness, in spite of my cleverness, the film has "heart". It had that indefinable quality of humanness, of intelligence, et cetera, that substance which makes asking Cocteau "why?" a meaningless question, that residue which lies at the base of everything 'important'. Perhaps this is what you mean by 'beauty'. I don't know.

Does 'comprehension' in your sense of the word mean an intuitive grasp of the object? "To know that one knows, conceptualised or not"? Does it mean that one feels that there is an affinity between oneself and the film? Does it mean ...etc. If so, then I suspect that our disagreement is one of terminology, and one, moreover, which is best resolved when the distance separating our words is a few feet and a few milliseconds of time. I don't want to write more on this, John, mainly because it involves the discussion of many subjects, some of which - a very, very few - I consider of 'importance' and which, consequently, may be distorted beyond comprehension when the medium of communication is a letter, that is, words, and more especially my own brand of incomprehensible and ill-thought-out prose.

One word in closing this subject, though: you say that "any solutions to the 'problem' (of what occurs in MARIENBAD?**) no matter how ingenious (sic), must be dismissed if they require more than one viewing to understand." Why so? I prefer to say that any solution is extraneous to the problem. Besides you also say (in SATURA) that "I've only seen it twice, and can't follow the time-sequence properly." Physician, physician!

Now for some comments on SATURA. And especially on the R.H. Blyth quote in S2 which has already excited LJH and Bob Smith ... so why shouldn't I put my little oar in? Either I've misunderstood a lot of people, or they've misunderstood you and the reason for the quote. I read it and laughed. Haha, I thought, Maxieboy is having a little fun, 'great height and depths have been reached, but much remains to be done in this direction', indeed. And this following the blanket statement re Bach and Mozart and 'man', whoever he may be. Lee's comment was brief, but gave me the impression that he entertains some strong opinions on these two composers (which way I don't know) and that perhaps he took the quote seriously. Bob Smith in S3 makes the understatement of the week: "too much of a generalisation", and in the

*comprehension is never intuitive.

**of the origin of MARIENBAD.

comments following leads me to think that he, too, may have taken the passage seriously - or at least quasi-so Please, please John, was the item meant to amuse or to provoke thought, or both, or, for that matter, neither? And the other quotes ... are they designed to display your catholic and omnivorous reading? In the light of my contact with you, I'd say they were there because you felt they made a point (valid or not) in fashions witty, intelligent, worthwhile or unintentional.

These quotes, and more especially your little article on 'beauty' (thoughts, rather), disquiet me somewhat, for I cannot but help getting the impression that they were remembered and reproduced not so much because they imprinted themselves indelibly upon you when you read them, as because you felt, on reading and being struck by them, that they could be used to advantage in WCB or SAT. I hope I'm wrong and that you didn't pop them in your mag merely to fill up space, to make a point using someone else's words and name, or to air your knowledge. For this smacks of one-upmanship and 'cleverness'. I really don't believe you'd resort to any of the above, for as I've often said, I'm sure you are too intelligent for that. Even so, a little doubt nags ... how do you remember them all?*

S4 on the whole I found to be redolent with a clever air - a pseudointelligent air ... not only the beauty piece, but Bob Smith's letter, and your notes on MOTTOES ET CETERA of S2. Once again - please don't misunderstand me ... I'm not saying that it was pseudo-intelligent; but just that the impression it made on me was. Haiku, and Zen, and Buddha should not be used cleverly, or even intelligently. Well, Haiku perhaps, but not the others. (Intelligence here means inter-legere, to choose from among - to gather new relations from the interaction of old ones, to have some creativity, perception). For both 'cleverness' and 'intelligence' belong to the world of Man, and only to the world of Man. It's been a while since I read anything on Zen (I prefer a more introverted, contemplative path, though this I'm positive is closed to me because I'm too deeply attached to things), but I always thought that Zen was more than mere Man. If I'm wrong then I've overestimated it. No, any religion belongs to the intellect. And I do not mean the ritual of religion ... not the exoterica, but the esoterica, the heart which cannot be expressed in words, the dark night, the supra-logic to which the koan points. As for intellect, let me quote from Frithjof Schuon's book THE TRANSCENDENT UNITY OF RELIGIONS: Intellect ... has been defined by Master Eckhart - who fully understood the import of his words - as follows: "There is something in the soul which is uncreated and uncreatable; if the whole soul were this it would be uncreated and uncreatable; and this is the Intellect". An analogous definition, which is still more concise and even richer in symbolic value**, is to be found in Moslem esotericism: "The Sufi (that is to say, the man identified with the Intellect) is uncreated)". Perhaps you can see now why S4 disturbed me, for it touched upon the fringe of what I

*And I thought the weakness of my memory was notorious!!

**But doesn't this sort of thing lead to a fat head?

consider to be important, and I resented the way it was presented (whether you intended it that way or not did not affect the impression it made on me) in what seemed to me to be a clever manner.

I daresay I'm unduly sensitive on this subject (normally I'd say nothing for I believe that words only compound the confusion of the issue and, besides, I'm very much on the outside), and if any of my comments offend, please accept my apologies in advance. If you disagree, well you disagree. Just let's say that frivolous-seeming talk on these subjects gives me an unwelcome frisson.

END.

This letter will be continued in the next SATURA; there's only a page or so more to go, but I haven't the inclination, and, with luck, might just get within a postage bracket. Another sheet would be too many.

HOW TO LIVE IN THE WORLD OF A CLOCKWORK ORANGE Carry a submachine-gun.

Next issue will be dated some time in May. From now on it is once a month, and eventually this will be the first of the month.

REINSTATEMENT:: The following persons are reinstated on the SAT mailing list: Miss R. Hardy, of Sydney (by Faith) and Mr. J. Bangsund, of Melbourne (by Works). Miss Hardy is reminded of an old saw relating Faith and Works.

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