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Australian Science Fiction Review



the next few years his restless mind ranged untiringly through the major works of the great psychologists, philosophers, historians and scientists, until one day he discovered the field which was to be his life's work, whereupon he immediately resigned from his position, bade farewell forever to sweet-making, and entered the University of Ard-Knox.

Here, at West Ferntree Gully's most renowned centre of learning, he applied himself with devotion and diligence to his study, and after a gruelling seven years at last graduated Master of Biblical Engineering. His thesis, a work as massive in size and scholarship as it is light and good-humoured in style, was entitled "The Application Of Ezekiel 10:16 (KJV) To The Retrieval And Preservation Of Abandoned Manhole Covers".

He continued his studies in Germany, Israel and Tokyo, until he was invited to become Senior Lecturer in Biblical Engineering at the University of Southern North Dakota. A man with an insatiable taste for learning of all kinds, Mr Claphanger here met and in his spare moments studied under the great Professor Schickele. Stimulated by this association, he wrote a Grand Oratorio for Orchestra, Soloists, Choir and Salvation Army Band, using texts from Sankey's Sacred Songs & Solos. I have had the privilege of hearing the beautiful chorale "I Tried The Broken Cisterns, Lord" from this work, performed by the PDQ Bach Guild, and I have never heard anything quite so moving.

Four years ago, Mr Claphanger returned to his old Alma Mater as Professor in his subject, and it was here at Ard-Knox that I got to know him as an associate. His first words to me - I shall never forget the moment - were, "You, Bangsund, what in hell is a Professor of Asfragism?" I explained my position and my somewhat unusual line of study to him, and we became firm friends. Before long he had, with his usual curiosity and rapidity, mastered my subject and, I have to admit, taught me a thing or two about it. Apart from our late lamented friend Professor Kelvin UF Widdershins DSc & Bar, I have never met a man so learned, so versatile, so eager and willing to grasp and turn to good use anything (as Sterne puts it) he can fairly lay his hands on.

Mr Claphanger (a democrat in many ways, he prefers Mister to Professor) has exhausted my science fiction collection, and has taken to writing the stuff himself, mainly between the hours of one and three in the morning, when he relaxes from his usual hard night's work before going to bed. His approach to sf is typically eclectic, and in the novel which he has almost completed - his working title for it is BUG JACK DEMPSEY - one finds a fusion of various approaches to the genre, to the extent that I would defy anyone to label it New Wave, Old Wave, or anything else but what it is - unique. I have had the honour of being allowed to read most of the manuscript, and would like to tell you something about it.

It starts off with this Spiniard named "Pop" Optic. In the capital of the tiny People's Republic of Spinland, the tiny republican peoples are preparing for their great annual festival, a sort of Moomba celebration with culture thrown in, when everyone goes to free lectures at the Spinnish Workers' University to mark the beginning of the academic year, feasts every night for a week, and finally sleeps the whole thing off. This combination semester, fiesta and siesta they call the Polyesta, and they all give each other eggs and things and elect a beauty queen, or beauty heroine of labour actually, called the Polyesta Bunny. Now Pop Optic is a Spinnish worker, and he works at the People's Republic Of Spinland Free And Untrammelled By The Chains Of Capitalism And Revision-

YOUR STATUS, AND OTHER MATTERS

First, the other matters. ASFR 21 will not be published for some considerable time - probably not until June 1970. The material scheduled for that issue will now appear in SF COMMENTARY 3. ASFR 21, I am fairly sure, will be the last. It will contain a full index to all issues, maybe an article or three, and photos of contributors. Every subscriber entitled to a copy will receive one.

Meantime, I will be publishing SCYTHROP. To allow me time to rake up the cash necessary to post out all the accumulated issues of ASFR, I will not be producing SCYTHROP 1 until October. This also allows you time to tell me whether you want to see it.

I will be producing initially 200 copies of SCYTHROP. 30 for ANZAPA, 30 for subscribers remaining after ASFR 21 (yes, I've lost at least 170 subscribers somewhere along the line), 20 to sell in McGill's (mainly a PR gesture for Melbourne fandom and sf in general: that's where Bruce Gillespie and several others found us), 40 to trade, and 80 to send to correspondents, new subscribers, and others. That may sound a lot, but it will be heaven after the 400+ I've been doing for the last year.

The subscription is going up, because frankly I am not very interested in subscriptions. People who would like to make a contribution towards running expenses as well as commenting or trading or writing, yes - very welcome indeed. But people who send money and stay silent thereafter, no sir. I'm not excluding subscribers on principle, but in future the rates will be:

In Australia	50¢ per copy
In USA	US60¢ per copy
In England	3s0d per copy
Elsewhere	local equivalent of A50¢

Every LoC will gain its writer at least one issue. Trades will be on an all for all basis, unless I am not really interested in your publication, in which case I will let you know as gently as possible. Contributors will receive regular copies, and if I can possibly arrange it photostats of comments not published. Subscribers will be meticulously credited for LoCs &c.

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You are, I like to think, a contributor.

--- You are a regular correspondent and/or commentator.

--- We trade or I would like to trade.

You are a member of the Lindsay-Porter-Alpers-Bangsund Axis.

--- You get everything I publish, lucky you.

If none of the above is marked, there is a special reason for your receiving this issue. But it also probably means you are not on the regular mailing list.

ism Broadcasting Network, or SpinRad, as it is usually called. He is secretly in love with his boss's secretary, the lovely Ilona Pobeida, who cares nothing for him and thinks only of winning the title of Polyesta Bunny. This is a touching kind of chapter, and its main purpose is to set the scene and mood of the book. It is entitled "The Spinnish Revolution".

The second chapter concerns an international conference of telepaths and other people with what Mr Claphanger calls "strange talents". This is being held in Melbourne, and everything is going smoothly and more or less silently when it is discovered that someone has put about the story that these people are actually Scientologists, and a small army of police, city council parking attendants and church leaders is on its way to apprehend them. Gifted as they are, the conference members soon realize what is happening, so they escape in plenty of time and teleport en masse to Tasmania (which Mr Claphanger rather irritatingly refers to as Fan Demon's Land). Here they learn that a similar prejudice against odd beliefs exists, so they decide to go back half-way across Bass Strait, just levitate there, and continue their discussions undisturbed. This chapter is called "2001: ESPers O'er The Sea", and its purpose is to contrast dramatically with the preceding chapter, which is basically earthy and realistic, by introducing what my friend calls "a sense of wonder". (Not that the touching earthiness of the first chapter is entirely absent from this one; there is, for example, a beautifully realized scene where the ESPers, investigating a rumour that there is a space-ship grounded in a little country town, find a little waif sitting in the shadows of the Ulverstone War Memorial, crooning "You're The Apple Of My Isle" to her rag doll.)

Mr Claphanger has been revising the third chapter, and I have not seen it. From his rather vague remarks about it I gather that it has something to do with a Venusian colony on Photon Four.

Chapter Four starts off with this artist chap, Jack Dempsey - yes, the very same Jack Dempsey mentioned in the title of the book - and he is a sort of action painter, throws pots of paint over nudes and that kind of thing, and one day he is thinking things over and he decides that he is not really cut out to be a painter at all. He has missed his calling. He should be a composer. So he prepares this fantastic music-happening, called "Etude Opus One", and what it is, he hires this concert hall and puts violins all over the stage, and he is going to ride a bike over them. What a concept! What sounds! This man knows what he is about, and that's for sure. Already the critics are calling him a second Boris Zilch, and they haven't heard a note yet. Comes the night, and there he is on the stage, lean and ascetic-looking in his gumboots and football guernsey, his bony intellectual-looking hands clenching and unclenching the handlebars as he waits, and there's a hushed expectancy from all the people in white tie and tails in the audience, and the elderly lady has just finished playing "God Save The President" on the harmonica, and he's about to get on his bike and start his composition, when down the aisles of the concert hall stream thirty fat little Jewish men in bowler hats, and they're all crying out, "Don't do it! Some little Jewish boys could learn to play those violins!" In the ensuing struggle on-stage all of the instruments get trodden on and there's a terrific racket and the audience goes wild with applause.

By now the scene is nicely set, and in Chapter Five there begin the development of plot, the subtle changes in characterization, the emergence of conflict, and all of those things that keep the story alive and the reader interested, while the author brings the big guns into place for the final climactic scene where

Dempsey and Ilona, adrift on a raft in the blood stream somewhere inside Pop Optic, are rescued by a damp telepath on a twisted bicycle, and together they fight off and eventually overcome the sinister Venusians and other forces of evil, find the gold, track down the corrupt parking attendant and rescue the little Jewish boy from the iron violin where he has been imprisoned, topple the Black Slab, regain normal size, return to Earth, restore Charley to the bakery, and hand in hand teleport to Spinland, where they are just in time for the judging of the Polyesta Bunny competition, which is won by Miss Ethel Briggs of Waukegan, Illinois.

I think you will have to agree with me that this is a terrific story. The plot has the pace and simplicity of classic science fiction story-telling, and I really think it's a winner.

My only suggestion to Mr Claphanger, and I rather hesitate to offer advice to a man who can conceive such a work as this, is that he might perhaps give some thought to re-casting the story and telling it from the viewpoint of the bicycle.

This, I feel, would give maximum impact to a story which is already as powerful and dramatic a piece of sf writing by one from outside the field as anything I've read since Llewellyn's HOW GREEN WAS MY MARTIAN and UP WHERE THE EARTH IS SMALL, and in many ways more so. Inside the field, and here the comparison really tells of course, I believe there has been absolutely nothing like it, with the possible exception of Kilgore Trout's GNURK, LORD OF THE STARS.

In Cosmo Claphanger MBE, I believe we have found a science fiction writer of new and (to use his own shimmering phrase) unexpected dimensions, and I can only hope that his work in this line will meet with the rewards, critical and financial, it so richly merits.

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SCIENCE FICTION IS NOT DEAD:

IT IS ALIVE AND WELL IN BRAZIL

BRIAN ALDISS

Rio de Janeiro is Hong Kong with florid additives - "Never forget Africa is our next neighbour", someone told me. Its impact is so great that fever sets in at the airport. Even science fiction writers, a group not noticeably short of imagination, found their imaginations beggared by Brazilian colour and hospitality. "It's like a new planet!" was the nearest we came to describing our response to Brazil.

The writers were there for a week's international symposium on science fiction. The symposium was run as a sideshow to Rio's film festival but, as the cariocas admitted, there have been film festivals before; the science fiction idea was new. It was also a sweeping success, despite a certain lack of organization - so much so that there are plans for declaring Rio a sort of informal sf capital, and to repeat the dose at intervals.

"SF is the world's strongest stronghold of free speech," declared Frederik Pohl. "The greatest - the only literature of the twentieth century," pronounced J G Ballard. "Science fiction does not exist - there are only writers," said someone else. On Copacabana, all parties could be right. With temperatures in the

THE NIGHT THE ABSURD
BECAME THE SUBLIME

MUNGO MacCALLUM

When the New South Wales Chief Secretary, Mr Wills, banned a section of a play last year, he told the Press that this power had last been invoked about six years previously, but he wasn't sure exactly why.

In fact, it was in March 1963, over a Sydney University production called A REVIEW OF THE ABSURD - a series of sketches by such playwrights as Ionesco, Beckett and Jarry.

Among other items was a film called IT DROPPETH AS THE GENTLE RAIN, based on a script by the French poet, Jacques Prevert. The film showed the world being covered in a downpour of human excrement.

The police got (as one might say) wind of this and demanded a preview. Having seen one, they recommended to the then Chief Secretary, the late Mr Gus Kelly, that the film should be banned.

Mr Kelly wrote a letter to this effect, which reached the theatre about five minutes before the performance was due to begin. Undeterred, the producer, Mr Albie Thoms, went on stage and explained to the audience that the film had been cut to make way for an item by an important new Australian author in the absurd tradition, Mr Gus Kelly. He then read the letter. "It was much more successful than the film would have been," Mr Thoms recalls. "It broke the audience up - they couldn't believe it was for real."

Egged on by a newspaper critic, the police returned to the theatre to see an item called THE SONG OF THE DISEMBRAINING, by Alfred Jarry. They went back-stage to demand an interview with the author, and, for good measure, with Samuel

A RECENTLY-DISCOVERED POEM OF ALFRED,
LORD TENNYSON, SAID TO BEAR THE
INSCRIPTION "FOR SAM"

This Earth is wondrous, change on change,
All coloured, beautiful and bright,
Almost almighty to fulfil
All comprehension of delight,

And yet because free space is left
And spreads and rounds her everywhere,
My freakish fancy sometimes fumes
And flits and leaves her hung in air,

And in a twinkle flashing up
Through fifty miles of atmosphere
I hit my head against the moon,
Turn on my legs and walk the sphere.

Quicker than Dan O'Rourke I fly,
Or Jack that up the beanstalk borne
Grasping the large pods one by one
Crept up and clutching caught her horn.

Jack lied: for horns the moon hath none:
Nor could I find from North to South,
That old one by his bunch of sticks,
Who with peas-porridge burnt his mouth.

But glens I found and sunless gulfs
Set round with many a toppling spire
And monstrous rocks from craggy snouts
Disploding globes of roaring fire.

It were not worth a wise man's while
To till it, for I saw the whole,
'Tis nothing but one ashy calx,
One cinder all from pole to pole.

Large as a human eye, the Sun
Drew from the West his feeble light,
And then a night, all moons, confused
The shadows from the icy heights.

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language of the original, and has been over-zealous on the poetic side. But let us continue, and compare with Lucian: "(199) Then gnats with great trumpets sounded the fell note of war, and Zeus the son of Cronos thundered from heaven, a sign of grievous battle. First Loud-croaker wounded Lickman in the belly, right through the midriff. Down he fell on his face and soiled his soft fur in the dust: he fell with a thud and his armour clashed about him..."

Which Lucian comes rather close to with: "Eventually the signal-flags went up, there was a loud braying of donkeys on both sides - for donkeys are employed as trumpeters up there - and the battle began. The enemy's left-wing immediately turned tail and fled..."

The author of the earlier work, however, got in his licks as well with such sections as: "(259) Now there was one among the mice, Slice-snatcher, who excelled the rest, dear son of Gnawer the son of blameless Bread-stealer..." Hard lines, Homer!

The plot of THE BATTLE OF FROGS AND MICE is so obvious from its title that I do not present any details. By having animals behave in this so human way, the author (Pigres?) almost certainly started the line of satire which last appeared, so far as I know, in Blair's ANIMAL FARM. (Pigres probably initiated the Jack-of-all-trades-master-of-none saying.)

At around this same time (ie, before 600BC) a book is supposed to have been written entitled JOURNEY ROUND THE WORLD. As most later works with similar titles which have survived are, shall we say, prone to exaggeration, I think it reasonable to claim this as a "geographical romance" - and therefore, to some extent, an early example of the "lost continent" story. Much of the appeal of modern sf comes from its writing of incredibly far-off places, and the readers of 2500 years ago liked this sort of thing, too.

Aristeas of Proconnesus, who was born (at a guess) around 620BC, wrote about the Arimaspi, who dwelt in the far north (hyperboreans), and such fabulous creatures as griffins (question mark on that one - this is partly guesswork). And about all that survives of this is a quotation in Longinus's ON THE SUB-LIME: "This also to our minds is a great marvel. There are men dwelling in the waters of the ocean, far away from land." - which is mildly fantastic.

The ghost of Aristeas appears in the HISTORIES of Herodotus (born 490BC?). Herodotus also appears on the list of Lucian's victims, but this is rather due to Herodotus's good nature, I am inclined to think, than to any desire to impress his readers.

Whereas writers today try to avoid errors or exaggerations (with certain limited exceptions; sf writers and writers on politics spring immediately to mind), Herodotus's main concern was to collect all the information he could, and to preserve it whether it was rumour or fact. Frequently he suggests that something may be ludicrous, but he nevertheless records it. This turns out to be quite fortunate, since he records the report of Phoenicians who obviously sailed around the Cape of Good Hope - and follows it with the statement that he personally doesn't believe it!

In the same book (4), Herodotus records much fantastic material, largely about lands to the North and East of Greece. He relies upon Aristeas, as already mentioned, but also upon unnamed sources, generally with the same unfortunate

result. Whilst his own endeavours were in earnest, those who followed Herodotus were more interested in seizing the imagination of the public, and for this reason Lucian felt that Herodotus had started a trend of lying. Ctesias of Cnidos was one of those named by Lucian: Gilbert Murray suggests that he wrote "with a view, partly of correcting the errors of Herodotus, partly, it is to be feared, of improving upon his stories".

Meanwhile, returning for a moment to more orthodox writers, the comedian Aristophanes (born 450BC?) often used fantasy as an element in his plays. It is a most important part of CLOUDS, PEACE and BIRDS, and Lucian cribs a city-name from the BIRDS.

Around 300BC an historian named Euhemerus thought to cast the Greek myths into some kind of rational form, and used the device of a journey to a far-off land, followed by the remarkable discovery of some golden tablets on which are recorded the deeds of Zeus and the other gods. (Some would say this proves that Joseph Smith read Euhemerus.) At any rate, this inscription consisted of the myths sans supernatural elements. Very little of this SACRED RECORD has survived. Some time later one Palaiphatos wrote a work with similar intent, called ON INCREDIBLE TALES.

"Aristotle" was the name attached to a list of unlikely occurrences entitled ON MARVELLOUS THINGS HEARD. Three excerpts should indicate the kind of material involved: "9. The goats in Cephallenia do not apparently drink like other quadrupeds, but every day turn their faces to the sea, open their mouths, and inhale the air." "47. They say that in Pieria in Macedonia uncoined gold was dug into the earth by the ancient kings in four holes, and that from one of them gold a span high grew up." "92. This is another marvel among the Ligurians: they say that there is a river among them whose stream is raised so high that it is impossible to see people on the further bank."

From this time until the time of Lucian very little of this "proto-sf" was written in a form which has survived. Only vague suggestions remain of works by Bolus of Mendes (who apparently wrote a romance in which occult science and alchemy played relatively large parts), Antigonos of Carystos (whose COLLECTION OF WONDERFUL HISTORIES, rather akin to the MARVELLOUS THINGS above, has survived) and Antiphanes of Berge, who is supposed to have originated the story about the frozen musical notes.

However, Diodorus Siculus, living in the time of Augustus Caesar, took the writings of Iambulos on a great southern land seriously, and preserved them (ii, 55-60). Iambulos wrote a sort of utopian fantasy, in which men lived to the age of 150, only dying then in order to let the young take over. These "men" had no hair, a double tongue, and marriage did not exist on their island. It makes rather boring reading, I am afraid.

Two other writers lived some considerable time before Lucian and wrote this same kind of fantasy. Phlegon of Tralles wrote ON MARVELS AND LONG LIVED PEOPLE, which concerned ghosts, gigantic men, monsters of assorted kinds, and changes in sex (still a popular subject). Antonius Diogenes wrote THE MARVELS BEYOND THULE, upon which Lucian based his own work fairly closely. Besides including such mundane matters as a trip around the moon, this tale about one Dinias includes elements which were to become standard in romantic mythology: the separation and re-union, the use of magic, apparent deaths, and a dollop of poisoning. It survives only in summary.

Iamblichos was roughly contemporary with Lucian, his BABYLONICA having been written around 185AD (Lucian was born c116AD). Like THE MARVELS BEYOND THULE, his work exists only in outline.

Lucian's TRUE HISTORY follows the standard pattern of his works - erudite and scathing. He guts many of the fraudulent descriptions detailed above, but at the same time succeeds in writing an enjoyable story. Some of his other works also have some inclination towards fantasy, though by no means to the same extent.

Alas, Lucian died too soon to parody the LIFE OF APOLLONIUS OF TYANA by Flavius Philostratus (c220AD), but he nevertheless handled a similar theme in his ALEXANDER - a careful exposure of a religious fraud. Philostratus embroiders the life of the historical Apollonius with such jolly frolics as learning the language of birds (1.20), sighting a hobgoblin (2.4), encountering unicorns (3.2), a piebald woman (3.3), dragons (3.3) (a learned discussion of the care, feeding and trapping of these beasts follows), a case of levitation (3.15), a griffin and a phoenix (3.48/9). Not to mention Apollonius's gifts in the telekinetic line. (Oh yes, most of this takes place in India - as might be guessed from the levitation incident.)

Proto-sf in the Greek language comes to a halt at this point, at least so far as this present survey is concerned. In the future I may try to extend this coverage to at least 1000AD in outline, though the amount of material surviving does not seem to be great at first glance.

[illegible]

Conversation following upon the above:

EDITOR: John, our friend Claphanger has expressed some surprise at the brevity of your article on Greek sf...

FOYSTER: That's not what I called it, chum. I just said "before sf".

EDITOR: Fair enough, but he says you've missed a few things.

FOYSTER: Does he indeed?

EDITOR: He says that when he attended Ithaca Tech for a few months...

FOYSTER: Ithaca, Michigan?

EDITOR: No, Ithaca, Greece. When he was there he picked up the lingo and read a fair bit of this kind of stuff. He says - what was his name? - Helioqabalot?

FOYSTER: Heliodoros? Yes, I thought of him afterwards. The AETHIOPICA might qualify for consideration. But what you should remember, John, is that I just worked this up from what I could find in the Monash library one lunchtime when I had nothing of my own to read. It's not meant to be exhaustive, you know.

EDITOR: Uhuh. John, promise me when you write something exhaustive in this line that you'll send it to Riverside Quarterly or Different or Quip or...

FOYSTER: I get your drift, cobber. I'll send it to Rataplan - Leigh goes for this kind of thing, doesn't he.

EDITOR: Not Different?

FOYSTER: Definitely not. If I did, next thing we'd know, Sam would have the stuff whipped up into an anthology.

EDITOR: SCIENCE FICTION BY RUSHLIGHT?

FOYSTER: The very thing.

EDITOR: How's Part Three of the Ballard Notes coming along, John?

FOYSTER: Something wrong with this line, John. Hello, hello, hello...

EDITOR: You don't fool me, Foyster! I know that ((click!)) trick.

Greetings and salutations to you all. It is with some sorrow that one speaks to you by means of this contrivance rather than addressing you in the all too ample flesh. One is quite positive that this short congress will repeat and surpass the success of its forerunners. Indeed, one expects the MelCon to be smoothly organized, backed as it is by the oldest fan club in existence in Australia.

John Bangsund, the burgomaster of Forny Gulch, sent me one of his brief Shavian postcards, on which he asked for comments on several points and finished by writing the following words: 'For goodness' sake, be short and to the point, because John Foyster is going to speak, and that will not leave too much time for the rest of you. *'

One must envy the newcomer to science fiction, that fortunate being on whom the field makes such a vivid and tremendously exciting first impact, driving home the sure and certain knowledge that here is the last refuge of imaginative and uninhibited writing; that here, and only here, is the challenge unlimited in its potential, etcetera etcetera etcetera.

One does not wish to sound cynical, but enthusiastic ramblings of this type are heard wherever two or more neofans are gathered together. This worshipful, unquestioning litany of the faithful is in point of fact vastly depressing in its massive untruth. Science fiction today consists in the main of a series of tried and true variations around stock themes. The experimental writings which could and should be carried out in this genre are being carried out in the mainstream of literature, whilst the great majority of sf writers potter away in their own backyards, rewriting the same book at regular intervals, and occasionally joining forces with their fellow writers in an orgy of mutual congratulation and self-esteem.

The overwhelming preponderance of today's writing is scatographic in the extreme. One would be hesitant about placing it in the jakes for emergency use. The responsibility for this rests squarely on our shoulders. For as long as the readers are prepared to ingest garbage without complaint, then garbage is what will be offered us. Of the readable remainder, a large proportion is reprinted, old reliable stuff from the Forties and early Fifties. Then we have the pure gold which is the reward for reading the dross: current work, a small group of authors, work of remarkable high literary and imaginative value. This alone is what prevents complete gafiation and a retreat into transcendental meditation.

It has been suggested that the paucity of good work is due to science overtaking fiction, and that because of this the really imaginative writers have taken refuge in the field of fantasy. And indeed, it must be conceded that fantasy, sword-and-sorcery, swash-and-buckle are flourishing as never before. It has also been suggested that the more conservative publishers are sneaking better-grade science fiction onto their general lists, so that it is missed by the specialist sf reader who, generally speaking, is not oriented towards publishers' catalogues. There is some evidence to support both these viewpoints. But one must emphasize and reiterate the implicit belief that the real reason for the rare appearance of good work, and for the deluge of garbage which assails us, is our own lack of protest. Any improvement in the standard of work offered

THE REVEREND DOCTOR OPIMIAN. Science is one thing, and wisdom is another. Science is an edged tool, with which men play like children, and cut their own fingers. If you look at the results which science has brought in its train, you will find them to consist almost wholly in elements of mischief. See how much belongs to the word Explosion alone, of which the ancients knew nothing. Explosions of powder-mills and powder-magazines; of coal-gas in mines and in houses; of high-pressure engines in ships and boats and factories. See the complications and refinements of modes of destruction, in revolvers and rifles and shells and rockets and cannon. See collisions and wrecks and every mode of disaster by land and by sea, resulting chiefly from the insanity for speed, in those who for the most part have nothing to do at the end of the race, which they run as if they were so many Mercuries speeding with messages from Jupiter. Look at our scientific drainage, which turns refuse into poison. Look at the subsoil of London, whenever it is turned up to the air, converted by gas leakage into one mass of pestilent blackness, in which no vegetation can flourish, and above which, with the rapid growth of the ever-growing nuisance, no living thing will breathe with impunity. Look at our scientific machinery, which has destroyed domestic manufacture, which has substituted rottenness for strength in the thing made, and physical degradation in crowded towns for healthy and comfortable country life in the makers. The day would fail, if I should attempt to enumerate the evils which science has inflicted on mankind. I almost think it is the ultimate destiny of science to exterminate the human race.

LORD CURRYFIN. You have gone over a wide field, which we might exhaust a good bin of claret in fully discussing. But surely the facility of motion over the face of the earth and sea is both pleasant and profitable. We may now see the world with little expenditure of labour or time.

THE REVEREND DOCTOR OPIMIAN. You may be whisked over it, but you do not see it. You go from one great town to another, where manners and customs are not even now essentially different, and with this facility of intercourse become progressively less and less so. The intermediate country - which you never see, unless there is a show mountain or waterfall or ruin, for which there is a station, and to which you go as you would to any other exhibition - the intermediate country contains all that is really worth seeing, to enable you to judge of the various characteristics of men and the diversified objects of nature.

LORD CURRYFIN. You can suspend your journey if you please, and see the intermediate country if you prefer it.

THE REVEREND DOCTOR OPIMIAN. But who does prefer it? You travel round the world by a hand-book, as you do round an exhibition-room by a catalogue.

LORD CURRYFIN. Well, then, what say you to the electric telegraph, by which you converse at the distance of thousands of miles? Even across the Atlantic, as no doubt we shall yet do.

MR GRYLL. Some of us have already heard the Doctor's opinion on that subject.

THE REVEREND DOCTOR OPIMIAN. I have no wish to expedite communication with the

Americans. If we could apply the power of electrical repulsion to preserve us from ever hearing anything more of them, I should think that we had for once derived a benefit from science.

MR GRYLL. Your love for the Americans, Doctor, seems something like that of Cicero's friend Marius for the Greeks. He would not take the nearest road to his villa, because it was called the Greek-road. Perhaps if your nearest way home was called the American-road, you would make a circuit to avoid it.

THE REVEREND DOCTOR OPIMIAN. I am happy to say I am not put to the test. Magnetism, galvanism, electricity, are "one form of many names". Without magnetism we should never have discovered America; to which we are indebted for nothing but evil; diseases in the worst forms that can afflict humanity, and slavery in the worst form in which slavery can exist. The Old World had the sugar-cane and the cotton-plant, though it did not so misuse them. Then, what good have we got from America? What good of any kind, from the whole continent and its islands, from the Esquimaux to Patagonia?

MR GRYLL. Newfoundland salt fish, Doctor.

THE REVEREND DOCTOR OPIMIAN. That is something, but it does not turn the scale.

MR GRYLL. If they have given us no good, we have given them none.

THE REVEREND DOCTOR OPIMIAN. We have given them wine and classical literature; but I am afraid Bacchus and Minerva have equally "scattered their bounty upon barren ground". On the other hand, we have given the red men rum, which has been the chief instrument of their perdition. On the whole, our intercourse with America has been little else than an interchange of vices and diseases.

LORD CURRYFIN. Do you count it nothing to have substituted civilized for savage men?

THE REVEREND DOCTOR OPIMIAN. Civilized. The word requires definition. But looking into futurity, it seems to me that the ultimate tendency of the change is to substitute the worse for the better race; the Negro for the Red Indian. The Red Indian will not work for a master. No ill-usage will make him. Herein, he is the noblest specimen of humanity that ever walked the earth. Therefore, the white man exterminates his race. But the time will come, when by mere force of numbers, the black race will predominate, and exterminate the white. And thus the worse race will be substituted for the better, even as it is in Saint Domingo, where the Negro has taken the place of the Carib. The change is clearly for the worse.

LORD CURRYFIN. You imply, that in the meantime the white race is better than the red.

THE REVEREND DOCTOR OPIMIAN. I leave that as an open question. But I hold, as some have done before me, that the human mind degenerates in America, and that the superiority, such as it is, of the white race is only kept up by intercourse with Europe.

.

LORD CURRYFIN. I will not say, Doctor, "I've seen, and sure I ought to know". But I have been in America, and I have found there, what many others will test-

ify, a very numerous class of persons, who hold opinions very like your own: persons who altogether keep aloof from public life, because they consider it abandoned to the rabble; but who are as refined, as enlightened, as full of sympathy for all that tends to justice and liberty, as any whom you may most approve amongst ourselves.

THE REVEREND DOCTOR OPIMIAN. Of that I have no doubt. But I look to public acts and public men.

LORD CURRYFIN. I should much like to know what Mr MacBorrowdale thinks of all this.

MR MACBORROWDALE. Troth, my lord, I think we have strayed far away from the good company we began with. But the discussion had one bright feature. It did not interfere with, it rather promoted, the circulation of the bottle...

[illegible]

JB: Mr MacBorrowdale, at least at times like this, makes an excellent companion. His singlemindedness is worthy of a Secret Master of fandom. Consider:

LORD CURRYFIN. What is your opinion, Mr MacBorrowdale?

MR MACBORROWDALE. I think you may just buz that bottle before you.

LORD CURRYFIN. I mean your opinion of Greek perspective.

MR MACBORROWDALE. Troth, I am of opinion that a bottle looks smaller at a distance than when it is close by, and I prefer it as a full-sized object in the foreground.

And if these brief tastes of the delights of Tom Peacock should meet with cries of "more more!" I will be happy to oblige. Better still, of course, would be for you to go to the original, if you have not already discovered him. There are seven novels, and between them they amount to less than a thousand pages. Rupert Hart-Davis in England publishes a two-volume quality paperback edition, but there are others around.

And if any of you out there feel disposed to write something for us about Peacock, his work or his circle, I would be very interested to see it.

And to all those many readers who thought that was Philip Jose Farmer on the cover of this issue - now you know differently, don't you.

[illegible]

"One night in Belfast, I smugly told a steel-helmeted riot policeman, 'This couldn't happen in Melbourne', and immediately regretted it. Because he smiled a very sad, very sweet Irish smile and replied: 'I know, my wife and I were talking only last night about migrating to Australia, for the sake of the wee kids, you know.'"

- Melbourne Herald correspondent in strife-torn Willisville.

The only good Irishman is an ex-serviceman.

- Oliver StJohn Gogarty: As I Was Going Down Sackville Street.

FAREWELL! THOU ART TOO DEAR FOR MY POSSESSING

This issue, as may be apparent from references here and there, was originally conceived and thus far typed up as the first issue of SCYTHROP. I have now re-typed the first page and re-designed the cover, because it has become quite obvious that I cannot continue to produce a regular large-scale (in quantity of material and extent of distribution) fanzine, so this had better be the last ASFR than the first issue of a new publication which I can't hope to continue.

I say "the last ASFR", but this may not be so. Lee Harding and Bruce Gillespie have been preparing what was to be no.20, and it may very possibly appear as no.21. This was to be a rather luxurious affair, with offset pages of photos and so on, and I certainly hope it will still eventuate. But if it depends to any extent on my financing it, it will not appear for some time.

I will continue to publish my small apazine, THE NEW MILLENNIAL HARBINGER, for the Australia & New Zealand Amateur Press Association, and this is available to anyone interested - but I will not be producing more than a hundred copies for outside distribution, so your interest will need to be constant.

One day when my financial problems grow less severe, I hope to start publishing regularly again. Those people left on the subscription list (and I must say that after no.21 there won't be many) will automatically receive anything I might publish in the future on a regular basis. I would like to refund subscriptions, of course, but I am not in a position to do this. (However, if you would prefer to have your subscription finished off with back issues, there are still copies of nos. 2, 4, 11, 12, 14, 15, 16, 18 and 19 available.)

I would like to thank all those people who have supported ASFR with contributions, comments, subscriptions, donations, physical assistance and moral support (not to mention immoral: people who have pinched envelopes from work for me, for example, and others who have given me discounts they perhaps shouldn't have). I really do value this support; without it, ASFR would have died at infancy. I hope you will now turn to ASFR's heirs - Leigh Edmonds's RATAPLAN and Bruce Gillespie's SF COMMENTARY - and lick them into shape. (I would have mentioned Ron Clarke's THE MENTOR in that sentence, too, except that it began publication long before ASFR, and apparently Ron doesn't want subscribers.)

With this issue most readers outside Victoria will be receiving issues 18 and 19 (except for many people in New South Wales who, through the courtesy of Gary Mason, have already received no.19). This is just one symptom of the way things have got out of hand. Another matter that got out of hand is the supply of back issues to those people who have ordered them: if you are one of these people, and if you do not receive the back issues you have paid for with this one, then please accept my apologies and point out my error as gently as you can to me.

In SHANGRI L'AFFAIRES no.75, Dick Bergeron had some flattering things to say about my writing, and suggested that fanzine editors rush to secure my services as a columnist. Immediately after SHAGGY's publication I was inundated with letters. Not one of them from a fanzine editor - just the usual letters from creditors. Eventually, Leigh Edmonds asked me if I would like to columnize in RATAPLAN, and when I managed to remove the lump in my throat (Leigh's fist, actually) I agreed. See you there then.

John Bangsund (10.5.69)

Phones -
62 4015 (office)
FTG 163 (home)
758 1118 (after July)

John Bangsund
PO Box 109
Ferntree Gully
Victoria 3156

Dear Science Fiction Friend,

Re: VISION OF TOMORROW

This is to advise that as of 31st May I will no longer be associated with the above publication.

The publisher, Mr Ronald E Graham, asked me some weeks ago to resign from my position as Associate Editor. I felt that I could not resign in all conscience, having carried out my duties so far as I understood them to the best of my ability, and I advised Ron of this, pointing out to him that most of our difficulties had arisen from a lack of mutual understanding. In his reply to this letter, Ron says:

In spite of all the arguments and explanations you have made in your letter to me John, I still emphatically feel that you are not the right man for the position of Associate Editor of VISION of Tomorrow. Your views and those of myself and Phil differ I feel too radically to ensure a happy working partnership. I could go into a lot of explanations regarding my reasons for thinking this, but consider that this would be unwise and a waste of time. Let me say now only that I thank you for what you have already done and that from the end of this month, that is, 31st May, 1969, you cease to be in my employ.

He has asked me to advise Australian authors that in future they should either send their submissions to him at PO Box 53, Revesby, NSW 2212, or directly to Phil Harbottle at Wallsend-on-Tyne.

I have a number of manuscripts on hand. Since part of our misunderstanding seems to have been over my ability or otherwise to select suitable stories for the magazine, and since I don't wish to be unfair to any author, I will send all the mss I have on hand to Ron on 31st May, unless I hear before then to the contrary.

I have also failed to reach understanding with Ron about rates payable to Australian authors, my questions and comments on this matter having met with anger and abuse from both Ron and Phil. However, I now understand that the rates are £4.0.0 per 1000 words to established writers, £2.0.0 per 1000 to new writers, and A\$2.50 per 1000 to new writers whose work needs editing. These rates of payment apply to first UK publication rights only. (At the *current* Australian exchange rate with Sterling, the first two rates equal A\$8.60 and A\$4.30 per 1000 respectively.)

VISION OF TOMORROW, as I have previously advised, was to have been in a paperback format, similar to the Compact New Worlds and Impulse of a few years ago. Printing had commenced on the first issue in this format, but as a result of Ron's discussions with distributors in England at Easter, the format has now been changed to a slick-style $8\frac{1}{4} \times 10\frac{3}{4}$, so that VISION will now be similar in appearance to the current New Worlds.

The first issue should now appear about August or September in England, and about two or three months later in Australia.

The VISION BOOKS series of paperbacks has, I understand, been shelved for the time being.

Since many Australian readers have seen various news items about VISION in Mr Gary Mason's publication, The New Forerunner, I would like to point out a few errors in his reports.

In no.3 the line-up of stories for the first three issues is different from the details supplied to me by Phil Harbottle. It may change again with the new format. John Foyster agreed to act as Australian reviewer for VISION, but was unable to meet the required deadline for the first issue. He has not been "retained" as a reviewer, as Gary reports. Phil Harbottle comments that Franz Rottensteiner has not been retained as Continental reviewer, either.

Also, reports in the SFWA BULLETIN, SCIENCE FICTION TIMES, and the German SF TIMES, to the effect that VISION will be printing stories by John Russell Fearn, are incorrect. This misinformation also appears in a letter to SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW, but in such a form that only those already misinformed will notice.

It is true, however, that Fearn stories were to appear in the paperback series.

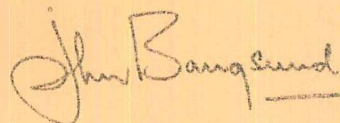
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In conclusion, I would like to make it clear that I regard my dismissal as unfortunate, and as the result of misunderstanding. In matters of detail and policy I have not concealed my disagreement from Ron and Phil, but I have been wholeheartedly enthusiastic about the main concept - that of providing an Anglo-Australian sf magazine, with its resulting benefits to writers and readers alike in these two countries; and I have never questioned their right to conduct their affairs in any way they see fit.

I believe that through misunderstanding I have been neglected, misdirected and insulted. I have been accused of many things, from incompetence to extortion, but, since there is not a grain of truth in these accusations, I feel it only charitable to regard these insults as proceeding from misunderstanding.

I believe Ron Graham and Phil Harbottle are acting unwisely. It is largely because I have not refrained from telling them so in the past that I am now no longer working with them. Nevertheless, I wish them well in their venture.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "John Barendse". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end. Below the signature, there is a small, faint, illegible stamp or mark.

AUSTRALIAN SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW

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This issue is going to subscribers, traders and a few esteemed
freeloaders, and will also be distributed through the fifth
mailing of the Australia & New Zealand Amateur Press Association
so John Ryan can at last see a copy.

OVERSEAS AGENTS

ANDREW PORTER
55 Pineapple Street Brooklyn New York 11201 USA

ETHEL LINDSAY
Courage House 6 Langley Avenue Surbiton Surrey England

HANS JOACHIM ALPERS
2850 Bremerhaven 1 Weissenburgerstrasse 6 West Germany

JEAN-PAUL CRONIMUS
65 Impasse Bonne Brise 30 Nimes France

UGO MALAGUTI
Libra Editrice PO Box 140 40100 Bologna Italy

MAURICIO KITAIGORODZKI
Aguirre 688-308 Buenos Aires Argentina

BARRY KIRSTEN
98 Campbell Street Palmerston North New Zealand

MERVYN BARRETT
179 Walm Lane London NW2 England

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Other Australian Fanzines

RATAPLAN

published by Leigh Edmonds PO Box 74 Balaclava
Victoria 3183 - 40¢ or trade or comment.

SF COMMENTARY

published by Bruce Gillespie PO Box 30
Bacchus Marsh Victoria 3340 - 40¢ or trade or comment.

THE MENTOR

published by Ron Clarke 78 Redgrave Road
Normanhurst New South Wales 2076 - 25¢ or trade or comment.

KONX OMPAX

Mr Claphanger met a young gentleman who said he was studying for his MBA at the University of Melbourne.

"Ah," he said, "Master of Biblical Accountancy."

"Eh?" said the young man, "No - Business Administration. But surely, sir, there is no such subject as Biblical Accountancy?"

"My dear fellow," said Claphanger, "If there is not, I will trouble you not to mention the fact to my eccentric friend Theophilus Persse-Tring, who lectures in the subject at Ard-Knox. But I assure you, there is such a subject. 'For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?' (Matt 16.26) A typical problem in Biblical Accountancy, and not as complex as some I could mention."

