

understanding both of author and subject. His observation about the difference between Aladdin's Lamp and modern sf is strikingly original.

* * *

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ODD JOHN

A Story between Jest and Earnest

By OLAF STAPLEDON

(First published by Methuen, SFBC 6/-)

Michael Harrison writes:

Odd John was first published nearly twenty years ago, at a point in time roughly mid-way between Wells's revised version of *The Sleeper Wakes* and Ray Bradbury's *The Silver Locusts*—two works which may justly be said to mark the temporal boundaries of what is called "modern" science-fiction. And it is instructive to see, in *Odd John*, that fore-shadowing of the fantasy-element that earlier "science-fictioners" thought proper to exclude from their works.

The tendency, in the science-fiction of to-day, is to go back, even beyond the Gothick of the late XVIIIth and early XIXth centuries, to the fairy-tale, in which a special framework of circumstance, necessary to the development of the plot, is presented to the reader as axiomatic. The basic difference between the fantasy of, say, *Aladdin* and *The First Men on the Moon*, is that there is no "scientific" explanation of the Lamp, but there is a "scientific" explanation of the sphere by which Cavor and Bedford reach the Moon.

Thus, for all that, in style, and in the sentiments and prejudices which are reflected in that style, Stapledon reminds

THE DEMOLISHED MAN

The next choice

by ALFRED BESTER

(Sidgwick & Jackson 9/6; SFBC 6/-)

CORRESPONDENCE

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