

for work, possessed in the past by only those few people who were known as geniuses, depended entirely on the physical strength of the body and an abundance of hormone stimulators. Correct physical training for thousands of years had made the average person on the planet the equal of the heroes of antiquity, insatiable in his desire for heroic deeds, love and knowledge.'

These heroes live in a mental and spiritual world which is brightly lit with white neon light; there is not a shadow, not a dirty corner, not a hint of human mysteriousness in them. Completely extroverted, they have no God and no personal problems, and their energy is wholly taken up with 'conquering' nature, never with anything which might demand the slightest subtlety or deviation, the slightest spark of the original. There is never a hint of working with rather than against nature, never a hint that the idea of progress, of unquestioning enthusiasm for labour, might have snags. We are a long way here from *More Than Human*, or *Tiger*, *Tiger*, or almost any sf novel of the West which depicts a future in which mind and civilization are flourishing. We ourselves are concerned with the preservation of the individual who stands increasingly in danger of being overwhelmed. 'They realized that all their strength, all the future of mankind, lay in labour, in the correlated efforts of millions of free people, in science and in a way of life reorganized on scientific lines,' Darr Vetter, who fears he has lost his girl, characteristically chooses hard labour to forget her.

'...All the jobs are taken!' answered the registrar in tones of sincere regret. 'You know that the young people are always anxious to go where the work is hardest.' This is an attitude in communists with which we are familiar, but which we cannot say we have noticed in our own more effete society. Other notes will strike similar bells (or is it the other way round). Here are the soul-searchings of a scientist who wants to conduct an experiment which the Council has forbidden.

'... a flavour of cowardly secrecy not common to people of today. It is true that the great objective they hoped to reach seemed to justify the means, but, they had to remain pure in spirit!' He remembers an unfortunate predecessor who had conducted a similar forbidden experiment: 'Beth Lohn, with his powerful mind hypertrophied at the expense of an under-developed sense of moral values and uninhibited desires, was a man of great strength and equally great egoism.'

And here is a snatch of casual conversation. '"There was a period in the past when art craved abstract forms," Veda Kong put in.

Queneau, Malory, Ariosto, Dante; and Professor Tolkien, an authority on Anglo-Saxon and Middle English, has infused parts of it with the brooding atmosphere of the ancient Northern legends. Yet the work is so very unusual that it cannot fairly be compared with anything. From the very start one has to take it seriously, and as the tension mounts one becomes wholly involved, for it contains everything from the comic to the really horrible.

'... Professor Tolkien's imagination is of so rich and fantastic a nature, and his book is conceived on so vast and audacious a scale, that it seems almost as though he had added something, not only to the world's literature, but to its history. There is no trace of whimsy in this book. There is instead grandeur and heroic deeds, and tragedy, and even a mysterious, Celtic twilight terror, and a robust and virile humour. It is written in a prose of majestic and delicate beauty which at times makes the half-world of which it tells more real and vivid than the one just outside the reader's window.' *Truth*.

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