



The Long Result

John Brunner

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When racial hatred turns to murderous menace . . . First a rocket ship loses its engines on take-off and is destroyed. On board - an important extra-terrestrial visitor. Next someone slams into the sealed vehicle used for transporting aliens around in the lethal atmosphere of Earth. Then the vital controlled environment for the Tau Cetian delegation is sabotaged. Oxygen leaks in, and the aliens are half burnt alive. Even if it means brutal murder, The Stars Are For Man League is determined to shatter the harmony between Earth and civilizations on other planets - and to keep mankind supreme among the alien life forms. Only one man can stop them - a man who unknowingly nurses a viper in his bosom . . . First published in 1965.

The Long Result Details

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Author : John Brunner

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From Reader Review *The Long Result* for online ebook

Clayton Yuen says

Here is another one of those novels that start off with a bang, presenting a scifi premise worth reading about. The story develops nicely, with introductions to several new worlds, many new aliens and more, then leads to a climactic blah. I guess I am spoiled into expecting a slam-bam ending to a storyline so wonderfully set up, but expect a great ending I did.

The Long Result really was a long long result . . .

Josh says

I picked this book and also Brunner's *Telepathist* up while briefly in London and read them both repeatedly through the summer as I wandered about Europe.

Brunner really didn't write about women particularly well, at least not during this part of his career. I know that made *no* impact on me at the time - I only realize it upon reflection. But OTOH, I think both of these stories would survive intact were we to totally invert the sex of the characters, so it might not be quite as bad as I think!

This is an interesting story that does a good job of portraying some truly alien thought processes, including among the humans.

What I learned from this book:

Breaking past low expectations - our own or others' - is hard, but often worth it. Unfortunately, the results are not always what those who are urging us on expect them to be - and big growth/change in ourselves can result in loss of what had been important relationships. That doesn't make it a bad thing, but it doesn't make it easy, either.

Our actions have way bigger potential ripples than we ourselves can see at any given moment.

(Note: the last two sentences in the first paragraph are pretty much a major key for understanding family therapy. ;-)

Simon Mcleish says

Originally published on my blog here in January 2003.

Much early American pulp science fiction is extremely chauvinistic, having an attitude to alien races closely related to the worst racist propaganda; aliens are menacing, evil creatures seeking to take over the universe. (It is easy to get carried away by an exciting story, only to realise afterwards that it has an unpleasant hidden meaning of this sort.) Superhuman heroes battle inhuman hordes and win the love of beautiful women; women are kidnapped and rescued in the nick of time from tentacular fates worse than death.

John Brunner has always written novels which were for their time slightly apart from the science fiction mainstream, and in *The Long Result* he produced one in opposition to the clichés of the genre (even if they were already outmoded by 1965). The main menace in the novel comes from the crackpot Stars Are For Man League, dedicated to putting human beings in a superior position over the various alien races in this part of the galaxy, on the grounds that humanity invented the star drive which enabled them to discover the aliens rather than the other way round. (This is - not coincidentally - similar to nineteenth century arguments to justify colonialism.)

The narrator, Roald Vincent, is a senior official of the Bureau of Cultural Relations, which handles contacts not just with the aliens but also with human colony worlds. He has to handle a rapidly escalating crisis when a ship from Starhome, the first interstellar ship not to be built on Earth, announces when about to land that it carries a diplomatic mission from a newly discovered alien species. This makes them the focus of attacks by the League, and the crisis is also being used in political manoeuvring between Earth and Starhome, a colony beginning to press for independence.

The political ideas are unusually sophisticated for the science fiction of the time, and yet *The Long Result* is still primarily an adventure story which has a style owing a lot to John Wyndham. It is clearly a milestone on the path of development which led Brunner to *Stand on Zanzibar* and the dystopias which followed it; well worth reading.

tENTATIVELY, cONVENIENCE says

review of

John Brunner's [The Long Result](#)

by tENTATIVELY, a cONVENIENCE - February 24, 2013

I'm now a full-fledged Brunner enthusiast. I'm happy to finally be reading his work after having more or less ignored it for the, at least, 40 yrs I've known about it. I think I wasn't interested in him b/c I had the impression that he's a somewhat 'generic' SF writer. WCH, in a sense, he is. He doesn't have that obvious topical distinction that J. G. Ballard does, eg. Ballard pries open the festering subconscious of the culture of his (& my) time & serves it up like Burroughs' *Naked Lunch*. & Brunner's writing style remains prosaic, limited by both his writerly philosophy & the commercial constraints of his publishers.

W/ that sd, he's also a writer full of ideas, of inspiration, & I'm glad he was as prolific as he was since it means that he's left behind a substantial reservoir of pleasurable stimulation for me to while away w/. [The Long Result](#) is essentially an anti-racist novel extrapolated into a future where distinctions between humans are no longer the negative obsession of the bigot but, rather, distinctions between humans & extraterrestrials. & Brunner does an excellent job w/ the theme. I'm beginning to think that it'd be hard for me to dislike *any* SF writer but my enthusiasm for Brunner isn't really reflective of that.

As seems to be so often the case, I found myself focusing on details not necessarily central to the main plot when I took my notes for this review. This is partially b/c I figure discussions of the main plot will be out & about in the world in plenty already. EG:

"I decided I would probably like bin Ishmael more than our previous casual - purely social - encounters had already made me. Old-fashioned or not, I liked people who had private libraries, and even Patricia - who took the modern attitude that all you needed was access to a good computer memory - couldn't make me

change my views." (p 42)

Now, *THAT'S* prescient! The copyright date on my copy of this is 1965. Such a distinction about computer use vs private libraries is very here-&-now of 2013. I participated in a 'Zine Fair back in the fall of 2011 & 2 guys told me that they'd had & liked some records of mine but'd gotten rid of all their records for CDs or some-such. The thing is, one of the records they mentioned is a RECORD, complete w/ things records have that CDs don't: parallel & lock grooves, etc.. THERE WILL NOT BE A CD TO REPLACE IT. Therefore, by getting rid of the record, they got rid of all its meta-content too. Not only do computers & the internet & e-bks, etc, NOT replace hard-copy publications, the powers-that-be can use the corporate control of servers to wink information out of accessibility. & let's not forget internet censorship, there's plenty of it. I had a movie removed from YouTube simply b/c someone complained about the accompanying notes. The movie was a critique of the Pavlovian 'believability' of mass media & the person who complained about it is an aspiring media studies professor. She complained b/c she's in the movie & in the notes I sd that the dog that's also in the movie was the most intelligent.

A bit more central to the plot is this:

""Well . . . Viridis was planted about a hundred and ten years ago by a group of neo-Roussellians who wanted to return to a pre-technological civilization. On Earth they'd become a laughing-stock, of course, but since the sociologists were pressing the government to aid the study of alternative solutions to the problem of organizing a mass society, their colony was approved and subsidized."

""They got on well?"

""Oh yes. About half of our modern music, drama and verse is Viridian in origin. Their society has a-" I fumbled for the right word. "A depth, a richness, which ours lacks."

""You prefer their society to the Starhomers'?"

""Well - yes. Starhome was founded to see how far a technologically oriented society could be driven. Of course in their own way the Starhomers have done exceedingly well: their level of mechanization is amazing. And, naturally, my department deals with the social consequences of this - well - experiment."" (p 54)

& Brunner's writing does get better & better: his descriptions get more & more subtly realistic, there's an attn to detail that I love:

""No, you're at least here - though what help that is I don't really know. I can't find your boss, I can't find the head of alien contact, the woman with the impossible to pronounce name -"

""Indowegiatuk," Jacky supplied. It meant something in an Eskimo dialect, they said; I'd never found out what." (p 73)

People are exasperated, people are frustrated by not being able to get in touch w/ someone, there're problems w/ pronouncing a person's name. Such details are ignored by hack writers in the interest of just moving ahead w/ the action.

&, as in The Whole Man, Brunner mentions a theremin in passing:

"The number of interests this room reflected was fantastic. A theremin stood under the main window, its flex

coiled over an antique and fabulously valuable guitar. Rows of loose-leaf binders containing semantic and sociological notes were half-hidden behind reproductions of classical sculpture: a Rodin, a Henry Moore, the Venus of Milo, and Kasneky's *Virtue*." (p 90)

& then there're amusing touches such as the discovery & appreciation of science fiction as an obsolete antique. How many SF writers think about *that*?!

"Oh, I don't think I've shown you this," he said, switching subjects once more with the same disconcerting rapidity. He reached behind him and drew out a small, rather tattered volume. He held his hand over the top of it so all I could see was the picture on the front: a painting of Mars with a spaceship in the foreground.

"What about it?" I said.

"Well - what do you think it is?"

"It's a spaceship, obviously. One of our early pure-rocket models, I presume, though I'm no expert on that."

"Take a look at the date on it. Handle with care!"

I took it gingerly. It was old, and made of woodpulp paper which had been coated with plastic to preserve it; even so it was brittle to the touch. I looked for the date Micky had mentioned, and found it on the spine. It was - 1959.

I said, "But -"

And stopped. It was one of the most violent double-takes I'd ever made.

"Correct," Micky said. "There weren't any spaceships flying to Mars in 1959." (p 93)

& Brunner isn't afraid to give credit where credit is due - even when it probably rubs somewhat against what're possibly his own personal political feelings:

"Starhome - as you damned well know - is a force-grown society. It's not exactly regimented, but it's sure as hell disciplined. It was planted by the spiritual descendants of the twentieth-century totalitarians. I know that's a dirty word, but it's an accurate description. Their supreme goal is efficiency. It's the most workable compromise ever achieved between the laxity of individual freedom and the rigidity of the corporate state. Most important, it's a far more efficient *basic* design than we have." (p 95)

Now I'm as anti-Fascist & as anti-Nazi as ever - but I wdn't mind having 'the trains run on time' - to use that reference to Mussolini metaphorically.

Brunner has revived my enthusiasm for science fiction like no other has for a while. C. M. Kornbluth & Frederik Pohl were his predecessors in this respect. & I'm grateful for it. Brunner's yet-another person I'd wish I'd gotten to know when he was alive. Our life-times overlapped by 42 yrs. Maybe I shd go to more SF conventions, eh?!

Raj says

Even in the future, racism is alive and well. The Stars are for Man League is determined to use any means to keep mankind supreme in the galaxy. This book examines galactic politics, racism and bureaucracy and still manages to be a page turner! It's got that very 1960s positive attitude towards large government, the hero here being the head of a department in the Bureau of Cultural Relations (basically the alien contact agency of a united Earth) who has to deal with the League as well as with various Human colony worlds.

I managed to spot most twists well before the protagonist (only missing one big one that I should, in hindsight, has totally seen) but it was still an enjoyable read, showing a future Earth that is mature and comfortable with itself and its relationship with the rest of the galaxy.

Amedeea says

Primul volum SF pe care l-am citit. Nu m-a impresionat foarte mult si nu este un must read dar nici nu m-am plictisit. Am inteles ca nu este cea mai reusita scriere a lui John Brunner insa cred ca voi mai incerca sa citesc carti SF, tot gasesc eu ceva interesant. Ceea ce la noi a fost tradus ca Rabdarea timpului, are de fapt titlul original The long result. Se aduce in prim plan vesnica tema a rasismului, nelipsit , pentru ca oamenii (nu toti desigur) niciodata nu sunt multumiti de ei insisi ce sa mai zic de alti semeni ai lor. In centrul actiunii il avem pe Roald Vincent, directorul adjunct al Biroului pentru Relatii Culturale de pe Pamant. Aflam ca sunt si alte colonii de oameni in spatiul extraterestru, Viridis, Stellaris, fiecare adoptand o strategie anume de dezvoltare, de cooperare, etc. Roald are misiunea de a se ocupa de studierea evolutiei culturale din cadrul coloniilor, el preferand linistita Viridis, unde oamenii traiesc arhaic daca pot spune asa si apartin unei civilizatii blande, agricole, fara intentia de a se dezvolta tehnologic. In schimb pe Stellaris, lucrurile au luat alta intorsatura, iar disciplina, ratiunea, ambitia, evolutia tehnologica au facut ca stellarienii sa isi doreasca sa nu mai depinda de Pamant, asadar sa fie independenti. Astfel apare Liga Stelele pentru Om, ce organizeaza atacuri violente asupra extraterestrilor, membrii acesteia sustinand ca doar oamenii au drepturi asupra stelelor, asupra zborurilor interstelare, asupra intregului univers. Dar stellarienii inca nu isi dau seama ca nu toti pamantenii sunt rasisti si totul ar putea fi rezolvat prin comunicare si intelegere. Roald care pana in acest moment se ocupase de civilizatia viridiana, se vede nevoit sa isi asume un rol mai important si sa elimine pericolul reprezentat de Liga. Va fi tradat de o persoana apropiata si va gasi consolare acolo unde nu se astepta. In tot acest haos, extraterestrii nu prezinta nici un pericol, dar superioritatea lor provine doar din faptul ca vor sa cunoasca omenirea cu adevarat, sa o inteleaga si in acelasi timp vor sa se lase cunoscuti. Iar omenirea va trebui sa inteleaga o data pentru totdeauna ca doar prin cooperare cu alte specii, prin pace, prin ratiune , va reusi sa ajunga la un inalt grad de cunoastere, de evolutie atat spirituala cat si tehnologica. Autorul aduce in prim plan rasismul, cat de periculos poate fi acesta, nu numai prin faptul ca presupune persecutarea si chiar uciderea altor specii, altor indivizi, considerati de unii diferiti, fie ei extraterestri sau oameni, ci si prin faptul ca implica pana la urma distrugerea propriei umanitati si a oricarei posibilitati de evolutie si cunoastere. In aceasta carte, l-am cunoscut si pe Anovel, un regulian , un extraterestru cu o structura fizica aparte, invulnerabil, care ii va arata lui Roald, ca evolutia trebuie sa aiba loc la timpul potrivit, si doar atunci cand oamenii vor fi evoluat in interiorul lor , in sufletul lor, doar atunci cand vor sti sa fie cu adevarat umani. Roald are calitatile si defectele lui, nimeni nu este perfect, dar intelege pana la urma ca nu e suficient sa gandesti ca faci o fapta buna, efectiv trebuie sa o faci, sa te implici , cu trup si suflet.

Derek says

I bought this book at a used store after reading the back cover, as it seemed a little too prescient for our current times. The plot described an Earth struggling with racism and protectionism at the hands of the "Stars Are For Man League", an organization that uses xenophobia and outright hatred to promote its goals, which are the subjugation of alien races and the promotion of human space colonization at their expense. (Sound familiar?)

The story is told through the lens of Roald Vincent, a high-ranking bureaucrat in the Bureau of Culture (BuCult) who is responsible for managing Earth's relationships with the two colonies. There are a series of mysterious acts of terrorism that are linked back to the Stars Are For Man League, and Vincent has to work with other authorities to attempt to determine the various connections between people and events in what ultimately, in some respect, turns out to be a whodunit novel.

The ultimate revelation of the mystery is little mystery, though Brunner takes care to pepper in a number of red herrings along the way; he also ensures that there are a few turns and twists that are not nearly as predictable and that are ultimately satisfying whether the reader was able to guess at the resolution of the mystery or not.

The story is under 200 pages - always a welcome pace for these kinds of stories - but it still feels a bit bogged down at times because of the intellectual nature of Vincent, the narrator. His language is a little, well, bureaucratic at times, and although it makes sense for him to take the actions he does, it still feels as though it might have been better for Brunner to get to the point; John Wyndham faces the same issues with his narrators, these kinds of overly intellectual middle class sorts who feel the need to expound everything they are thinking.

Still, the bloat is not a huge issue, and the book does not suffer much for it. If you like John Wyndham or other similar authors, you will enjoy *The Long Result*. It takes a few great ideas, works them into a believable narrative, and presents some interesting philosophical discussions along the way. It's not a classic SF novel, but I enjoyed it and I think that others would too.

Maria Dobos says

This was my first encounter with **John Brunner's** work and I must admit it was quite enjoyable. Even though many reviewers say this isn't one of his best novels, I liked it; it was an interesting point of view on how humankind will deal with different alien species and approach the challenges brought by a multi-planetary society.

Squirrel says

I've owned this book most of my life; if I read it as a child, I definitely didn't understand it. Reading this now, 50+ years post-publication, I am struck by how clever, fresh, insightful, and positive it is. It strikes me as a model blend of the best SF of the 40s and 50s and the skillful breaking of the limiting mindset that insisted only engineering counted as science.

In all, however, this reading it struck me as a 5-star tale, with interesting characters, credible foibles, great thinking piece, enjoyable story...except. Except for the too-convenient ending, where we can't miss that two critical contributors to murder attempts are not held accountable for their parts, and instead are multiply rewarded because of it. This sours the story, making us think, "Really? It's okay if I sponsor murderers, as long as I get someone else to pull the trigger?"

Still, I'll read this book again after some time, and see what else I learn from it.

Florin Constantinescu says

This is a decent vintage sci-fi novel.

The plot is original enough (and short enough) and the writing style is clear enough to make you finish it in ~24 hours.

However, a while after finishing it, all you'll be able to remember is the fact that you had a good time reading it. Which in some cases is much more than you would with some other books.

Jim says

Brunner is one of my favorite SF writers and this one is not one of his more famous novels, but I like it. I read this book published in 1965 for the first time back in the 70s and have now given it a second reading. Brunner likes to look at the social implications of future developments and here he shows a strong effect of humanity's contact with aliens. Some Earthmen have shown a strong racism toward aliens and have formed "The Stars Are for Man League" to make humans supreme in the galaxy. Their attacks on aliens are for the purpose of destroying any possibility of good relations between humans and aliens.

The hero of the story is a World Federation bureaucrat by the name of Vincent and he wants to stop the fanatics of TSAFML-- but the most interesting character for me is Anovel, the 8-foot-tall blue horse-faced Regulan. He seems to have his own agenda....

Kent says

Not quite as good as I was hoping, but still a good political/mystery thriller type of book. Maybe not a thriller. It involves an anti-alien group who is attacking visiting alien representatives on Earth. Roald is the main character and works in the Bureau of Culture and is sent to accompany the newest group to Earth and gets involved far deeper than he would have expected. As usual, Brunner does very well at portraying human behavior on grounds of xenophobia and intolerance. I can only imagine this is how things would be in the future if we were to actually be in contact with life outside our own planet.

Jeremy says

This is my first actual review as compared to just rating the book, so please be gentle. :)

At first I could barely wade thru this book. I kept wanting to give it up...it became tedious and remembering names, the twists and turns, who was who was a hassle.

But I stuck with it and I am glad that I did. About half-way thru the book it became a lot better, moved faster and became a lot clearer. It was as if it had two different authors.

So my advice, for what it is worth, if you find yourself ready to give up on the book, keep going... it will be worth it.

Kevin says

THE LONG RESULT

In an advanced society racism rears its ugly head and alien visitors are the targets. Who are the conspirators and why the hatred?

John Brunner weaves a terrific tale; he manages to capture the reader's attention with his subtle yet potent prose. The book's ebb and flow rides on a undercurrent of social unrest.

Starhome is a space colony formed by earth. Space colonies are expected to be just that; a space colony. Starhome is much more. Looking to break away from earth and form a separate nation in space, Starhome concocts a plan to disrupt the peace of earth: The Stars Are For Man League. The League is a front to keep the politicians busy while Starhome prepares to ask for its freedom.

This was a terrific book and a book, which tackles the subject of racism and hatred. John Brunner wrote this book in 1965, so some of the science and technology are dated but the subject remains fresh and relevant.

I highly recommend this book.

Mike S says

John Brunner is a great story teller, this book started out a little stiffly but got better as it went along, with quite an imaginative ending. I have read several books by Brunner and look forward to re-reading them since a couple of decades has gone by.
