



Oms en série

Stefan Wul

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Que sont devenus les hommes ?

Les survivants du grand cataclysme ont été recueillis par les draags, géants bleus aux yeux rouges, qui les ont emmenés sur leur planète, où le temps s'écoule beaucoup plus lentement que sur la Terre.

Asservis, domestiqués, ils sont devenus des oms, des êtres dégénérés au service de leurs nouveaux maîtres.

Mais peu à peu, menés par le jeune Terr, petit om d'une intelligence supérieure, ils retrouveront le goût de la liberté et affirmeront leur humanité face aux draags.

Oms en série Details

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Andrew says

Simple concept, great ideas but pretty juvenile. The writing seems to have been lost a bit in the translation to English. The animated film is how this story was meant to be portrayed I believe. Okay book, not fantastic.

Liam says

I haven't watched the film. Something appears to have been lost in the English translation of this, as sometimes there is awkward vocabulary and grammar.

This seems too simple and unfinished. There was no plot twist, it was purely exposition>falling action, I was waiting for something to happen. Maybe the film will improve my opinion, but the only meaningful idea mentioned here that I spotted was:

"We are only accountable to ourselves, and we can only rely on ourselves"

Edward says

Loved the animated film when I first saw it in 1984, waited for decades for an English translation of the French novel that inspired it. I was hoping the book would reveal subtleties of the storyline or other intangibles of the imagination that a movie can't leave to chance, but I was disappointed. At times tedious (even for a 154-page book), there's no real character development or depth to anything that occurs, it's more like a timeline of events. I was intrigued as a fan of the film, but disappointed as a reader.

Dang Ole' Dan Can Dangle says

Most will be familiar with Stefan Wul's *Oms en série* through the animated film adaptation released in 1973, *La planète sauvage* to French speakers, *Fantastic Planet* to English speakers. It's certainly how I discovered this book. And while I thought the film was fine for what it was: a beautifully animated and drawn film with some truly fantastic designs and an interesting premise, I felt it was lacking in almost every other regard. I was hoping the book it was based on could provide me with something a bit more substantial.

Written in 1951, it wasn't until a few years ago that it was finally translated to English. The writing feels very mediocre, but that could be more the fault of the translator than the author. Same goes for the sloppy and inconsistent grammar. If the writing ever held any eloquence it has since been lost. The translation gets the job done in telling the story, and I suppose we should be grateful that this even got an English translation, but I definitely suspect it to be the work of an amateur.

The story itself is simple and straight-forward. If you're familiar with the film then you know the basic story. There's some differences but for the most part it's essentially the same tale: On an alien planet humans (Oms)

are ruled by giants (Traags), who treat them as mere animals, until the humans (Oms) get tired of the oppression and rise up. It's an interesting, even if simple, premise. I like the idea that if we seemed as small as ants to someone we would be treated as such. I liked how the Oms used their shorter lifetimes to their advantage, being able to work faster and develop quicker than the Traags. I liked the way evolution was handled, which I'll let the book's own "Spraw's theory" explain:

"Spraw was a scholar from the last lustrum. He claimed the Oms once enjoyed a brilliant degree of civilization similar to ours, but that its perfection was the very reason of a gradual sclerosis. Strictly imprisoned within their rules and regulations, the Oms did not have the need to think. Spraw thought instinct took over their intelligence. Why think when one leads a perfect life where everyone knows in advance what they must do? The Oms' intelligence, how can I say, wasted away gradually, like a useless organ. Their lifestyle regressed and stagnated. Their civilization's progress thus stopped."

That's about as deep as the book ever gets, but it's still interesting. The fact that in a truly perfect world instinct would be more useful than intelligence is certainly a plausible one. The book later goes on to explain how the Traags, in ruling the Oms, gave them back their individuality, their taste for freedom, and put them back on the road to progress. Cool stuff, wish there was more like it in the book. Also perhaps worth mentioning is the likely Cold War influence that was present in this book, as with many sci-fi books of the time.

Like I said, it's a light read. There's not much here. The sloppy translation doesn't help matters. The short novel has its moments but certainly not enough of them to make it anything truly worthwhile. I'd say stick with the film, not because it does anything better (aside from the visuals, of course), it'll just waste less of your time (73 mins.).

Wraith Tate says

I first saw *Fantastic Planet*, the extremely trippy animated film based on this book when I was, I believe, in middle school. I at last decided to check and see if my local library had a copy of the novel. Some of the elements of the story were changed quite a bit for the movie, which was interesting.

However, I think this edition should really have had a better editor. The formatting of it was inconsistent, and there were many typos and spelling errors. Sometimes the "flow" of the text felt very awkward, as if the translator was trying to put down an almost word-for-word translation of the original French text. That may be a guess on my part, of course, since I don't read French and have never seen a French version of the book.

On the whole, I'm glad I read it; I just wish the book had been formatted better, and the translation perhaps "smoothed out" a bit.

G says

The animated film based on this book is truly great. This book itself reads more like a synopsis of a sci-fi epic than a novel. The scope of the narrative is quite large while the pace of the action is very rapid with little or no elaboration of any of the characters except the protagonist - whom we still know very little about. The writing itself (translated from the French, of course) is fairly rudimentary, and again, reads more like outline notes than well crafted prose. Still, the central idea is a great one.... I can't recommend this as a great book but anyone who loves the film version and has a few hours to spare should be amused.

Sarah says

Despite some cool concepts and interesting (if poorly crafted) imagery, this book was awful.

Reason the first: the writing was just bad. the author waffles between overwrought, confusing metaphors used to describe small details and single sentences used to describe entire civilizations. The dialogue is unnatural, but not in an interesting, "oh they are speaking an alien language," way. He also shifts at random in a few spots to using very modern-earth-based similes which unnecessarily and incongruently break the fourth wall..and also...

Reason the second: ...are racist. When you describe the "voluptuous" undulations of the tentacles on a carnivorous plant as being "like a depraved oriental dancer" under the hot lights of a theater, you have lost me. It's not only racist, but also...

Reason the third: ...super sexist. This in addition to the human society only allowing fertile women to contribute by breeding, and only allowing sterile or menopausal women to work. So.

fuck you and your bullshit Stephen Wul. I have no idea how this novel has survived into the 21st century.

Jim says

The first part was great and very much like the wonderful film. Part two and three were not. A bit disappointing as I absolutely love the film that was based on this book.

Brittney says

Fantastic Planet is a short novel about two opposing groups, the ruling Traag's and the subordinate Om's which are taken from Earth by the Traag's after the stagnation of their civilizations and intelligence to be kept as pets. They later break free of their captivity and after much adventure become an equal race alongside the Traag's. How charming.

Fans of the animated movie version may be disappointed. The storyline is similar at the beginning, but quickly diverges from the films plot. So, if you had hoped for the book to be a perfect literary repetition of the later film, think again. That is not to say that the book is uninteresting.

It is a very simple, straight-forward read; sometimes too simple for my liking, especially in the dialogue, but perhaps that could be put off to the translation into English. The plot wavers from time to time; some things that could have been focused on in more detail were skipped over, and vice versa. There are a number of sections that come off as ponderous, others that seem rushed.

Though books usually surpass their film-adaptations in most situations, I don't feel wrong in saying I much preferred the animated film, La Planete Sauvage (Fantastic Planet), to the book. Of course, I am thankful to Stephan Wul for writing this story in the first place, so that it could later be adapted into a film.

If you are looking for an elaborate, deep book with an intriguing plotline and unique story, I would suggest you skip this. I'm not a huge fan of sci-fi literature but I am absolutely sure there are much better books out there that tell the same basic story as Fantastic Planet. For fans of the film interested to read what spawned such a marvellous animation, this book might be of some interest.

Ksenia Anske says

Surreal sci-fi. A story told in images. Gave me a fantastic, drugged feeling.

Brenna says

Dans ce roman simple, il y a l'histoire de les étrangers d'espace s'appelle les Draags ("Traags" dans le film "La Planete Sauvage") et leur animaux familiers (mais ces animaux est, en réalité, les hommes - ou "Oms" - qui est tres petit pres de les Draags). Quand l'Om de un petit Draag s'appelle Tiwa a disparu, il etait tres malheureuse... mais pour l'Om Terr, l'aventure est commencer! Il se reunit avec un autre om s'appelle Brave, qui est le patron d'une troupe des Oms sauvage, qui habitent dans un arbre gros...

L'histoire est simple, mais aussi tres complexe. C'est un roman science-fiction, bien sur, mais les themes sont fondamentaux et universel. Des Oms (ou des hommes, peut-etre...?) etait faire pour être libres.

Pour le petit Tiwa, l'histoire est triste et tragique parce qu'il etait le seule Traag qui etait un caractere sympathique - il a aime simplement son animal familier, et le lecteur de cette roman doit sentir pour le petit étranger d'espace, tout seule apres Terr soit parti.

Un roman fantastique - un de mes favoris!

Carl says

A 2010 translation (the first time ever in English) of the 1950's Novel (entitled Oms En Serie) which was made into the 1973 cult classic animated film La Planete Sauvage (Fantastic Planet).

it is difficult to give this allegory/novel a fair chance reading it nearly 60 years after its initial publication. it has such a simplistic and small story and plot, but that is its point. It is an allegory of race relations, ethnic conflict and societal genocide.

Humanity, or what's left of it, has been brought from earth to the planet Ygam by the Draags, a giant blue-skinned, red eyed race. There the humans are known as Oms, treated as savages and used as lowly servants and pets.

Gradually under the leadership of Terr, a very intelligent Om who leads a desperate group of renegade Oms, the remaining humans fight for their freedom until they reach an accord to share power with their former masters.

A Biting satire of the collective over the individual, it is best read as a historical comment on the folly of humanity, both in the 1950's and now and the future.

J.j. Metsavana says

Kuulsat ulmemultifilmi "La Planete Sauvage" on ilmselt paljud näinud. Omamoodi kurjoosumina on see film isegi olemas eestikeelse dublaaziga. Ning kuigi film ilmus 73 aastal ja raamat juba 50nendatel (ei viitsinud täpsemalt kontrollida) tehti teose tõlge ingliskeelde alles 2010 aastal. Igaljuhul on filmiga kõige tugevamalt seotud teose esimene pool ehk Terri noorus ja mehistumine (ka seal on väikesi kõrvalepõikeid ja suuremaid-väiksemaid erinevusi). Lõpp on juba hoopis teine ning ühel poolt küll vähem ulmelised (filmis sekkusid inimesed otseselt kuidagi traagide paljunemisse) aga samas raamatu versioon on põnevam. Võideldakse mitmesuguste koletistega ja see kuidas inimesed endist kaitsevälja jaoks energiat imesid oli ka nutikas. Kokkuvõtteks kõhklesin tükk aega hinde juures nelja-viie vahel ning otsustasin lõpuks nelja kasuks kuna minuarust jäi Terr kuidagi liiga vähe lahtirkirjutatud tegelaskujuks. Karismaatiline liider kindlasti aga veel? ma ei saanud isegi aru, et missugune oli ta suhtumine traagidesse. Pidas ta neid endi lepitamatuteks vaenlasteks või pigem ei? Häbematult vähe saime kuidagi sellest kõigest teada. Ehk siis üks väheseid raamatuid mis minuarvates oleks võinud pisut pikem olla.

Lionel says

Deux choses positives à retenir: l'idée des hommes comme animaux de compagnies du race extra-terrestres plus évoluées et le temps relatif à la biologie des espèces.

Au-delà de ça, tout va beaucoup trop vite, il n'y a quasiment pas de background, on parle finalement peu des draags (je n'ai toujours pas d'image précise d'eux en tête) ni des autres espèces animales. Dommage

Aaron Kent says

What sets this book apart from many of its contemporaries in science fiction is that an award winning animated film was made (haven't seen it yet) Outside of that, this is on par with a fair amount of the science fiction of this caliber. It had moments but just felt rushed a overly simple towards the novels end.
