



Title 67

One year after the end of our BBC French broadcasts about *Voyages Interplanétaires*, the news was released in Washington in August 1958 that the most spectacular voyage still possible on our Planet had been achieved: A submarine, the **USS Nautilus**, had reached the North Pole submerged under the ice and made the first trans-polar crossing from the Pacific to the Atlantic ocean.

To commemorate this event, I decided to present a copy of Jules Verne's first luxury edition of *20 000 Lieues sous les Mers*, the *Edition polychrome*, to Commander William R. Anderson USN of the USS *Nautilus*, to acquaint him with Jules Verne's story of his imaginary *Nautilus* cruising below the ice of the South Pole. Handing over the original French book at the Headquarters of the US Navy in London is recorded in this photograph with Rear Admiral Robert W. Cavenagh USN, US Naval Attaché London (right) and Captain A. Davis RN, British Naval Intelligence (left) looking on, as the author (centre) turns a page. The book was published in Paris in 1870 and I had searched for a year to find a copy (*Official US Navy Photograph*, published in *Navy Times* on 24 November 1959).

In addition to editing *Discovery* I always did other work, mostly writing but also broadcasting and some television. So, when I was sacked by the British Managing Director of CIBA for refusing to write a semi-political speech for him as a Member of Parliament, I was not worried about my future livelihood, particularly as Dr Erni saw to it that I received a 'silver' handshake.

My freelance article with the greatest number of readers was called 'The Breeding Storm' and was a whole page in *The Guardian* of 21 November 1961. It dealt with the ever growing number of people on planet Earth. It was reprinted on the front page of the *San Francisco Chronicle*, four days later and I was very proud. I took as my text a statement by Professor A.V. Hill:

"If ethical principles deny our right to do evil in order that good may come, are we justified in doing good when the foreseeable consequence is evil?"

To this day, there has not been a satisfactory solution to the world population explosion, except through birth control. Many prejudices still prevent its efficient use for all who want and need it. [See Title 388]

At the invitation of the French Service of the BBC in London, an integral part of its World Service, Arthur Garratt and I produced for 6 months a twice weekly 30-minute programme. In 1956 we aimed to foretell human space travel, (the first unmanned satellite, *Sputnik* was not launched till October 1957) and we decided to imitate Jules Verne who had called all his books at the end of the last century *Voyages Extraordinaires*. Based on strictly known scientific facts, we extrapolated to the best of our knowledge and suitably dramatised, our *Voyages Interplanétaires*. They were received in France with some acclaim.

Arthur Garratt was a brilliant physicist with some private means which allowed him great independence of thought and action. He was a true professional in broadcasting and later television and was widely used as an 'anchor-man' for scientific programmes. In our team work he provided the basic physics and the dramatic episodes, whereas I was perhaps best in the extrapolations. We covered all stages from launching manned rockets from Earth to a permanent lunar base and we stipulated an 'International Interplanetary Authority' for these broadcasts. We gave all astronauts a different nationality and an appropriate national name. Our excellent professional BBC producer was French, Pierre Rollin.

On our Paris press conference organised by the BBC, I met a charming lady, called Gloria de Medinacelli. We promptly named the doctor at the Moon base after her. But when later she refused my invitations, she was unfortunately struck by a meteorite at the lunar base and killed. *Sic transit gloria lunae*.

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