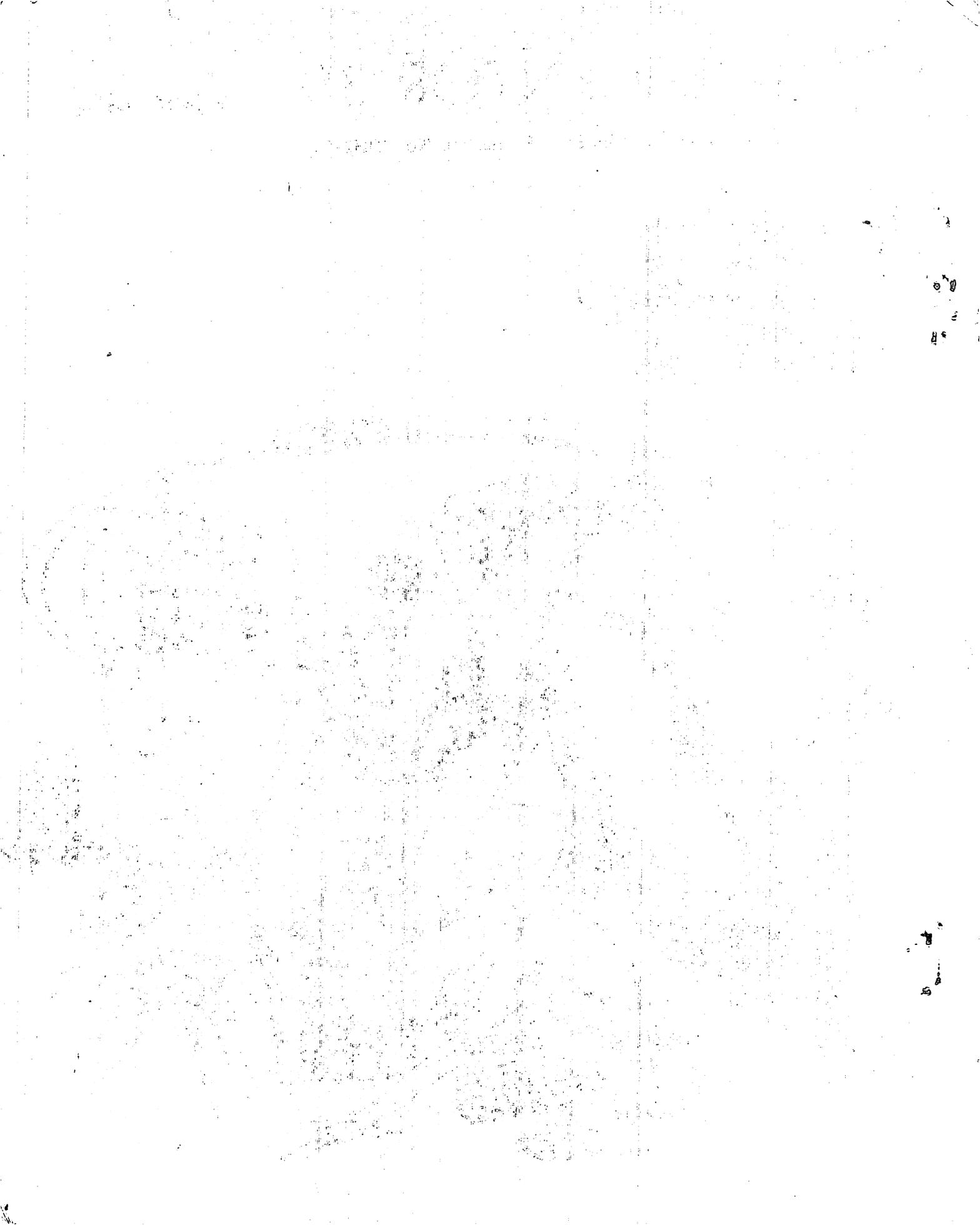


THE MENTOR 39

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THE MENTOR

SCIENCE FICTION

AUGUST 1982

NUMBER 39

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RON'S ROOST

THE STATE OF THE ART

Earlier this year the government tried to put a tax on books - a sales tax. It was defeated in the Senate. About this time I decided to consolidate some things in regard to fan publishing and see just what was required by government agencies.

One of the biggest costs with fan pubbing is the sales tax on the materials used - paper, ink, ribbons, typers, etc. Many fans claim sales tax exemptions under the First Schedule of the Sales Tax (Exemptions and Classifications) Act. This saves them 20% sales tax. The item they claim under is Item 113 A-C, which says goods that qualify as Aids to Manufacture to exempt goods are exempt from sales tax. Books and magazines are exempt sales tax under the First Schedule. This was OK up till the 19th August, 1981, when the rules were changed to ensure that only goods which are used exclusively or primarily and principally for the purpose of the business come within the exemption. Note that reference to 'business'. In other words, any manufactured goods have to be produced by a business.

How do you start a business? As far as I know you have (officially...) to run a business for profit. To prove this you have to have (somewhere) in the magazine produced, a price. To help you along you need a business name, eg 'Duper Press'. Unfortunately, under the Business Names Act any person who uses a business name which is not registered can be up for a \$200 fine or six months breaking up rocks. Registration is done through the State Corporate Affairs Office, and in NSW is \$15 for three years.

I figure the sales tax you would save is about \$280 over those three years. Then there is the savings on the typer and mimeo/offset. (Second hand goods do not pay sales tax).

Income Tax is also interesting. From what I understand a Partnership must submit a kind of return to the Commissioner of Taxation, but a Sole Trader includes any profits in his/her ordinary tax return, and it is amazing what useless businessmen/women the average fanzine editor is. They can't seem to make money, let alone break even...

I had an interesting conversation with a Sales Tax Investigator at work the other week and found out what I suspected from my own Investigation work - records must be kept for sales tax purposes of goods bought exempt sales tax and the use to which they are put - eg production records, stock records/books, etc. It is extra work if you buy exempt sales tax - you must keep records - because they do check up on you. But the savings is worth it, I think.

THE EMPTY CITY

BY PETER LEMPERT

I am walking down Elizabeth Street dressed in a suit of black with a matching wide brimmed hat.

I draw up at the intersection and while I press the button that will change the danger-red 'DON'T WALK' sign to green 'WALK' with the barrel of the machine-gun, I puff clouds of smoke from my pipe and wait, one hand is always near the trigger; after all, one can't be too careful in the streets of Sydney what with the crime wave on the increase and of course, I forgot to mention that there is... THEM!

As I wait for the light to change I watch the people around me - they are all dressed differently and none look exactly alike and yet, there is something not quite right about this casual crowd. I see it and yet can not identify it.

I realise a question nagging at the back of my mind like the gentle repeated moves of the water in the harbour and I clarify it:

'Why don't they notice me?'

Perhaps they envy my machine-gun and do not notice it to spite me?

I look closely at their eyes, there is no retinal movement, they are like sheep tending to their own needs, but is that different from any other day? They move about me like regulated ants and I smile at my own comparison; yes, even better than sheep, like regulated ants! Overhead the looming buildings warp into ant-hills and I see people in a slow but steady stream transverse from one hill to another and...

There is a red sign across the street and it changes to 'WALK'.

My long legs take me away from the crowd with ease and I cross the road and reach the footpath before the light flashes back to 'DON'T WALK'.

I see myself reflected off shop windows, my! What a tall dashing figure I cut, and view myself for a moment and then turn back to the path only to find that the crowd have overtaken me and are well up the path, but that's impossible!

I start after the crowd and catch them at the next set of lights just as the 'WALK' sign comes on and I quicken my step to be the first to reach the other side leaving the crowd in the wake of my smoke.

My breath comes shorter from the exertion and I stop at the window of a gunshop. There is the usual array of rifles, and the usual array of expensive price tags but nothing worthwhile... Wait! What is this? No, it can't be! Aren't handguns banned to public sale?

Quicker than lightning, he appears! He's about six feet tall and has black hair and a rough beard that takes in his moustache; jutting from his lips is a black cigar, and although we are separated by the glass I can hear every word he's saying.

"With this fourty-five magnum I can blow your head off! There's a price on your head and I aim to collect it!

His right hand lifts the gun up and his left comes over to slam the hammer back. That was a mistake! I aim the barrel and fire and as the glass shatters and falls, so does he.

I lower the barrel, smoke drifts from it.

"You forgot one thing, I can blow your head off, too!"

I turn away, and my eyes behold blasphemy. The crowd has overtaken me again!

I storm after them but they are too far away, I am left behind.

Across the road flowers run rampant, splendid in their multi-colours.

I cross the road regardless of traffic, I have to reach Hyde Park!

I sit down among a flower bed and take in the fragrant air which for a moment overpowers my pipe. I feel the flowers, so delicate, spring up from the earth in bright patches, they exude a feeling of life, they are perhaps the only things alive in the city.

Something moves behind me - I leap whirling around and fire.

It is one of them! But it moves too quick and hides in the long grass. Yes, the grass is certainly high. The gardener must have died and no-one has replaced him, or no-one has noticed the length of it. After all, would an ant appreciate beauty?

I wade through the grass, my eyes just peering above it, wary of an attack and step onto a path.

I see a fountain in the distance and head toward it. As I approach, a figure seems to detach itself. I hold my fire, there is something familiar about it, about him.

He is tall and dressed in barbaric clothes and has a sword strapped to his side.

I draw up beside him and observe the fountain - the water no longer founts and is putrifying into a cesspool.

"You promised," he says.

I scratch my chin and smoke, then remove the pipe to speak.

"There is nothing more I can do."

"You never did enough".

"You condemn me for things beyond my control."

"And what about me?" A third voice says.

I look to my left and behold a good looking young man. Only thing is, he has abnormal hands and feet for they are enormous.

"Was I not to be?"

"You were to be the greatest and I weep for your stillborn~~ness~~."

"Why?" They both ask.

I was about to answer when they shout a warning.

I whirl and face a mechanical thing that stands twenty feet high and reaches an extension towards me.

I stand my ground and fire, the bullets whine incessantly and then the thing topples and I dive aside as it falls in the fountain. Contact! The water short-circuits it, bright sparks leap. It does not stir.

I stand alone.

I walk away, back towards Elizabeth Street and cross back over and resume walking. Some people are walking the opposite way but they take no heed of me. I think sometimes that I don't exist.

I am jostled by a man emerging from a bookstore, his arms are full of books and they fall pandemoniously to the ground.

"Thou illiterate person! Can't thou read?"

"Hey, aren't you Viking?"

"I be he." He bends down to pick up his books; I help him.

"Asimov?"

"Scientifically accurate."

"A bore of the first kind," and pick up the next book.

"Wells?"

"Prophet of the future."

"A bore of the second kind," and pick up the next book.

"Verne?"

"Very scientifically accurate."

"The ultimate bore," There are no more books. "I see that you are well up on your Australiana. Now if you want something really far out and homegrown I've got this story and it's about.."

"Wait a second! Aren't you the author of Vangor the Vip Slayer?"

"That's right," I answer.

"Well, stand aside sir! I've no time for fantasy and gothic horror!" And with a huff he walks off with speed.

"It wasn't all gothic horror," I yell, "Ya dummy!"

I raise the machine-gun and blast the bookstore and then start on the buildings, they seem to lean over me as I fire and spin about me, faster and faster. I feel as if I am going to.... THEY are coming!

I open my eyes.

At first I can't focus, and then slowly a round object becomes clear.

The clock across the road reads six o'clock. But that isn't true, the sun is high - the clock will always read six o'clock; it stopped a long time ago.

The truth is, I am the only person left.

I am propped against a building, there is a cigar holder at my left side as well as a machine-gun and on my right side is a note pad and pen and a few inches from it a pile of dopesticks.

I stare at them. There isn't much between them - one gets addicted to you, and the other gets you addicted.

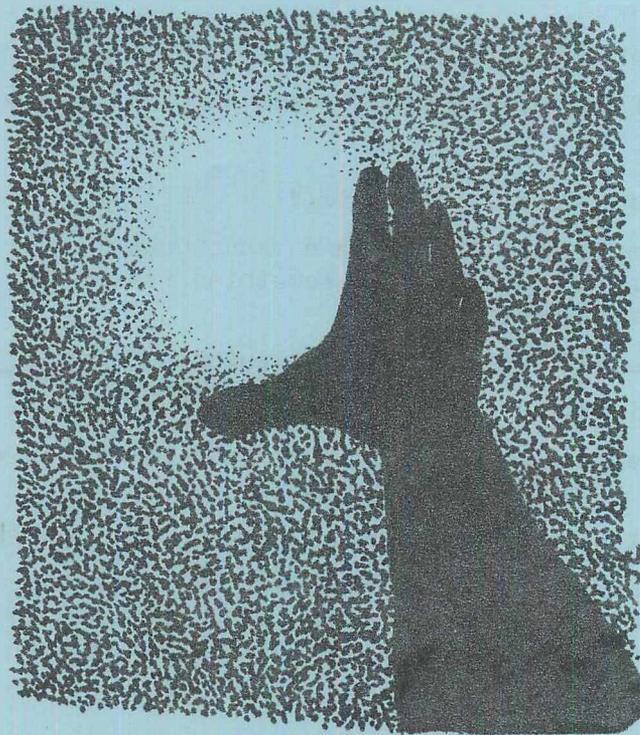
Straight ahead of me is a small wall. It is made of a dull blue-grey stone and yet it is reflective and I gaze at myself: my eyes are haggard and full of tears from yesteryear.

I haven't touched pen to paper in a long time. I have all the time in the world now.

My hand moves and reaches for

- Peter Lempert.

—ooo0ooo—



GRIMESISH GRUMBERLINGS,

A COLUMN BY A. BERTRAM CHANDLER.

THE QUEST FOR FIRE

When I first read about this film in OMNI I decided that it was one that I must see. When it finally came to Sydney I lost no time in keeping this promise to myself, despite quite a few reviews that were less than enthusiastic. In my younger days, when I was one of the Astounding Science Fiction mob, it used to be said that the average magazine illustrator has a mental age of six and can't read. Things have changed for the better. But today, all too often, I come to the conclusion that many film reviewers have a mental age of six and can't think. This dictum seems to apply especially to the reviewers employed by the more prestigious periodicals. The higher the brow, the lower the standard of intelligence.

For many years I have been a Faithful Reader of The New Yorker. My wife is an even more Faithful Reader than myself. Once she said to me, "I regard Time as a necessity and The New Yorker as a luxury - but if I had to do without one or the other I'd do without Time." She, unlike me, is still influenced by The New Yorker's film reviews. Perhaps that statement is not quite true, as I, too, am influenced, but the wrong way. If a science fiction film is sneered at by The New Yorker I decide that it is almost certainly well worth seeing. If The New Yorker raves about any film at all I tend to stay away in droves.

The last time that I allowed myself to be influenced the way intended by a New Yorker review was with Last Tango In Paris. Ms Pauline Kael went into raptures over it. The same Ms Kael did not like Zardoz. One of her whinges was the absurdity of Sean Connery's engaged in (simulated) coitus without taking his trousers down. But Marlon Brando was doing just the same in Last Tango In Paris and Ms Kael did not mind a bit. Probably Ms Kael would have been able to say kind words about The Quest For Fire if Mr. Brando had appeared in it. Unluckily (luckily) there was no part sufficiently subhuman for him.

From the above, you may have gained the impression that Ms Kael did not care much for The Quest For Fire. I must confess that I was in complete agreement with her regarding those lions masquerading as sabre toothed tigers with obvious false teeth and a few half-hearted stripes of park paint on their tawny fur. They looked about as convincing as the 'dinosaurs' in that second, cheap and nasty version of The Lost World - some genius went out into the desert and caught a few lizards and then stuck obviously spurious spines all over their bodies. Getting back to The Quest For Fire, Ms Kael was not impressed by the elephants

disguised as woolly mammoths with fur coats and false tusks and referred to them as refugees from The Muppet Show. Well, that's what they did look like - but I think that it is highly probable that the original woolly mammoths would have conveyed the same impression. I found those on the screen quite convincing.

Ms Kael also spoke slightly of the labours of Mr. Burgess and Mr. Morris regarding the spoken languages and the body language of the various tribes. But the proof of the pudding was in the eating. With all the jabbering and gesticulating subtitles were not required. I just knew what the various characters were saying. And that most 'certainly cannot be said for the vast majority of films with foreign language dialogue.

It is a great pity that the film carries an R classification. It should be compulsory viewing for schools. Oh, there is nudity - which in the context one just didn't notice - and a spot of fairly explicit simulated sex, and large dollops of the brutality which, in those bad old days, was very much a way of life (and death). The Quest For Fire is an experience rather than mere entertainment. The afternoon that I saw it I gained the impression that the entire audience thought as I did. There was no laughter except during the one or two genuinely funny episodes.

But that R classification....

Quite some time ago in The Mentor, I said that there should be a new classification, this is to apply mainly to shorts - NRFHC. Not Recommended For Human Consumption. In The Good Old Days, I said, any competent cinema manager would endeavour to set before his patrons a balanced menu. He would select shorts that would complement the main feature. Today, I complained, there seems to be some sort of package deal and the shorts are almost invariably an insult to the intelligence of those who have come to see the Big Picture.

But, insofar as The Quest For Fire is concerned, somebody really tried and no doubt kidded himself that he had found shorts that must appeal to the intellectuals. Even the sort of cartoon rubbish in which unpleasant little animals can lay their paws on unlimited stocks of high explosives would have been preferable. (At least the occasional loud bang would have kept me awake.)

First was a CSIRO effort called The Living Earth. It was beautifully photographed but as boring as the pages of The National Geographic Magazine, a periodical that can make the most interesting story on Earth - or in the Solar System - deadly dull.

Following this was one of those Canadian Government arty and crafty efforts called Albert Gets His Wings. It was an exercise in the art of Mime. I am, I know all too well, a philistine insofar as most aspects of culture are concerned. Mime, as an art form, leaves me cold. If I were deaf I might see something in it but as my hearing is normal I'm just not interested. It was obvious that every other member of the audience thought as I did. The thing was supposed to be wildly funny but during its showing there was not so much as one feeble titter.

Making it worse, it wasn't even pure Mime. The two actors involved were making noises with their mouths but in no recognisable language. These noises made far less sense than the noises being made by the actors in The Quest For Fire.

The First short, then, was just boring. The second short was an insult to the intelligence of the audience. The feature film could almost have been Time Travel - not necessarily pleasant, far from pretty, but - apart from those absurd lions with the obvious dentures - a most convincing look at the way we used to be.

SOME THOUGHTS ON SCIENCE FICTION

BY BURT LIBE

I first encountered science fiction in 1954 when a high school friend (both of us juniors) invited me over to play chess. His family and two brothers had been eeking out an existence in a not-so-affluent part of Los Altos at the time. The house, quite small and somewhat run-down in appearance, had a yard filled with tall weeds. Bob's 'room', an old trailer with flat tires and shell of fading silver, sat in the midst of those weeds. When I arrived, Bob suggested I wait inside while he finished some last minute chores. After asking just what I might do to pass the time inside a trailer (had never even been inside one before), he said, "Read the books and magazines."

I shrugged and entered the decrepit trailer to find a strange world awaiting. Aging paper scents from vividly colored piles of mouldering pulps beckoned with promises of adventure, thrills, and excitement. Other than the hard trailer bed and small table space, these magazines stood piled everywhere else. This suggested an obvious answer to why Bob, himself, was always broke. Titles such as Amazing Stories and Fantastic Adventures conveyed an irresistible air of excitement where thoughts converged and dreams solidified. As an avid comic book fan, I could see my world enlarging.

Suddenly I found myself confronted, then compelled - overwhelmed with a cosmos I never knew existed. The variegated covers first riveted my attention as I quickly checked through stack after stack in rapid succession. Brightly pigmented, highly detailed artwork depicted bizarre scantily-clad women, monsters, fascinating alien, and other futuristic scenes which unfolded before my eyes. I'd always dreamed of the stars, planets, and galaxies. The old Flash Gordon serials on TV had already ignited my longing, and I had my own small reflector telescope with which I'd studied the moon, phases of Mercury, bands and satellites of Jupiter, striations on Mars, the rings of Saturn, and various other globular clusters, nebulae, and galaxies. On a warm clear night, I'd stare up at the millions of stars, gripped with complete rapture, feeling myself being drawn toward them into the Great Chasm of our infinite Universe. And that was before I'd even heard of John Carter, although the original Burrough's versions probably lay right at my fingertips, had I known.

The drab pulp interiors proved a complete letdown. Black and white and lifeless, they repelled my eye. But hooked fatally I was, from the covers. I chose samplings and found the stories very difficult to read, impossible to follow. Try as I might, story after story, I found them all dry, boring, uninteresting. My enthusiasm faded into extreme disappointment. I felt cheated.

When Bob finally returned, I acknowledged the incredible pictures, but asked if he really understood all that stuff. He returned me a strange disdainful look that hard-core fans reserve for outsiders 'incapable' of comprehending their

sheltered world. Which means, of course, I got no answer, but felt the distinct impression of being scorned as the lowest sub-life-form on Earth. I never understood the full meaning of his reaction at the time. Suffice it to say, I beat him several chess games in a row in retaliation (I was a top-ranked player at the time).

Bob moved away two years later, never explaining how or what those strange stories communicated to him. He only eyed me with alien suspicion each time I'd ask. I haven't seen Bob since. But the mystery gnawed for years and delayed my serious entry into science fiction writing. I'd been writing delightful fantasy stories for children ever since I was seven; but I could not motivate myself to write anything as coarse as what appeared in those mags.

Two decades later I learned those stories in Bob's collection culminated the Campbellese era. After procuring some late 40's and early 50's pulps and comparing them to today's SF writing, I noted the problems still exist. The three major problems of SF, in my opinion, are:

1. Failure to communicate with the average reader. Most SF writers assume selfish attitudes, and use esoteric and allusory styles slanted toward narrow interests and backgrounds of a few.
2. Failure to appear to general (diversified) readers lacking pre-req backgrounds in SF and its ways.
3. Failure to entertain, with subject matter too dry, rote, and boring.
4. Overstress of violence and depravity (mostly in New Wave).

At this point one might ask what is good literature? Why do many literary classics have the appeal, warmth, and durability so lacking in science fiction? Because, I feel, (1) they have wide general interest, and (2) they communicate with and enrapture large numbers of diversified readers. Ellison, for instance, is one SF/horror/fantasy writer with classicist potential. Despite his depravity his word style hooks, entertains, drags you in with full and complete communication - totally involves the readers. When I read Ellison, I am there.

Science fiction in TV and films has had similar problems. In addition, many SF screen efforts suffer from low budgeting, bad scriptlog, or both. Close Encounters, with its Tarzan-like dialog and plotting, came out very disappointing - a prime example of high-budget special effects ruined with bad scripting. Of the older TV series, I enjoyed Twilight Zone, Star Trek, and Outer Limits. The first episodes of Lost In Space (we don't talk about the rest) were very good. I got my hands on a copy of a pilot script which was excellent. The series was originally called Space Family Robinson; but the changed title took effect when the series hit the screen.

Among my past film favorites are: The Time Machine, Rocketship X-M, The Time Travellers, Westworld and Futureworld. These films, despite their fluffs and some production errors and other drawbacks, 'communicated' to me. Their detriments seemed minimal. The old Flash Gordon serials have acquired tremendous nostalgic impact. They continue to appeal to my sense of wonder. 2001, the movie, on the other hand, had a ruined ending; but its other values saved it.

From 1954 to 1972 I thought about different SF stories, continued writing juvenile fantasy, pursued motion picture scripting, but sold nothing. In 1972 I rediscovered a fan world enlarged to nuclear proportions and my juvenile stories and articles have started to appear in print....

- (C) 1981 Burt Libe.

VERTICAL HORIZONS LADIES - I THANK YOU

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT AND REFLECTION

FROM FRANK BRYNING

I owe a debt of acknowledgement to the Vertical Horizons Group of Sydney's "femme fen" of the 'fifties, mentioned in The Mentor 28, in Part VI of A History Of Australian Fandom, adorned by a photograph of some of the ladies. I would be grateful if I might make acknowledgement in The Mentor - the most likely medium through which to reach any whom it may concern, and the most appropriate since you published the Group in No.28.

Now, quite some time after The Mentor 28 appeared, it happens that The Bulletin (July 6, 1982), in its quarterly Literary Supplement, has published an item of mine (not sf) which I entitled Vertical Horizons. I hereby acknowledge, with gratitude and affection, having borrowed or otherwise misappropriated the title from the fanzine of that name published during the 'fifties by the Vertical Horizons Group.

The Bulletin item is a 'nonpoem' complaining about what I regard as the futilities of 'contemporary nonpoetry'. While this is not the time to pursue such a complaint, nor the place, whether I have a case or not, this is the occasion and the venue for me to acknowledge to the ladies who once published Vertical Horizons my debt to them for the loan of their title. I hope they may regard my borrowing of it as a tribute to them.

Since I first saw the fanzine Vertical Horizons I have regarded its naming as inspired - in the sense that it was then, and still is, perhaps the best expression of the ideas and aspirations we fans then nurtured in our devotion to our special literature, science fiction. We were, in fact, exploring in the only way available the boundless universes of physical phenomena and intellectual speculation.

Combination of the two incongruous yet complementary and not entirely contradictory concepts of 'vertical' and 'horizons' in the one banner seemed also to me to flaunt heroically the challenge we sf addicts offered the orthodox, who looked on us as crackpots. It added strength to our satisfactions in being voices crying in the wilderness.

I remember fondly the world Vertical Horizons supported by an illustration of a space whip blasting up vertically over a crescent 'horizon' which was a segment of the curvature of Earth or some far planet. Such horizons, yet to be discovered beyond our blue skies, we were then looking upon, and beyond.

(Today's Pioneer and Voyager probes are only now showing them to the rest of humankind.) To me Vertical Horizons seemed to be then saying all this - and saying it gaily, thumb-to-nose. I have cherished the words ever since.

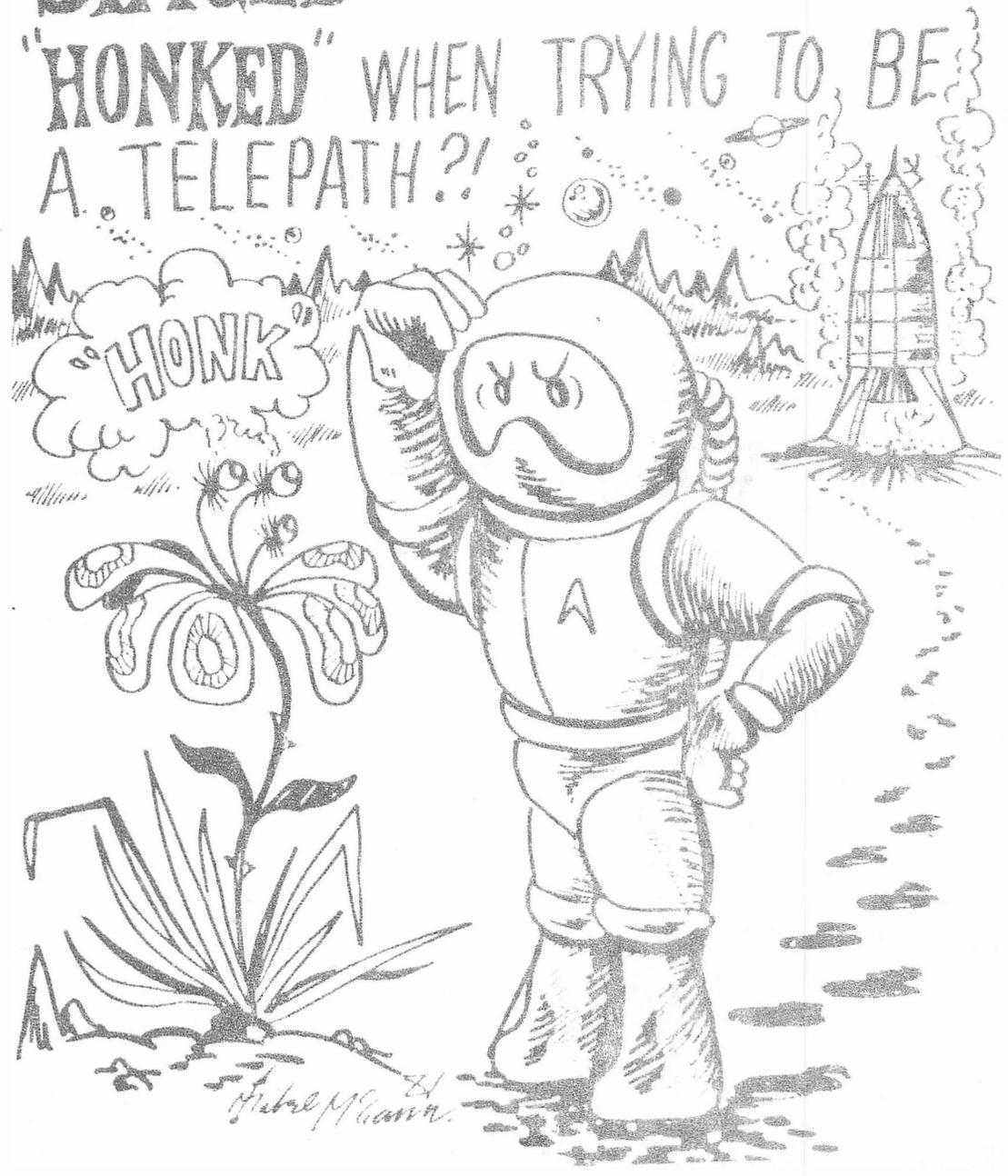
Now, I confess, I have applied them in a much less worthy cause - to tilt satirically at what appears to me as the topsy-turvy unintelligibility of some contemporary 'nonpoets', their lack of concern to communicate, the neutering of word meanings in which they deal.

As I said above, that argument does not belong here, true or false. But here I do again acknowledge my debt to the ladies of the Vertical Horizons Group for the loan of their splendid fanzine title. I hope they will not think I have misused it, but if any should, I pray they may forgive me.

- Sincerely,
Frank Bryning.



SPACED OUT!... IS GETTING
"HONKED" WHEN TRYING TO BE
A TELEPATH?!



THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

PHYSICS DEPARTMENT

PHYSICS 439

LECTURE 1

STATISTICAL MECHANICS

LECTURE 1

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STATISTICAL MECHANICS

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STATISTICAL MECHANICS

LECTURE 1

me reading to see what happened next. A lot of SF published in Australia in short story format (both fan and pro) seems to me poorly written and/or predictable. Concerning The Transition by Peter A. Kells, I have nothing against vignettes as such, but I've read so many short-shorts in Isaac Asimov's SF Magazine over the last few years I've become immune to them unless they're extraordinarily striking.

Your reprint about the IPD idea made me wince - partly at recognition with how little males worry about the problems of IUDs and similar devices. It demonstrated the double-standard in action perfectly; ie no males would want to put up with what they don't think twice about inflicting on females.

Your review of Glut's Frankenstein Lives Again! misses the point of the book I'm afraid. Of course it reads like "the paperback version of a B-grade movie"; as I read him, Glut is novelizing a non-existent Universal horror film from the 1930's or 1940's. If he was around 40 years earlier, I'm sure he'd be submitting scripts for Karloff and Lugosi films. Since these are the 1980's, the only way he can recreate this genre is in print - nowadays the term 'horror movie' means a film about a mad killer with a big knife and a small brain. Like Glut, I yearn for the old days when you could go to a movie like Mask Of Fu Manchu or Son of Dracula and come out not feeling as though you were spattered with blood.

⌈Talking about horror movies - Channel 7 is running the old Flash Gordon serials on Saturdays at 8.15 am in the kids shows. At least now I've got a reason for watching TV at that time... - Ron.⌋

Bruce Weston Jean Weber has asked a question in The Mentor 38 which
10 Cartmell Way, needs to be clarified. I am real! Unfortunately at the time
Blaga, of reading A. Bertram Chandler's column, Nothing Like A Good
W.A. Whinge, I was misappropriating the main intention. I wasn't
6061. feeling that well at the time of writing my LoC and foolishly
taking the heading as the main theme, I read it and wasn't amused. However by just
reading a few lines of it, I really enjoyed it. I am not trying to worm myself out
of a difficult situation, but honestly saying how I feel now. When I find some
time I am going back over the articles A Bertram Chandler wrote and find what I
really missed. Basically I find that when I am in a depressed state of health,
reading becomes very difficult.

I totally contradicted myself when I wrote a bigger whinge. It wasn't meant to be humorous but serious. Unfortunately I had taken the article the wrong way and made myself a bumbling bubble headed fool.

I apologise to Mr Chandler for lashing out at his pieces, in accordance with my ill health at that time.

Roger Waddington .Here's another whingeing Pom...
4 Commercial St., Reading the latest Grumber-
Norton, Malton, lings, I just wish that I had enough knowledge to spot such
North Yorkshire faux pas when they arise. For years, I cheerfully accepted
YO17 9ES, US. the roar of missiles in those battles in outer space, and
couldn't tell the difference between gravity and coriolis
force; and that such writing has been considerably tightened up during the past

few years is no fault of mine! And what else is 'suspension of disbelief' for? No, I have to admit to some degree of jealousy; the only time that I'm ever in a similar situation is in a more fluid medium, ie the television documentary or radio interview where facts are tossed aside in passing and I've just time to express disbelief before the moment's gone for ever.. Never mind, one day the extent of my knowledge will meet the lack of somebody else's, and I'll achieve fame at last. Though I do remember that classic, that had Cinderella losing a glass slipper when it should have been a fur one, the 'vair' of the original French that was read as 'verre'... or was it the other way round?

Incidentally, I think that the 1880 illos missing from his library books will be found in natty frames and lining the walls of social-climbing homesteaders; I was leafing through a recent issue of a magazine featuring books for sale, and found the legend 'grotty condition, but suitable for breaking' against a book of views of a county; and to a book worshipper like myself, that was nothing short of heresy!

And what interests me about your reviews of the same is the preponderance of English titles; is there something about the Australian industry that it can't keep up with the demand? I'd appreciate an update on what's being published over there, rather than over here! And something else that interests me is the price you have to pay for them; I see from today's paper that the rate of exchange is \$1.65 to £1, which makes a price of \$4.95 for a copy of Roadmarks, for instance, seem remarkably excessive.

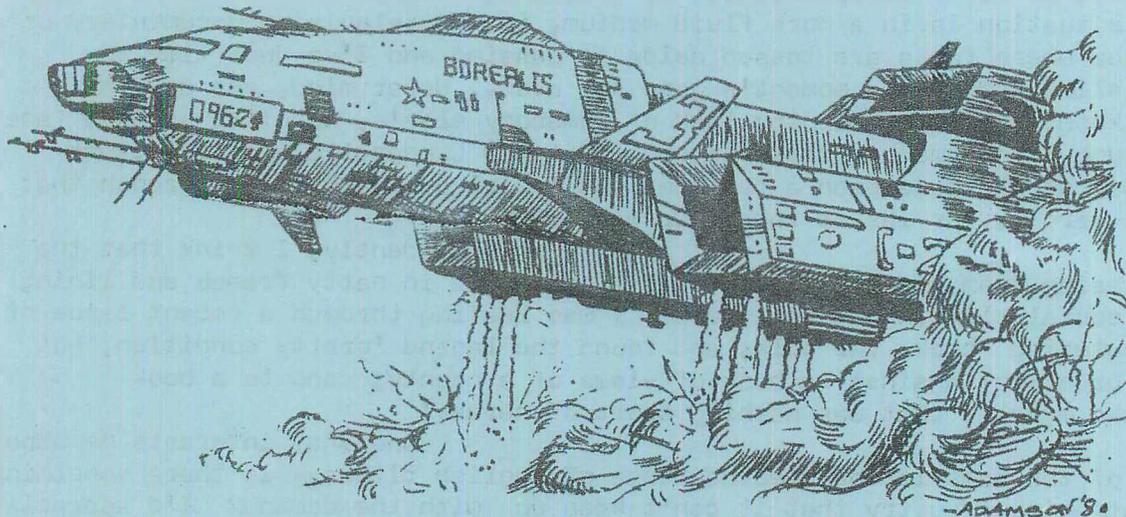
I can't review Aust if the publishers don't send me review copies. Considering that the Govt, through the Book Bounties scheme pays back about 66% of the printing costs of books published in Aust then something is lacking in the Aust. publishing industry. As for the cost of imported books - someone is raking in the money - and it isn't the customers. - Ron

A Bertram Chandler
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Potts Point,
NSW 2011.

I was particularly interested by Harry Warner's letter in The Mentor 38 in which he says, "In contrast to A. Bertram Chandler, I don't know much about anything..." Well, neither do I. Only in a very few fields do I possess more than a layman's knowledge. But as so many people who wouldn't know the sharp end from the blunt end of a ship will persist in writing "sea stories" I am frequently aroused to righteous wrath.

Like Mr. Warner I am often annoyed by the stupidity of fictional characters. For example, recently I read a very competent thriller, written by an ex-policemen - a retired Scotland Yard C.I.D. Commander as a matter of fact. This gentleman, I thought at first, was guilty of a gross error insofar as the conduct of one of his characters was concerned. This man, a soldier, something of an expert on small arms, was left to guard a prisoner. He was handed an automatic pistol by a superior and told that the weapon was loaded and cocked and that he was to use it. The prisoner wriggled out of his bonds. The guard pointed the pistol and pulled the trigger. Nothing happened. He recoiled, at which stage it was obvious that there had not been a round in the chamber. By this time the gun was jammed and the hapless guard was hit with a handy hammer and killed. The escaped prisoner - a detective inspector - investigated. He discovered that he had been meant to make his escape, Apart from anything else the top round in the magazine had been put in back to front.

Of course people, even intelligent people, even experts, are all too often incredibly stupid. But surely that hapless corporal,



having been given a firearm with instructions to use it, would have checked the weapon. Oh, well, it was a reversal of the old dictum: "It's the gun that's not loaded that kills people." In this case it was the gun that was loaded that did not kill people.

So the corporal was stupid. The crooked staff sergeant knew that the corporal was stupid. Nevertheless, he was taking a risk, Just at the one time that the corporal should have acted in character he would have done the wrong thing and made sure that the weapon was in proper working order.

Finally, with reference to my article on convenience foods... I have found a local deli which carries a good stock of all manner of imported goodies in cans.

Mark Ortlieb
PO Box 46,
Marden,
S.A. 5070

Though your editorial in The Mentor 38 says 'if', the tone clearly implies that you yourself believe the accusations you present therein with reference to the Ditmar's presented at Tschaicon. Could I suggest that it might be an idea to check things with those involved before printing material of this nature. Your editorial certainly will not improve feelings between media and 'fannish' fans.

A simple phone call to Justin Ackroyd, con chairman, or Mandy Herriot, who was looking after the awards would have cleared matters up. The situation is as follows:

DITMAR NOMINATIONS RECEIVED BY THE DEADLINE

Q36 - 19; SF COMMENTARY - 15; AUSTRALIAN SCIENCE FICTION NEWS - 11; WEBERWOMAN'S WREVENGE - 11; SCIENCE FICTION - 8; DATA - 8; Others - 14, shared between nine titles. Total fanzine nominations - 103.

According to Justin, there were other nominations forms which arrived after the deadline, but they were destroyed. True, they may have contained the other nominations which you claim were sent in, but that is irrelevant. The committee is obliged to stick to its deadline. If people can't get their forms

in on time, that is unfortunate. However, there was no "disallowing" of any fanzine on the list.

There are only a few people who are on the Melbourne in '85 Committee who were also on the Tschaicon Committee, and none of those were involved in the Awards subcommittee, which consisted of Mandy Herriot, Phil Ware, and Justin Ackroyd.

I'm sorry to see you sink to this sort of editorial, which I see as irresponsible rumour mongering. I like The Mentor, and will continue to LoC it, and, hopefully we will continue to exchange zines, but please don't allow your particular concerns to warp the truth in this manner.

That list of nominated fanzines is interesting - by the nature of the Ditmar's as Australian SF Awards, as I mentioned in my editorial in TM 38 - at least three nominations should not have been allowed - as the fanzines were not primarily SF. As to the others, I think Aust. SF News is not a fanzine as such as it does not trade and is meant to pay for itself (though maybe it doesn't). Data, being a clubzine should not be allowed either - on principle. Clubzines are mostly edited and typed by one person (both Data and Forerunner are..) but the clubs pay for them so they should be excluded.

That cuts that list of 'nominated' fanzine down, doesn't it?

Some time ago several fans were pushing the the creation of FAAN awards for those zines which were primarily fannish. This needs to be done as a matter of urgency. I consider that this section at least, of the Ditmar's needs to be tidied up before the 1983 Australian National Convention to eliminate the distortion created when sf fanzines and non sf fanzines vie for an sf award. - Ron.

John Foyster
21 Shakespeare Grove,
St. Kilda
Vic. 3182

You know I think that I've never had much patience with the fiction you publish, but there's not much of that this issue (of course, one can never be sure with John Alderson's pieces...) However, so far as I can make out, there is one piece of fiction - part of your

editorial.

Despite being on the Tschaicon committee I'm afraid I can't cast any light on whether or not any fanzine was disqualified or not. There doesn't seem to be much case for disqualifying anything as 'sf' these days - at least after Gnomes of Australia won the Best Oz JSF Category some years ago - but as Jack Herman points out in a recent WAHFUL some awfully funny things happen when committees are handling awards.

Anyway, the fiction arises later in your article. I am pretty well placed to inform you on facts about the Melbourne in '85 Committee, and the only person on both the Tschaicon Committee and the Melbourne in '85 Committee was me. As I said above, I didn't know anything about possible disqualifications and there is a good reason for this. These days awards get handled by awards subcommittees, not by whole committees (I'm not sure that this is a terribly good idea, but that's what the rules demand).

Furthermore, the suggestion that the Melbourne in '85 committee might foster the attitude you criticise is pretty unpleasant and inaccurate. On the contrary, it is in the interest of the Melbourne in '85 Committee to encourage all SF groups in Australia. I've done it in the past, and I suspect - no, I know - that the Melbourne in '85 Committee is moving in this direction now.

That's good - there are over 1000 members of the sf media clubs in Aust who haven't heard from the M in '85 committee as far as I know... which makes a good pocket of fans to bolster membership/support. - Ron

You say some pretty strong things on the basis of a rumour; others have done that in the past, but it was then and is now to be regretted. By the way, your rumour seems pretty precise; sounds like a bit of a write-in campaign. There used to be a fan in Sydney who delighted in trying to stuff ballots around fandom, but for some reason saved on postage and mailed all his ballots in one envelope covered by one cheque. I had hoped that that sort of thing no longer occurred. You are at least raising a suspicion in my mind that that spectre may return to haunt us all.

James Styles
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723 Park St.,
Brunswick,
VIC 3056.

You feature two of my favourite writers most issues, A Bertram Chandler and John J. Alderson. I won't discuss their columns in TM 38 except to say I enjoyed both and that in regard to myth, legend and history I find it safer to accept the dictionary meanings.

Richard Faulder has some very worrying ideas. If we are going to depopulate our planet for the dubious short pleasant life the remainder would lead I would suggest that the human race will never explore the universe. Indeed he says the risks of childbirth are greater than the risks of contraception. I'll accept this statement though I would like to peruse some figures (ie proof) and make my own comment that the natural, normal functions of human life have always seemed to me to be the most rational. Surely the "big dreams" and "aquisition of new attitudes" involve greater risks?

I feel sorry for Michael Hailstone in that I beat him to such a good magazine title. In Crux 4 I mentioned some of my reasons for the choice of this title in 1975 and I am still quite happy with it. The title has oome significant personal meaning to me.

Marc Ortlieb may not be my favourite fan writer but he is certainly my favourite LoC writer and makes several good points in his letter. I must punish some puns for him sometime.

As to Harry Warner's comments on the youthful generation, the elder generation had the responsibility of breeding the younger generation and instilling in them the qualities they thought correct. As environment seems to influence more than heredity I can only say "woe the demise of the fascist state".

The comments in the last paragraph come from a person who likes classical music, doesn't smoke, and should be a Christian (being a Roman Catholic, but more Viking-like in attitudes and living pattern). I find many of the younger fen have pseudo-Christian ideals and morals anyway. Christ would have been proud of their pseudo-committment.

I think anyone who lives by the diction 'treat other people as you would like them to treat you' covers about anything. - Ron.

Ron's Roost makes some valid points. As an SF fan more interested in fantasy I have always wondered why there was such a gap between media fen and trufen. As a trufan I will say that Star Trek is more SF than all our fanzines, though I prefer the latter myself. The Ditmars should be raised above such petty manoeuvring as block voting, cliques, pat-on-the-back voting and dubious pressure tactics from persons in positions of responsitivity.

John J Alderson
Havelock,
Vic. 3465.

I find the idea of 'closed-cycle economies' a curious concept and would like Buck Coulson and Richard J. Faulder to elaborate if they think them of any likelihood. However the two aspects queried by Richard deserve comment.

John, Laird of Merchiston, though admittedly preferring his library to public service, apparently found time between running his estate to write a book on theology, design various military weapons, and to devise a calculating machine (apparently forerunner of the slide-rule), and to inventing logarithms. His surname was Napier. He also suggested improvements in farming. The other aspect, music brings to mind the greatest of all musicians (composers) the MacCrimmons. They lived in a non-cash economy and their payment as pipers was a rent-free farm at Borrevaig. Their music is regarded by many as the most unsophisticated and complex of any known. Belike they made their own pipes.

The making of wooden musical instruments is possible and practical by one soul. A neighbour made a violin and I've seen a hand-made octagonal squeezebox that was a magnificent piece of work. Regardless of odd ideas by others the alternate communities envisaged by myself and others would have the time and hopefully the encouragement for such hobbies. Well-practiced orchestras would be more likely than now.

If Peter Kells did a bit of thinking he'd know I hadn't glossed over the problems of self-sufficiency. I wrote of general principles and not of particulars. To deal with pests alone would need something like an encyclopaedia but the placing of a great number of species together is an inbuilt defence against most pests and diseases. Birds, animals and neighbours are a different problem. Bill Mollison's answer to all this was, look on them as a resource. Trap them and put them in the compost. Run an electrified wire around the garden. I know that rats eat up to 80% of food produced in many parts of the world - so why hasn't the world done something about them? After all, rats were not invented to ruin Alderson's vision of utopia. They are with us now, and so are all the other pests and they flourish best in monoculture. I wonder if the New Zealand bird, the weka, could be used against them?

Well, its nice to have Marc Ortlieb define 'historical', that is documented. Most politicians on the other hand regard historical as something in which they were involved. I know a lot of people believe that putting something into print gives it an aura of sanctity but I believe that Dr Goebels would agree that the biggest lies are usually those which are printed. The text Ramses II had carved on some wall or other is on a par with what Malcolm Frazer says about John Cain and age does not lend it any more authenticity. Quite frankly there is no proper documentation for the vast bulk of history, even contemporary history. Marc is not being very honest in quietly substituting 'historical civilization' for my civilization. Now, if my memory serves me well, Peter A. Kells claimed Atlantis was the mother of whatever of the alphabet and presumably of writing, a view from which I demurred. Kells wrote again in The Mentor 36 pointing out that "this ABSURD PHANTASY about the Middle East origin of all civilization" should be swept away, and continues that the "origin of all civilization is in the distant West." Then in The Mentor 37 I conceded that "I am aware that civilization in Western Europe is now believed to predate that of Egypt."

So Marc Ortlieb may be pacified in knowing that Kells is the authority for 'civilization' in the west preceding that of Egypt. However, I find in certain respects that Leslie V. Grinsell's Barrow, Pyramid and Tomb takes the same view regarding chambered tombs. Again I allowed Kells' use of 'civilization' to stand. However, let me suggest that civilization is the stage a society reaches when it fosters self-expression. To

answer the question as to what I meant, its this: Western Europe had highly organised self-expressive societies before any similar societies settled the Egyptian Nile.

As to Michael Hailstone being "bamboozled" by my scepticism of there being ice-ages; I define "ice-age" in the terms of Lyall and successors. I said Western Europe was under ice, not ice-sheets as mis-quoted. This I believe happened by the sudden shifting of the earth's axis of rotation suddenly plunging Siberia into the arctic circle and removing Western Europe into the temperate zone. This process is not in my book, an ice-age. Ice-ages may be an attractive theory but they are mathematically impossible.



R Mapson
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Kilmscott,
WA 6111

I must disagree with your disagreement about my terming your 'reviews' as reviews (all very confusing) According to Collins English Dictionary (this bit is best read in a pedantic tone) a review is, amongst other things: 'a critical assessment of a book... esp. one printed in a... periodical.' You state that you (merely) give your opinion of the book, whether it is worth buying, and what one may expect from it; and it seems amazing to me that you do all this without once making some form of critical appraisal of the book (even if it is one as simple as whether the book appeals to you or not - you are still using some form or system of criticism). So there. (Anyway, by the standards of much that appears in zines under the general term 'review' yours would qualify as such and are at least as good).

Which brings me to the reviews themselves. I must take issue with your review of Mr Wolf's The Claw of the Conciliator. This book revolves (figuratively and literally) around a red giant sun that is dying; the story involves ETs, at least one time traveller, genetic manipulation of animal species, use of solar cells, dead civilisations, dimensional travel, and the Claw itself, amongst other examples of science fiction (the Claw is the nearest thing here to fantasy only because no explanation, either scientific or fantastic, has yet been given). As you state, all these may be replaced by elements of fantasy (your daemons for example) but then so may most elements on any sf work. This does not alter the fact that Conciliator, as written, is sf. Granted the society is mock-medieval, but then so are a lot of

others in sf. You probably know Clarke's Law that the more advanced science becomes, the nearer it seems to approach magic. I now propose Mapson's Corollary: the less science is understood, the more it seems like magic (not the same thing at all: eg both ftl travel and a humble match are magic, depending on whose understanding of science you are using as a reference). Most of the science in this book is of such a nature: advanced, but much of the theory has been forgotten.

On your recommendation I purchased The Many-Coloured Land. I had previously been put off by (a) not knowing anything about the author and (b) profuse publisher's hype that it would rival the Lord of the Rings and the Lensman series. This sort of thing is becoming nauseatingly common, there are countless books out there to rival TLOTR, the only qualifications being that they must be a series, and each book should, preferably, be long. Ho hum. (And it really wouldn't take much to equal the Lensman series, now would it?). This has also put me off reading any Stephen Donaldson (just when the first trilogy ends, along comes a second! Is there no end?

As to TMCL: it wasn't a brilliant book, but a readable and interesting adventure story. I have a nasty feeling it was written by P J Farmer, though. The plot (various characters, involving various semi-historical aspects, versus alien overlords in a setting far removed from normality) and the characters themselves (people Moxmox Burke reminiscent of PJFBs Leo Queequeg Tincrowdor) plus the diverse drawing of ideas and thematic material, are all similar to PJF. Has anyone else ever heard of Julian May? He is either PJF himself (in which case the reviewer's comments in the latest Cygnus Chronicle are very interesting) or else he writes a brilliant pastiche-Farmer. PJF is, or course, prone to using pseudonyms, especially of late.

Your comments about Aldiss are somewhat unjustified: he has indeed written a great deal of good work since 1969 (personally, I think his best stuff has been since that date) but rather than labour this point I will merely direct you to his fantasy The Malacia Tapestry and his dirty book A Rude Awakening. Also, in condemning 'new wave' sf, most people seem to ignore that it has a long and honourable history and that James Joyce was writing back in 1922.

Onto Mr Alderson's article. Any man who begins by dismissing his protagonists because he doesn't like them, rather than for their arguments, has already dropped in my Credibility Ratings Scale. He then goes into confuse folk legends/tale (Ned Kelly etc.) with myth. Myth is largely a large enough field without confusing the subject any further. Due to this, the search for a monolithic theory to explain 'Myth' (for which Mr Alderson gives us no definition in respect of his research) has largely been discredited, with various theories (G S Kirk in The Nature of Greek Myth -Penguin, 1974- gives five) being applied depending on the nature of the myth (more than one may, of course, be applicable to any one myth.)

I am also curious as to how ancient Mr Alderson allows his sources to be before they pass the boundary from 'history' into 'myth', and how he extracts the 'history' from the latter. His use of a Greek myth as an example is dangerous, as these have passed through a long period of literacy, meaning they now exist as the Greeks thought they should have, rather than as they did in prehistoric times. He also offers us tantalising glimpses into the 'truth' of the Garden of Eden Episode, without providing any proof, or even how he arrived at his conclusions (not even the conclusions themselves)!

I would like to know what qualifications he has (apart from 'self-taught' - wasn't von Daniken self-taught?) and why he hasn't tried to publish his theories in a respectable journal such as Nature (or if he has, why they haven't achieved worldwide recognition).

Jack Herman
Box 272,
Wentworth Bldg.,
Uni of Sydney,
NSW 2006.

Kerrie Hanlon is certainly a find. Her artwork is amongst the best defined in fandom. If you are going to continue giving over space to portfolios, can we have one of Kerrie Hanlon art?

Your editorial. Ron's Roost - is both right and wrong. If Data was left off the ballot then there is something wrong with the way the Ditmars were administered. However, you go overboard - firstly, "a scent of corruption" overstates the case. "Misjudgement" maybe but "corruption" is a far stronger concept and not one borne out by the facts. None of the Awards sub-Committee had a vested interest in the Award. Secondly, none of the working committee of Tschaicon is on the Melbourne '85 bid (except Foyster who was, solely, involved in the Programme, not the Awards). So you can't really tar M85 with this brush. Finally, you ignore an important point: it is certainly "legal" to bloc nominate for the Ditmar, but did those nominating Data act morally in attempting to "stack" the ballot? Melbourne Uni SFA did the same in 1979 so there is a precedent, but I still don't like it.

✓ You don't think headlines really parallel what the following news is, do you, Jack? Anyway, I liked the 'feel' of scent rather than corruption. As for 'stacking' - Data has a circulation of about 300, many of those receiving it are literary.sf.fans who will as media fans - so I don't think that comes into it. It's like SFCs readership or Q36's readership 'block stacking' for it. - Ron.✓

It is interesting to see Alderson's piece in the place usually reserved for the lead fiction. Unfortunately, even seen in that light it is a shoddy piece of work. It suffers from confusion and failure to define terms. He makes little distinction between myth, legend, fiction and history. When each has a clear meaning. Certainly myth or legend may, ultimately, be traced back to historical events, but the historicity of these events does not demonstrate the truth of myth or legend - just that some memory of the base event remains. There was a conflict between Mainland Greece and Troy but that doesn't prove Homer's story. Earlier Greek states paid tribute to Minoan Crete but that doesn't show there was a Minotaur.

Equally to assert that there is something common ("a creation myth") between the Genesis myth and Batman's ascribed words or Phillip's landing is absurd. The Genesis myth is a mixture of mysticism and faltering attempts at ontology. Romantic emendations to History are that - humanisations of events recorded as fact. If Alderson cannot understand the distinction he might try this: There were people recording events in 1788 and when Batman was at Port Phillip - diarists, clerks, officials but no-one was around during the creation process. There were no diarists in the Garden of Eden, everything about these events (prehistory) is speculation - mythology.

I concur with Bert. You can't get a good can of Pork and Beans any longer. Used to be one of my favourite fast-foods.

Diane Fox
PO Box 129,
Lakemba,
NSW 2195

Kerrie Hanlon's artwork is a pleasure to behold. I especially liked the chaotic alicorn on the cover - the delicate thin striping effect on the wings came across very well. I think of the beastie as chaotic not merely because of the bat or dragon-like wings, but because it has 2 horns, symbolic of duality, a divided nature and possibly deceptiveness, rather than the single horn of the true unicorn. This may be a thought inspired by the contrast between Una and Duessa in the Faerie Queene).

John Alderson's article on myth and its pervasiveness in living cultures was fascinating - the myth making faculty would be continuously working - in fact, we now have a few myths regarding things that have not yet happened (but are likely to happen). There's also an opposite process constantly at work - the demythologising impulse, which is often supported for political, social or moral reasons (not all myths are beneficial to a culture.)

Captain Chandler's article on tinned foods was a great relief to me - I'd always suspected myself of having a somewhat warped taste in enjoying baked beans, herrings in tomato sauce, sardines in olive oil, etc. The lazy man's chili can currie is pretty similar to something I make - only I start by putting a lump of frozen hamburger meat in the saucepan with just enough water to keep the bottom of the pan from overheating. The meat thaws and cooks simultaneously. I just keep knocking the cooked parts off the outside. When it's no longer a lump I put in a chopped onion, cupfull of baked beans, and either chili powder or a chopped-up pickled hot chili. There seems to be a ratio between technology and living standards - as soon as a slightly inferior and cheaper substitute to anything is found, the original soon becomes beyond the pocket of all but the very rich.

I liked Karen Irving's drawing with this article. A fine collection of drawings also from Julie Vaux - I didn't think these three in the portfolio were among her best, but they were still enjoyable and were reproduced very well.

Re R. Mapson's comments on my drug remark - by "creating additives like drugs" I meant that they should be banned - half the chemical muck that goes into our food we don't need. The main reason it is put in isn't even to make it look more attractive - it is to further reduce the cost of production. Why put in organics when artificial sweeteners, flavours, etc taste quite similar and cost a tenth of the price? And you can charge the customers the same price you used to charge them for the real stuff. After all, they can't buy anything better - nearly all foodstuffs have chemicals put in them. I learned that "raw sugar" is usually refined sugar that has been reprocessed to have larger crystals and has had a bit of flavouring added - it is far cheaper to refine all the sugar in an operation of such size and of such a level of automation. Of course I suspect that a law against such compulsory drugging of the masses would be even more difficult to enforce than normal anti-drug laws.

Richard Faulder's concept of population control by sterilizing everyone (after obtaining one shot of sperm, eggs, etc for breeding 'in vitro') has its defects. One is that Big Brother gets a lot of control of what sort of citizen gets born. They're almost certainly bred for docility and probably unquestioning stupidity. And perhaps breed a special military sub-race, unquestioningly obedient but savage - a sort of human doberman pinscher type. Creativity, etc would be bred out of the race within three generations and probably compassion as well. This isn't my paranoid, this is a world wide problem. People have raised bloody hell over far slighter matters.

[I don't know, Diane - as long as there are people such as Senator Chipp and Justice Kirby you are pretty safe. - Ron.]

A rapist Roneo? Ye Ghods.

The lust-crazed Roneo knew no law:
When a naked girl on the stencil it saw
With a horrible leer
It shredded her gear -
For it was the Duplicator of Gor!

Buck Coulson,
Route 3,
Hartford City,
In 47348,
USA.

Sorry to hear about Chandler's problems with Ned Kelly. I'm rather looking forward to that one, and I wonder if he can really make me believe in Kelly as a hero. Maybe he can; he probably knows more about bushmen than I do (but I have firm prejudices). I recently acquired an elderly hardcover titled The Broad Arrow by William McLeod Raine, all about this English nobleman who is transported to Australia for murder, becomes a bushman, etc. (Even Raine knew that noblemen didn't get transported, but this gent has been living under an assumed name and when he's accused he's too noble to drag his family name in the mud, so...) I wonder what Chandler would think of it? (I enjoyed it, silly plot and all.)

Which of your sadistic female readers provided the male contraceptive article? A nasty parody, but funny.

Female fanzine writers. Yandro doesn't get articles from women because we don't request material and get very few articles from anyone. But we certainly get letters that could easily be made into articles if I wanted to. Almost all from US fans. (Though we do now have a column from Ethel Lindsay; that one I did request.) I have sent issues to various Australian fem-fans, and mostly received damn-all in return. A few trades, here and there, but no locs or contribs. Something in the air down there? (Well, to be fair, all the women editors have been willing to trade, as long as their publications lasted; mostly they didn't seem to last all that long.)

It may surprise Peter Kells to learn that not everyone does live in a squeaky-clean, pepsodent-smile world, and that those of us who still have regular contact with nature are a lot more appreciative of modern technology than those nicely-reared children who have never seen the alternative. Live with a privy for 20 years like I did, Kells, and you'd appreciate plumbing. Watch your crops eaten by insects for several years in a row and you'll appreciate pesticides. Try reading by lamplight (or going to bed at dark) for longer than a couple of weeks and you'll have a kindlier feel for power stations.

I was under the impression that a functioning brain wasn't a prostitute's main attribute, but I bow to Diane Fox's superior knowledge. (She'd have been better off to use actresses for her models. I was about to add "or US congressmen", but then considering what's come out of Congress lately, that's not much of an ad for drug use.)

If hyperactive children are produced by commercial food colorings, flavorings, etc., why isn't every child in the US and Australia hyperactive? The range of susceptibility to these things must be damned wide... so wide that one wonders if it's really the answer. "Widely thought" isn't an answer; it's widely thought in the US that Proctor and Gamble is operated directly by Satan, but that doesn't make it so. Kells says it's been proved, but then Kells believes in a lot of garbage. Who's done any research, and when and how good was it?

Peter Kells
PO Box 1670,
Southport,
Qld. 4215.
and Vaux.

This was an interesting and varied edition of TM. The artwork was particularly striking, and the reproduction very crisp - particularly the cover, whereon appeared a most curious bat-winged steed: fine draughtsmanship was also in evidence on P.6 with a delightful unicorn. My compliments to the artists, Hanlon

Unfortunately, Australian Space Science at the Crossroads did not excite

my interest. I disagree entirely with the article's basic premise. I contend that the less we know about the universe, the happier we will be; the greater our knowledge, the more complex our problems.

There were some entertaining and incisive comments on canned foods. I must agree with Chandler. I often have recourse to canned 'meals', as I live far from any town, or source of fresh foods (nor are any of my thumbs green). Now, it has been my experience that there is surprisingly little variation in the flavours of these canned dishes - regardless of the labelling. There are certain tinned 'salads' that swim hideously in vinegar, No self-respecting chef would do this!

I note with interest that Alderson flings a gibe at the proponents of such theories as the flat earth and the geo-centred universe. I agree that it is difficult, nowadays, to maintain a faith in the flat earth - yet I am not such a pedant as to insist that such a belief, in itself, forms sufficient reason to dislike its adherents. As for a geo-centred universe - well, after all, in a very real sense the Earth is the centre of the universe, for us. The Earth shall be man's centre of the universe for a very long time to come - probably forever.

The Historical Basis of Myth - what a ponderous title - seemed to be an amorphous catalogue of unrelated facts, mixed with John's personal theorising, and whimsical extrapolations. Perhaps John would be spared the attacks by "nongs and worse" if he ceased to adopt such a self-important and pontifical tone.

Richard Faulder's criticism of my TM 37 story was both inappropriate and specious. (I think logic is overrated, anyway). What did Richard want? - an appendix a la Tolkien describing the Tarkomandrian legal system whereby the character became an outcast: - footnotes describing the life cycle of Tarkomandrian cetacea: - analyses of the nutritional value of extraterrestrial "roadside herbs"?? It is glaringly plain that Richard is no artist - for Art is concerned with imagery for its own sake.

Postscript to Ron; should you find it unavoidable to edit, or censor, my LoCs, may I gently request that you append to them an editorial advice to that effect.

✓ Nearly every LoC I print has been edited in some way, mostly to cut out material I don't think is warranted in putting in that issue - or that has been covered by someone else or which is too short. So take it for granted that all the LoCs have been edited. - Ron.✓

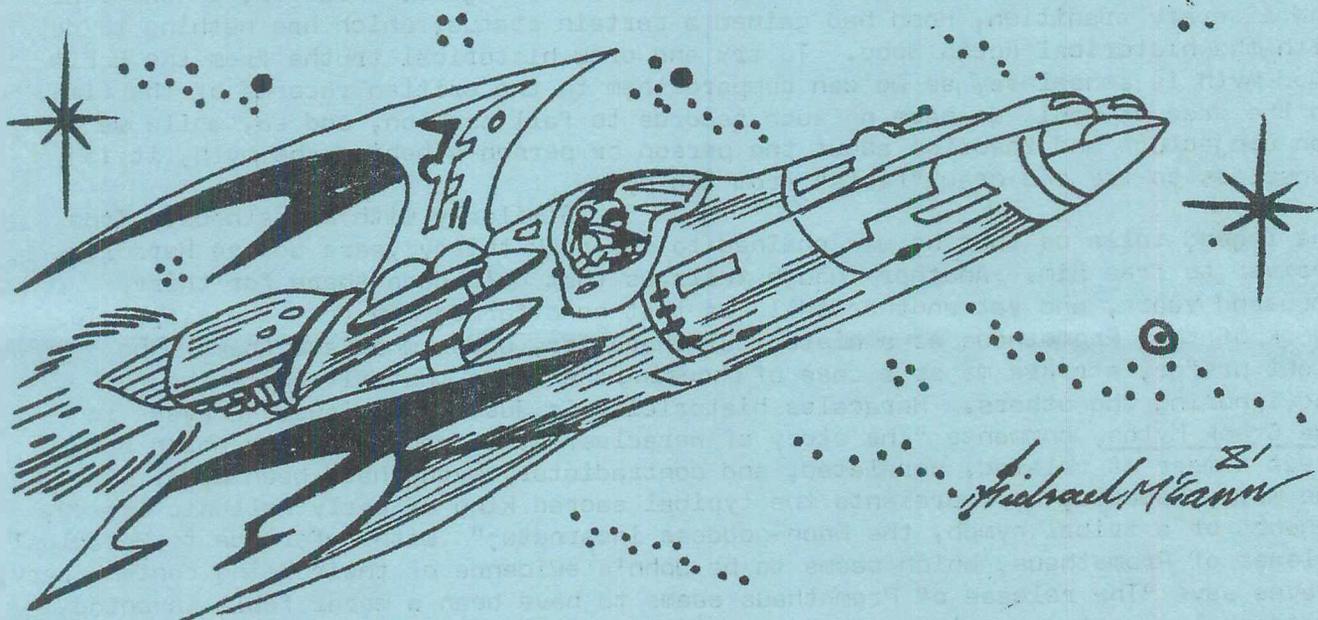
Richard Faulder
c/- Yanco Agric.
Research Centre,
Yanco NSW 2703.

In spite of my well known affection for junk food, I am little acquainted with Bert Chandler's convenience foods. I remember with no affection camp pie from my youth (although dry-frying does render it quite edible), although a tinned dish masquerading as braised steak and onions stirs up more favorable memories, as do some of the tinned sausages

The folio of Julie Vaux Artwork seems a departure from her usual style, and is, if anything, more successful than her usual. Up to a point I'd agree with Mr Mapson that we can't really ignore 'alternative' views - certainly not to the point of actively discouraging their dissemination amongst society. It's just a pity that there's no way that we can ensure that any individual will receive as full an account of both sides of the issue so that s/he can make up his own mind.

In principle I'd also agree with him that people who want to destroy themselves with drugs should be free to do so. Except that, as he also points out, the pursuit of a fix can lead to crime (as can the consequences of a fix - one only has to consider the contribution of drunken - and possibly stoned ones also - drivers on the road toll) which affects members of the society other than the addict. There is also the argument of one's obligation to the society as a whole (an argument not accepted by the Me Generation) by ensuring that one is able to make as full a contribution to that society as possible, let alone having to divert the energies of others in picking up the pieces.

Peter Kells thinks that "our entire technology is geared towards aggression", but without some clarification it's not possible to make a judgement of his statement. Buck Coulson is closer to the truth than Mr. Kells. While it is true that artificial drugs are based on models occurring in nature (in a number of cases, anyway) the modifications to



the original molecules (which are often produced entirely artificially) which make them pharmacologically more effective and with fewer side effects are only possible because of the application of high technology. Eyeglasses, likewise, may have been "around for donkey's years", but the versions we see today - lighter, more efficient (not to mention the contact lens) are the product of such technology.

Kerrie Hanlon's artwork is nicely executed (even if I did find the horned-bat-winged Pegasus a bit strange, not to say improbable), but I tend to feel a bit uneasy about the half-nekkid wimmin. They remind me of the brass-bra'd broads on the cover of the pulps (and I'm wondering how the artist would like to find herself wearing the garment on page 40) which I thought fandom had outgrown.

I dunno, Richard. At least it would keep wandering hands at bay. ^{Well,} A marauding BEM (or fan) would need a can-opener to get at the goodies. - Ron.]

Marc Ortlieb,
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Marden,
S.A. 5070.

Sigh. I should have known better than to try and argue with John Alderson, but I was never known for common sense. His article on mythology was an entertaining read, but I wish he'd be a little more careful in his definitions. "History", for instance can have several usages. The one I prefer to use is that of "a written record of the past". This places arguments like John's in their correct perspective. What he is giving us here are his theories about the past. The difference between Cook's discovery of New Zealand and Maui's is that we have a written record of Cook's. True, written records can be altered, as the Russians have shown us, but there seems no reason to doubt that Cook did indeed sail around North and South Islands. In addition, there can be little doubt of Cook's "historicity", as we have plenty of evidence concerning his birth, education, military record, etc.

What John is talking about is "oral history" and that is notoriously mutable. One example from our own past is that of Robin Hood. Historians are still arguing over his exact status as a historical figure. However, in the oral and literary tradition, Hood had gained a certain status, which has nothing to do with the historical Robin Hood. To try and draw historical truths from the Robin Hood myth is senseless, as we can compare them to the written records of the time. In the case of Maui, we have no such records to fall back on, and so, while we can conjecture and theorise about the person or person's behind the myth, it is senseless to try and draw "facts" from the myth.

Similarly with Prometheus. True, one legend tells us that he was chained to the rock thirty years before Heracles arrived to free him. Another though tells us that he'd been there for thirty thousand years, and yet another tells us that he'd formed man from the clay. To speak of this Prometheus as a historical character, under what ever name John might prefer, strikes me as a case of choosing the facts that fit one's theory and ignoring the others. Heracles historicity is just as dubious. Graves, in The Greek Myths, comments "The story of Heracles is, indeed, a peg on which a great number of related, unrelated, and contradictory myths have been hung. In the main, however, he represents the typical sacred king of early Hellenic Greece, consort of a tribal nymph, the Moon-goddess incarnate;" With reference to Heracles' release of Prometheus, which seems to be John's evidence of their being contemporary, Graves says "The release of Prometheus seems to have been a moral fable invented by Aeschylus, not a genuine myth."

Sure, it's only John's word against that of Robert Graves, but when it comes down to arguments of authority vs authority, I tend to doubt the presence of "truth" anywhere in the vicinity. So what evidence can John produce for us for the historicity of any of these characters? Can he show us the church records of Prometheus's birth? (The only records I've heard of list him as a Titan, but there are at least two stories of his mother's identity..)

No, While I'm willing to accept John's theories as interesting academic exercises, I certainly can't see them as being ^{real} /in any accepted sense of the word. As John himself points out, people are very good at weaving stories, complete with puns, "in" jokes, and complete fantasies. Thus I don't see any rational reason for trying to pluck gospel truth from mythology. True, there may well be a historical basis for some myths. The discovery of Troy, and one or two of the Mycenaean tablets do seem to confirm that some of the characters from Greek myth had "real" historical models, but to go from that to the idea that all myths have real historical meaning is a leap of faith which, in my opinion, has nothing to do with science.

An example of what annoys me about John's statements can be found in

the following line: "In the story of the patriarchs we may have some legend, some tradition (it was written down no later than a century later) but it all purports to be history, and probably is." What does this mean? The story was written down no later than a century later than what??? Which parts of the story are we to accept as history? If one part of the story is clearly fantasy, why should one be so willing to accept any other part of the story as fact, particularly since the only evidence for the story comes from the same book, either directly, or from the same stories that the book was taken from?

I could create a lovely history of the World, using the illuminatus Trilogy as evidence. I mean, that contains true facts. Kennedy was assassinated in Texas. Does that mean that I can also believe that there's a lake in Switzerland full of Nazi soldiers in suspended animation?

I won't disagree that we can preserve folk tales in the oral tradition for quite some time. However, that proves nothing. For every time that a tale is preserved unchanged for five hundred or so years, how many changed variants are there? Sure, one of the versions of TAM LIN printed in Professor Child's collection of ballads might well be the same as one sung in the thirteenth century. However, Child lists over a dozen variants. Without having a copy of the version sung in the thirteenth century, one cannot determine which, if any, is correct. Similarly with John's attempts to prove the historicity of the mythologies of non-literate peoples. Sure, there's a chance that he's right, but for all his protestations, his methods cannot reveal truth, they can only reveal what he thinks is the truth, and this is, in turn, going to be coloured by John's biases, whether he accepts this or not.

Thus John's opinions on women are going to colour his theories on the meanings of the various and contradictory myths with which he deals. In my opinion and I stress that, because I have no more means of proving it than John has of proving the historicity of Prometheus, John is trying to justify some of his current attitudes to the state of things by appeal to history, and he seems quite willing to invent the history to justify this. I would certainly wish to see a little more concrete evidence for some form of interaction between the Australian aboriginals and the ancient Greeks before I was willing to accept John's theory that myth is universal. But enough. As I said, I still find John's theories interesting, but I do wish he's stop insisting that they were incontrovertible fact.

Raymond L Clancy
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Australians are a tough breed - hard for me to call heroin and cocaine soft drugs. Culture Conflict most interesting. And Chandler's revelations... The Transition was more than interesting to me. "De Gustibus", of course.

Noticed Yandro listed in your foreign fanzines. Hope it is still a superior publication. I was flattered to make its pages with a short-short story once. Liked your informative letter dept - lot of thought Buck Coulson has my sympathy - all those drugs! And my great respect for his achievements despite all that. Wish I could remember what I wrote last time though, because I meant the religion of Paleolithic Man. Also, it seems to me that there is still rivalry between priest and magician today.

I can remember when the fashionable belief was that a handful of Mongols peopled

this "New World" a couple of thousand years ago. Science took care of the dogmatists there. Then there was the absurdity of Troy. Until it was dug up. Herodotus caught hell too about the Scythians. Until they were dug up.

Alderson fascinated me. However, his concluding sentence reminded me that the delicious "oyster fry" of my youth is not even mentioned, much less sold in a very great area today. Wonder whether anyone ever reflected that other forms of life - food - multiplies at a much greater speed than mankind. Man is a great destroyer. If only he ate a species, he'd have plenty. It is the senseless slaughter, killing even the soil, which makes our problems.

Harry Warner, Jr
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Culture Conflict impressed me as a quite good story. When I read it, I had been wading through a Best of Cyril Kornbluth collection. John Playford's story seemed quite harmonious with the Kornbluth fiction in its general atmosphere of gloom and it impressed me as possessing more originality than several of the stories in the Kornbluth volume. (Just recently, I've found myself reading science fiction in greater quantities than at any time in the past couple of years but so far this new resurgence of interest has caused me to stick to older authors and older stories, for the most part.)

The Bertram Chandler column is a fitting companion to the Playford story as far as the general character of despair and decadence of humanity are concerned. I suppose I should feel some sort of satisfaction to learn that typists make a lot of mistakes and the postal service is erratic Down Under just as they are around here Up Over. And I could tell a sad related story about the manuscript of a book on photography for young people which I actually sold many years ago and how it never got published, but there's enough sorrow in the world already and I'm too chicken hearted tonight to add to that quantity.

Kim Huett's theory on why there's less humor in fandom nowadays is a logical-sounding one that is new to me. The only hope that I can find in the present situation derives from the fact that the science fiction which the masses are gulping down so avidly nowadays has little in common with the science fiction we grew up on. It's the modern equivalent of the old dime novel type of science fiction, terribly elementary in theme and story development and characterization. Maybe there will continue to be a genuine fandom of sorts composed of those people who prefer the more adult kind of science fiction, the kind that the Campbell Astounding and the Gold Galaxy made famous, to the kid's stuff which is being patronized by giant quantities of adults nowadays on the paperback racks and in the movie houses and on the television networks.

It's a relief to find a letter from Jackie Causgrove in this issue. I'd grown quite worried about her, after she virtually disappeared from fanzine fandom. It's good to find this evidence that she is still up and around in the physical sense even if circumstances have forced her to reduce her paper fanac. (Remember, I'm not a congoer. For all I know, she may be attending three cons every weekend, in which case nobody else in fandom would have thought of her as defiliated or gaffiliated except me.)

JOSEPH HANNA-RIVERO: As usual I will start by commenting on the cover (of TM 38).
To put it is one word - superb! Its the first time I've seen Kerrie Hanlon's artwork and I must say I love it. I especially liked the butterfly girl that adorns the back cover. Julie Vaux's portfolio was also impressive. Her 'spidery' artwork really livens up the zine. Good Spaced Out by Mr McGann although his captions could do with being a bit funnier.

RALPH SILVERTON: The nonsensical and wrongheaded connotations of my insult (directed at Mr Alderson) might be accounted for by the fact that it was never intended for publication in the first place. Strictly a DNQ affair, a purely private expression of that irritation which his writings are apt to stimulate. Hence all logic was thrown to the wind.

if you wish anything to be DNQ, please label it DNQ.v- Ron. /

/Note to all LoC writers -

BURT LIBE: Your Roost in TM 37 was sobering. Many Americans see Australia as a last frontier where that sort of stuff isn't supposed to exist. But I had my eyes opened some years ago when I learned more and more about Australia. I guess this stuff is rampant all over the world. But I always thought we had more of it.

/The general excuse here is that the US R&R servicemen coming here from Vietnam brought much of it with them (drugs, among other things). As to Australia being a frontier - we may have not all the luxuries of gadgetry but in some respects we are ahead of a lot of the other Western countries in things to help wage-earners keep their lifestyle up - things like a "basic wage", Leave Loading (holiday bonus of about 5% of salary), Long Service leave (one month after the first ten years, going up 3 days each year thereafter), four weeks annual leave, a 40 hour week since 1940 (currently working on a 35 hour one), no tax on food, maternity leave (we used to have paternity leave - of a week, so the partner could help out with kids, etc but the present govt. cut that)... Of course we do have a strong coordinated union movement - about the only balance to the Multi-nationals. - Ron. /

JOHN K PLAYFORD: Grimesish Grumberlings was as good as ever - but I'm waiting another Bob Smith article (please?).

I'm a little worried by the reactions to my story - they're all so different. Yet I think if you strip the plot away the basic world is reasonably logical (which is why I've since written another story in the same universe).

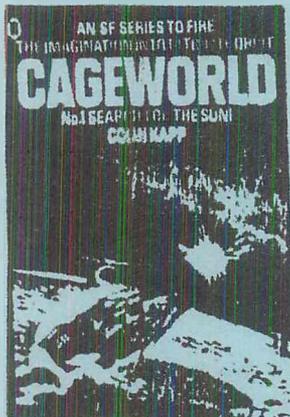
One last point: did the Roneo on pg.40 try to rape a nude girl Kerrie had sent or the picture of a nude girl?

wouldn't have gotten as far as the roneo. - Ron. /

/A nude girl

WAHF: Harry Andruschak. Agro, and Jean Weber.

S.F. BOOKS RECEIVED



CAGEWORLD I - Search For The Sun by Colin Kapp. New English Library, dist in Aust by Hodder & Stoughton. 172 pp. A\$3.95. On sale now.

I remember reading Colin Kapp's novels when he was just beginning to break into the field in the late 60's, when he was being published in Carnell's NEW WORLDS. He was a bright new talent then, and his incandescent writing style reminded many of Alfred Bester.

Cageworld I is the beginning of a new series by Kapp, set in the far future when humankind lives on artificial "shells" which span the solar system at the orbits of the old planets - mars, earth, jupiter. Created by an artificial intelligence, the shells have, it appears to the government of at least one of the shells, reached the limits of the materials, and soon the pressure of humanity for space will bring civilization crashing down. This first of the Cageworld novels tells of the voyage to find the 'sun' and follows the adventures of four people as they try to unravel some of the mystery.

* * *

CAGEWORLD 2 - The Lost Worlds of Cronus by Colin Kapp. New English Library, dist in Aust by Hodder & Stoughton. 170 pp. A\$3.95. On sale now.

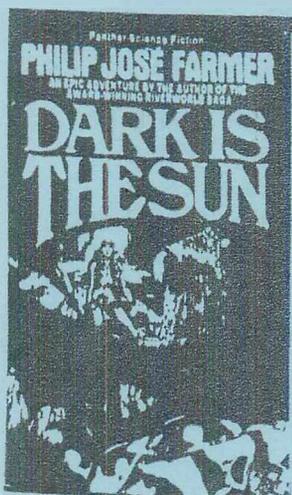
The second in the Cageworld saga finds our heroes onboard the hardy ship Shellback as they venture out to find if there is another 'shell' between that of the planets - the phantom 'Boxa Shell' which was said to be built in the Stygian darkness - most shells had artificial suns - but the Boxa Shell did not. What kind of creatures could live on such a landscape and why the Intelligence Zeus would not let them near it, and did it's best to destroy them. Why was this?

In trying to solve this problem they had set out on one of the longest voyages humankind had attempted. And, unlike others who had gone before - they planned to return. Both these novels are old style sf adventures - in the tradition of that English magazine. Good entertainment.

* * *

DARK IS THE SUN by Philip Jose Farmer. Panther SF. Dist in Aust by Granada Publishing Aust. P/L. 400 pp. A\$7.50. On sale now.

This is another of Farmer's novels set in the far future. In fact the future this is set in is about as far as



one can go in this Space Time Continuum. Set 15 (US) billion years from now, it tells the story of a dying universe, from the point of view of an equally dying earth seen through the eyes of a small group of beings including two humans. The man, Keyv, has lost his Soul Egg; or rather had it stolen from him. Without it he can't find a mate suitable for him, or go back to his tribe - they would disown him. He meets up with an Eggless female, who is as stubborn as himself and they in turn meet up with the two others. The rest of the novel follows their travels as they wander over a fair piece of the earth looking for the Eggs and a way out of the collapsing Universe.

The end is predictable, but fun finding, nevertheless.

* * *

MR MONSTERS Movie Gold by Forrest J Ackerman. Published by Donning Co, Publishers of 5659 Virginia Beach Boulevard, Norfolk, Virginia 23502, USA. 21.5cmX27.7cm. 206pp. US\$12.95. On sale now.

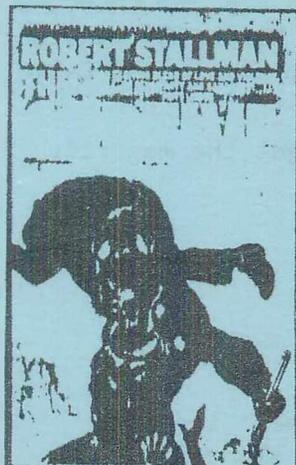


If you like Famous Monsters of Filmland you'll love this. It is full of 'previously unpublished' photos from Ackerman's collection of black-and-white stills and if you are a monster fan this will help fill in any holes you may have. Every page has a photo or two and there is a text to go with it. I find Ackerman a bit rich at most times, but he does have quite a good wrap-up.

Diane Fox will love this, even if Forry does name drop like the worst tourist when they get back in the old country. Recommended for the horror film fan.

* * *

THE CAPTIVE by Robert Stallman. Mayflower science fantasy, dist. in Aust by Granada Publishing Aust P/L. 240 pp. A\$5.95. On sale now.



The second in the trilogy of the Beast. The Captive continues the story of the alien (it has to be) who is trying to integrate itself into earth society and uses multiple personalities to do so. Starting out as a cub (and a little boy called Robert) the Beast progresses until he is taking the part of a young married man and the time period progresses into the late 1930's.

This novel continues what I consider to be one of the best written and original series to be currently published. If you can get the first and this volume get them. They are well worth reading and when the trilogy is finished will make a whole which will stand along side the like of Weinbaum as the creation of believable aliens.

Granada seem to be publishing a tremendous amount of sf - I hope they continue to do so. The last two months seems to have been very quiet - judging by the numbers received.



THE WARLOCK IN SPIKE OF HIMSELF by Christopher Stasheff. Mayflower Science Fantasy, dist. in Aust by Granada Pub. P/L. 284 pp. A\$4.95. On sale now.

Set on the lost planet of Gramarye, the agent of SCENT finds a medieval society but with something added which threatens to turn his plans for an advance into a democratic society on its ears. Together with his iron horse, Fess, Rod Gallowglass sets out to try to put things back into the proper pattern, through several adventures and beds.

This is one of the more famed humorous sf novels in the past decade and it is hard to put it down once you have started reading it. So don't start unless you have the time to finish in one reading.

Recommended.

* * *

THE SCIENCE FICTION SOLAR SYSTEM edited by Isaac Asimov, Martin Greenberg and Charles G Waugh. Panther science fiction, dist in Aust by Granada Publishing Aust. P/L. 313 pp. A\$5.95. On sale now.



This is a collection of sf stories, each of which is set on one of the planets of the solar system. The stories which have been picked will be known to older readers, and they are nearly the best choice for each planet that I can think of. Several times there would have been two or three stories what could have been picked (for instance about Mars) but those picked are good choices.

The stories are: The Weather on the Sun - Theodore L Thomas (Sol); Brightside Crossing (Mercury) - Alan E Norse; Prospector's Special (Venus) - Robert Sheckley; Waterclap (Earth) - Asimov; Hop Friend (Mars) - Terry Carr; Barnacle Bull (Asteroids) - Poul Anderson; Bridge (Jupiter) - James Blish; Saturn Rising (Saturn) - Arthur C Clarke; The Snow-bank Orbit (Uranus) - Fritz Leiber; One Day in Neptune (Neptune) - Alexei Panshin; Wait it Out (Pluto) - Larry Niven; & Nikita Eisenhower Jones (Pluto) - Robert F Young; The Comet, the Cairn and the Capsule (Comets) - Duncan Lunan.

Quite a collection; if you haven't got the majority of these - buy this.

* * *

Well, that's about it for this issue. Not many reviews - must be the quiet season of the year.

I don't know if I can carry this bi-monthly schedule on much longer - we are expecting in October. The last time one of our kids came along it made me gaffiate for three years, the time before that another three years. Kids are certainly a disrupting influence - or rather, babies. - Ron, 20/8/82.

