

THE MENTOR 45

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THE MENTOR

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RON'S

ROOST

CON TIME (TO MIS-QUOTE GEORGE TURNER)

As you may have noticed by now, this issue has a theme - Conventions. The first article I received was Bert's. Then came Sue's. Carol Bott was up at Faulconbridge one weekend just after the con and I suggested to her that she set down in an article her memories of Syncon. Mike McGann's cover work I already had. Paul was up here running off his zine offset when I asked him to do his sketch. Somehow it all hung together. Even I, who didn't go, found it built up a good image of what went on.

Talking of cons - this family is now deep into the prep work in shaping up MEDTREK '84. It is in March next year. The first MEDTREK at Medlow Bath went over extremely well (you have only to read the letters in the Con Report) and so we decided to have another. As before, the con is media related - though there are the usual panels on fanzine production, etc. The first MEDTREK was 'sponsored' by ASTREX, the Sydney ST club- though it only lent it's name to it. All the committee had various interests, not necessary media (me, for instance). GoH was A Bertram Chandler. I don't know exactly what Bert thought after the con finished, but I think he enjoyed himself.

Next years con will be along the same type of lines - there will be a whole line-up of media characters, including Dr Who, Blake's 7, the Thunderbirds, Star Trek, some straight sf, Star Wars and others. The GoH from the US is Bjo Trimble, an sf fan from way back, who is remembered by fans by the work she and her husband did at the Worldcon Art Shows in the 60's. There is an Australian GoH (Nikki White) and, as long as his contracts permit, a Goh from the UK, who is one of the stars of the Blake's 7 TV series.

MEDTREK '84 will follow the financial guide of MEDTREK '82 - the most for the least money from the attendees. Membership of MEDTREK '82 was \$10 full. The idea is to stay away from the rip-offs which can, and do, surround sf, fantasy and media cons. We have had to charge a \$25 attending fee because of the \$5,000 or so air fares to bring the two from overseas. Hopefully the con will be even better than MEDTREK '82.

A. BERTRAM CHANDLER

GRIMESISH GRUMBLING -

ELLISON SHOW

I've known Harlan Ellison for quite a few years -- at first by correspondence and later by calling upon him at his fabulous abode, Ellison Wonderland, each time that I've visited Los Angeles. The most recent occasion was last year. As had not been the case on previous visits I had Susan with me. She'd heard all the stories about Harlan. She'd read his article in a Los Angeles weekly newspaper and seen his photograph in the same rag. She was convinced that she would hate his guts. She had to be dragged, kicking and screaming, to the Ellison mini-mansion. But Harlan turned on the charm. He just about charmed the pants off her. When we left he gave her a flower from his garden -- which is more than he's ever done to me.

As a matter of fact Harlan did much for me than just give me a flower. It was on the occasion of our first meeting, in 1976. Harlan regards one of my earlier novelettes, Frontier Of The Dark (ASTOUNDING, September, 1952), as a classic. He urged me to convert it into a novel. I said that I'd long since lost the carbons and the issue of the magazine in which it had been published. So Harlan told his Girl Friday to hunt in his magazine library for the ASTOUNDING in question, and then to Xerox the story. He then rang New York for Berkley/Putnam. As a result of this I received a substantial advance before I as much as set pen to paper.

Now every time that I meet Harlan I ask him, "When is The Last Dangerous Visions coming out?" He retaliates with, "When is Frontier Of The Dark coming out?" Both books should have been coming out this year. When they will come out the Odd Gods of the Galaxy alone know.

And now we've had Ellison tour, Harlan down under. Having witnessed Harlan's GoH performance I wonder why organisers of SF conventions ever ask anybody else to be GoH. At Syncon he did not go over like a lead balloon; he went over like the Hindenberg in her prime. He played to packed houses, with his audience hanging on every word. He did insult a few people -- but there was justification. For example, when he was reading us a few of his newspaper articles somebody was taping it. Harlan stopped in mid-sentence and pointed out that the taping of copyright material is illegal. The culprit not only switched off his cassette recorder but left in a huff.

I listened to Margaret Throsby interviewing Harlan on 2BL'S City Extra.

She committed the sin, referring to science fiction as Scifi. Harlan smacked her down. A little later she asked Dr. Van Ikin (the Australian GoH) what his Christian name is. Harlan must have given her a dirty look because she apologised in some confusion and changed "Christian name" to "first name".

The next morning Harlan was interviewed on Channel 10 TV. The interviewer refrained (but it must have been with an effort) from referring to SF as Scifi but he did refer to Syncon as a Science Fiction Conference. He was firmly corrected.

But it is quite amazing how many people, even people in the media - but they, of course, know less about more things than anybody else on God's green Earth - still insist on referring to a convention as a conference. When I am involved in such controversies I always take as an example a Morticians' Conference during which the delegates engage in sober discussions of all the dismal aspects of their macabre trade and a Morticians' Convention, all booze and call-girls.

I was interviewed myself prior to Syncon, by the Daily Mirror. I smacked down the interviewer when she started to talk about Scifi. But it was to no avail. My photograph was captioned Scifi King A. Bertram Chandler...

(Which reminds me of a very unkind review of one of E. Philip Oppenheimer's novels in ESQUIRE many years ago. (Remember him? He write sort of pre-Bond secret agent stuff and everybody, but everybody, was upper crust and would never have dreamed of appearing after 1900 hrs. not attired in white tie and tails. For some reason his publishers always referred to him as "the prince of storytellers".) Anyway, the reviewer said, "If Mr. Oppenheimer is, in fact, the prince of storytellers we sincerely hope that the king has many years to live.")

But Harlan is most cert.inly a king of storytellers. Usually I stay away in droves when an author is reading from his own works. When I am asked myself to give a reading I invariably decline. At the Syncon Harlan did his usual convention trick, writing a story in public and then, on the last day of the con, reading it aloud. There was just one thing wrong with his performance at Syncon. He hadn't quite finished the story. But he gave us a few clues so that we could, at least, establish the identity of the vampire.

And as he read the story I felt a very real envy, first for the marvellous, off-beat idea that he so brilliantly exploited and then for the ability to tell the tale by way of the spoken word as well as on the printed page.

Unlike many writers, including myself, Harlan is a workaholic. He carries his typewriter with him anywhere and everywhere he goes. And, working in strange locations, suffering from jet lag, he still turns out work of very high quality.

He is a non-drinker (but he gets drunk on words).

He is not a non-smoker.

A man must have some redeeming vices.

* * *

Dear Ron,

Do you think that you could publish the enclosed letter to the editor of The National Times in the next issue of The Mentor? I am enclosing too, a Xerox of the article which aroused the ire of both Harlan and myself, just so you can see what we are so annoyed about.

Brian Toohey, Esq., Editor
THE NATIONAL TIMES,
Box 506 G.P.O.
Sydney 2001

July 3 1983

Dear Sir,

Harlan Ellison rang me in a fit of extremely bad temper to tell me about Dr. David Dale's piece - THE NATIONAL TIMES, June 24 to 30 - on the 1983 Australian Science Fiction Convention. I therefore obtained a copy of the offending article. The next day, over lunch, Harlan and I discussed it. We both are strongly of the opinion that the record should be set right and that your attention be drawn to, among other matters, slovenly reportage.

Harlan was annoyed by Mr. Dale's unwarranted assumption that the science fiction community is divided into two warring camps - the Humanists (as typified by Harlan Ellison) and the Technocrats (as typified by myself). This is very far from being the case. For many years Harlan has been one of my Faithful Readers and for many years I have been one of his. Furthermore he has commissioned me to write the occasional short story for his justly famous anthologies.

Harlan took particular exception to the implication that he would say that I am "older than God". (As a matter of fact I shouldn't mind a bit if he did say it.)

What annoyed me were the gross factual errors in the article insofar as I am concerned. To begin with, I was not one of the guests of honour at the Convention. I was just one of the attending members. And then there was this misstatement. "...A. Bertram Chandler, an Englishman now resident in Melbourne..." I was, I admit, born in England (I had no choice in the matter) but I am an Australian citizen. And I do not live in Melbourne.

In the next paragraph: "But A. Bertram Chandler proudly describes himself as a science fiction writer..." I do nothing of the kind. I admit to writing sea stories thinly disguised as science fiction.

Then, a few paragraphs further on: "He started writing while he was working as a ship's captain in the 1940s..." If I had held command in the British Merchant Navy in the 1940s I should, indeed, now be "older than God". As it was I started the Second World War with the rank of Fourth Officer and has gotten as high as Second Officer by the conclusion of hostilities. It is true that eventually I held command - but by that time I was well established as a short story writer.

In the next paragraph comment is made on my novels. "They are strongly reminiscent of The Boys' Own Annual." Are they? From my earliest writing days I have endeavoured to turn out adult science fiction and, in fact, suffered quite a few rejections because of my determination to allow sex to rear its ugly (?) head. (But those stories always sold eventually.) A few years ago I wrote a novel - one in my never-ending Rim World series - which my usual publisher in New York rejected as "too pornographic". The book was accepted by publishers in England, Italy, West Germany and Japan. Last year my New York publisher admitted that times have changed and, at long, long last, bought the thing.

Then we have: "Chandler doesn't have the charisma of Ellison, but it was clear at the Australian Science Fiction Convention his side had the numbers."

The first part of the paragraph is quite correct. Chandler doesn't have the charisma of Ellison. (But who does?) The second part of the paragraph is utterly erroneous. It was Harlan Ellison whom the fans flocked to see and listen to, not A. Bertram Chandler. We - I include myself among them - got our full money's worth.

But as for a "War Of The Worlds Of Science Fiction"... What utter hogwash! Writers and readers, we are all members of one big international family and, as such, present a united front against condescending (from what spurious altitude?) and inexcusably ill-informed outsiders. Oh, we have different tastes. Some like Sword & Sorcery, some like Space Opera, some like hard-core, nuts-and-bolts Science Fiction, some like sociological Science Fiction. Many of us are willing to plough through something *not-very-well-written* as long as the ideas dealt with are interesting. Some, such as Harlan and myself, sill read anything - and that includes mainstream fiction - as long as the writing is good. And all of us regard science fiction (or science fantasy, or straight fantasy) as essentially a medium in which to kick ideas around to see if they yelp.

I couldn't write the kind of story that Harlan writes. He couldn't write the kind of story that I write. But each of us, the Humanist and the alleged Technocrat, has his following. I am among his and he - there is no accounting for taste - is among mine.

Yours faithfully,

A. Bertram Chandler

—oo00o—



Love Harper

ENCOUNTER

BY SUE BURSZTYNSKI

The prizes had been awarded for the best costumes and the crowd of convention attendees had dissolved into small groups, chattering above the loud dance music. Alison and her husband descended from the judges' dais to mingle with the brightly-costumed fans

Steven was thoroughly enjoying the attention, Alison thought. It was his first con; they had always been more her scene than his. She had been attending, first as a fan, then as a writer, since she was sixteen. But this was a media convention; the attendees had, for the most part, forgotten that she was a successful writer and seen her mainly as the wife of their hero. She had written an episode of the television series in which he appeared, but he was still getting far more attention than she. Which was all right with her; her ego was not outsize and she really preferred to be lost in her own thoughts rather than constantly signing books and answering questions. Besides, she was pleased at Steve's success.

He had been a minor actor with a string of forgettable films and T.V. appearances behind him when he had been offered a small role in the pilot of a new science fiction television series.

"An alien," he'd told Alison. "Blue skin, for goodness' sake! Long black hair. If I take this, I'll never get anything else. I'll look an idiot!"

"Take it," she'd said. "I know SF fans better than you do. And I've read the script. It's good."

"It is," he'd admitted, "but that doesn't mean anything. Look, I've had another offer - a musical comedy. It'll run for a year, if not more. Revivals of the big shows always do. Whereas this pilot could be rejected. In fact, it might be rejected because it's good. I'm not sure this show would sell toothpaste to the masses."

"Never mind, love, give it a go. Gamble - it's part of being an actor. If you're just after work, you might as well be a clerk. I've an advance coming through for my next book and there are still royalties coming in from the last one. We won't starve."

"We - ell..." He was enough of an actor to see beyond the trappings of blue skin and long black hair. It couldn't be worse than his roles to date and might just work...

Neither of them could have predicted how very well it would work. Almost overnight, the new series, Star Wanderers, had become a cult show and Steve had found

himself a sex symbol. Fan clubs had grown up and fan publications were pouring from the presses (if spirit and mimeo duplicators could be described as presses). Alison had read some stories about Steve's character, Thrand, that made her wonder about the fantasies of her fellow females.

He was lapping it all up. He signed autographs, beamed, joked with this fan, spoke kind words to that and made them all go away declaring that Steven Walker was a true gentlebeing.

"Excuse me, Mr. and Mrs. Walker," A journalist's voice cut into her thoughts. "Could you pose for a photo, please? I'm doing an article for the Saturday segment, on what makes people go for cult shows and..." She posed for the picture with her husband, then stood for a time while the journalist asked his questions of Steve.

The crowds pressed around her, stifling her. It was a hot evening anyway; make-up trickled down the faces of many of the costumed fans. The smells of too many human beings in close proximity - sweat, clothing, stage make-up, even the spaghetti or pizza they'd had for dinner - assaulted her nostrils. She had to get out.

"Dear, I'm going for a breath of fresh air," she said as soon as she could do so without seeming rude; the last thing she needed was talk of how the guest of honour's wife had stormed off, jealous of the attention he was getting. Fandom was one big grapevine.

Outside it was hotter, but at least there were no crowds. Somehow, the air was more breathable.

The hotel faced a park where, earlier in the day, fans bored with the panels or films had come to play games. A lonely frisbee lay abandoned, looking for all the world like a minature spaceship. There were lamp-posts among the trees, but it was not wise to stray too far, for fear of the unpleasant people who tended to lurk in these places. Still, it would be nicer than the streets for a short stroll.

Slipping her evening shawl from her shoulders, Alison chose a path through the trees. Insects fluttered about the lighted tops of the lamp-posts and the odd possum scuffled in the tree branches. It was quiet, on the whole. Last night there'd been a band concert and people had turned out in force to enjoy it. Tonight she seemed to be the only person here.

After a time, she arrived at one of her favourite spots in the gardens, where a narrow path led off from the main one, climbing steeply among bushes to a tiny grotto with an artificial waterfall. It was a cool, pleasant place to sit - and she wouldn't be missed for a while yet. Why not?

Carefully, she lifted her long skirt and began to ascend the rocky path. It became cooler as she went and she could hear the soft rush of water from the waterfall.

Turning the corner around some bushes, she saw she was not alone. In the light from a lamp placed near the grotto, she saw a pale figure sitting on a rock.

He still wore his costume from the masquerade. He must have left early to get here before her, but it was unmistakably a costume of the type worn by Thrand's people in Star Wanderers. Besides, his skin was blue - the best make-up job she'd ever seen. He's taken a lot of trouble, getting even his hands blue,

as was the bare foot he was nursing. A pity he hadn't entered the costume competition, as he would certainly have won a prize. She recognised the translator pendant hanging around his neck; she had devised it herself, for the episode she had written. It was lovingly recreated; in fact it looked more real than the prop Steven had worn in the show. What a lot of trouble fans took, she thought in wonder.

"Hullo," she said. "Done something to your foot, have you? Can I help? I know a bit of first aid."

His head, which had been bent over the foot, jerked up, his face startled. "Oh, no!" he moaned. "I hoped I'd be gone before someone came along, but now --"

"Hey, I'm not going to eat you" she said, genuinely surprised by his reaction. "What happened to your ankle? Can I help there?"

"You aren't surprised to see me?" He was astounded.

"Well, I admit I hadn't expected to find anyone in this particular spot." She sat beside him and bent to look at the foot. "But I suppose I'm not the only one to want some fresh air. Hmm, that doesn't look too bad. It might be a bit painful, but nothing seems to be broken and if you'd hurt it badly, you'd know it! Can you walk on it or would you like me to help you back to the hotel?"

"The hotel?"

"Where the con is going."

He looked down at his translator pendant almost reproachfully, held it between long, slender fingers and shook it slightly. "A colloquial word," he sighed. "They do not translate well."

She laughed. He gave her a puzzled glance.

He isn't joking, she thought. It was her turn to be puzzled.

"Well, what about the ankle, then? Can you walk?"

"I... think so. Soon."

"How did it happen?"

"My teleport device..." He held out a small black box. She recognised it from her episode. This was particularly well-made. She felt she could almost touch a switch and vanish to another planet.

"What's wrong with that?" she asked. "It's very good."

"It has taken me to the wrong co-ordinates. I materialised on those rocks and fell."

She had heard of devoted fans, but this was going a little far, even for a cult show. Still, it was her husband's living; she would not be making any friends for him by showing contempt for the show's followers. She could see the newspaper article already: WRITER RIDICULES HUSBAND'S SHOW! She held back her reaction. Actually, she told herself, there was a certain pathos about a person whose own life was so empty that he had to live out the life as a fictional character.

He was fiddling with the box. "If I can fix it quickly, I could be on my way before anyone else sees me."

"Why don't you want to be seen?" she asked, putting his foot down. He winced at the pain, but continued to work at the box, seemingly oblivious to her.

"All right, don't answer." She rose. "I'd better get back before anyone worries."

He looked up. "Please! I didn't intend to be rude. But I am a long way from home and if I don't repair my teleport device, I shall never be able to return."

She smiled uneasily - he believed it! "Well, what's wrong with that? Earth's a nice enough planet, give or take a few problems."

He didn't smile at the jest. "MY people have been here in the past. You can't even tolerate those of your own kind who look different or believe differently, so how shall I be tolerated?"

"Very well, I should think," she said drily, "if the size of my husband's fan club is any indication."

"Your husband?"

"You know. Steven Walker. Thrand..." Her voice faded as she saw the bland incomprehension on his face. He didn't know what she was talking about. But then --

"Ah!" he said in sudden triumph as something clicked in the box he held. Eagerly, he twisted a dial and vanished, as suddenly as the image from a switched-off television screen.

Alison stared at the place where he had been. Could she have imagined it all?

I'm tired, she thought, After this book is finished, Steve can support me for a few months. I've earned a holiday. Maybe I'll start writing a nice historical novel. Marco Polo or the fall of Rome or a new slant on Richard III...

But a single sandal remained to prove to her she had not been dreaming. She picked it up. It was a Lythian sandal. Thrand's people.

It could have been made by a fan, but not by an illusion.

She dropped the thing and, putting her head in her hands, laughed weakly.

It was too absurd, She had had an experience for which any science fiction devotee would give his right arm. And she had missed her opportunity. But how could she have known? Who would have expected an alien from a television series?

"It's fiction," she said aloud. "Damn it, I wrote an episode of that. I invented the translator pendant and the teleport box!"

Or had she?

How many times, asked where she got her ideas, had she replied that her stories seemed to write themselves, that she felt as if she snatched her ideas out of somewhere beyond herself? All she'd really meant was what a sculptor means when he says he "frees" a statue from the marble, but what if she really did get her ideas from elsewhere? Someone, she couldn't remember who, had written that



science fiction stories were actually visions of other universes that really existed somewhere. Suppose the alien's box had sent him, not merely to the wrong co-ordinates, but to the wrong Earth?

In any case, he wouldn't be back. Not after what he had said of humans. Earth, for him, was only a step between more desirable planets.

And who would ever believe her? She was a science fiction writer, wife of an actor who played an alien of the kind she had met. All her claim would get her was ridicule. People would assume it was for publicity purposes - that, or that she had finally lost touch with reality after years of reading and writing science fiction.

She thought of the fans back at the hotel, watching their video episodes of Star Wanderere, absorbed in other worlds, other times - and laughed ironically.

Then she turned and walked back down the path.

- Sue Bursztynsky.



SYNCON '83

AS SEEN THROUGH
THE EYES OF

CAROL BOTT



I have to confess that I never really intended to go to Syncon '83 because the Guest of Honour was Harlan Ellison. I had read some of his columns and had decided that if I ever got within abusing range, I'd have my hands around his throat.

What made me change my mind?

The events as they happened:-

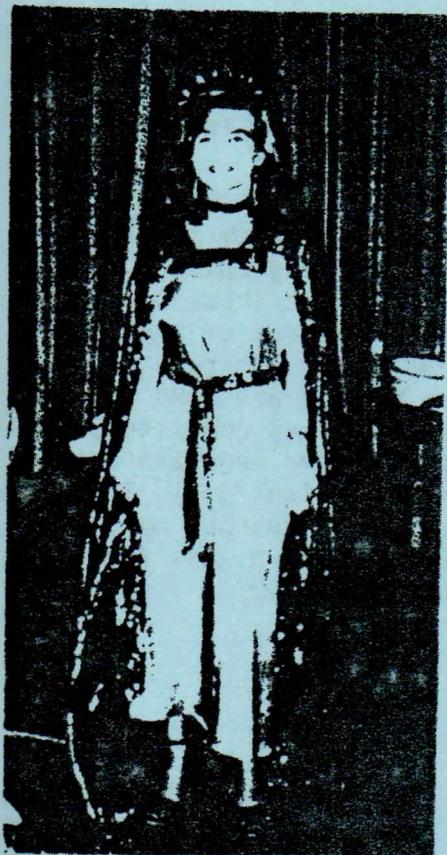
FRIDAY. I picked up Katina Barry and Patricia Anderson, whereupon all three of us descended upon the East-West Airlines terminal to pick up Lorrie Boen, and, having found that her plane was late, decided to have a drink (and chat up the barman, discuss which one was wearing the wig, which one wasn't, etc.) Lorrie finally arrived and we set off back to the Shore Inn (I took the girls a short, scenic trip around the back streets of St. Leonards - even though it was practically pitch-black). Katina had already had the (mis)fortune of meeting H.E. and promised me that she'd introduce me to him (even though I hss sworn vengeance!). The man has a strange effect on people - he had a strange effect on me (which is unusual because I rarely let people get close enough to effect me). At dinner, when the man was far enough away, we all discussed what crazy thing would we ask him to do, the favourite being a photo of him on all fours. Mind you, no-one in the group had attached any sexual connotations to it (least of all me, being a little innocent and never having seen an R-rated movie and I'm 20!) - he did. As the dear boy came out of his section of the restaurant, he belated to us the fact that he couldn't have his coffee and sweets - so why should anyone else. He then duly informed us of his imminent departure to the main opening ceremony to which we all dutifully trooped and sat second row from the front, just out of the video-cameraman's way.

After listening to certain pearls of wisdom and various pleasantries, we all trooped out for a wee drink (unfortunately, I had to hit the "O.J." as I had to drive home), whereupon the G.O.H. appropriately joined up. (It was appropriate that he joined us so that we could ask the more personal questions in privacy

rather than being embarrassed in public.) We all chatted, quite cosily, for nigh on an hour before being joined by some of the more rabid attendees. This, unfortunately, put pay to any chances of furthering our relationships that evening.

Whilst everyone else trotted off to bed, I hit the highways and drove home, only after being kicked, cajolled and wheedled to return for lunch the following day (Saturday, for those who can't remember).

SATURDAY saw things not working out as planned and yours truly registered for the whole day having caught a terminal case of "con fever" (very contagious). I was then subjected to strange stares and looks from the man himself every time he walked past me. But then he was told that I wouldn't be there on Saturday, which is why he posed for aforementioned picture with me. That night, sitting at the Blackjack Table, draped in towels, gold belts and purple lipstick (I would just like to thank the Shore for their kind co-operation in lending me one large, white bath towel and numerous safety pins), H.E. approached and demanded to know why I was still here. To which one replied, "I changed my mind - and Katina kicks extremely hard." In the meantime, three Avons (eeeeek!!!), one Jenna, one Hitchhiker and Shayne McCormack got down to the serious business of playing. H.E. interrupted us once to ask if we really knew what we were doing with the chips and having gotten a smart comment back, marched Lorrie Boen off to the dance floor. At around 11 pm, I changed back to "normal" clothes and headed home (towards Liverpool). I completely forget that I had "different" make-up on when I stopped for petrol.



SUNDAY saw me registering for the rest of the con and, I have to admit, discarding all notions of going up to the mountains. On this day, the Syncon attendees were privileged to see a "real" writer at "work" as Harlan had set up his typewriter (in one of the most noisiest of places around, I thought) with the intention of finishing a story that he was writing for those of us at Syncon, which was later read out. During this time, he was also typing out another story that was read out on Monday afternoon. Unfortunately, the end had not yet been written and so we were all left on the edge of our seats.

Commendations to go to the party who presented the synchronised (Blakes 7) slide show -- very effective and very good (when it finally went off without a hitch).

Sunday night proved to be quite interesting for all of those who were at the Pirate Bar after dinner, waiting for Harlan to deliver his G.O.H. speech. You see, since I wasn't going home that night, I could let my hair down a bit and have a drikk. White wine, unfortunately, goes straight to my head (along with lots of other things) and after dear Katina (Barry) had poured number 2 down my throat I felt quite.... happy; actually a little too happy, so I hit the O.J. again - but it was too late. (God this is embarrassing.) Harlan appeared and noticed that I was now dressed a little differently (please note that I was not the only one in costume at my table). "Jesus Christ!" he exclaimed, "what's all this?"

Feeling a little "devil-may-care", I rose with Imperial calmness and replied, "I am not Jesus Christ. Would somebody please inform this gentleman that he is in Imperial company." and sat down again. Patricia Anderson informed him that I was the Empress of Traken.

"What?!" the man exclaimed. "My God, the woman is insane!" (True.)

"Yes," I flashed back, "and it's all your fault."

"My fault? But I haven't even laid a hand on you."

"Exactly."

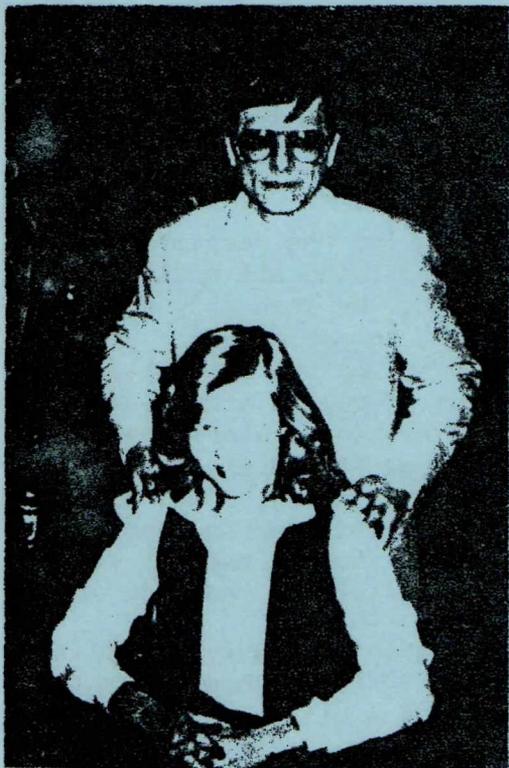
Ooops. Too late I realised what I'd just said. Time to go for an Imperial jog, I thought. However, I just wasn't quick enough. Let's just say that he remedied the situation by placing more than a hand on me. For those who are (still) wondering, no, "The Empress" and Harlan did not run off together. (I could think of better people to run off with, heh! heh! heh!)

MONDAY proved to be enjoyable after all as Harlan began reading his latest story to us (the one that I rememberd earlier). Other than that, Monday seemed rather dull.

GENERAL COMMENT:

SYNCON '83 was my first national convention, and in my opinion, was just as good as MEDTREK '82. There was the same atmosphere of friendliness at Syncon that seemed to pervade the air at Medtrek; I hope all future cons that I go to are like that. I would like to thank the Syncon committee, and all others connected with the organization and running, for doing an excellent job. I thoroughly enjoyed myself. (What changed my mind about going to Syncon? You've just read the answer in this last paragraph.)

- CAROL BOTT (with help from Katina Barry).



-----ooOoo-----

In the 1983 DUFF race Jan Howard Finner just missed out coming to Australia. THE MENTOR suggests, and supports, him as DUFF candidate for the Aussie World Con in 1985 for all his help in supporting Aussie bids over the years - Ron

SYNCON 83

PAUL KENNEDY...

Since I joined fandom some two years ago, I have attended two cons - MEDTREK 82 and SYNCON 83. I enjoyed the latter, but it was not perfect: no con can be.

I attended Syncon with my wife Tina and her brother, Ren. Each of our group attended the con for their own reasons. I am a fannish fan - I love fandom. Tina's interest in sf fandom is Time Loop and so simply attended to see what a con was really about. Ren is not into fandom or sf and really came along to take photographs as our guest.

We had intended to go on the Friday night, but due to other factors we were unable to attend till the Saturday. Having two small children we decided to leave them with my parents at Strathfield and use their home as our base, returning there for tea and to sleep. On the Saturday, after registration, we wandered around and made our way to the huckster's room and found some items of interest. After this, and not finding anything more of interest, we left to have some lunch. We made our way to Lane Cove and saw a small child find a wallet. The mother quickly took it off the child and put it in her granny shopper. They then rapidly departed.

We made sure that we were back in time for the Ellison talk and reading. It was very good and very amusing. What I also enjoyed on that day was the fanzine auction. It was interesting to hear the bids from Aussie's and Yanks: one dollar, then a buck and a quarter and on and on. I even picked up a Ron Clarke and Shayne McCormack 1st edition - The Penultimate Blimp for 50c. After the auction we left for dinner and returned to see the masquerade. I must say that many of the costumes were of a high standard and those concerned should be proud of their fine work. Unfortunately the night soon became boring until the parade. Some of those in the parade gave a spectacular performance. When the parade finished, we departed.

Sunday came and we arrived back at the Shore in time for the fan fund auction. I bought some good items and it was fun to see people bid up to twelve dollars for a small bag of watermellon jelly beans. Both auctions were well run and enjoyable.

We had a break for lunch at the end of the auction and returned to the con for the panel discussion on "Is SF T.V. Possible." I watched as Ellison tore Jack Herman's words to shreds. Many people left after this and missed Van Ikin's talk. Although he is not a dynamic character, he was well worth staying around to hear.

I then left to see the artwork - it was very good indeed; Nick Stathopoulos and the other artists did themselves proud.

We left for dinner, and returned to hear Ellison's GoH speech. He began by insulting Jack Herman with the following description - "Jack Herman has as much personality as an armpit!". From there I watched with some amusement the award presentations. I was later to learn that under sixty people bothered to vote and some people won awards with less than 21 votes. This does detract from the awards. How easy would it be to win on a block vote. It becomes unimportant who wins. With so few people voting it makes sense to keep the ballot open for the whole con.

The Monday came and we were back at the con at 2pm for a Doctor Who gettogether. I was appalled by the mess that was left by con members in the room that we were allocated. It took us fifteen to twenty minutes for three people to make it presentable for our meeting. The gettogether went over OK, with some nineteen fans attending.

I would like to make a few comments on closing. It was a pity that the con organisers stated a weapons policy and then did not bother to enforce it.

For a mainstream SF con there was a lot of media activities and merchandise. This seems strange when mainstream fans always tell media fans how bad media is.

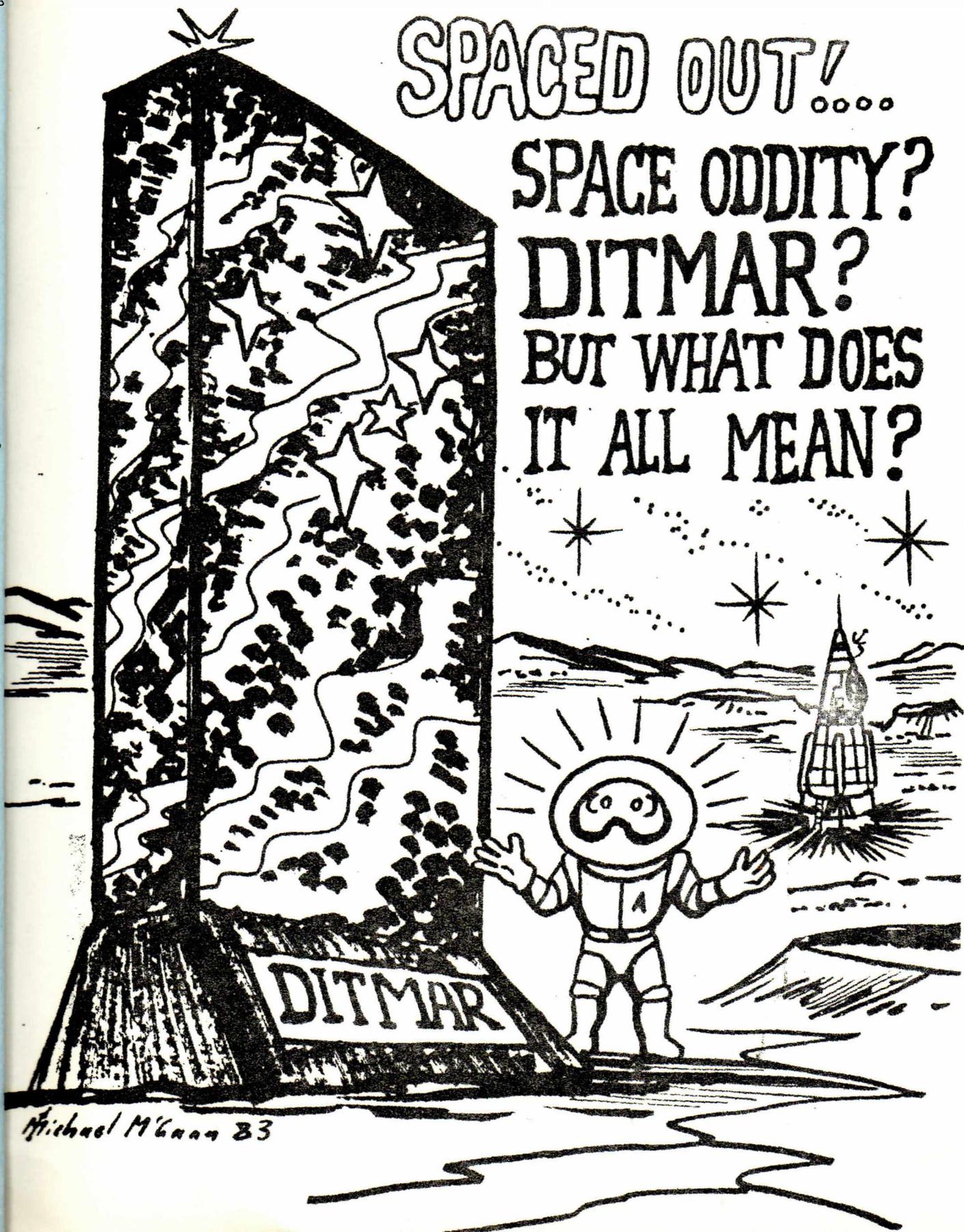
Lastly - over all, I did enjoy myself, and must say that Jack Herman, and the other official and unofficial organisers and helpers did a good job.

- Paul Kennedy.



SPACED OUT!...

SPACE ODDITY?
DITMAR?
BUT WHAT DOES
IT ALL MEAN?





WAVE

BY MICHAEL BLACK

CONCLUSION

In studied, calming tones, VNM158 offered a matter-of-factly stated explanation:

"Those ultra-conservatives among the many despicable politicians of your despairing world, after decades of ever-worsening drought and rampant desertification, seized upon the only remedy for your world's economic woes that they have ever seemed able to devise - the final total war, despite successive universal agreements (made so many times) that war is unthinkable, considering the nature of weaponry available. Of course, just prior to this latest outbreak, as usual, the 'democratic' governments of the more constantly aggressive (and monopoly-run) of your nations, had introduced mandatory military service for almost all of their youth, plus for all the other unemployed-and otherwise disabled members of their populations, of any age, even pensioners, in order to diminish all the problems these politicians saw as due to what, in fact, they themselves secretly encouraged for their own profits' sake - population pressures! The actual minority of electors who had voted for them deserved such a fate, true, but those electors were all among the small number of people, including the politicians themselves, who escaped that fate; in the beginning, of course!"

"I'd ridden," Nash continued grimly, "my bicycle to places that took a hard morning's work to barely reach, but somehow, returning - mostly uphill - seemed then to take little time at all. Yet, on other visits to those places, even by bus, car or train, it'd be pitch-black by the time I'd get home."

"Were there any later recurrences?"

Nash was utterly fed up by now: "Not the same!"

"Why? What did happen?"

Nash continued in mechanical fashion, as though speaking to a naughtily two-year-old -

"They were of two totally different, and odder, sorts of experiences."
(Nash had began musing about these events himself, now, and continued more slowly)
"After a short series of a first type, there was about a five years' break, then five years of a second type, then nothing unusual for about ten years - until now."

"What do you mean by a first type?"

Nash was almost shouting now, at the end of his tether: "I would meet people, for the first time, in my job as a counter clerk, and have written down their names before being told them! Also, people used to come up to me in the street, whom I'd never seen nor met before, greet me warmly by my preferred name - as though I knew them well - and ask questions about my affairs they could only have known about if we were close acquaintances. I suppose, really, that was a second type, and the later ones were a sort of third type..."

Nash stopped as there was a thought trying to break through - but he couldn't materialise it out of a growing cloud in his mind.

VNM158 interrupted: "What do you mean?"

The hysteria of fear forced Nash to mumble a reply -

"Well, from about five to ten years later, especially when I was living for a year overseas, in parts of a foreign country I'd never been before, I was 'welcomed back' to a number of isolated places, and by a number of people, all definitely and totally unknown to me. Yet these people all behaved as though I was well-known to them!

"Your arithmetic and memory are probably both faulty. You could have known these people and places, and only just forgotten having known them. Why refer to these experiences as 'types', but not the strange events in the preceding years of your life?"

It was the last straw for Nash: "You should know why! It was your voice!"

"To what are you referring? What voice?"

Blurting out his answer, Nash heard a plaintive, but definite "No!" too late to stop his replying:

"Just as each occurrence began, I'd hear my name spoken, as I'm hearing you now; at least, it sounded like your voice - I suppose all you robots have similar sounding voices..."

There was a very long pause; long enough for even Nash to comprehend what he might just have done.

Then the machine began its questioning again, but in a much more comradely tone:

"These time distortions, as you like to think of them - what about the people around you - didn't they notice anything odd - and your appearance, you must have seen, and felt, changes, even if they didn't?"

Going into slight shock now, Nash's tone was softening, and his anger was ebbing:

"Some people I was really fond of, but seldom saw, have grown old and died, or were killed, or otherwise left my scene. But those close to me, and my own appearance, have remained similar for years now. Maybe this is as oldish-looking as we're going to get - we're must lucky, I suppose..."

"Don't your surroundings change?"

"About every three or four years there are sudden abrupt changes - sometimes towards oldish, but mostly either to totally different modernisations, or just complete disappearance..."

"You mean nothing remains of some places?"

"It's as if nothing had ever been built in some places I've tried to find my way back to - there's just gullies and trees and wild bush - but three or four places I've never been able to get more than a little way along the routes I remember to them before I've become lost because everything from then on was unrecognisable. That I've blamed on my poor memory, except that sometimes for a moment, in a completely different place, new to me, I've seen glimpses of scenes I remember were missing from along the old routes to those favourite places I can no longer find. But I suppose that's because there's only so much variety possible in any given set of circumstances."

"Why did you try to return to these places?"

In the face of such a question Nash's aggression resurfaced: "Because I'd liked them - but, most importantly, because I'd wanted to renew my friendships with the people I'd known in them."

"Could not you have met these people elsewhere?"

(These memories were beginning to frighten Nash again, the way the events themselves had done): "No! It's strange, but all the places that I can't find any more, have to do with certain favourite people I have not seen again for many years. But, not all the places I knew them in have gone: it's just that those people never visit the places that are still to be found, when I do, now. Even old telephone books, my own notes and every other place I could think of finding something to do with them contain no trace at all!"

"Maybe you imagined them."

"As I'm imagining you, and your absurd, burlesque perils, now?"

This retort apparently galvanized the machine, or reminded it that the time for urgent action had already passed. Its entire manner suddenly changed once more:

"What do you see as being wrong with your current cosmology?"

Taken aback, Nash thought for a moment then admitted: "It's partisan, too contradictory, relies on an overly flexible concept of time and it's basically both egocentric, and at the same time, too empiric. Also, it seems unlikely to be a correct idea dynamically speaking - because there are too many odd notions in it, not justifiable: just explainable superficially. Of course most of the data are inexact, if known at all, so you can't expect a proper complete picture."

The machine did not comment and, in face of its impassivity, Nash felt constrained to add: "Actually the whole current cosmology field seems nonsensical, but what can you expect, when all of science, and most of the humanities, too, seem to have become just chaff for the computers' company-owned salesmen? Even now there are still some of these 'scientists' who write learned-sounding nonsense about it being unlikely that man will ever evolve the intelligence even of the computers we now have. As if so-called Darwinian evolution were even possible unless all variants of everything had been present from the beginning - and even then it's illogical. Even the Huxley's - its current protagonists - realised it was only Lamarckism in another guise and with now less illogical. But the contention of mere adding machines being able to think is absurd regardless. Von Neumann himself was only a mathematician when he'd proposed the notion. As if thought were electric instead of biological electrochemistry..."

Nash had realised at once the absurdity of his own last outburst, directed as it was in the circumstances. The machine imperturbably asked, in innocent tones:

"What had you hoped to achieve when you wrote the letter to that leading astronomer, when he came to your country to open the new observatory?"

This event, being so far in his own past, Nash was at first nonplussed by the question, then vaguely aware of the memory, and finally recalled most of the details.

"I was at a college, and was hoping that he might be enticed to come to speak to us about the latest cosmological theories at that time, his own cosmology being amongst the most relevant to the country, as his own ideas were based, in part, upon meteorite analyses (from the tektites found in the country's west and north) as well as his having just recently suggested that it could be possible to form a 'Mills-cross-type' radio-telescope by using his superbly programmed new electronic data processor and program to link up all of the huge country's vast array of lines of metallic (and partially-metallic, piezo-electric)'boundary fences' which would then act as one enormous grid, and thus so dwarf traditional bowl-type radio-telescopes as to make even Arecibo seem little more than a domestic video-satellite antenna. If this trial were successful, it would presage use of the same computerised system to couple up all existing terran radio-telescope systems into one interferometry and radio astronomy grid at least as large as could be necessary to thoroughly investigate in a workably short time (ie 10 years or less) the entirety of the radio Universe. Thus, he was not only suggesting that all of creation might actually constitute only one Intelligence, but giving a practical way to investigate this notion, as well as propounding a down-to-earth hypothesis of how such an Intelligence might have come into being..."

Nash's thoughts, like billiard balls obeying a calculated strike, but seeming to roll randomly until they each finally pocket in different ways, saw at least that these underlying elements of the long-dead cosmologist's proposals, interlocked, and recognised the theory in a sudden new light, tying in the "Einstein Satellite's" discoveries (that there was at least as much 'immaterial' matter in the Universe as there was 'solid' matter, and that the former generated a background X-ray signal equalling that from the solid Universe). What the dead astronomer (and Valikovsky) had both predicted.

"Of course," Nash muttered to himself, "Matter does not spontaneously appear from nowhere. It coalesces from the Universe Number One - from the ether's finest components - from the non-material Elementals falling back towards the site of their Big Bang through the debris of the material Universe Number Two radiating away from its own later Big Bang's site."

Inhumanly impartial, VNM 158 did not chime in with a "I told you so" remark, nor even inquire why Nash had decided not to send his letter, let alone ask about the childishness of its cosmological porridge (which Nash himself had sub-consciously seen), but only remarked - "The accidental juxtaposition of we two individuals, in your terms, defies the wildest odds and in such a manner as no statistician of your culture could even conceive, let alone calculate. The parameters of a problem such as one requiring two, so opposite, planetary time-lines to cross, their populations each degrading towards their own means, similarly, it is true but the particular protagonists - us - coming together, by chance, just where our individual time-lines also nearly intersect, when they only do so by means of a single, random bisector, and do not themselves truly meet."

Nash had himself wrestled with this properly-human problem - the source being the typical human confusions about time: - time solidity itself only a human concept, anyway - so he realised what it was that the machine was unable to encapsulate and why. Nash replied almost soothingly - having forgotten their dire peril for the moment:

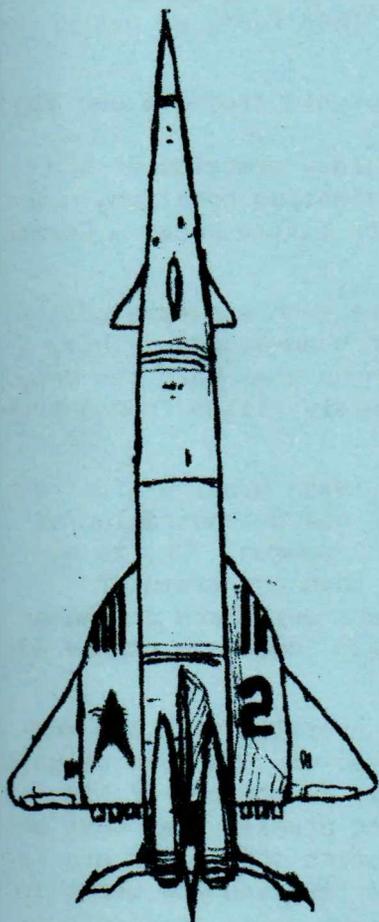
"Statistics is the logical opposite of Empiricism - and equally fatuous. It attempts to codify the reasons why all the so-called possible alternatives to an actual event did not happen instead, in its various mystical numbers and its mathematically derived curves are only the last persistences of ancient-Greek-Earth-religions. Even the Greeks knew that their various oracles, though overcome by various forms of primitively-plant-derived, transmitter-substance isochems as they might be, were able to predict' outcomes and events more accurately than would any of the mathematics sober cultists. This, more than anything else, makes one wonder at the computer cult which gradually would have supplanted even the militarism cult, (which had spawned it), but for the ending of the human race - if the war you have shown me is not just an illusion you have created in my mind."

The machine had mentally confused its own program; by now, but Nash's long-winded remarks had given it the time and direction to recover from its own internal ellipses, and it briefly, brusquely, took over the direction of the conversation again:

"As I have said, by a lucky accident we could be said to be of the same mind. What you did not realise - as your insight, useful though it is, is still run by your emotions, and thus egocentric - is that our time-lines also do run along together, not in parallel, (my own mistake being due to your emotionality interfering with my internal processes) but in opposite time directions, so one of us has to change for the good of us both."

Perhaps as a further indication of the machine's growing sense of alarm, or perhaps as a by-product of his own cerebral awakenings and stimulation, Nash began to experience a veritable cascade of forgotten memories: images tumbling over each other so rapidly his consciousness was virtually surfing along over waves of memories, themselves in such disorganised array as to have little more than a broad similarity of subject matters, and the passage from one memory to another almost too fast for Nash to consciously recognise, let alone reflect upon them:-

His own childhood and early teenage, awe, when clear southern nights' stellar radiance had left him spellbound; especially his first observations of the early man-made satellites' passages through a sky full of light sources - obviously not all equally distant; the latter, awesome sightings, each shared with large crowds, of several unnatural, nonartificial objects moving at great distances, and great speeds (and, therefore, incredibly far in the past, if some theories of the speed of light were true), subsequent to many daytime, visual sightings in his youth, (accompanied by many other equally objective observers) of flying saucer-type, metallic-looking, gigantic objects: following aircraft, hovering over a city's zoo and harbour foreshores, then slowly, silently moving away to disappear in the distance, without any indication of any form of motive power known to man, then or later.



Concepts derived from his reading of every acquirable book and article on astronomy and cosmology by respected scientists, leading to a dualistic view of a universe both contracting and expanding simultaneously - an immaterial Universe - the result of a big bang many eons ago, having reached the limits at which its remaining momentum could no longer conquer its inherent gravity and tendency to spin (which Einstein had realised were, together, Newton's inertia concept, (Newton never having lived long enough to be able to conclude that a "body's tendency to gravitate towards another" and a "body's tendency to remain where it is until sufficient force overcomes its inertia" were the same property)); such a Universe would tend to fall back towards the site of its initial big bang, and its implosive rate would accelerate in identical manner to any body's that were accelerating under the influence of gravity, except that the well-known observed tendency for spin to develop, in opposite direction to that experienced following the big bang, would slow the accretion process, as well as further redistribute the subatomic particles, a sort of gene-dance of pre-material sub-microminiature subatomic components slowly coming together into forms of matter unknown in the Universe Man accepted as real.

Meanwhile, Man's real Universe, still speeding outward from its own big bang...

But Nash's own thoughts, which had recalled schoolday memories of the Maginot Line debacle when the machine had boasted of its defensive position, now recalled the closing scenes of the brilliant - but therefore little known - German film The Delegation.

AND THEN IT COULD NOT BUT HAPPEN - as Nash's aggresssion was spasmodic rather than continuous. Between these spasms his character changed impossibly, so different was it then to his usual, forthright abrasiveness that Nash can only be adequately described as a biological receptacle alternately filled from untra-aggressive and then from exceptionally placid time lines.

As is almost always the case with human examples, Nash Model A (for antagonistic) was far behind Nash Model B (for buoyant) in his demonstration of that rare degree of common sense complimented by the term of acumen. Or, to be plainer, it was only when he was calm and amenable to more than one train of thought or view of reality, that Nash's actions and demeanor evidenced any human (or other) brain's exercising more than mere reflex control. Thus even VNM158 was stupefied when Nash suddenly declared:

"Now hold on there! I've had time to grasp your overall drift now and the failings in my own critical overview of it. Firstly, you are wrong in assuming that you, I or any other similar single creature is uniquely in control of his destiny. Secondly, you are wrong in taking as an underlying premise that that which we, and everything else are part of, is one ether; but ignoring this vital premise in the remainder of your consideration of our problem. Thirdly, you are wrong in maintaining that we are on the same time line - because either yours or mine must be the prevailing one, as otherwise they both must collide soon since yours supposedly moves in a directly opposite direction to mine. Therefore, one or other of us must cease to have ever existed else neither of us will have ever existed. nor any other thing in that which we each now call the Universe."

"So we must first realise if everything is, as predicted, one ether, one universe, one intelligence, and you and I, or I and you, and the other of us is a private friend invented by whichever is more real, exist at all, then it must be concluded either that everything that seems to be happening to me, you or us

now, is a delusion, or that the impasse represented is itself a delusion because these seem, to me, mutually exclusive.

"Secondly, we must assume an existence, and therefore that the first predicate in full must be true, so a further corollary is that our time lines cannot collide unless we are both on a time continuum version of the Mobius or, endless, two dimensional loop. Just as the loop itself is a combination visual-intellectual illusion, so too if time as a dimension, the result of the predominance, and even supremacy, of marketing jargons over even the dullest of thinking processes.

"Therefore the conclusions we must act upon are that the next likely dominant species would have been plants, as man had effectively exterminated insects, and made even the marine environment unsuitable, by the nuclear holocaust accidentally set off. But this had opened undersea rifts and resurrected dormant volcanoes as a combination of tectonics, volcanic activity, earth-quakes/earth tremors on land, and aquatic activity, not only destroyed his world and inundated with water, lava and radioactive matter much of the Earth, affected its axes of spin, and orbital configurations, but also the consequent atmospheric losses plus clouding both denied essential heat and light, and also caused a greenhouse effect, etc which overheated the atmosphere, biosphere and oceans, and allowed excessive cosmic and UV radiation to destroy the regenerative capacities of spores, seeds and bacteria, etc, after a horrendous short outbreak of totally unadapted and bizarre mutations. The climate finally became too cold, as the Earth was now orbiting on a semi-cometary orbit, for any further formation of forms of life.

"The Moon, however, acquired the atmosphere and other matter drawn from the earth, and acquired satellites of its own as well, and went into a spiral orbit about the sun, to later be consumed by it and speed the sun's evolving into a white dwarf. The four other 'machines' had bred biological, rather than constructed mechanic-electronic, cyberons, but the vulcanism, and the unavoidably destructive character of their biological creatures, meant that a much longer period became necessary to suitably modify the environment - so the flying saucers of the later years perished on arrival. These were the VNM's builders (as their home world's whole population now consisted solely of machines - the originating biological species having annihilated itself with radioactivity - spreading weapons so potent that only a few of all their many machines even survived - and only then because they were pre-colonisers, already despatched to far planets for the purpose of environment-modification to prepare for later biological colonisation."

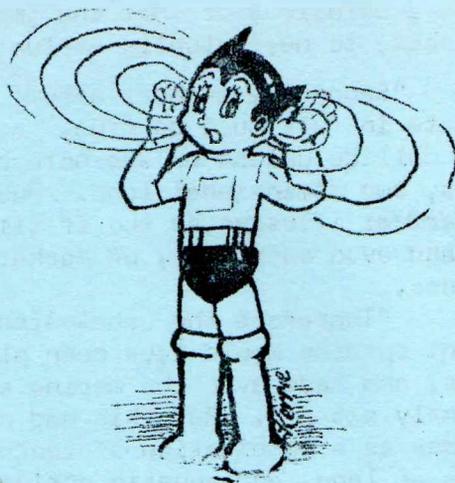
Four of the VNM's had gone off to modify the environment whilst the others had remained, to guard VNM158: Human (ie "mad"), because of shock damage to its circuits when the micrometeorite had hit the mother vehicle.

Waking from his reverie, Tom glanced over the page on which he'd written the title WAVE, added PERHAPS A STORY FOR SURFERS on the next line, then glancing briefly at the wave welling up below the ferry, began to write (planning the end sequence of the film he was directing, in honour of his late friend Frederick Nash, world champion surfer at age 14):

SLOWLY REVERSE ZOOM FROM UNTRA CLOSE-UP OF WAVE CREST, TO WIDE-ANGLE PANORAMA OF SYDNEY HEADS AND SYDNEY HARBOUR. KEEP CAMERA RUNNING AS HELICOPTER MOUNT LIFTS OFF, PANNING TO RIGHT AND REVERSING ZOOM TO CLOSE-UP, FOLLOWING MOTION OF WAVE TOWARDS CLIFF, UNTIL SURFER COMPLETES FLIP OFF WAVE. IRIS OUT. CUT/DISSOLVE TO .
CREDITS: WHITE ON BLACK.

Such a shame that Nash had not cut off in time to miss hitting the cliff. What could have distracted his normally acute perceptions?

The R. & R. Dept.



Jan Finder
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U.S.A.

Enjoyed Hailstone's article on the Greenhouse Effect in TM 42. He doesn't reach an answer, but points out the confusion on just what will happen. Of course using non-fossil fuels to power our society would be the real answer. One of these days I may write an article wondering why Australia doesn't invite more research in on non-fossil fuel energy research.

I thoroughly enjoyed ABC's review and his comments about reviewing.

I find it interesting the reaction of mundanes and non-North American men to backrubs. Most seem to feel (?) it is only a come on or foreplay. Yes, it can be that, especially among those who CAN'T do it well. I do a good backrub/massage. When I backrub, I backrub; when I play, I play. There is a difference. I feel better after giving a backrub. It is also hard work. I'll give a back rub to most anyone who asks, female or male. A back is a back and they are all different. Granted there are fringe benefits, but I give backrubs for the pleasure of it.

I expect to be over in '85. Not a certainty, but I'll try my damnest. I expect to buy a house in '84, which, as you know all too well, eats up available cash. Things go ahead here, knock-on-wood.

Richard Faulder
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Yanco,
NSW 2703

The trouble with conspiracy theories is that they fall very easily to Occam's Razor, Thus with Michael Hailstone's previously unmentioned affectation of that hoary old construction, the Illuminati. I have in fact seen the Deyo book, which was lent to me by a Fundamentalist Christian. Deyo's underlying reasoning is that the Illuminati are actually agents of the Antichrist, preparing the world for his temporary ascendance. The underlying motivations of some of the other people who believe in the Illuminati (not, I hasten to add, that I believe this of Michael Hailstone) can be seen in some of their other writings where the prime movers amongst the Illuminati are said to be Jewish. Anti-semitism, anyone? Still, some sort of divine, or profane, influence would have to be invoked to keep such a conspiracy rolling along after all these years. My belief cannot remain unsuspected when I am asked, in these days of investigative journalism, to believe that such a massive international conspiracy would remain unexposed. (Unless you take the view that tales of the Illuminati already have been

released in such a manner as to discredit anyone who tried to put them forward seriously). All that aside, I cannot agree that the closer we move to a world government the closer we will move to a world dictatorship. It is just not efficient to try to manage everything about a large group of people from a central point, as the Soviets have found. Rather, for efficient operation what is needed is a tiered system in which decisions are made at the lowest possible level, where the local conditions are best appreciated. The role of the higher levels of government is essentially to ensure that one group does not receive a disproportionate share of the resources of the society. Those computer codes which Michael finds so distasteful are not the product of government action, but of private enterprise. Perhaps Michael envisages a world such as that portrayed in Pohl and Kornbluth's The Space Merchants. There the giant transnational corporations had accumulated the power that they had precisely because of government inaction. In a sense, I suppose, the speed at which time passes is a product of the energy of a system, inasmuch as time slows down as an object moves faster, or, rather, appears to slow down. The rate at which an event takes place, according to an outside observer, seems to slow down as the object's potential energy (which will only be released if the object actually hits something) increases, but it is not really true to say that the system itself is more energetic. Certainly not in the sense that you can just pump energy into and out of a system and so make time speed up or slow down within that system. Certainly you could make time appear to run faster for a group of people by increasing their amount of adrenaline, but this is not changing the amount of energy in their system, merely the rate at which the existing energy is changed from one form to another.

Michael Black's story fell down badly, generating a monumental sense of confusion. The problem was that Black took the reader and thrust her straight into a vast morass of not obviously related information. This story is clearly one which cried out to be stretched out, on the one hand, rather than being compressed into two short parts, or on the other hand, ruthlessly pruned of excess verbiage.

complete story in one reading you may find it more coherent. - Ron. /

From looking at the picture of that compact photocopier it doesn't look as though it could do 300 copies in one hit. At 5¢ a page, plus the cost of bond paper (yes, I know Leigh Edmonds uses it) that seems like fairly expensive duplicating.

Oh, your earlier comment to me rather sounds like inverse snobbery. I've been to university, and I like to think that I don't suffer from terminal illiteracy. The fascination with the copulatory expletive that you observe in many of those who have passed through university, especially since the times of what its participants liked to fancy as youth rebellion in the 1960s and early 1970s. For many of those people they went straight from school, an environment where adolescent rebellion was possible, to university, another such environment, and what better way to be adolescently rebellious against one's middle-class parents than to adopt the speech patterns of some mythical proletariat, for it is not only offensive but also safe.

Actually, it is ecologically safer to burn wood than fossil carbon fuels - providing, of course, that trees are not removed faster than they can be grown - since this merely involves speeding up the cycling of carbon at present available in the world, rather than liberating carbon in storage from a time when the amount of photo-synthetic tissue available to process carbon dioxide was greater.

Harry Warner may be able to remember when he first came in contact with adult

science fiction, but I'm afraid I can't. I was coming in contact with the genre a little over twenty years after Harry did, and not only did I have access to juveniles by Heinlein and Norton in the local library, but my cousin and her fiance were devotees, so that I had access to science fiction at all levels, and while I didn't perceive many of the subtleties in the adult fiction I read, to me it formed a whole.

The prime element in any secession attempt by any Australian state would be to deny the federal government access to taxation revenues. However, since the money is collected directly to the federal Treasury, rather than by the state Treasuries and passed on, such secession could only be enforced by posting guards at state borders and inspecting all mail for tax money. There is no putting the genie back in the bottle.

Ah, but I didn't say that the rhythm method of birth control was the exclusive province of the Roman Catholic Church. However, this method will be popular with the male hierarchy of that Church because, being male, they have little sympathy for the women coping with the problems of an unwanted pregnancy, and being celibate (it says here) they will not be inconvenienced as must both marriage partners be by the necessity for temporary abstinence. Thus the temptation to encroach further into the fertile period, only to find that it really was the fertile period, especially if the woman's oestrus cycle is erratic.

James Styles
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Brunswick,
Vic. 3056.

It appears that the readers of my letters do not appreciate the full subtlety of my views. Indeed, because of this lack in their awareness, the richness of metaphor, sarcasm and wit is wasted upon them. If they fail to perceive the direction of my innuendoes I feel I must resort to plain language even to the extent of appearing banal.

Julie Vaux accuses me of being charvinistic and biased. Please re-read my letter, Julie, and recognise that I was also poking a bit of mild fun toward Kerrie Hanlon's art and its sexual undertones. I felt you would defend your creation and wasn't surprised by your reaction. What is of more interest to me is the artist's reactions to my assertion that SF art has only developed as an illustration and parasite on the real beauty of the SF field, that is, the actual writing of SCIENCE FICTION. I long for the time that art by its very nature and appearance will take me beyond the sense of beauty, wonder and awareness of the universe that science fiction invokes (but I do so rarely) within me.

It has been my unfortunate experience to gain true insights into the very fundamentals of existence when my body has been racked by the ravages of malaria; when I have heard my friend gunned down by crazed Alcholi tribesmen and the later sickening view; when I have walked beneath the gods on the high and clear ridges of The Mountains of the Moon in the border regions of Rwanda and Uganda; when I have stood alone in the pouring evening rain in the grotto in Lourdes and drunk deeply of the miraculous water; when I have strode with a friend through the quiet forest snows of Sweden. Truly if art is to become great in the SF field it should be able to raise similar emotions and appreciation of Life, The Universe and Everything in me.

Thus, Julie and other artists, please forgive my mild sarcasms. They are only meant in good critical fashion to spur you all to greater efforts and achievements!

Your Altamirran
biology stirs my own memories of a choice I made in 1977. Whether to utilise my high school studies to become a wordsmith and author; to go surfing; or to aspire

to more military ventures. I chose the latter. Thus if you wish to give me a rank - call me Private Styles. The title of "Mr." is one I find tedious and unnecessary and prefer the use of my Christian and Surnames.

Finally, I do appreciate female beauty. Scantly clad Amazons and Red Sonja are fine by me. Steel bikinis are laughable, nothing more if not functional. I am constantly appalled by the search by women for outrageous fashions and appearances catering to some of the whims of their consort sex. High heels I find unnatural and visually disturbing. Revealing skirts and blouses I find to be often dishonest and over praising. Give me the nude, natural look any time. To Julie Vaux's last and laughable charge I must plead innocent! I find men and women with muscles to be visually attractive and enjoyable. I can confess to annoyance when my sisters refused to develop muscles because they considered such to be unladylike. Pythons's piss! Such views are just the outmoded and tired luggage that our society carries with it. Should I ever have the chance to "adjust" society, blouses, unisex dresses/trousers and sturdy walking shoes will be "encouraged". Whips and leathers will be left to the military and other extremists.

One final comment. The only woman I ever came close to loving was a swimming teacher and judo exponent. She had muscles in her brain, too!

Richard Faulder's comments on "fucking" are interesting. I find the word used excessively in the predominantly male Train crews of Vic Rail. The change in this Driver is remarkable when in the presence of the other gender. Now THAT'S a reaction I find offensively sexist!

I stand by my own assertion that "People only live to die". Sure they may leave their genes, their history and their imprint on the Akashic record. Sure, they may venture on to spirit life in some celestial heaven or hell (or limbo). But it doesn't change the physical fundamentals. Richard, show me a man that beat death (or came back) and I'll disagree with you and call him a God. However, my views spoil the little nuke global joke. I lean more to belief in necrobiosis than feelings for necrophilia.

I don't believe the human system was even in equilibrium. Ever since Man crawled out of his tree its been one hard struggle to finally reach the present. Richard, people like you want to throw us back the thousands of years to the beginning of that struggle. Hasn't Science Fiction taught you the necessity of nation and culture? Abortion is one of the most hideous and socially criminal practices foisted upon us by a society that is driving itself to what you claim to be so afraid of. I can find some sympathy for your views even though they are so terribly wrong.

You agree that "behaviour patterns" can be "conditioned into an individual". Thus, we should be conditioning people to the more normal and healthy human mating patterns. This would discourage extremes and cultural whims (such as the Ucker sport of Poofter bashing) as well as insuring a strong, vibrant and healthy nation ready to play the part of increasing that "dynamic equilibrium of the human population" that you seem so keen about.

Yes, I do disapprove of "blow-up rubber dolls". Please refer to my comments on wanking in TM 43 as I feel these have some relevance.

Michael Hailstone's paranoia is becoming obvious. The only conspiracy is that the truth has never been told except in times of national crusade (ie the Japanese conquest of Asia and the Third Reich's crusade against communism). In simple words, the situation is fine. Some people like to order, and the majority of people like to be ordered. The sooner every being is filed on databank, the better.



The world order as defined by The Club of Rome seems fine by me. 1984 is next year; we welcome the changes!

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Re societies (TM 44),
I doubt that women-dominated societies can be considered stable as determined by human nature.

Sure, there would be small exceptions like small obscure tribes and past accounts of fabled societies such as the Amazons. But these past accounts come out mostly more fable than fact. I can not think of any large present society which is woman-dominated. It goes totally against male human nature, unless you round up all the males and cut off all their balls or something. Like it or not, human males have been in-bred to compete for the female. And when scanning the histories of all the known great societies past and present, there seems to be no deviation. So, girls, don't start planning on nay big changes!

Looking for something else on which to comment - typical cat-woman on page 51. Seems SF just can't exist without these feline creatures, or the predictable ogre-like deformed monsters mostly carrying off a fair maiden. And SF maidens are almost always guaranteed half or fully nude, or scantily dressed. Probably because fans are lustier (the male ones, I mean) than most groups. Or, science fiction has fallen into a fatal rut as far as finding new ways for depicting its creatures.

One final question - what is the purpose of an etch attachment, anyway? Just before placing an offset plate on the press, one must prepare it for the ink - one uses an etch solution of ferrous cyanide, which one spreads with a cloth or small sponge, wiping it over the complete surface of the plate. With an etch attachment on the machine one pulls down a lever which contains the solution on a roller and the plate is etched in one motion. It also prevents the hands being covered with the cyanide solution - not recommended when you have any small cuts on your hands. It is much faster. - Ron.✓

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The cover of The Mentor 44 turned out quite well. Presumably it represents your first encounter with sf? I can not say the same about the back cover. Kerrie's usually fine line work has become a mass of black; is this the fault of the offset or was Kerrie's original too dark in the first place?

Mostly the fault of the offset. The original was an experiment on Kerrie's part using white-out to achieve an effect of flames. I don't know if it would have worked if the offset was operating at peak efficiency. - Ron.✓

The DITMARS: No, Ron, there should be two classes

for the art. There should be a Best Australian SF or F Artist and a separate SF or F Cartoonist. After all, putting the two together pits a cartoonist, say Terry Frost, against the likes of Marilyn Pride. It's like chalk and cheese. There are two distinct classes that appeal to different people (or, granted the same people), but using different styles, approaches to art. It would be like comparing that stock Sigma to a Porsche; cars they may both be but each belongs in a different class. If you had to race them against each other you know which one would win.

✓ Yes, but what is a cartoon? An illustration with a caption? There are only a very few artists who do them in Australian fan circles. One of the better was Gerald Ashworth a couple of years ago in TM. A better break-up would be black-and-white art and colour works (paintings, etc). The black-and-white would be mainly the fanzine works, the colour would be the works presented to the public at cons, and where the artists do not get their just recognition, as I am sure Julie Vaux would agree. - Ron.✓

It also surprises me that while you made the best editor nomination, the Mentor did not make the zine list. Rather strange?

✓ What I consider strange is that I made the Best Editor list at all. The Mentor's circulation is a fraction of the other zines that were nominated. As long as the circulation of TM is what it is, this zine has no hope of being nominated for a Ditmar. I like it like it is - I get over 90% response rate, which is why the zine is put out (as well as seeing contributions I like and what I think other people would like. - Ron.✓

Wave: seemed to bog down on the beginning with the dialogue, but turned out to be ... interesting. I am not sure whether splitting the story in two parts is a good idea (unless it was written like that), as it will tend to stop the flow of the story, especially since next ish is a two month wait.

I may be on the same boat as Harry Warner Jr. I may speculate that it is, in fact, John Carter, leading the Barsoomians, controlling the atmosphere factory to keep us Earthers from despoiling Mars. Harry may also be the instigator of a rush of LOCs on My First Encounter with SF. I'm going to relate my own encounter: the year was 1970, at which time I was in sixth class and heavily into Marvel comics. I would have been 11 at the time. My older brother was in High School and you know they do studies in English with books, such as Wuthering Heights, David Copperfield, etc. Well, he had a certain book which I "borrowed", and so had my first encounter with sf - Day of the Triffids, by John Wyndham. So, years later when it was my turn to write about these books, our class was assigned Day of The Triffids and I was already familiar with it.

Meanwhile, back in 1970, after the Triffids, (I also remember the time my brother said "Why don't you get out of these comics and read books? You only read them because they have pictures!") I was constantly borrowing from my brother's stock of paperbacks. I read Galactic Odyssey (I can't remember who wrote it, but it did have a crab-like creature on the front cover) The Puppet Masters by Heinlein, and also the not-so-juvenile Green Hills Of Earth. Keith Laumer was a favourite of mine (he may have written Galactic Odyssey) - he wrote Worlds of the Imperium and The Monitors (featuring Ace Blondel). I read another of his, the title eludes my memory. It was mainly set underwater in vast, domed cities. I also met with Corum, courtesy of Moorcock in The Bull and the Spear. There was also two Tarzan novels, Tarzan and the City of Gold is one title that comes to mind. There was also Logan's Run and Fahrenheit 451.

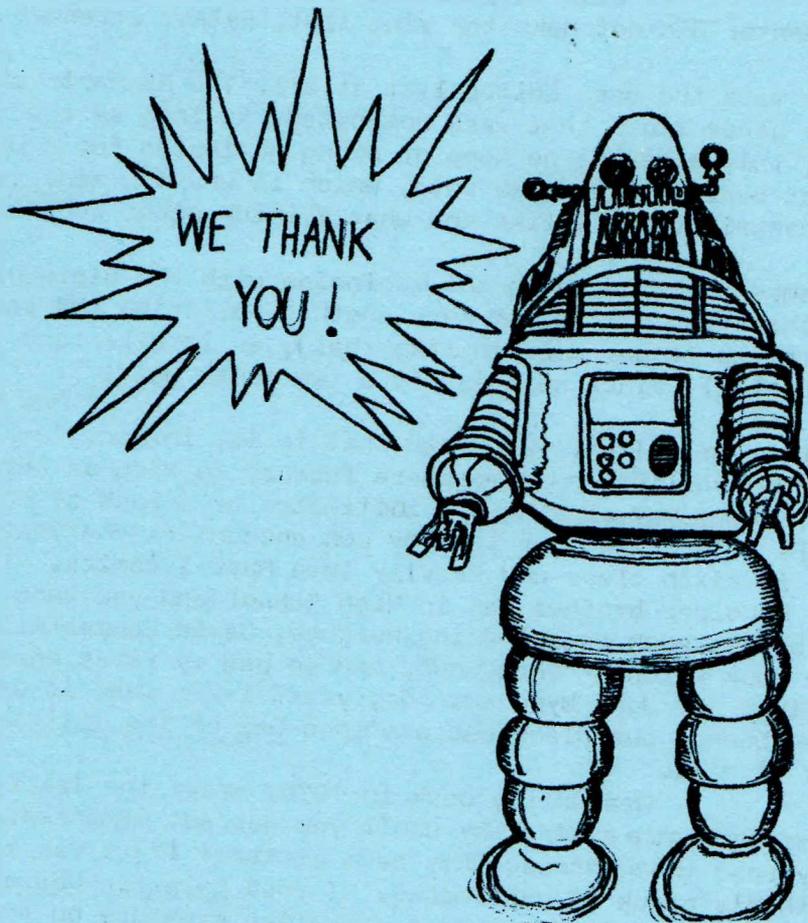
I began to collect my own, and at the same time was reading spy novels

(I also had read Richard Luppoff's One Million Years and probably a few others, from the High School library a year or two later). Now a twelve year old doesn't get much money, so either sf or the spy novels had to go. Sf lost out; at the time spies appealed to me more. At the time I also began writing, inspired by Ian Fleming. By the time I left school at 16 I had written an easy 100 spy novels. I had also exhausted the field so when a friend wrote saying he was reading the sf books on the library that I had already read, and he was buying his own as well, I was once again in the thick of things. I discovered Robert E Howard, Conan, El Borak, Soloman Kane, Moorcock, Elric, Keneth Robson (Lester Dent), Doc Savage, The Shadow (Walter Gibson who's alias is Maxwell Grant) and of course there was Asimov, Verne, L Sprague de Camp, etc.

And of course these were the radio shows, but we were talking about the written word, were we not?

to Mr. Warner's compliment is:

All I can say in reply



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Michael Hailstone's article fascinated me. Ever since I got hold of a copy of the Illuminatus trilogy I've been fascinated by the subject. I've got a copy of Stan Deyo's Cosmic Conspiracy somewhere in the book stack but haven't read it yet.

There's one or

two points which make the theory in its full form a little unlikely. Unless... But I'd better explain. Human beings tend to have trouble functioning towards one purpose for extended periods of time. Power struggles, infighting and petty resentments. Even the presence of a powerful outside opponent may not be sufficient to keep a group together (People's Front of Judea versus the Judean People's Front). The mixture of idealism, fanaticism, ruthlessness and deviousness involved in a conspiracy to set up a totalitarian world government would make such in-fighting far more intense and likely than even the average political organization. Perhaps this has happened, and nuclear power/warfare, originally set up merely as a means of cowing the masses, is now generally out of control.

There is, of course, the possibility that the conspiracy may not be controlled ultimately by humans. There might be one central group or even one entity, extremely long-lived and of towering willpower and superhuman intelligence (either a mutant, or more likely, an extra terrestrial of some kind).

I feel that this would be how it would be. if we're stupid enough to never learn. Consistency -

John Alderson sounds a bit paranoid in his latest description of social structures. He blames it all on the woman: but the trouble with the societies he depicts is the work of the stupidity of both sexes. Both men and women are fools, conditioned by their social roles. To see some Great Female Conspiracy may be fun to him, but it is worse than useless as an incentive to improve conditions.

Re Richard Faulder's comments on After Man. I saw the book as fiction - ie possible but not necessarily probable.

Ron, re your comments that Joh Bjelke Peterson would not set up a republic because he is a monarchist - you're wrong, alas: probably he would do almost anything up to and including painting his face green, if he thought it would aid his political power. Politicians tend to be pragmatic.

Lana Brown's comment on birth positions and "royal fads" is most timely. Ghod, what mindless fools people are. (Incidentally, the French Revolution seems to have been long overdue).

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I found Alderson's article rather frustrating, as apparently do many others. I wonder what sort of conclusions he would draw from the habits of some Australian aboriginal tribes, who make no decisions regarding the movements of the hunting grounds, etc, until an elder has died. The corpse is suspended from a tree, surrounded by painted stones, and decisions are based on which stones the rotting fluids drip onto. Could this therefore be considered Corpse Dominated Society?

Harry Warner's comments about his first contact with SF made me stop and think about mine. I am 34, and my first contact with the genre came when I was about 8 or 9, and my Dad bought me some of the 'Johnny Danger' series of children's books from the Children's Book Club. My wife, Debbie, who is 24, was a mundane until her relationship with me began, and her first contact with SF came with the release of The Empire Strikes Back and as a result, she is now a sort of media fan. (I lie, she has been a Dr Who fan since childhood, but only in a temporary form.) Our daughter, Alicia, had her first contact with the genre at four months of age, when we went to the Wagga Wagga drive in during the May holidays to see Star Wars. She is now a devoted Dr Who fan, and growls at

the monsters. Those same monsters would have sent me into screaming nightmares at that age, but she seems totally immune to them. Perhaps there is more to Michael Hailstone's article than meets the eye.

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I was really tickled to recognise the comic strip following my paranoid article in TM 44 as an extract from Twin Earths, also the illo on the cover of Space Travellers reproduced on your cover. What I didn't say in my article because it wasn't very relevant) is that there were two Twin Earths stories going at the same time, one featuring Garry Verth (whose name, I just recently worked out, must have been a contraction of "Garry of Earth", a nice touch) [And would "Garth" be a further contraction? - Ron.] appearing daily in the Sun, the other weekly in the Sun Herald, starring the teenage counterpart of Verth, Punch, whom you see floating around with his terran friend, Prince Torro, on the cover of your book. As I said many issues ago, the closest I ever got to the comic book was seeing another kid reading it on the bus or tram one day; I wasn't allowed to buy comics, because my father dismissed them as useless rubbish. (I used to read Donald Duck and Uncle Scrooge avidly when I visited my best friend, who had untold stacks of these comics.). It seems though, that the comic book carried the same story that ran in the Sun-Herald. The extract you've reproduced comes shortly after where astronomy lesson, the sort of thing that would give today's trendy sf readers the horrors - science in science fiction! (For example: "The Sun is a huge ball of hot gas 865,000 miles in diameter; it would take 1,300,000 Earths to make up its volume!" (I also remember noticing that nearly every statement made by the characters ended in an exclamation mark!)) Punch and Torro go aboard the derelict rocketship, where one of them makes the saying, that I'd never struck before: "Ashes to ashes, dust to dust." Aboard the ship they find a film or videotape of the last days of its home planet, which they play back; the planet is named something like Terrovia or Terrania. After that they proceed on to Terra, where our two naughty boys abscond in a crash craft and make their own landing. Torro calls his poor bewildered mother on the videophone, then they fly off to the Forgotten Islands on the backside of Terra, inhabited by dinosaurs and other prehistoric monsters, the works. I'd forgotten though about those backpacks they use to float or fly around the place, as seen on the cover. While they're there, a pygmy ship lands, they get captured, and the chief pygmy knocks Punch out with what Torro somehow knows to be a "brainwave". They escape, later somehow meet a terran girl named Lana, find a small submarine, then later a spacecraft and set off back to Earth, where they land, due to some error in "space maths", about 300 years in the past and encounter hostile indians or something. One possible reason why the comic strippetered out could be that Anon ran out of ideas. Which brings me to my next point: was the creator of Twin Earths really anonymous. Also, why isn't Anon credited with the comic strip (or the 1955 model flying saucer) in your index?

[An oversight. - Ron.]

I don't care much for Michael Black's Wave, I'm afraid; found the writing very muddy and had to read back over several passages to understand what was going on. By the way - Anon has drawn the wrong kind of ferry for the story. Does Baragoola really mean "frothy ocean wave"? I have the vaguest recollection of reading that the Baragoolahas already retired, since they brought in the new Freshwater. This last strikes me as a very poor joke. I experienced one of her "breakdowns" myself when I was up in Sydney back in March;

* I first came in, which was, as far as I remember, Torro giving Punch aa...

she refused to start up at Circular Quay, so all we peak-hour passengers had to get off and cram ourselves, together with the next load of evening commuters, aboard that stupidly small tin can Lady Northcott. Why on earth does a harbour ferry need a computer? It has since occurred to me, an unbeliever in the possibility of machine intelligence, that it may be possible after all; it shouldn't be too hard for a mischievous spirit to occupy ("possess") a computer and make it act in all kinds of ways.

I read John Alderson's article on woman-dominated societies with interest and surprise. It's been all the rage through the seventies to condemn patriarchy as bad and praise matriarchy as being good, warm, human and all that. John seems to give the lie to that, but then I take it that he's so far dealt with only one kind of matriarchy, where the male is treated with despite, so I'll be interested to read about other matriarchies, which presumably are better.

I couldn't agree with Richard Faulder about "fuck" used as an epithet being an overseas import during the trendy seventies, but he was a point there. I never heard my father use it either when I was a boy, and only once when I was grown up. One particular experience comes to mind: when I was producing a satirical radio serial on 2SER FM a few years ago. One line had one character saying: "Bloody weird, it was." The person speaking this part objected to saying "bloody". When I asked her why, she said it was old-fashioned, to which I retorted that to come up to date, I supposed, one would have to say "fucking", but I drew the line at putting that word over the air. She answered that we were not allowed to say "fucking", (although the station staff was pretty easy about naughty words). As it was I agreed to her changing it to "real weird..." But it's true; "bloody", once the Great Australian Adjective, has been just about ousted by "fucking".

I'm afraid though that I fail to follow his argument why my magnetic perpetual motion machine won't move, and I wonder whether he understood my article aright. However I'm also aware that my description of the machine was less than clear, so I'll try to clarify here. The small magnets are mounted obliquely around the rim of the disk, which is mounted on a vertical axle sticking up from the centre of one pole of the large magnet, which has about the same diameter as the disk. The important thing about the small magnets is that they must all point the same way, that is, all their north poles must point either clockwise or anticlockwise around the disks rim. It doesn't matter which end points downward; if the north pole of a small magnet points down towards the big magnet's north pole, it will be repelled, if another small magnet's south pole points downward, then it will be attracted. Either way, as long as the small magnets are all pointing the same way around the disk, it will turn the same way.

I think Joe Hanna-Rivero's being a bit unfair in requiring a perpetual-motion machine to be frictionless to meet his definition. My understanding of a p.m. machine is one that runs as a closed system without energy input from outside. I don't know of any claims having been made about a machine not being limited by wear and tear.

I think I can answer Harry Warner's question how Mars's "nonexistent" atmosphere can raise dust storms. We are all too aware how destructive our own atmosphere can be when stirred up. With that in mind, I don't see that an atmosphere a hundredth the density of ours should have any trouble whipping up a lot of fine dust. Remember for one thing the much weaker gravity on Mars, so that the atmosphere is less compressed, meaning that the density doesn't fall off so fast with height, and so dust can be, and is, pretty evenly mixed in up to a height of about 30 km. Also, martian duststorms seem to be nowhere as thick and blinding as their earthly counterparts; they're just thick enough to hide

the Sun from the surface and the surface from our prying eyes. Conway Snyder says in his paper The Planet Mars as Seen at the End of the Viking Mission: "At the height of both dust storms, the optical depth was unmeasurable because the sun could not be seen. The reduction in and unpredictability of the illumination level caused problems for the imaging team in setting the exposures, but the effect on the visibility of objects on the horizon several kilometers away was barely noticeable... This is not surprising when it is considered that the dust appears to be fairly uniformly mixed in the atmosphere up to at least 30 km... In the 1971 storm the height was estimated at 50 km..." Sorry about the jargon, but I hope my point comes across: the dust is not actually very thick.

As for the Martians putting up invisible domes, pumping the air out and turning on the refrigeration - well, I wonder whether Harry has read or at least heard of the paranoid book Alternative 3, (which I reviewed in Crux 3). Going by that, it seems that it's the Americans and the Russians, working in collusion, rather than any Martians, who are hiding the true nature of Mars. According to the book life on Earth is doomed by the dreaded greenhouse effect, which is going to turn our planet into another Venus, so the Americans and Russians are collaborating in a plot to evacuate the cream of humanity to a colony on Mars. They secretly and jointly landed a probe there on 22nd May 1962, (though from my knowledge of astronomy, it couldn't have been that year, but rather the year either before or after). They found the air breathable and measured a temperature of a balmy 4°C. (It's odd too that I had a vivid prophetic dream about a pleasant Mars in June 1980.) As for the said greenhouse effect, I don't see what difference wood-stoves are going to make; whether you burn coal, oil, wood or gas (other than hydrogen), you're still putting carbon dioxide into the air.

I didn't know that fans had the custom of writing about the date they first encountered science fiction. I must confess that I didn't become acquainted with the term until I was about fifteen, (I recall thinking it was a good name though) but I'd been familiar enough with the genre for a good few years beforehand, though I can't put even the year I first met it, let alone an exact date. Twin Earths was amongst my earliest encounters, but then there were also the films Destination Moon, (which I saw for the second time at some do Mike McGann dragged me along to about three years ago) and It Came From Outer Space and The Beast From 20,000 Fathoms, (which I'd love to see again; I found that big lizard rather lovable). But I missed out on The Day the Earth Stood Still, which was going to be screened at Circulation 1, but wasn't. However, to make up for that, I bought the book secondhand in the Monaro Mall a few weeks ago but haven't read yet.

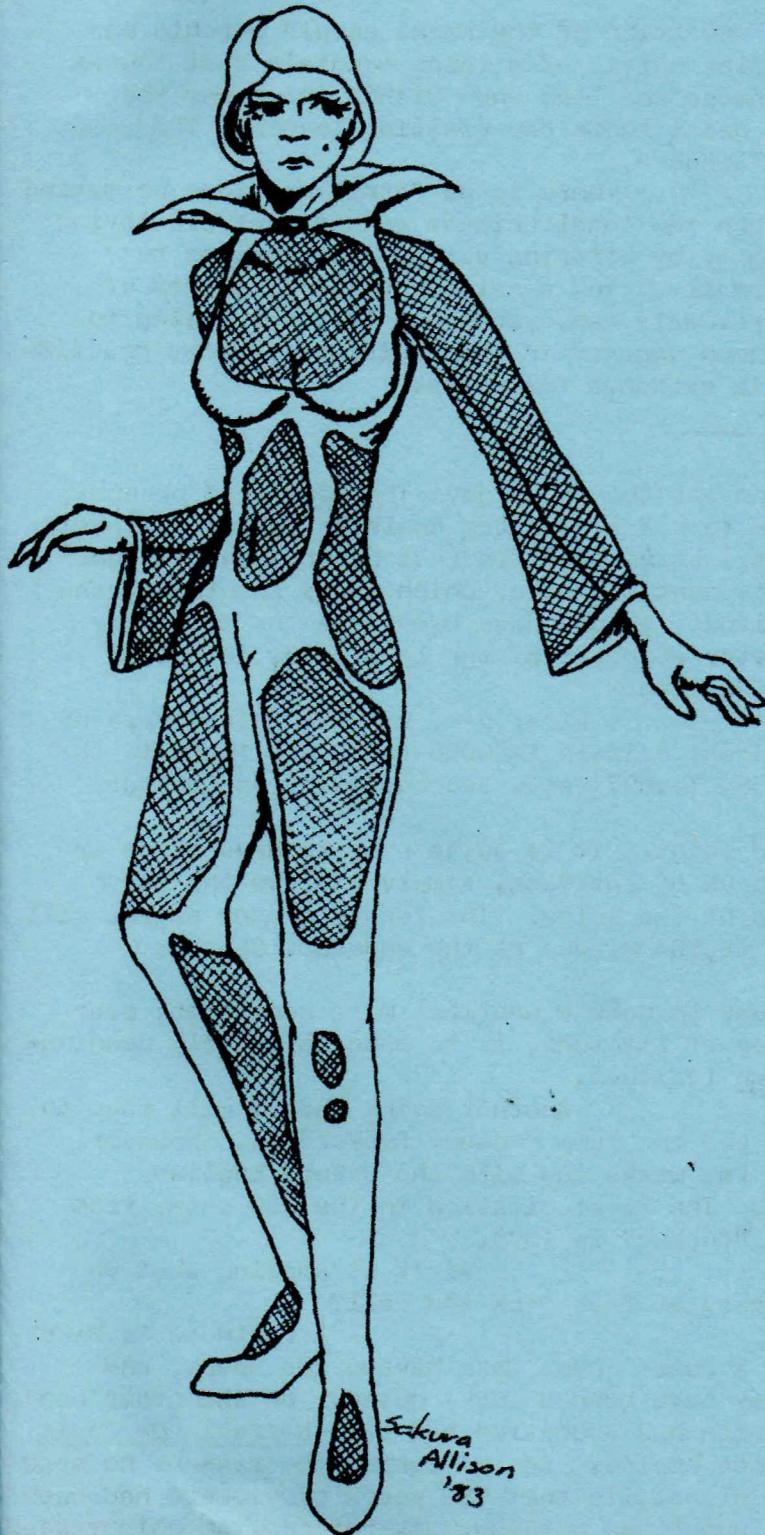
What does Harry mean by his first encounter with sf "as a genre"? Anyway, I clearly recall my own sf world I dreamt up in my last year in primary school: Busnical Planet, an earthlike planet in our orbit but 90° behind the Earth - I could hardly put it on the other side of the Sun, because that would have been plagiarism; Terra was there. This planet was inhabited by busnicals, (the first syllable is pronounced like "puss" with voiced consonants,) huge repulsive green sausage-shaped monsters which stood on their small hind legs about sixty feet high. (Apart from some elementary astronomy, by the way, I knew no science then.) But my fantasy world was then very private and personal to me, so I never (well, hardly ever) wrote any of this down; instead I acted it out and drew scenes therefrom. I was fourteen before I plucked up the nerve to put my dreamworld down on paper, and by then I'd moved on from busnicals and their planet.

Let me repeat that I fully respect John Alderson's right to be sceptical about some theories; what has kept me

going here is that he seems confused about certain facts. For example, "the tilting of the poles in historical Times", by which he means the north celestial pole being in different constellations, is supposed to be due to the precession of the quinoxes, a 25,800-year cycle which has nothing to do with the Earth tipping over but rather the Earth's axis pointing different ways in the sky. The poles has been much the same to the orbit, varying by no more than a degree or two either way from the present. Milankovich and others have tried to explain the ice-ages away as effects of these variations, but I was glad to see that Hoyle refutes those theories.

It's funny that John should suggest my writing an article on Hoyle's book Ice, for I thought of doing just that with much eagerness a few months ago, after reading the book, but I've since run out of steam. Anyway, all I can add to what I've already said is that I don't think much of his theory of ice-ages beginning and ending with the impact of stony and iron meteorites; it sounds too contrived for me, a criticism Hoyle himself anticipates and tries to rebut, but unconvincingly to me. Nor can I buy his theory of the mammoths having died of hypothermia in freezing rain and somehow being snap-frozen - I think I prefer them falling down holes and crevasses, if that doesn't hold water either.

I'll let John have his point about Siberian precipitation, not because he's won me over, but because I couldn't be bothered trying to argue further about it. I'll end though by saying that Australia seems to benefit in a glacial climate, so I don't see why we should go along with the ideas of a fogbound Englishman like Hoyle (or a snowbound North American or Russian) about frigging around with the oceans and trying to prevent future ice-ages.



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John Alderson might be interested to know that there is still a matriarchal society in Western China that does more than practise polyandry. I am surprised that he did not mention the polyandry found in Tibetan and Nepali society or that as recorded by Marco Polo in many of the Hilalayan countries and cities he passed through and their wife sharing.

This particular sub tribe of the Nazhi people worship one moth rGodesss who is seen as the residing spirit of a large mountain that towers over their valley. The women inherit house and land and within the house the women and men have seperate rooms plus guest rooms for visiting lovers. The women and men take multiple partners called "azhus".

There is no formal marriage or mating ceremony, only a puberty ritual, although the local Chinese authorities are trying to bribe the people into adopting monogamy by offering various concessions to couples who register their marriage formally. The people practise a mixture of agriculture and hunting and herding. Formarly many young men left the valley to join trading caravans and many young women engaged in what outsiders saw as prostitution by becoming "arhus" to traders in exchange for gifts.

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Aside from all the other joys The Mentor 43 brought, I was thrilled to see A. Bertram Chalnler make a mistake! "But I still maintain (but nobody ever listens to me) that the nautical mile, which means something, one minute of latitude, should have been made the standard, not the kilometer which, like the land mile, is one of those utterly meaningless artitrary measurements."

First off, we have three types of nautical miles. US is 6,080.20 feet. Great Britain is 6080 feet. And there is the International nautical or air mail, at 6,076.097 feet. Source: American College Dictionary.

This brings us to the second point. It is auite easy to have three or more different measurements for one degree of latitude, simply because the Earth is not round. It is slightly flattened at the poles. The length of one degree will vary from 69,407 miles at the poles to 68,704 miles at the equator. Source: Encyclopeda Britannica.

Thus the only way to make a nautical mile consistent over the Earth and still represent one degree of latitude, is to make an utterly meaningless and aribtrary designation of which latitude.

Another point that I will have to look up later. I have no idea of how old the term "mother fucker" is. However, I do know, from some research I did a few weeks ago with the Oxford English Dictionary, that "fuck" is an old word. The first citation in the OED dates from 1680. The first citation for the term "fucker" is 1598.

Air't it amazing what you can do with something like the JPL library at your beck and call?

A footnote to Mike Hailstone. It is true that Swift made a guess about Mars having two moons, and gave very rough values for them. It may have been a lucky guess. On the other hand, it is far far more likely that a man with his education had read Narratio De Jovis Satellitibus, written in 1610 by Johannes Kepler. And of currese the reasons he made the moons small, and very close to the planet, iis that 150 years of viewers had been using telescopes to seek moons of Mars and found nothing. I, for one, am unimpressed with Swift's "prediction".

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North Yorkshire,
YO17 9ES, U.K.

Re the latest Grimesish Grumblings; nostalgia isn't what it used to be... though on the theme of "God Bless the Squire, etc" there is one thing that surprises me with all the change in the world, and that is the intense interest in the ultimate station, the Royal family. Judging from the recent tours by the Queen, of America, and the Prince and Princess of Wales, in Australia and Canada, judging from the press and TV reports (unless they shifted the same crowd round the countries...) there was an adulation. approaching mania on their appearances; which, considering all the progress we've made since those earlier days, seems very much like going backwards.

Well, I suspect that I might be a newsprint freak, re Jean Wever's letter, claiming comparison in that I too read a weekly newsmagazine (Time?), but also put two newspapers a day under my belt (it used to be three) and four Sunday papers, and numerous monthly analyses, though for the life of me, I can't see what good it's been doing me. Certainly not at work - maybe a little in fanac. The only positive effect I can find is completing general knowledge crosswords, and they're few and far between. Or maybe on TV quiz games, if I ever plucked up the courage to apply. I suppose I could maybe start a branch of Newsfreaks Anonymous, much like the AA....

Harry Warner, Jr.,
423 Summit Ave.,
Hagerstown,
Maryland 21740,
U.S.A.

Metrics haven't made the progress in the United States they were supposed to achieve. I suppose the most memorable Big Change in my experience has been a gradual and sort of unofficial one: the change in the status of the United States dollar. When I was growing up and for for a few years of my adulthood, a dollar was a monetary unit which was valuable enough to be regarded with awe. One dollar could buy several paperback books, several meals at a fast food establishment, admission to three or four movies, enough groceries to keep a person who lived alone eating for a couple of days, several pairs of socks, and so on. Now kids grow up without knowing the meaning of "dollar" because it takes several to them to purchase one unit of any of those things. After all these years, I can't avoid a shudder of horror when I must pay virtually a dollar for a loaf of bread or a half-gallon of milk; it seems as if the whole universe had turned inside out.

But I'm not happy about the intrusion of bad language into fiction and the movies. If authors feel they have attained freedom by the ability to get it into print, I feel I've lost freedom by my inability to attend a movie or buy a book without the strong probability that I'll find obscenities and profanities that disgust me. Maybe my experience wasn't typical, but it tells me that the use of bad language has spread and grown enormously among the populace during my lifetime. I grew up in a neighborhood that was hardly high class: Hagerstown's black ghetto began just a couple hundred feet away from my block, there was a factory across the street from my home, and several of the boys in my crowd were in and out of reform schools. But I never heard the kids I played with use anything worse than an occasional reference to the deity, hell or damn, the factory workers didn't either when they sat outdoors eating their lunch, and the grownup residents of my neighborhood restricted themselves to the same mild expletives the kids used. Now I hear children hardly old enough to enter the first grade of school using language which I'd never heard until I was in my middle teens, and was thrown into contact with some really tough adults. I think the prevalence of bad words in published materials and films nowadays is as bothersome

as writers who end almost every sentence with three exclamation points and write one or two words in every sentence with capital letters, or conversationalists who pound their fist on the table or shake their finger under your nose four or five times a minute. In each instance, what should be held in reserve for rare moments of extreme stress is overused to the point of extreme annoyance and disgust.

Michael Hailstone will be in a good company, if someone tests his perpetual motion and finds out that, by George, he's done it. Arther Clarke also came up with a bright idea, that of using satellites for communication purposes, and didn't take the precaution of patenting his theory before unleashing it on the world. If the Hailstone discovery turns out to be impractical for one reason or another, what is wrong with considering man-made earth satellites as the first human-made perpetual motion machines? True, they eventually are prone to suffer changes in orbit that cause them to graze the atmosphere and burn up, after many years of circling earth. But I suppose any perpetual motion machine would suffer wear and tear on its moving parts that would cause it to break down, as the limited life span of the satellites would hardly invalidate them as examples of perpetual motion.

I hope Andy Andruschak is correct in his prediction of cheap copying suitable for fahs to utilize within a few years. Actually, it's possible to buy in the U.S. right now "office copiers" meant for home use, and they aren't enormously expensive, either. But the advertisements say they're recommended only for occasional use to make a few copies, and all the low-priced ones that I've run across require expensive special paper to be utilized. What is needed for fannish purposes is a home copier that wouldn't overheat from turning out a hundred or more copies in succession, would work on any kind of paper, and wouldn't need a \$160 repair bill each time it suffered from mechanical troubles.

Lastly a further comments to James Styles from Diane Fox:

James Styles' letter I read with care and concern. At first I thought he was using irony and sarcasm, but I'm not tirely sure. Some of his statements are no more far-fetched than some I've seen elsewhere, intended completely seriously. If you are joking, James, you should make it a little funnier, and more obvious so that we fools can get the joke too. If you aren't, than may God Almighty have mercy on your soul., though probably She will not!

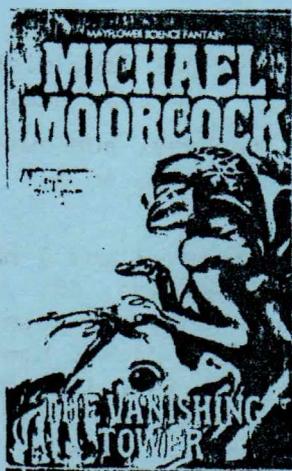
We also heard from: Kevin McCaw, who sent The WASFFAN; Sue Bursztynski; John Playford; Gail Neville (whose story will appear nextish); A Bertram Chandler and Bruce Weston.

That about ties this ish up. The last stencil is being typed on 29th July and hopefully, this will be in the mail on the 1st of Aguust.

ooOoo

ON MY SELECTION -

S.F. BOOK RELEASES



THE VANISHING TOWER by Michael Moorcock. Granada paperback, dist in Aust by Granada Publishing Aust P/L. 190pp. A\$4.95. On sale now.

This is a story in the chronicle of Elric of Melnibone. It has previously been published (in a different form) as THE SLEEPING SORCERESS. As in those other Elric novels, it involves a quest, as Elric seeks to find and kill the sorcerer Theleb K'aarna. It appears the novel was first published in separate parts, as the action breaks down readily into those parts.

If you like heroic fantasy of the like of those tales told by Fritz Leiber and Moorcock then you will like this. I find, after reading these novels such as the Elric Saga, that after a certain number the reading begins to pale.

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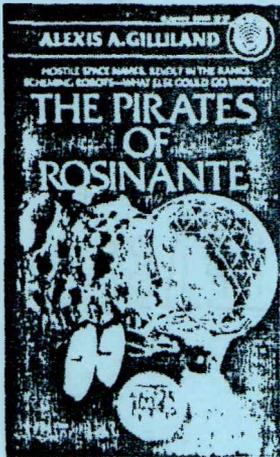
RESTOREE by Anne McCaffrey. Corgi Books, dist in Aust by Transworld Publishers (Aust) P/L. 223pp. A\$4.50. On sale now.

I was surprised at this book. It is written in a different style than those others of McCaffrey's I've read - the Dragon books; Halva, etc. This novel seems to be written on a more 'adult' level.

The story commences when the heroine is snatched from earth by something dark and immense. She endures a time of pain and fear and wakes to find herself a nurse in a mental hospital attending an ugly man who appears an idiot. As the plot unfolds the reader becomes immeshed in the story. I can see why this edition was reprinted in 1970, 1976, 1977 1980 and 1983.

As mentioned above, I found the book different from her others novels. If you like McCaffrey, or a good sf story, then buy this book. *Recommended*.

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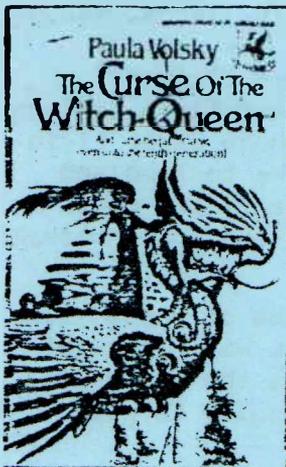


THE PIRATES OF ROSINANTE by Alexis Gilliland. Ballantine SF, dist in Aust by Doubleday Aust P/L. 216pp. A\$ On sale now.

This is another of Gilliland's looks at the revolution on Mundita Rosinante. In each of the ~~two~~ previous novels - THE REVOLUTION FROM ROSINANTE and LONG SHOT FROM ROSINANTE he looked at the same events from differing viewpoints. This latest books carries the tale forward and is as well-thought out.

In this navel, the computers who run the day-to-day offices (bureaucracy) of Rosinante begin to extend their powers - but in a way to help Rosinante. Seems they see themselves as the logical next step past man. God created man as a tool by which to create the computers. Who also evolve. A mixture of politics, speculation, extrapolation, capitalism and a spot of sex. Well put together.

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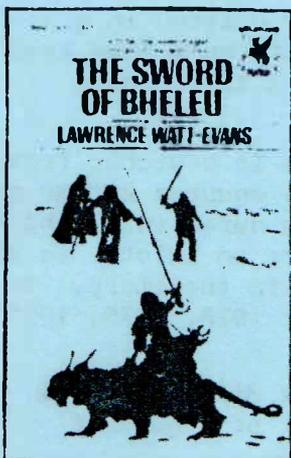


THE CURSE OF THE WITCH-QUEEN by Paula Volsky. Del Rey, dist in Aust by Doubleday Aust P/L. 345pp. A\$ On sale now.

Del Rey are running a strong line of fantasy, and some of them are crud. I am becoming wary of fantasy, so I approached this book with caution.

This is apparently Paula Volsky's first novel and I hope she writes many more. There are the usual bizards, the young nobleman who insults a very powerful wizard-king, his young friend who is learning to become a wizard, and a Quest. However, the way Ms Volsky puts all this together is quite well done. I found her writing amusing and engrossing and I had one of the best reads of a fantasy novel for some time. If you haven't read much good fantasy, or think you would like a good novel, get this. *Recommended* for fantasy fans.

* * *



THE SWORD OF BHELEU by Lawrence Watt-Evans. A Del Rey fantasy, dist in Aust by Doubleday Aust P/L. 270pp. A\$ On sale now.

A sword and sorcery epic this time around. It is one in a series, the others being THE LURE OF THE BASILISK and THE SEVEN ALTARS OF DUSARRA. Set some unspecified time on a planet which has at least two intelligent races - humans and humanoid overmen, it tells of the further adventures of the overman Garth who returns to the human city of Skalleth with the loot he had obtained from his sacking of the human temples of the Seven Gods. One of those prizes was a sword - the talisman of the god Bheleu. The time was at the end of the Thirteenth age and the Beginning of the Fourteenth. The Thirteenth had lasted 300 years but the Fourteenth was prophesised to last but 30; however the God Bheleu was the 14th's ruling god and was the god of destruction. When Garth, among others, saw the power of the sword for destruction he decided to rid himself of it. Run-of-the-mill fantasy.

THE WINDHOVER TAPES - Flexing The Warp by Warren Norwood.
Bantam books, dist in Aust by Transworld Pub, Aust P/L. 231pp.
A\$3.50. On sale now.

As you can see from the cover, the woman has at least one outstanding attribute. They feature in the plot also, in a way. FLEXING THE WARP is the second in an apparent trilogy and many of the references in this volume leave the reader who hasn't read the first volume (me, for one) with a few loose ends.

The plot is pure space opera - after being pursued by a mystery warship, and later evading space pirates, Gerard Manley and his bride, Shril, voyage to various planets to find more about The Legend of Tenderfoot. Halfway through the novel I still didn't know the background for that little episode (presumably the thing started off in vol.1). The whole novel is told in diary format, in the form of extracts from the ship's tapes. Which means the action is second hand. A bit slow...

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THE DOLL by Rex Sparger. Bantam, dist in Aust by Transworld Publishers Aust P/L. A\$1.95. 135pp. On sale now.

Supposedly a young teen book from the Dark Forces series, this book held, for me, two rather strong negative points. Firstly, the morality expressed by the protagonists (admittedly they didn't go jumping into bed with each other, but do this age group really find true love and sneak away into corners to neck as described? - too much is stressed on a romantic background) and secondly and most importantly, the fact that this type of book is feeding the macabre imaginations of the already curious teenage reader. The Occult is In at the moment; however should we cater to something which may be potentially dangerous or sick in a developing mind at an impressionable age?

The book is sketched - as against filled in as in an adult book - well and moves quickly. It took me $\frac{3}{4}$ of an hour to complete. It had the seeds of a good adult book in it.

(Susan Clarke)

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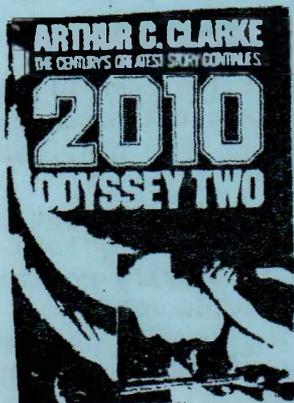
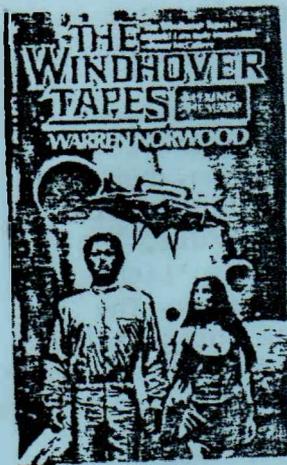
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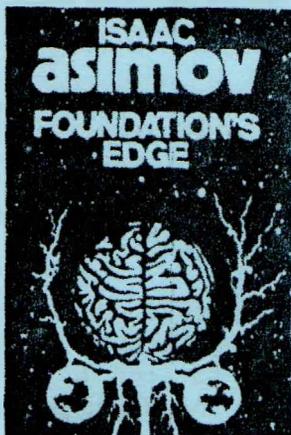
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2010 - ODYSSEY TWO by Arthur C Clarke. Granada, dist in Aust by Methuen Australia. H/C. 216pp. A\$18.95. On sale now.

The sequel to 2001. It continues the story of the movie rather than the resulting novel. After David Bowman disappeared there was confusion on Earth as to what happened. In the end, HAL's creator, Dr Chandra and Floyd Heywood were two of the Americans chosen to go when it was found that only the Russians had a ship that could reach Discovery before its orbit decayed. Unfortunately the Chinese had one closer...

This book does not have that sense of wonder that marks such novels as CHILDHOODS END or THE CITY AND THE STARS, but it is in the same mold as 2001. Worth reading for finding out just what Bowman turned into and the ultimate fate of HAL.





FOUNDATION'S EDGE by Isaac Asimov. A Granada H/C, dist in Aust by Methuen Australia. 326pp. A\$18.95. On sale now.

The time was 500 years into the period between the First and Second Galactic Empires as the Seldon Plan foretold. The First Foundation, under Harta Branno, becomes cognizant of the existence of the Second Foundation, which they believed was destroyed hundreds of years before. She sends out Golan Trevize, a counciler, to act as a 'lightening rod' to draw their fire and pin-point their origin. The Second Foundation, in turn, becomes aware of a third force in the Galaxy which had enormous mental powers, with abilities far greater than those of Trantor. What the result is when the three meet is first-rate science fiction.

The Foundation Trilogy was completed nearly thirty years ago- this novel is the fourth in the series and proves that Asimov has not lost his touch. There is no perceptible difference in a casual reading which shows up that gap. *Recommended*.

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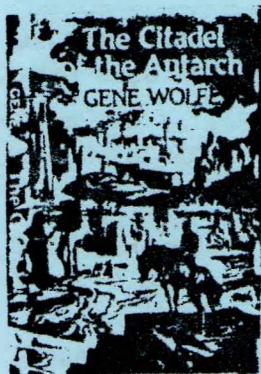


FIGHTING SLAVE OF GOR by John Norman. W H Allan H/C, dist in Aust by Hutchinson Group (Aust) P/L. 383pp. A\$. . On sale now.

This is the fourteenth in the Gor series by the author. The latest is, apparently, a divergence from the usual, in that the slave whose exploits we follow is male.

Jason Marshall is the typical male of earth - docile, sweet and downtrodden by the women of that planet, where sexual differences are ignored and whose attitudes are personified by the use of the word 'person'. The society of Gor, with its male dominated society and its caste society upheld by slavery breaks over Marshall with overwhelming force, and he finds himself the silk slave of a free woman of that planet. Gor, being low-technology, has unspoiled country and air and he finds that the physical life suits him. A good picture of Imperial Rome transplanted to the 20th Century.

* * *



THE CITADEL OF THE AUTARCH by Gene Wolfe. Sidgwick & Jackson H/C, dist in Aust by Hutchinson Group (Aust) P/L. 317pp. A\$. . . On sale now.

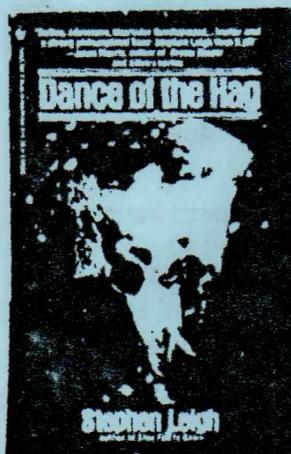
In the fourth and final volume of The Book Of The New Sun, Wolfe brings to a satisfying conclusion the journeying of Severian as he completes his quest and comes into his, and Man's destiny.

As in the other volumes, the plot is straight forward; however it is intersperced with short stories, told as moral tales, usually, which are intended to clarify points of the central sotry. I said in a previous review that I considered the earlier volume (The Claw Of The Conciliator) to be more fantasy than sf; thinking more on it, and reading this present volume, I agree that it is sf - especially if taking

into account the dictum that high technology would be looked on as magic by an inferior culture.

Buy the whole four in hardcover - they're worth it.

* * *



DANCE OF THE HAG by Stephen Leigh. Bantam books, dist is Aust by Transworld Publishers (Aust) P/L. 183pp. A\$3.50. On sale now.

When I saw the cover and blurb of this book I thought it was a horror novel. I started it with trepidation and found that it is pure hard-core sf. It is set on the world of Neweden, which has a caste ridden society, with guilds. A man with a dream, Gyll, founded a guild of assassins, which he called the Hoorka, with criminals from the dregs of that society. At the time the novel takes place he had stepped down from the position of Thane (leader) when he found it getting too much. However, events on the planet become more complicated when a Trader ship stopped there and tried, by overt means, to change the society.

The background of the novel, both social and physical, is well thought out and the plot interesting throughout.

Recommended for the 'hard' sf addict.

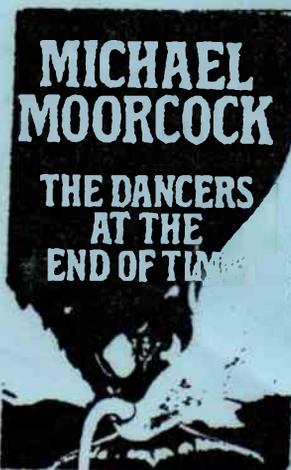
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THE INSIDER by Christopher Evans. Granada, dist in Aust by Granada Publishing Aust P.L. 237pp. A\$5.95. On sale now.

This is borderline sf. It concerns the effect of an alien 'presence' in the minds of two people in Britain from the early part of WW II to the 1990's. An alien had penetrated the mind of an adolescent boy when its ship was destroyed. The alien, in the body of the youth, passed a sheltered life before expiring of a heart attack. The alien managed to interpenetrate another person at the time of death and so lived on. Unfortunately for it, the stronger personality of the second victim proved hard for it to pursue his lifestyle. You can look at the plot that way, or you can look at it as if the second personality was deranged and believed he had an alien personality, when he was actually having a breakdown. A fairly pederstian book.

* * *



THE DANCERS AT THE END OF TIME by Michael Moorcock. Granada, dist in Aust by Granada Publishing Aust. P/L. 663pp. A\$9.50. On sale now.

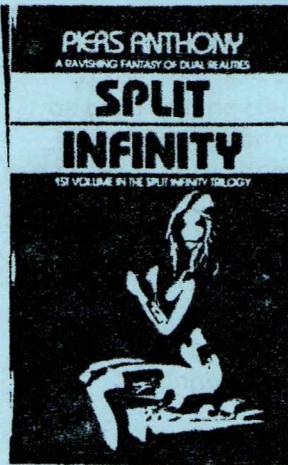
The three novels together consisting this novel were written in 1972 (An Alien Heat), 1974 (The Hollow Lands) and 1976 (The End Of All Songs). I usually find Moorcock quite shallow in his plots and his settings convoluted, and the writing (especially in his later novels) hard to follow. The Dancers At The End Of Time I found quite well worth the read.

The story concerns the end of the human race in that far

future when the 'big bang' is ending and the stars flickering. The people of that era have the ability to time travel, but their society is of such a nature that all they have to do is enjoy themselves - theirs is the end of human aspirations - they have it all. They are not even worried that it is the End of All Things. *Recommended*.

* * *

SPLIT INFINITY by Piers Anthony. Granada, dist in Aust by Granada Publishing Aust P/L. 382pp. A\$5.95. On sale now.



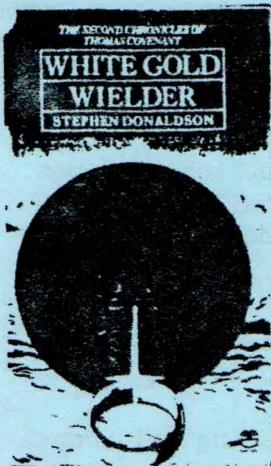
This is the first in a trilogy. It is an experiment by Anthony, in that almost each other chapter alternates between sf or fantasy (which is from whence the title derives). The book opens on the world of Proton, where the indented serfs serve Masters who are rich beyond belief - the products of Proton's mines. When their tenure gives out the serfs must leave the planet, moderately rich by the outside galaxy's standards. Else they can win the Tourney - a set of games - and become a Citizen of Proton themselves.

Stile was coming up the rungs when he fell in with the robot Sheen, and because of his masterly horse riding ability, became the target of an assassin. He escaped through a 'curtain' to Proton's nemeses, Phaze, where magic worked. Here he met a female unicorn, who was a shapechanger, and who, after being ridden-in, became his companion.

Anthony has done better than this, but it is still enjoyable reading.

* * *

WHITE GOLD WIELDER by Stephen Donaldson. Fontana Pb, dist in Aust by William Collins P/L. 500pp. A\$6.95. On sale now.



This volume is the third in the Second Chronicles of Thomas Covenant and nicely ties up the issues at hand.

It commences at the Giant stonship, the Starfare's Gem, as it is fleeing the defeat at the One Tree where Covenant and his allies were almost killed by the Worm. The ship is trapped in pack ice in the far north of the Land and Covenant, Linden Avery and several others leave the ice-bound ship in an attempt to find some way of destroying the Sunbane which is ravishing the Land, and to pass on the news of the defeat at the One Tree.

Reading Donaldson is like walking through a dense forest. It is mostly dark, gloomy and hard to visualise, then suddenly the reader comes to a glade where a moment of clarity and action occurs. Then into the gloom again.

It is an interesting fantasy and is a fit end to this trilogy. It also seems the end of Covenant.

* * *



THE COOL WAR by Frederik Pohl. Corgi pb, dist in Aust by Transworld Publishers (Aust) P/L. 252pp.A\$3.95. On sale now.

Just before beginning to type this review I noticed the cover of this book - it actually illustrates the story. Which, of course, follows the career into the 'spook' business of the Rev. H. Hornswell Hake (Horny to his friends) as he is brought into the fold of a secret spy organisation operating out of the USA. The novel is set some few years in the future when the oil resources of the Arab states have been destroyed by the Israelies in an attack using nuclear charges. The world is energy short and the big mission that Horny is later sent on revolves around destroying a novel mechanism (depicted on the cover) for harnessing the power of the sun.

With the excision of the sf elements this would be a straight 'conspiracy theory' novel. Well written and entertaining.

* * *

STAR RIDER by Doris Piserchia. Bantam SF, dist in Aust by Transworld Publishers (Aust) P/L. 219pp.A\$3.95. On sale now.

This novel was first released in 1974, but it doesn't show its age. The heroine is a teenager who is from that branch of the human race known as a jak. Jaks are able, alone with their mounts (evolved dogs) to teleport through space to the stars. This is the only way that humankind has been able to reach across interstellar space - though intergalactic space still proves too wide to cross. Unfortunately the sense of adventure is slowly dying in the race and the jaks are becoming more hedonistic. Jade, though she knows it not, is one of the new generation, who may have the ability to cross the deep between the galaxies. Someone, however, is trying to take her out of circulation.

This kept my attention throughout - a light read, but enjoyable.

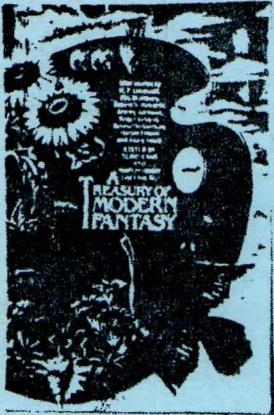
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SCIENCE FICTION OF THE '40's, Introduced by Frederik Pohl. Avon Books, dist in Aust by Transworld Publishers (Aust) P/L. 377pp. A\$5.95. On sale now.

As the title says, the stories in this volume originated in the sf prozines of the 1940's. There are twenty one stories altogether and include a lot of classics. These include: Reason by Asimov; My Name Is Legion by Lester Del Rey; Doorway Into Time by C.L. Moore; City by Simak; The Million-year Picnic by Bradbury; "It's Great To Be back!" by Heinlein; That Only A Mother by Merril; and "Dear Pen Pal" by Van Vogt. Which is quite a collection for a new anthology for only \$5.95.

It would make a good Christmas present for anyone wanting to give an introductory primer to someone to start them reading sf.

* * *



A TREASURY OF MODERN FANTASY, Edited by Terry Carr & Martin Greenberg. Avon Books, dist in Aust by Transworld Publishers (Aust) P/L. 15x23cm. 588pp. A\$9.95. On sale now.

This is the book that I recommended in TM 44. There are thirty-three stories, dating from 1924 to 1980 and the volume covers the range from Lovecraft's The Rats in the Walls to Jefty Is Five by Ellison. Other stories include: The Woman Of The Wood by Merrit; They Bite by Boucher; The Black Ferris by Bradbury; Displaced Person by Eric Russell; Sail On! Sail On! by Farmer; One Ordinary Day, With Peanuts by Jackson and Timothy by Roberts.

If you buy but one fantasy book this year - make this one it. *Highly Recommended*.

* * *



I WILL FEAR NO EVIL by Robert A. Heinlein. New English Library, dist in Aust by Hodder & Stoughton. 414pp. A\$5.95. On sale now.

This is a re-issue of the 1972 English edition. It was previous to that a serial in Galaxy. It was the beginning of Heinlein's longer works. He has taken a very rich, very sick old man and the body and soul of his beautiful young secretary and put them together by way of a body transplant. The story traces the day-to-day adventures of this man-in-a-women's body and explores some novel relationships which develop as the old man learns to use and cope with the abilities of the new body.

Whilst the story does move slowly in some places, it is an exciting and enjoyable book to read - not the best Heinlein available, but not too bad. - John Fox.

* * *



TIME ENOUGH FOR LOVE by Robert A. Heinlein. New English Library, dist in Aust by Hodder & Stoughton. 607pp. A\$7.95. On sale now.

This mammoth book continues the memoirs of Lazarus Long - the long-lived forbear of most other characters in the story - through time and space. Yes, Long has developed time travel and can now make his influence felt in the past.

If you have trouble getting to sleep, don't take pills: take this book. It is guaranteed to make even an experienced owl grow tired. The various lives of Long on different worlds are interspersed with his wise sayings, told in a manner which is guaranteed to bore the reader as much as living them has bored Long.

Definitely one of the worst Heinleins to date.

- John Fox.

* * *



THE FIRST CHRONICLES OF THOMAS COVENANT

by Stephen Donaldson.

Collins H/C, dist in Aust by William Collins P/L.
371pp. A\$22.95. On sale now.

This volume comprises Lord Foul's Bane, The Illearth War and The Power That Preserves in one tome. The following review is by Diane Fox, and reviews each book separately.

LORD FOUL'S BANE - This is the first book in a massively thick trilogy that has been followed by one more of equal length. It is compulsively readable, but Donaldson is obviously determined to smash the silly theory that "fantasy is escapism". In fact, the main character spends endless time brooding over whether everything he is experiencing is just an escapist fantasy, and this causes him to behave very irresponsibly. Thomas Covenant, a 20th century man who is suddenly transported to a Tolkienesque world where magic works, and which only he can save from evil forces bent on corrupting and destroying. However, Covenant is no hero - he's surly, guilt-ridden, neurotic and prone to panic; what's more, he suffers from leprosy, and his experiences have been so wretched that he cannot really believe in anything good happening. He's hailed as the reincarnation of Berek Half-hand, the Land's greatest hero. The people of the Land are able to use the magic inherent in natural materials - wood and stone. They are led by the Lords, a group of good wizards at the castle of Revelstone. A powerful Staff of Law, once wielded by the High Lord of Revelstone, has fallen into the hands of a mad Cavewight (an Orc-like creature) who is being manipulated by the Satanic Lord Foul, the Despiser, who prefers tricking other beings both good and evil into doing his dirty work. Covenant is supposed to have awesome and unknown powers of Wild Magic, effective against even Foul - power visible in his white-gold wedding ring - yet Covenant doesn't want to use this power, and hasn't the faintest idea of how to use it. When he finally returns to his own world, he has no answers, only more questions, and much to feel guilt and dismay over.

THE ILLEARTH WAR - Covenant is drawn back into the Land at a time when he most desperately wants to stay in his own world. At Revelstone he meets another 20th century person - Hile Trby, a blind military strategist who formerly worked for the Pentagon. He is even more dismayed to learn that the new High Lord, Elena, is his daughter by a woman he raped during his first stay in the land - he expects her to hate him, and is so full of guilt that he can't accept her love. The Land has been invaded by a monstrous army of Lord Foul's creatures - mostly mutants (created by vile experiments, but also giant wolves, Cavewights and Ur-viles - black, eyeless creatures proficient in magic and the use of said in war. A strange "ancient youth" appears at Revelstone, offering to guide Elena to a spell that was known but not used by the ancient wizard Lord Kevin, who had centuries before destroyed the Land in an attempt (unsuccessful) to kill Foul. Elena and Covenant follow Amok to the awesome mountain Melenkurion Skywair - Covenant "bargaining with fate" that Elena will handle all the responsibilities and make the decisions... and unfortunately she does, making a similar if less obviously disasterous mistake to that of Kevin. Meanwhile the armies of the Land, led by the other

Lords of Revelstone and Troy, fight under harrowing conditions against an enemy too numerous to defeat or even greatly delay. They are appalled to hear of the genocidal murder of their allies the noble Giants by a foul Raver, a demon that possesses the bodies of its victims and forces them to commit atrocities. Ultimately the people of the Land are saved by an unexpected ally, thanks to Troy's quick wits and desperate use of any possible means - but the price is indeed high, and as the Staff of Law is now destroyed, the Land has only won a breathing-space. Covenant is returned to his own world so torn with guilt that he is losing the wish to survive. This novel would be utterly depressing if it were not for the richness, diversity and wonder of the Land and the nobility of many of its inhabitants.

THE TOWER THAT PRESERVES - Covenant is again drawn back to the Land, while trying to save a child from a snake. He refuses the summons and only allows himself to be drawn to the Land after he has saved the child - and been bitten himself. Revelstone is being besieged by a huge army of monsters, led by a possessed Giant - the hardwon victory in Illearth War brought seven year's grace only. The Land is in the grip of unending Winter, as the Staff of Law appears now to be held by one of Foul's creatures. Covenant has been summoned by Triock, foster-father to Elana and former lover of her mother - understandably, he is bitter against Covenant but sees that only the White Gold Magic can now save the Land. Covenant is at last able to accept his responsibilities and is learning courage - he vows to learn to use his power and to destroy Foul, and destroy the Illearth Stone, a green glowing rock that is one of the sources of the Despiser's enhanced powers. It was the Illearth Stone that had destroyed the Bloodguard, Revelstone's staunchest soldiers, who had been kept immortal by a vow made to Lord Devin centuries before. Covenant is aided in his quest by Triock, and by Lena, Elana's mother, now an old woman and partially mad. The last survivor of the Giants, Foamfollower, and Bannor, a former Bloodguard who has lost his immortality, also join him. They journey through a bleak landscape where every decision seems to have turned out wrong and the noblest deeds provoke the worst treacheries - the horror climaxes when Covenant learns Elana's true fate. He finally manages to use the White Gold Magic, and helps her and the Land. From this point on Covenant becomes genuinely a hero, though he cannot utterly kill the evil represented by Lord Foul.

This book introduced many more wonders and horrors to the already complex world created by the two earlier volumes - even whole new races or species. One of my favourites was the jheherrin, wretched and timid mud-creatures evolved from experiments that Foul discarded as unsatisfactory.

- Diane Fox.

This book is a hefty volume - it is about seven centimetres thick and well produced and bound. I think even if you have the three volumes in paperback and if you find that you like to re-read Donaldson it would pay you to buy this edition for a permanent edition to your library. *Recommended*.

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V O T E J A N H O W A R D F I N D E R F O R D . U . F . F . I N 1 9 8 5 .



TITUS GROAN: GORMENGHAST: TITUS ALONE by Mervyn Peake; Penguin, dist in Aust by Penguin Books Aust Ltd. 506pp, 511pp, 272pp. A\$6.95, \$5.95, \$5.50. On sale now.

TITUS GROAN: The first of a trilogy, and perhaps more influential in a non-obvious way than even Lord of the Rings on heroic fantasy ever since. It is set in Gormenghast, a gigantic, ever-crumbling, ever-rebuilt Gothic castle, a world of its own with forgotten rooms and secret passageways. The lives of the inhabitants are equally ramshackle and intricate, replete with marvellous and unnerving eccentricity. They have funny and very Dickensian names - Nanny Slag, Doctor Prunesquallor, Flay the butler, Swelter the cook - and their mannerisms are also reminiscent of Victorian England: but this is an alternate world. Life in the castle seems timeless, ancient rituals grow meaningless with time control every aspect of the day-to-day lives of its hundreds of inhabitants. There is an almost Lovecraftian feeling of age and decay. However, this doesn't stop the people of Gormenghast from leading almost melodramatically exciting lives - intrigue, rebellion, duels to the death, midnight murders, banishings, hectic romance, and a most fiendish bookburning. The latter is the work of the devious anti-hero Steerpike, a malevolent youth who starts out as a lowly and put-upon kitchen boy and who seems well on his way to being the real ruler of the castle by the end of the book. Titus Groan, son of the melancholy Lord Sepulchre, is still a mere infant at the end of the novel, and plays little direct part in the story.

GORMENGHAST: The second in the series. Lord Sepulchre, driven mad by the destruction of his library, has been eaten by owls: Flay the butler, the only man who knows of his death, has been exiled from Gormenghast but is found surviving in the forest. The fiendish Steerpike is gradually becoming unhinged with lust for power and commits sundry atrocities, while trying to hold the favour of Titus' shy moody sister Fuchsia, who is simultaneously attracted and repelled by his cruel wit. Titus, growing from boyhood to young manhood, feels stifled by life in the ritual-soaked world of Gormenghast, and is fascinated by a mysterious feral child, the outcast daughter of the peasant woman who was his foster-mother. The eccentric and apparently silly Dr Prunesquallor shows his true depths of courage and intelligence, and the likeable if rather inept Headmaster Bellgrove wins the gawky and slightly crazy Irma, Prunesquallor's sister, for his bride. The people in this book lead quite unpredictable lives - there are unexpected violent deaths, odd turns of events. At the end, the castle is saved from its hidden enemy - and yet its lawful heir must make the choice to accept or reject his home and all it stands for, to stay or leave.

CHILDREN'S CORNER.



ZORIC THE SPACEMAN RETURNS TO HIS PLANET. Ladybird Books, dist in Aust by Penguin Books Aust Ltd. Written by Peter Kingston. 51pp. A\$1.75. On sale now.

A brightly-coloured primer set out in comic style with large print and an illustration for each sentence to make it familiar, easy to read and interesting by capturing a child's attention and imagination. - Susan Clarke.

Zoric tells his story - eg Zoric says to his animal friends how he landed on earth. Everything on Zoric's planet is small so everything on earth is big to him. He is a policeman and had two other police friends who went to fight some aliens, who when the war was over went looking for Zoric. - Evelyn Clarke.

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RAIDERS OF THE LOST ARK by Les Martin. Random House, dist in Aust by Doubleday Aust. P/L. 21x28cm. Illust. 55pp. A\$7.95. On sale now.

This book is exactly what it proclaims to be in the title - the story book of the movie, with no superfluous words - nicely done, and an easily read retelling of the book, following the action and dialogue of the film exactly. Beautifully illustrated with shots from the film and a cast of characters at the beginning so that the reader will recognise them in the film clips (at least one per page.)

I suppose they meant this book for the adolescent, but they'd have a hard time wresting my copy from me. Makes a great souvenir of the film which was a unique experience (it's a hard-cover).

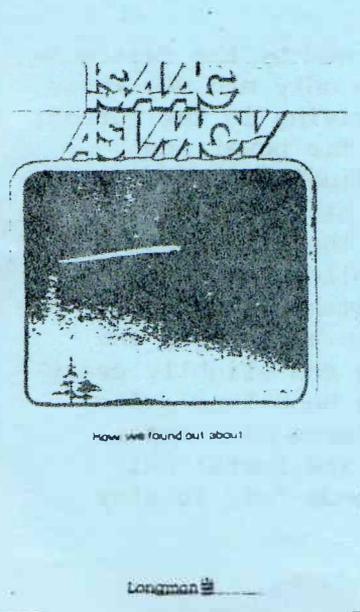
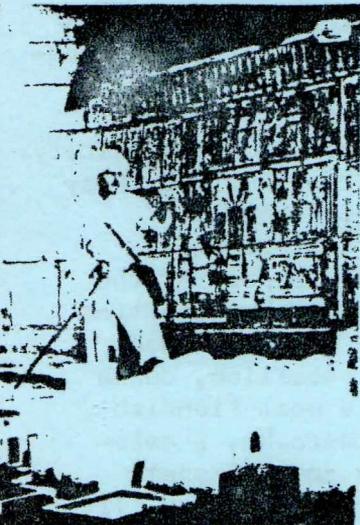
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HOW WE FOUND OUT ABOUT COMETS by Isaac Asimov. Longman Books, dist in Aust by Penguin Books Aust. Ltd. H/C. 14x22cm. 44pp. Illus (b&w). A\$7.95. On sale now (August).

One of a series of discovering science books that is in an easy to read style; tells step-by-step how comets were hypothesized from observation of 'hairy stars'; their orbits were described by deduction and use of the theoretical and mathematical tools of physics. Describes how they were eventually tracked and photos taken of them to confirm the theories and establish the facts. The book is a good example of the Scientific Method at work: the orderly deduction of extra-terrestrial physical phenomena through history.

Well-written, easy to understand and definitely *Recommended* for all amateur astronomers and young, curious minds.

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STAR WARS - The Wookiee Storybook. Random House, dist in Aust by Doubleday Aust P/L. Illus by Patricia Wynne. 38pp. A\$6.95. On sale now.

Bright illustrations, beautifully executed catch the eye in this book. The cast of characters will be familiar to those who saw the SW holiday specials. The story centers around Chewbacca's family and gives an insight into the history of the Wookiee race and their customs. I found it unpalatable that Han Solo is the saviour of the Wookies, leading them to freedom and peace, but the kids eat it up.

Most of the words are familiar to Terran readers, though some vocab is difficult, so if you select this book as a present, don't be surprised if you are asked to translate Wookiee-type words. - Susan Clarke.

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EXPLORING THE EARTH AND THE COSMOS by Isaac Asimov. Allen Lane, dist in Aust by Penguin Books Aust Ltd. H/C. 339pp. A\$21.95. On sale now (August).

This is a fairly thick book of Asimov's short pieces, such as he does quite well in F&SF. The title is prefaced - The Growth and Future of Human Knowledge and Asimov traces the history of knowledge from the first chapter titled: Prehistory-The Eastern Hemisphere, on through the ascent of the balloon, and in to the future. Some of the groups of chapters are guides to what you will find in those groups: The World as a Whole, the Interior & the Polar Regions, the Solar System, Mars & Beyond; High Temperatures; etc.

Though short, each chapter is concise and to the point. Recommended for those in late primary and early secondary school with an scientific bent.

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SPACESHIP MEDIC by Harry Harrison. Puffin Books, dist in Aust by Penguin Books Aust Ltd. 141pp. A\$2.75. On sale now.

A good read that starts off with plenty of action which is continued throughout the book. The idea of the ship's doctor being in charge of a passenger liner after a freak accident kills off the officers on board, is fun and handled well in an easy story-telling style. (At least it is fun for the child reading the book...)

After reading Heinlein, I am glad that Harrison did not fail me. The book was first printed in 1970, which is probably why, as it is fairly vintage Harrison.

Buy this one for your kids (or for those other persons' whom you like). You will probably like it also - I certainly enjoyed it throughout. -- Susan Clarke.

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THE NUMBER OF THE BEAST by Robert A Heinlein. New English Library, dist in Aust by Hodder & Stoughton. 536pp. A\$6.95. On sale now.

A bookstop of a novel which should be used, in my opinion, only as that, if you really must buy it. I found it tedious in the extreme. I could compare, unfavourably the style of writing to Margaret Way whose "sophisticated" style almost turned me off reading forever. It's blurb describes the story plot as "a brilliant but eccentric scientist has invented a space/time machine and using the three space and three co-ordinates, he has discovered a possible 6₆ alternate universes - that being the magical number associated with the biblical Beast of Revelations." I couldn't find the plot after a great number of pages - then my patience and stamina failed me and so did the Master, Heinlein. The only word that rang true was "eccentric".

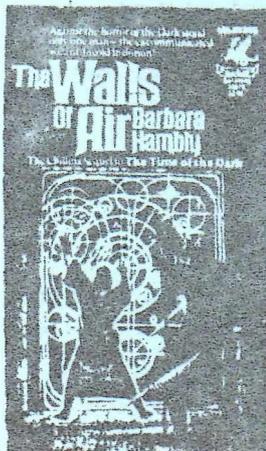
An utter disappointment. - Susan Clarke.

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 - HODDER - PLANET OF EVIL, Nain, \$14.95.
 - GRANADA - SHATTERDAY, Ellison, \$5.95.

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THE WALLS OF AIR by Barbara Hambly. Del Rey Fantasy, dist in Aust by Doubleday Aust P/L. 297pp. A\$5.95. On sale now.

This is the sequel to THE TIME OF THE DARK, which was reviewed in a former issue of TM. It continues the adventures in an alternate world as Gil and Rudy strive to keep alive as, with Ingold the wizard, they fight the advances of the Dark, Eldrich creatures spawning deep beneath the earth and which have, for the first time in three thousand years, ventured onto the surface, carrying off people to become part of their herds, living forever deep underground in their loathsome caves.

Another run-of-the-mill fantasy - better than some - and its part of a trilogy.



