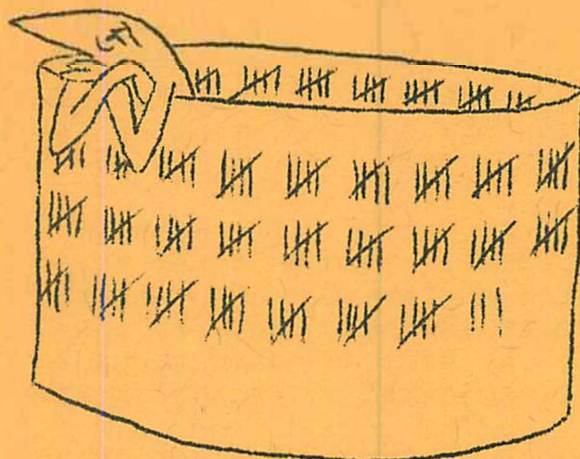




DIASPAR 17



DIASPAR

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FANSPRACH

This issue of DIASPAR, like most, contains some material that needs a little explaining. The article by Bob Shaw, for instance, may seem a bit old.

This is because it is old. Many and many a year ago, in a kingdom by Long Island Sound, I planned to publish a super new issue of that legendary fanzine INNUENDO, specially for the Bob Shaw Fund. (You remember that -- it was for the purpose of raising money to import Bob Shaw to the Noreascon in 1971.) Following my ancient rites and practices in publishing INNUENDO, I quickly gathered lots of hyperneat fannish material for the issue and began stenciling...and stenciling... and stenciling. The pages mounted up, just like they used to do with the Original INNUENDO, till it looked like the issue would run to close on 100 pages. There was stuff by Sid Coleman, Greg Benford, Calvin Demmon, Carol Carr...yes, and Bob Shaw.

Then, following my ancient rites and practices with INNUENDO, I got bogged down and didn't finish. We moved from New York to California and stuff got stored in boxes, buried...you know. Other projects, mainly those that earned me money, commanded my attention.

Bob Shaw's piece was the one that seemed to be dating more rapidly than any of the others: its genesis was a minor argument Bob and I had had when I was editing one of his novels for the (original) SF Specials. (The book was The Palace of Eternity, in case you're wondering.) So rather than let it date further while I get up the energy to finish off that monstrous issue of INNUENDO (which I'll do Real Soon Someday), I've dug out the stencils for it and am including the piece in this DIASPAR.

I won't continue the argument in the face of Bob's article, but I do want to clarify one point: though it may sound differently as he writes it, I didn't just arbitrarily chop out anything from his book. Instead, I deleted it in the manuscript and sent the ms. to Bob for him to okay, which he did; he asked about the toothbrush when he returned the ms. and I explained my reasoning when I wrote back.

The other piece herein, Brian Aldiss's libretto for a children's opera, is much more recent -- this year, in fact. Brian explained its genesis to me thus:

"I dreamed that I was on a ship, below decks. There was such a storm that it took a hell of a struggle to get up on deck. The whole world was a hell of enormous waters. Only then did I realise that I was on The Ark -- and in that moment, another ark slid by, carried by a towering wave; in a moment, it was out of sight, quenched.

"I was writing a series of newspaper articles at the time. The dream came in handy for one of them. I realised I had not done the theme full justice, so I wrote a short story incorporating the idea. Even then, I still felt restless, feeling there was further to go: whereupon I had a letter from a young composer saying he had read the newspaper article and thought the ark idea was splendid for a children's opera. We collaborated. It never worked out, as these things sometimes don't. What you have is my words. Now I'm hoping to write an opera based on a version of Frankenstein, treating it as serious and not as a bit of horror comic or joke material."

I must thank Bob Shaw for his patience in waiting for his article to see print, and thank Brian Aldiss for allowing me to publish his piece here. Arthur Thomson stenciled his own drawing for the heading of Shaw's article, and the mimeography is by Redd Boggs Himself, who deserves more elegant thanks than even his impeccable mimeographing can convey on this page.

And sometime soon I've really got to finish up all those giant fan-publishing projects I've been tinkering with for five years. Not only the big INNUENDO, but a couple of other big volumes which I think I'll not even hint at.

Boy, I'll bet the suspense is killing you.

-- Terry Carr

Brian Aldiss

THE DOPPELGANGER ARK

Singers: HAM
SHEM
JAPHETH
NOAH
ARK animals
CAPTAIN
DOPPELGANGER ARK animals

Scene: Aboard the Ark. Night. Storm.

HAM (at wheel): Still the rain flies down
And the sea flies up to meet it
The cloud tries to smother us
While the waves try hard to eat it

ARK animals: Ham! Ham! Steer the ship safely
We animals fear the wilderness of water
And the giant waves beside us
Ham! Ham! Sail the ark safely
We animals fear the wilderness of water
Find a star to guide us

HAM: While the rain's still hammering down
They'll get no star to guide them

JAPHETH: These are God's darkest wettest nights
And the Ark is lost inside them

HAM to SHEM: Shem, where's our father, old bearded Noah? It's
his turn at the wheel

SHEM: Noah's below, Ham. I'll take the wheel -- you
rest, but stay by me to quiet the fear I feel
(Takes wheel)

HAM: Fear not, brothers, we'll survive this storm. God
keeps us all alive. You know that, young Japheth.
Everything's fine.

JAPHETH: If God is looking after us, I wish he'd give a sign

ARK animals: Shem! Shem! Find us a harbour
 We animals fear the wilderness of water
 And the darkness creeps inside us
 Shem! Shem! Find us a safe port
 We animals fear the wilderness of water
 Find a star to guide us

HAM: How can you make an animal know that the Lord will never let us go? We've been chosen to survive the Flood and build a new world out of the mud.

SHEM: All the same, how right they are -- I know I'd feel better for sight of a star!

ARK animals: Ham! Shem! Look out ahead there
 Far over the heaving wilderness of water
 Beyond the waves that chide us --
 Star! Star! Bright through the cloudbank
 Shining bright through the wilderness of water
 A star, a star to guide us!

HAM: They're right! A star! It's real! You fetch old Noah!

SHEM: You hold the wheel. Maybe there's land -- (Exit)

JAPHETH: Or another vessel, better manned.

HAM: It must be a star, but I don't understand --
 There's a rainbow in the contract but I don't recall a star
 Our little shipping company it really has no place
 For stars as well as whales here -- unless of course we are
 Washed clear off Earth and sailing out through space!

Enter SHEM with NOAH

NOAH: Life's one crisis after another --

SHEM: He was sitting having a drink with mother!

NOAH: I was sitting having a -- well, why not?
 My feet were cold and my head was hot
 And my eyes were tired and my back was strained
 From keeping you and the animals trained
 To survive the storm and the Flood and the lot
 Now, to pile on worse confusions,
 I hear you're starting to have illusions

HAM and SHEM: Look forward, Noah, where foam and spray
 Come bursting forth -- A light! A star!

JAPHETH: See it, Father, not too far away?

SHEM: It's getting nearer, clearer!

NOAH: A light! Out here! Oh, let us pray --
In all the drowned globe, near or far,
This tub, this Ark, can alone survive,
And there's no one but us and the beasts alive.

HAM: But a star will light our lonely trip
Whate'er befall --

NOAH: It's no star, it's not a star at all --
Look again, Ham, Shem, Japheth, animals --
It's not a star, it's another ship!...

SHEM: I was always terrified, but now --
Our way has been cast on a haunted sea

JAPHETH: If everyone else is dead but us
What kind of mariners can they be?

ARK animals: Noah! Noah! What kind of ship can it be
That sails like us the mountain-drowning water
And glows like a star through rain and dark?
Noah! Noah! What kind of ship can it be?
You told us God gave you alone a charter
To sail these waters in your Ark!

HAM: This certainly wasn't in the contract. We'd
better give them a hail!

SHEM: They're getting nearer! What do we do?

JAPHETH: They're going to hit us -- I'll get Mother up
on deck (Exits)

NOAH: I'll wave a lantern! Why did I forget to put
navigating lights on this vessel, fool that I am?

HAM: Because we are supposed to be the only vessel
afloat. That ship shouldn't exist

DOPPELGANGER ARK appears

NOAH: Is it going to strike us -- or has it missed?

ARK animals: Oh what a beautiful ship, what a beautiful ship!
From its stem to its stern, it's as white as ice!
And it glows with pale light like a glorious star
As it slices through waves that are darker than
night

NOAH: What a beautiful ship, what a beautiful ship!
I can tell, I can tell, it's the rarest device!

SHEM: But the people aboard -- are like nothing we know

DOPPELGANGER
animals: Eternally! Eternally! Through the high waves
climbing
Eternally we have no destination
Beyond our flight through angry desolation
Unless eternity itself's our only port

ARK animals: We see them! We see them! All God's other
creatures
With alarming features -- scales -- streaming hair --
Wild of teeth and tails and spines and necks --
(individuals:) Stegosaur! Werewolf! Brontosaurus! Centaur!
Gryphon! Goblins!
Dragon! Winged horses! Mighty creatures! Tyran-
nosaurus rex!
We see you, Doppelganger Ark! We see you! Stay!
Why do you sail so fast the other way?
Can you not see us through the driving mist and
spray?

DOPPELGANGER
animals: Eventually! Eventually! We may pass beyond this
Frightful journey between universes
Where Heaven heaps the weather up like curses
To peace within the imagined port of Might-Have-Been
But until then! Yes, until then, we can see nobody --

NOAH (running): Why can't they see us? They don't answer my
signals!

HAM: They misses us by metres. Let them go wherever
they're going, whoever they are! I want no part
of them.

SHEM (also running): But what a beautiful vessel. I wish I were on it!
How much safer I'd feel than on this leaky tub.

NOAH (clutches
SHEM): Stay where you are, son! She may look beautiful
but that doesn't mean to say she is beautiful.
She may be damned. Look, there's her Captain!

CAPTAIN: This night is full of voices. These waves are
full of lips.
The ocean's full of corpses, the ocean-bed of ships.

DOPPELGANGER
animals: Eternally, eternally, through the high seas climbing
Eternally we have no destination

CAPTAIN: My eyes are full of visions, my head is full of
rain.
I wonder if we'll spy landfall ever again --

DOPPENGANGER
animals: Beyond our flight through angry desolation
Maybe eternity itself's our port!

CAPTAIN: Or if our fate, as wilder blacker oceans loom,
Could lie in always fleeing onwards, Ark of Doom --

NOAH: Get me my bottle, Shem. I need something strong.
The beautiful ship is going.

SHEM: And we'll be alone in the darkness again

HAM: We nearly had a mid-ocean collision. Think your-
selves lucky! God must be with us in this boat.
I just wish he had given us a chart. Where's
that other phantom Ark heading, I wonder?

ARK animals: Oh what a beautiful ship, what a beautiful ship!
It's as white as ice from its stem to its stern.
And the creatures aboard -- oh, we hope they'll
be saved
As they all disappear in the battling night.

DOPPELGANGER
animals: Our past is blind, our future sees extinction
So let us then be present in your mind

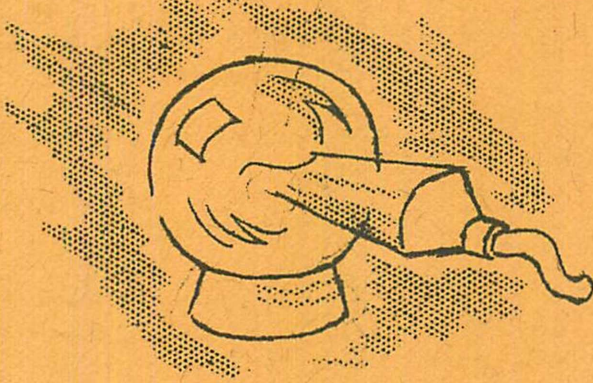
DOPPELGANGER ARK exits

NOAH: Well, there they go. Let's hope they don't perish
In this filthy tempest. The ship was so fine

HAM (singing at
wheel): It was sent for a purpose! There it goes now,
astern! --
Like a rainbow, Father, can't you learn? --
We know naught of the cargo. It was sent for a
sign!

ARK animals
(looking back): Ham! Ham! Steer the ship safely
We animals on this wilderness of water
Know how blessed we are
Ham! Ham! Sail the ship onwards
For we know that deliverance can't be far
When we just saw a star like a boat
And a boat like a star...
A star like a boat
And a boat like a star...

BOB SHAW



PREDICTION OR PREDILECTION ?

"How would you like to have been predicted by H. G. Wells?" Rodney Beck demanded gloomily in White's Tavern the other night, at a meeting of the new ten-strong Belfast Science Fiction Club which I founded lately. He was bemoaning the fact that he is two stone (28 pounds) underweight for his height. I, who am two stone overweight for my height, did not feel much sympathy for him, but he got me thinking about the business of prediction in science fiction. The reverse side of prediction, that is.

Not so long ago a science fiction editor (who shall be nameless, although he also edits a fanzine which is not very far away from you at this moment) cut out of one of my books a paragraph in which a young boy is brushing his teeth. He didn't say why he had done so, and I pondered about it for weeks wondering what I had done wrong. Then I found out that the deletion had been made because the nameless editor felt that in the 24th century, in which the story was set, the traditional brush-and-paste method of cleaning the teeth would have been replaced by something better.

I don't agree -- I just can't imagine a better, nicer way to get food particles out from between one's back teeth -- but it raises an interesting question. Which features of our society will not have changed in future societies? This is almost as important in the science fiction context as accurately predicting new inventions and trends.

Somehow I have a feeling that any one of us thrown 400 years into the future would, in spite of the accelerating rate of technological progress, find quite a few things which were pretty much as they are today. After all, a science fiction fan living in Roman times might have looked around him and said that in the 20th century men would no longer be using ancient materials like wood, leather, glass, ceramics, wool and concrete.

One of the things I remember most vividly about the late 1940s, the period in which I was literally science fiction crazy, was my tremendous impatience to start experiencing the bright new world which was bound to be coming along within a few years. Writers were aware that plastics were on the way, so when they were setting the scene for a story set, say, in 1971 there was a liberal use of

plastics. Drinks, in particular, were always served in things called "plastibulbs." Remember plastibulbs? I do. They seemed to handy, bright, logical and right that my fingers used to itch for the feel of a plastibulb full of Coke. That's what I was going to drink while modified V-2 rockets were transporting loads of passengers to Luna City in 1956....

Now, of course, I have learned that plastics are no use for drink containers, or more accurately they have a certain functional application but if you want to enjoy a drink, old-fashioned glass and ceramics make the best containers.

Another mistake writers used to make (and still do to a certain extent) was to assume that some radical technological advance would make itself felt at all levels of life almost instantaneously. This produced sentences like: "Jon closed the front door with the atomic lock, went to the garage where a nuclear motor automatically opened the door, got into his fission-powered automobile and checked the time with his atomic wristwatch."

We've been in the atom age for a quarter of a century now, and of the four devices mentioned in that sentence the only one you might find on the domestic scene is the watch -- the one the writer probably had the most doubts about when he was making his prediction. This is due to the cultural equivalent of the fractionation process -- the hot vapours of invention rise vertically and condense out only where conditions are right. A few years ago I was part of a small group watching the world's most advanced vertical takeoff jet aircraft going through its paces -- and in the background, beyond the perimeter of the airfield, I could also see a steam locomotive, diesel and petrol trucks, and a horse-drawn cart. They were all working away, unaware that they were supposed to be obsolete.

That's why, when writing about the world of four centuries from now, I have no hesitation in including toothbrushes, bicycles, hand-saws and helicopters. I like to think that many of us retain the ability to judge a thing not by its price but by its worth.

In the same vein, a thousand years ago in this country you could walk along a country road to an inn and have a lunch of beer and cheese and bread. You can do it today, and something tells me you'll be able to do much the same thing in 2971.

Roger Zelazny is the Franz Lehar of space-opera. -- J. G. Ballard

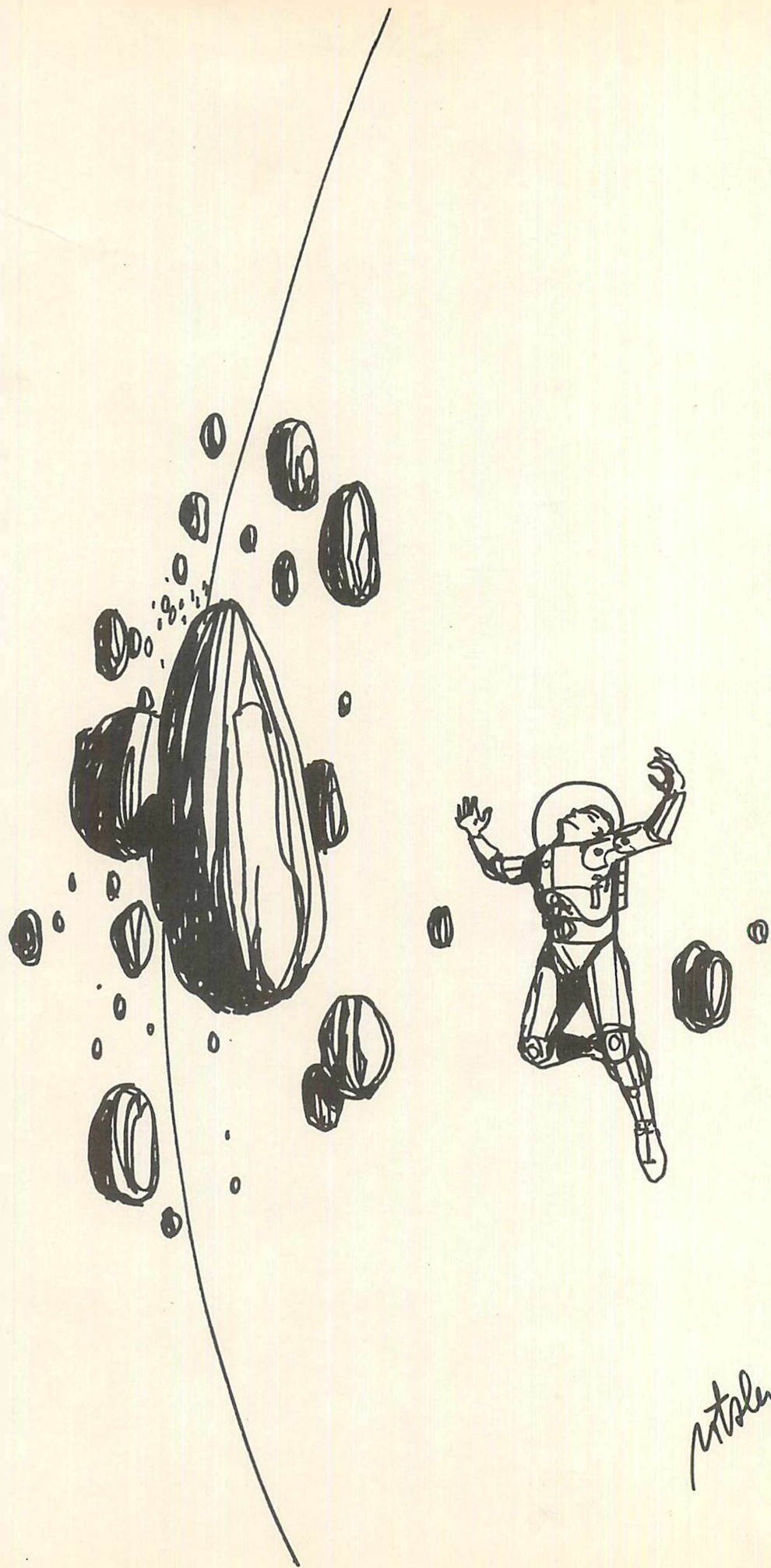
H. C. KOENIG, WHERE ARE YOU NOW THAT WE NEED YOU Dept.:

"You," she said, hissing in tones that were more cat than woman and that made the single word a paragraph.

"It's my turn to say get out!" He bunched his fists, searching for something to strike out at, wondering all the while why he was so enraged. "You're in my room. I want you out."

"I don't give a damn," she hissed again . . .

-- Star Quest by Dean R. Koontz



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