

THE
MAD
DAN
REVIEW

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THE MAD DAN REVIEW

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Editor Marc A. Ortlieb

Available for a letter, a poem, a zine, a drawing, a naughty in the bushes, or a thirty cent stamp. All correspondence to Marc Ortlieb 70 Hamblynn Road Elizabeth Downs S.Australia 5113.

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JUSTIFICATION PHASE VIII

Those who know me are well acquainted with my fickle nature. Thus, having promised a letters' suppliment to MDR4 I instead have produced MDR5. There were two main reasons for this. One was that I had a lead article ready in time and the second was that there weren't enough letters to fill a special letters' edition.

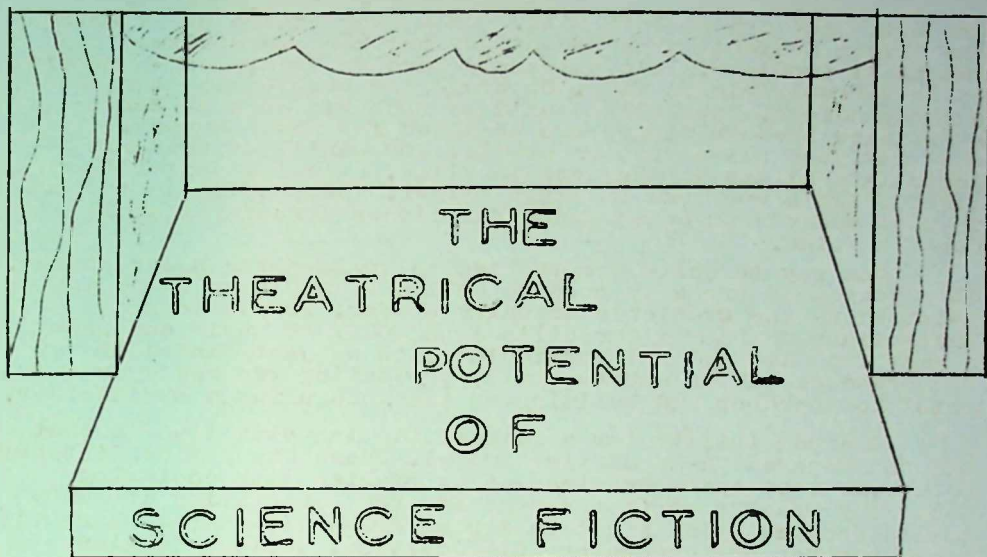
I managed to con my brother into doing a little artwork for me so the cover should look a little better than usual. I also finally got round to using one of Sheryl's beautiful little drawings which she sent to me on plastic so I could trace it onto a stencil. Thanx Sheryl.

This edition is being rushed out for BofCon and for my first fannish aniversary. MDR will be one year old in September.

My thanx to Allan Bray, who kindly helped me put together MDR4 when I was duplicatorless.

Note. It is distinctly possible that MDR6 will be A4 size. I have located a cheap offset service for drawings but it will only use A4. If anyone has any reasonable drawings they want to see in MDR I will be all too happy to use them.

Please write. Fandom is communication



THE THEATRICAL POTENTIAL OF SCIENCE FICTION

With the success of science fiction as a form of writing, it is not surprising that science fiction has been adopted by a number of other media. Thus in film we have had such successes as 2001: A SPACE ODYSSEY and A CLOCKWORK ORANGE. In television we have seen STAR TREK and DR. WHO and in the comic medium we have had the classic SLOW DEATH sf orientated comix. Music of course also holds numerous examples of the influence of science fiction. It would seem that one of the few areas not yet successfully penetrated by sf is that of the theatre. In this article, I will attempt to show why, in my opinion, the medium of theatre is not suited to science fiction.

Firstly, the type of science fiction that can be successfully presented on stage is very limited. Vast space battles are impossible to represent directly. Thus space wars can only be theatrically presented as control room situations. Similarly, space travel itself must be theatrically presented in a control room. The only person I know of who has got round that problem is Ray Bradbury in his play KALEIDOSCOPE. Bradbury pictures the survivors of a meteor collision. Their spaceship has been blown from under them and they are floating in space.

He gets his effect by using lighting. Once the collision has occurred one only sees the faces of the crew illuminated by their helmet lights. Also used is a star backdrop. Since the audience can only see the faces of the crew, the crew can provide a semblance of free fall by climbing on blocks which are camouflaged by the backdrop. Given this prop they can then create a free fall situation with their words.

Okay, so from a theatrical point of view, space epics are out. What are we left with. For a start there are always the "First Contact" type situations but here we strike technical problems. It's extremely hard to create non-humanoid extra-terrestrials on film. On stage the problem is magnified a thousandfold. Your alien can't be much bigger than Earth human size because stages are designed for Earth humans. Secondly, your alien must be mobile. You can't get away with incomplete aliens as they can in films. Sticking sailcloth on lizards isn't much use on stage either. The problem in theatre is that everything comes under far closer scrutiny that it does in films.

One way to solve the problem is to keep the alien unseen. Thus you could probably produce CHILDHOOD'S END up until the point where the Overlords actually appear. Two Western Australians put Lewis Carroll's JABERWOCKY to music and made a play from it. In that particular show we just hinted at the presence of the Jaberwocky by projecting two red eyes onto the backdrop and building up the mood using a synthesiser.

One possibility for a science fiction play lies in that old and revered theme of time travel. There one has no disturbing aliens, no vast space battles and no problem with costuming since any theatre worth the name has vast quantities of musty period costume lying about in its wardrobe department. Here again however one encounters difficulties. Science fiction has traditionally been broad in scope. It deals with large ideas. Theatre on the other hand because of its limitations concentrates on individual characters rather than societies. To convey the idea of the vast social change caused by time travel, the characters in the play would have to spout vast and boring monologues. That in theatre, is out.

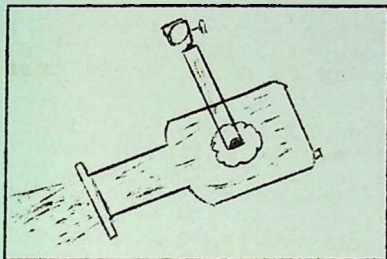
There are three plays which I would class as both successful and science fiction. Of these only one is written by a science fiction writer. Once again we return to Ray Bradbury. He, more than anyone else has tried to make the theatre a valid medium for science fiction.

Of the six Bradbury plays I have read, one succeeds. That play is TO THE CHICAGO ABYSS. In this play, Bradbury incorporates the very old sf theme of a post-atomic war society. After the war we find a totalitarian government devoted to stabilising the new order and making people forget the old order.

Into these plans steps the Bradburian monkey wrench in the form of an old man who enjoys remembering things for people. He remembers car dashboards and cigarettes for young men and coffee for old women. He is, in the words of Bradbury, "...a trash-heap of the mediocre, the third-rate-hand-me-down, useless and chromed-over slush and junk of a race-track civilization that ran "last" over a precipice and still hasn't struck bottom"

The Old Man is of course hunted by the police but an underground movement save him and arrange a meeting where he can address a large number of people after which they get him out of the city on the condition that he doesn't preach in the open any more. Naturally the Old man forgets their injunction almost immediately.

TO THE CHICAGO ABYSS is theatrically sound for two main



reasons. Firstly, it is technically feasible. Any amateur group would have no difficulty in presenting it. The second reason is more philosophical.

As mentioned earlier, theatre as a medium is mainly concerned with individuals rather than with large scale phenomena. Science fiction

is still attached to large scale occurrences. This is the much quoted "SENSE OF WONDER". One of the notable exceptions to this in sf has been none other than Ray Bradbury. In an F&SF book column, Bradbury's work was compared to a finely detailed water colour. For realistic theatre, this is the approach needed. TO THE CHICAGO ABYSS is a good play because it is the story of one man. We are shown the character of the man through his words and his surroundings. In most sf, the concern is reversed and we learn of the surroundings from the words of the characters. The essence of sf theatre as used by Bradbury is simplicity of scenery and complexity of words and character.

Despite my rather extravagant praise of Bradbury, his plays still aren't that great when compared to the work of established playwrights. THE VELDT for instance is more a play for the back stage crews and set designers than it is for actors. KALIEDOSCOPE, while interesting, is better as a short story where one can allow one's mind to fill in the missing visual images. To see a really good sf play, one must look to the work of Samuel Beckett.

Beckett is one of the best known exponents of the form of theatre known as THEATRE OF THE ABSURD. His play WAITING FOR GODOT is probably the best known piece of Absurd Drama. After WAITING FOR GODOT, END GAME is his best known piece and this play in itself contains elements of sf. It concerns two major characters living in what one gathers to be the last surviving building on Earth. The play is noteworthy for the two minor characters who are found in dustbins in the room.

In the Faber edition of END GAME there is a short mime which is, in my opinion, the sort of thing an sf play should be. There is only one character and he never speaks. At the beginning of the play he is hurled onto stage by an unseen force. Twice he is attracted to the wings by a whistle only to be hurled

back onto stage again. Eventually he gives up trying to leave the stage. He is then tested. A carafe of water is lowered from the flies. He tries to reach it but can't. A large cube is lowered from the flies. He climbs up on it but still can't reach the water. This continues with other cubes being dropped and the man trying different combinations of them to reach the water. In all cases he fails. Eventually he gives up trying anything and is finally seen sitting on the floor of a bare stage.

I'm sure that the comparison between this and a chimp in a Skinner Box is obvious. One is also left wondering who could treat a man in the same way as a man would treat a chimp.

Finally one comes to Spike Milligan's brilliant Black Comedy THE BEDSITTING ROOM. Here, once again, we have a post Atomic war situation although we are in this case given the full details of the war. It lasted exactly two minutes thirty eight seconds including the signing of the peace treaty. No one is sure whether the Americans or the Russians won it but everyone is unanimous the England lost because it was her turn.

The play is set in post war England where eight hundred and seventy four people are trying to keep the country going despite the fact that seven hundred of them have radiation sickness, and they have only four Members of Parliament, a standing army of three and no Doctors or teachers.

Matters are confused by the increased mutation rate. Harold Wilson has changed into a parrot; Lord Fortnum of Alamein is changing into a bedsitting room and Mrs Gladys Scroake, the Queen of England, has changed into a chest of drawers.

The play is performed as a comedy but the subject of laughter is such that one finds oneself thinking "What is so funny about cannibalism, murder and the destruction of civilization?"

It succeeds as a play because it is not trying to be realistic and once that has been accepted then one takes little notice of the scenery. There are however some very clever touches. One gathers that Captain Kak's son Robin is a mutant but one never sees him. One does however see Penelope, Robin's mother, hanging out the washing and with it three baby's socks.

The BEDSITTING ROOM is much akin to Absurdist Theatre and thus gets away with much that a normal play could not. None the less its concerns are linked to sf and I feel that it should be seen in that light. Indeed many absurdist do occasionally venture into the realms of fantasy and science fiction. In Eugene Ionesco's play RHINOCEROS, everyone is turning into rhinoceroses. ANEDDEE by the same author deals with the problems of a couple whose house is invaded by a dead body which is growing.

We return once more to the original question. What is the potential of the theatre as a medium for sf. I'm afraid the answer is not good. Very few science fictional ideas work well on stage. Those that are suitable are often better represented on film. The only way some ideas can be got across on stage is by suggestion whereas in film and in books you can directly represent what you want to.

Even the best sf plays, those of Bradbury, don't stand up well against other theatrical forms. I'm of the opinion that theatre is not a good or appropriate medium for science fiction.

BOOKS USED

Samuel Beckett END GAME (Faber 1973)
Ray Bradbury PILLAR OF FIRE (Bantam, 1975)
Ray Bradbury THE WONDERFUL ICECREAM SUIT (Bantam, ?)
Spike Milligan and John Antrobus THE BEDSITTING ROOM (Tandem, 1974)

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THE UNITED FANARCHIST PARTY

As those of you who read FNS 45 will know, Leigh Edmonds once made a suggestion that the UFP be formed on a platform of cheap mailing rates for fan mail, subsidies for writers and faneds and jobs for all the boys. Since then nothing much has happened so I am hereby taking it upon myself to form the Adelaide branch of the party. (I had previous experience as UFP candidate for Naracoorte - See G'Nel 1)

My aim is to free Australian Fandom from the harsh financial restrictions placed upon us by that foul organisation which so persecutes us, The Australian Post Office. As part of this plan I urge all recipients of this zine to flood the Postal service with letters and so jam up its archaic facilities. Since it doesn't matter what you send or where you send it as long as you send lots of it, may I suggest that you just send lots of money to 70 Hamblynn Rd Elizabeth Downs S.Aust. 5113. I am willing to sacrifice an empty mailbox for the joy of seeing our ancient enemy destroyed.

The UFP will be triumphant. But until it is, watch it.

Because no matter what you do
The U F P is watching you.

THE UNITED FANARCHIST PARTY - Power to the correct people.

A HUMOUROUS ARTICLE FOR MARC ORTLIEB

by John J. Alderson
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Having read the last issue of MAD DAN REVIEW thoroughly and having observed that Marc wants a humorous article or two, I felt morally bound to sit down and write him one. Well, it's all right about the sitting down part, I would do that in any case, but it's the humour that bothers me. Here we are in the middle of a cold and bloody dry winter with me poor sheep starving and their poor boss starving and within a few days one has to make out an income tax return which should be done in red ink like the bank does my statements and I can't afford a red pen....

Well, as I say, what is there to be humorous about in this dull, grey world. However, not to worry; in a few days I am expecting a letter from my Stock and Estate Agent telling me how much my wool cheque would have been if I didn't owe them even more, and perhaps, as they sometimes do, asking me when I am going to pay the balance. That sort of letter I treat as it deserves: they ought to know as well as I do that they won't be getting another penny out of me until my next lot of wool is sold. Then, with the wool cheque after that, I intend to take a lovely holiday, probably at Laanacourie (I've got a sister there and it's not real far.....)

Mind you, I had a real laugh the other weekend. A Land Subdivider dropped in to see me, having been told that I was interested in owning more land. Well, that's so, but then every man has his dreams, and I have had more than enough. I mean, at various times I have thought how nice it would be to own an ocean-going yacht and tour the world, or a spaceship and go somewhat further afield, and occasionally to have a dozen red-headed women. Naturally I would not knock back a trial run with any of these. (All right you filthy minded so-and-sos, no pun was intended.) So when the Agent suggested I come and look at the paddocks I came. Apart from knowing the land better than he, I was interested to see just what land was still on the market, and what had come onto the market again due to the previous buyer not being able to make the payments. So he showed me a nice thirty acre piece with some swamps in it where the drive of a big mine had gone down, which, he explained, would save me digging a dam. I mean, fancy trying that rot on a farmer, resident almost all his life within a couple of miles! What I liked was the repayment terms, only \$140 per month. Now this may interest some of you budding economists. If I cropped that paddock in wheat and got a good crop every second year, my wheat sales, minus seed and super, would nett \$400 less than the 10% interest being charged. And wheat is the most highly paying farm commodity at present. I didn't buy the paddock.

Well, that's very funny, in one sense of the term.

THE REVIEWS

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\$ BOOKS \$
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STARSMASHERS OF THE GALAXY RANGERS Harry Harrison (Orbit, 1976)

Harry Harrison did a very stupid thing . He wrote a great work of humourous science fiction. Now, normally this would not be considered stupid but in Harrison's case it was because he wrote it too early in his career. Thus whenever one reviews a humourous Harrison novel, one starts with the question "Is is as good as BILL THE GALACTIC HERO?" In the case of STARSMASHERS OF THE GALAXY RANGERS the answer is "No".

The book is basically a parody of the FLASH GORDON, SKYLARK OF SPACE type sf novel in which our heroes invent a spaceship in their back yard and go gallivanting around the universe meeting all sorts of alien nasties who have designs on the beautiful but virginal girl who is on board. Unfortunately parody is seldom better than the original. It may be funnier (or at least contain more deliberate humour) but it cannot lift itself out of the style of the thing being parodied.

Here lies the major difference between BILL and STARSMASHERS. BILL THE GALACTIC HERO is basically satire. It has taken elements of parody but has built them into an entirely new novel. One can feel for Bill because he is a real person. One can watch his character develop through the novel because he is not limited to being a typecast figure in a parody. The heroes in STARSMASHERS do not have this freedom. They are as limited as the characters in that well known film FLESH GORDON. Indeed that is where, in my opinion, the book belongs, alongside FLESH GORDON and The Harvard Lampoon's book BORED OF THE RINGS. That isn't to say that it has no redeeming merits. It is quite a funny book but it doesn't stand up to close examination.

DECISION AT DOONA Anne McCaffrey (Corgi, 1976)

I'm one of those people who like to have complete collection of authors and so I was pleased when Corgi choose to re-release this novel. It's a pity I didn't get hold of it earlier because again we have a case of a novel suffering by comparison. As an early novel, it isn't bad. It follows the encounter of Earth humans with an alien race and we watch the humans bending over backwards to control their savage natures.

The problem is eventually solved and we are left with a nice scene in which McCaffrey assures us that people will always get on with one another providing they try enough. A pleasant book to waste an hour or two over but don't expect too much.

CAGE A MAN F.M. Busby (Signet, 1974)

This is very much a novel celebrating the dignity of humanity as opposed to the wierdness of others. The hero, Barton, is a loner who is forced by circumstances to fight aliens, his own people and above all, his own nature. His character and actions are such that, had the book been written twenty years ago he would have had to die at the end of the novel.

The word for Barton is ruthless. He commits atrocities in the interests of saving himself and in the same breath accuses his enemies of similar behaviour. Barton wins out not because his cause is just but because he is the strongest contestant.

The book seems a hangover from the fifties. We have a stereotype German who has switched sides because he thought that the enemy was going to win. We have the young female who sees the righteousness of the human cause and so throws in her lot with Earth. We even have the aristocratic enemy who refuses to see beyond his own culture. All he needs is a monacle. I'm sure Robert Heinlein would like this novel. I found it enjoyable reading but it is another of those novels that I feel I should apologise for liking.

AMAZING SCIENCE FICTION June 1976

I don't usually mention magazines but I thought I'd just slip this one in because it contains a beautiful AussieCon report by Susan Wood. There are lots of other Big Names too but I've got round to reading few of the stories. The one I did read was Asimov's which is a cute little thing which explains why Hugo Gernsback called his magazine Amazing. If Asimov had sent the story to a fanzine it would probably have been rejected but I suppose that his name, combined with the fact that it is the fiftieth anniversary edition, got it in.

HEAR THE SOUND OF MY FEET WALKING DROWN THE SOUND OF MY VOICE TALKING Dan O'Neill (Glide Publications, 1975)

I figured that while I was breaking one custom, I might as well break another and review a comic book. This has to be one of the best books I've read all year. It deals with the travels of the Odd Bodkins, Hugo and Fred. They encounter such characters as the Bat Winged Hamburger Snatcher, The Great Hoo Hoo in the sky and Sam the 100% American dog. In their travels they have time to search for god, the magic cookie and the real meaning of the stars.

I made a mistake in trying to explain the book. It's beyond description. All I can say is, if you see it, brouse through it. Before doing so, make sure you can afford to buy it. If you can't you might find yourself in the rather unpleasant situation of being caught sneaking it out of the shop.

THE HIGH CRUSADE Poul Anderson (MacFadden, 1968)

It is a pity that this book isn't readily available in Australia at the moment. It's one of my favourite Anderson novels. Basically the idea is that an alien spaceship lands in medieval England, scouting prior to an invasion and a group of English soldiers, assembling for the Crusades capture it and end up rocketing through the galaxy. In many ways it's like the Peter Sellers film THE MOUSE THAT ROARED. However, the idea is mostly serious. Once more we have the invincible Earthmen but that's something which Anderson specialises in and one soon learns to allow for it and enjoy the story.

TO RIDE PEGASUS Anne McCaffrey (Sphere, 1976)

This is a collection of Anne McCaffrey's Talent (psi) stories, some of which have appeared in Analog. The stories deal with the problems associated with getting psi recognised and legally accepted. It is in many ways the American counterpart of Dan Morgan's Minds series. The emphasis seems to be on precognition and telekinesis rather than telepathy. The stories center on the fact that psi is a talent just like music or nursing. Worth reading.

BEFORE THE GOLDEN AGE 1 Isaac Asimov (ed) (Orbit, 1975)

I wish that Asimov would just write his autobiography and be done with it. As it is, I'm probably going to have to buy all four volumes in this series anyway. I suppose the stories in the collection aren't too bad as far as pre-Campbellian sf goes but to one more accustomed to stronger fare they are not impressive.

The book is basically of interest because of Asimov's comments on each story. The work isn't exactly scholarly but I have no doubt that future students of sf will find the series to be useful references.

SMITH OF WOOTON MAJOR J.R.R. Tolkien (Allen and Unwin, 1974)

A beautiful little book. I don't know why I waited so long to read it. While this is, from the feel of it, a children's book, I cannot help but place it in the category which includes ALICE'S ADVENTURES IN WONDERLAND and A WIZARD OF EARTHSEA.

The story itself is quite innocuous but one comes out of it feeling most refreshed. For such a small book it packs a real punch. A real insight into Tolkien's concept of Faery.

CHUNDER RIOTS OF THE GHODS Errich von Daneccles (adcor 1977)

In this book, von Daneccles advances his theory that we are the descendants of a group of spacemen who came to Earth for a massive orgy and never found their way back to the spaceship. As evidence, he refers to the Greek legend of Bacchus (Dionysus) who was said to have brought wine to man and whose mother had been destroyed when she looked at Dionysus' father, obviously a spaceship taking off.

Destined to become a cult classic.

RECORDS

SPITFIRE Jefferson Starship (Grunt BFLI 1557)

The first thing you notice about this album is the cover, a magnificent dragon bearing an Oriental lady. The second thing you notice is that Papa John Creach, the violin wizard, has been dropped from the Starship line up. The third thing you notice is that there is only about half an album's worth of good tracks here.

It's a real pity. Though there are five strong tracks on the album, the other four are filler. True, CRUISIN' and BIG CITY are pleasant enough disco numbers but as for WITH YOUR LOVE and LOVE, LOVELY LOVE, the less said the better.

The three tracks on which Kantner takes the major credits are first class Starship. DANCE WITH THE DRAGON is apparently an Airplane type dope hymn and really moves. SAINT CHARLES is a powerful love song in the style of CAROLINE. SONG TO THE SUN co-written by Kantner and China Wing Kantner (Grace and Paul's little girl) is another in the long line of Kantner sf songs. It includes that well known Arthur C. Clarke title CHILDHOOD'S END. (The cover notes thank Arthur C./Goldie/Shelley/Christopher R./Robert H.. No prizes for guessing the full surnames of the first and last members of the list.)

The two Slick tracks seem concerned with her faltering relationship with Kantner. Fortunately this doesn't seem to have effected the group in any way. In Slick's songs, the absence of Papa John is especially noticed. There are several violin sized holes in the backing.

Over all, this is not that good a Starship album. Maybe next time.....

I WANT TO SEE THE BRIGHT LIGHTS TONIGHT Richard and Linda Thompson (Island, ILPS 9266)

Richard Thompson was the original lead guitarist with Fairport Convention and wrote much of their better original material. His writing talents are as sharp as ever on this album.

I am of the opinion that there are distinct differences between the ways Americans do things and the ways the British do things. You have only to watch TILL DEATH US DO PART and ALL IN THE FAMILY to see this. Thus it is possible to say that there are British and American groups which attempt the same thing but get different results due to their cultural backgrounds. Compare The Bonzo Dog Band's fifties rock rip offs with Frank Zappa's fifties rock rip offs and you'll see what I mean. Anyway, in that sense, Richard Thompson is doing the same sort of thing in England that Jackson Browne and Melanie are doing in the U.S.A. and the result is electrifying.

The tracks are often concerned with London night life. They give tourist guide like pictures of all the little scenes.

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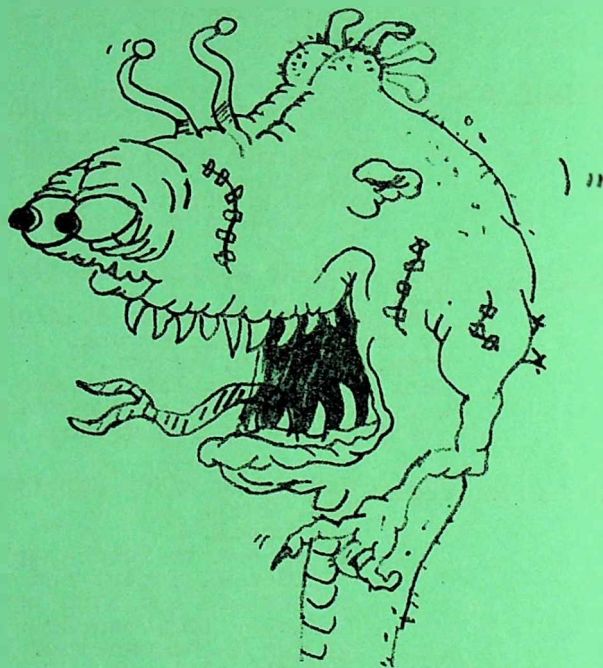
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(I was in Mt Gambier. Where were
you?)

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THE GHETTO



MAD DAN

Welcome boys and girls. The topic for tonight's discussion is sex. That should have you all interested so let us start by examining the subconscious mind of a certain Adelaide fan who shall remain nameless.

Here then are Ortlieb's views on sex. (Curse it all. I never could keep a secret.) It may for a start surprise you to learn that the lad is an avid supporter of the Fem Lib Movement. He holds that women are people just as men are and that just as there are strong men and weak men, so there are strong women and weak women. Similar trends occur when you examine such things as intelligence, creativity and on the other side of the fence, bad temper and dishonesty.

The statement Women are equal to Men is of course an over-generalisation but once one comes down to statements such as some women are stronger than some men then one is dealing with cold facts. (Providing one has defined one's terms.) These facts do not appeal to all and your average MCP will probably shrug it off, explaining that since most women are less well physically developed than most men then men should be considered the stronger sex and treated as such.

Ortlieb has a personal motive in wishing to dispel the masculine superiority myth. Attendant with the idea that men are superior to women is the idea that the stronger should support the weaker. Ortlieb has no intention of supporting a woman. Thus, the more women who realise that masculine superiority is a myth, the happier Ortlieb is.

Let's say right here and now that when it comes right down to it, Ortlieb considers an unmarried female in the same way as a bear looks at an un sprung bear trap. (There are some interesting Freudian connotations here.) Now, no bear is going to be so conceited as to imagine that the bear trap he is looking at was specifically set for him, but just the same, the trap was set for a bear and can quite easily catch him. It doesn't help at all if our bear has already escaped such a trap by the skin on his arse.

According to Ortlieb, the other advantage of Fem Lib is that it removes the onus on the male to initiate relationships. Nowadays, a female can open a conversation with a male without too many untoward stares. For some reason, Ortlieb, though wary of females in general, is quite fond of talking to women. As a safeguard however, he prefers talking to married women. A sprung bear trap seldom resets itself and it normally gives a fair bit of warning before it does.

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THE MAD DAN REVIEW SUPPORTS ADELAIDE IN '83, SYDNEY COVE IN '88 and RATCON IN '02 (BLAST YOU STYLES! WHERE IS MY COPY OF CRUX ??)

\*\*\*\*\*  
\* THE KORFLU KID RIDES AGAIN \*  
\*\*\*\*\*

The sun was sucking up the last dregs of daylight before settling down for the night. As the crickets were tuning up, an important meeting was taking place in the decrepit shack. An undetermined number of sinister figures were clustered around a rickety table. Several half empty glasses of dittoing fluid were resting on the chipped linoleum surface. A tall man with a purple mask thumped the table to gain the attention of the congregation. Several palsied hands shot forward to steady their tottering drinks.

"And I say we raid the town" the figure declared. "Them bastards is no better than we is. O.K. just cause Goodrite can afford his imported Beam, that ain't no reason to ban us ditto swillers from the bar."

A mutter of approval arose from the group. The Fandom Fordographer held a high place in the Society For Creatively Anachronistic Printing. A waivery voice chimed its support.

"Yesh. I agree. Jusht cause we ish meth schniffers isn't a reason to keep ush outov town."

The Fandom hushed the meth demented raver with a stern glance then continued his speech.

"Thanx Jön. Now let's get down to business. I suggest we raid the stage. There's a big shipment of Beam due through here any day now. If we can get that, we can hold all Ghetto City to ransom. Then we'll present the list of demands I've had brother Obie draw up for us. Let er rip Obie."

A slim bespectacled figure took a place at the head of the table.

"Okay brothers. Here it is.

(1) Dittoing fluid should be legalised.  
I mean, we're being descriminated against unfairly. Did you ever hear of one of them toadying corflu sniffers bein arrested?

(2) The Ghetto Gazette should be at least fifty percent Fordograph.

(3) All dittoed zines should be photographed for posterity.

(4) A research grant should be given to find a way to make fordograph readable."

A drunken chorus of "Here Heres" drowned any further discussion.

.....

It was a highly excited Adelcon who burst through Marshall Goodrite's door a week later.

"Marshall! The stage just got in and the Beam shipment's been hijacked!"

Goodrite valliantly fought back an attack of the DTs. "Hijacked!" he thundered. "Where's my Ghod damned Remington?"

Strapping his trusty typer to his side, he rushed out to where the stage stood waiting. The driver was weeping copiously. "Oh how am I gunna explain this to the Johnson Shipping Line?" he sobbed.

The Marshall caught a whiff of his clothing; dittoing fluid, no doubt about it. The wide spread but indistinct purple bruises which covered him confirmed the Marshall's suspicions. The Fordographers had struck again! As Goodrite stared at the empty Beam crates, a whirring sound filled the air. A dark figure dropped from the clouds and came to rest hovering twenty feet above the horrified townsmen.

The flyer reached into a sack belted at his side and threw down masses of barely legible propaganda. It was SCAP's list of demands. The Marshall's roar of protest lofted the hovering figure ten feet.

"Whut?" he yelled, "You just buzz back and tell yer crud-brained bosses where they can stuff their demands."

The aerial messenger needed no further encouragement to leave, especially when he saw Goodrite's hand twitch toward his weapon. The propellor beanie whirred into top gear and the figure rocketed away.

"Rega," Goodrite screamed, "Get me Doc, immediately."

The deputy dropped his pile of wanted posters and scuttled in the direction of the Doc's office. Such was his hurry that he didn't stop to knock. Suddenly he stopped dead. There, with his feet up on the desk was the Doc, perusing with obvious enthusiasm a Star Trek script. Gramaticus hastily concealed it under his desk. "Uh... hello Rega old chap. What fortuitous circumstances bring your good person to my humble office?"

Ygor, having overcome his initial shock stuttered "The Marshall wants to see yer in his office pronto."

"Certainly" proclaimed the Doc, "Lead the way."

By the time the aging pedant had reached the Marshall's office, Goodrite was pacing in his six inch deep worry track. "Glad yer could come Doc." he halted in the dust. "I guess yer heard whut happened to the stage."

"Yes, I certainly did. Dashed unsporting is all I have to say" sympathised Gramaticus.

It's got me worried," muttered Goodrite. "We've only got three month's supply left and the next shipment ain't due for another year. I hate to imagine whut's gunna happen when the withdrawl symptoms hit."

"I would have thought the solution obvious." enunciated Doc. "We simply send the Child out to break their barricade and then we call in Emergency supplies."

The Child?" queried the Marshall, "Oh you mean the Kid. Shouldov thought of that myself. I'll get him on the job right away."

Goodrite headed for the saloon. As expected, the Korflu Kid was lounging against the bar with a whiskey glass in his hand. The lawman walked up to him, staring dissapprovingly at the Kid's brimming glass.

"We're gunna haveta go on short rations." he muttered. Korflu looked up from his alcohol sodden dream. "Oh, howdy Marshall." he slurred. "How's the old Ghetto running business goin'?"

"Snap out of it Kid." stated Goodrite abruptly, "Unless we do something, there ain't gunna be any more decent drinking around here for a time. Ain't you heard about the Fordographers hijacking the Beam shipment?"

Instant sobriety flickered into the Kid's eyes. "Fer Kerist's sake boss, don't joke."

It wasn't long until Korflu was informed of the situation. His sobriety became more pronounced and his eyes lit up. After a couple of minutes thought he smiled slyly at Goodrite.

"I think I got the solution to yer problem. Send Doc here and I'll see what we can do."

The next morning, the Kid, resplendent in pale pink Levis thundered out of town on his faithful steed Minac. Within seconds he had reached the Scap's shack. The rattle of his high powered typer split the air.

"Hey yer lily livered mundanes. Cummon out and face me."

From the shack came the sound of several pairs of pants being drawn up and of the loading of typers. There was a rattle of keys but the Kid had ducked behind a rock before the foul words could hit him.

Three Scaps dived out of the door and slid behind the mound of misprinted paper which stood in the barn. A few more carefully selected expletives brought the rest of the gang scurrying out of the shack.

The volume of the clattering increased. Korflu, having set his IBM on automatic was blazing away with his Olympic. Despite his brilliant wordsmanship however, he was being forced back. He retreated just in time to avoid the Scap's pincer movement. With a hyperspatial leap, he was on Minac and haring down the track. The fordographers hurled a stream of exclamation marks in his wake.

Minutes later, he reined up outside Marshall Goodrite's office. A wanted poster caught his eye.

WANTED

CRUX 2

REWARD:- None but if Styles don't send me a copy I'll have his gutz for garters.

The Kid swaggered into the office with a smirk the size of a banana on his face.



"Well, we done it. While I drew their fire, Doc sneaked in the back and grabbed the stuff. It should be here any moment."

The words were prophetic. At that moment, Gramaticus' bugeye came rumbling down the street stacked to the backboard with bottles of Beam. The Marshall's eagle eye swept the pile. His face dropped. "There's one crate missing," he said. Gramaticus smiled wryly.

"Well," he said, "I thought it'd be worth while losing a crate to scuttle the entire crowd. I filled their machines with Beam. That stuff should rot out their duplicators in a matter of weeks. The Ditto menace is over."

Goodrite spluttered. "You mean their foul machines are filled with good Beam? Ghod's blood! Couldn't you have used water?"

Doc looked dazed. "I didn't think of that."

Goodrite glared at him and stomped off. He didn't speak to anyone for a week.

~~~~~

The Watermelon Song.

As I walked out one morning
The sights that I did see.
I thought I saw a watermelon
Climbing up a tree.
With me fi rol dol
And me fol rol dol
And me fi rol dol
And me dee
I thought I saw a Watermelon
Climbing up a tree.

And as I lay down on me back
On that fine summer's day,
Along came a maiden fair
Upon a horse so grey.
With me fi rol dol etc.

She left her horse, came to my side
And said these words to me
Oh why you watching that watermelon
Climbing up a tree
With me fi rol dol etc.

I said to her "Fair maiden
All in your mantle green
That watermelon is the finest
Ever I have seen.
With me fi rol dol etc

~~~~~  
Well she took off her mantle green  
And bared to me one breast  
Saying "If you think that that is nice  
You ought to see the rest.  
With me fi rol dol etc.

I said "Young maid I may be mad  
But I am no one's fool.  
I never judge on one short glance  
And that's my Golden Rule."  
With Me fi rol dol etc.

Well she let fall her garments all  
And said "Young man cop that.  
If that don't beat your watermelon  
I will eat your hat."  
With me fi rol dol etc.

Her lips were red as rubies  
Her breasts were lily white  
The sweet things that she did to me  
They kept me up all night.  
With me fi rol dol etc.

As I walked out one morning  
The sights they made me whirl  
I thought I saw a Watermelon  
Growing from a girl.  
With me fi rol dol  
And me fol rol dol  
And me fi rol dol  
And me dirl.  
I thought I saw a watermelon  
Growing from a girl.

~~~~~  
Copies of the Mad Dan Memoirs go to the first five hundred
people who point out how sexist that song is.
~~~~~

#### Con Info

By the time you get this, BofCon will probably be over. So on  
to the next. There is of course MidAmeriCon Kansas City,  
Sept 1-6. I doubt if many people who could go will receive this  
before then anyway. More possible are SwanCon. Perth  
contact address is 82 Milne St. Bayswater W.Aust. 6053.  
Con is to be held 9th to 11th of October.  
Q Con III Brisbane over the new year. PO Box 235 Albion  
Brisbane Qld. 4010.

UniCon III Adelaide over the Easter weekend 1977.

I might even get to one or two of these if Ortlieb gets off his  
fat arse.

GHETTO LETTERS

Leigh Edmonds PO Box 76 Carlton Vict 3053 21/6/76

Bootlegs are not a good thing. They might provide listeners with more records but the performers don't get any of the rakeoff. // Yeah but if the public want something they're going to try and get it. If the groups don't produce enough recorded material for the fans then they can't complain if someone else makes a little money doing it//

BLESS ITS POINTED LITTLE HEAD is the only / Jefferson Airplane album/ I play at all these days, probably because I like live recordings. When a group is live up on stage there isn't much that it can do to muddy up its music with all sorts of unnecessary rubbish, something which the Airplane were quite good at but of which I do not approve.

Leigh goes on to lament the state of the popular music industry, a lament which I echo. Suffering endless tirades from the kids about the virtues of the Bay City Rollers, Sherbert and Skyhooks sort of gets to me. Maybe I'm not much better with my Airplane/Starship fixation but at least I try to justify my likings. To the kids, the only answer to the question "Why do you like .....?" is " They've got lots of records in the charts and everyone says they're beautiful." Back to Leigh.

At various times I have found myself in quite heated arguments because, when pushed, I will claim that the "Ball and Chain" track off the Big Brother and the Holding Company's "Cheap Thrills" is almost certainly one of the ten best pieces of music ever entrusted to record. Up there with the 1st Shostakovich Violin Concerto, Britten's "Peter Grimes" and Peter Maxwell Davis' "Eight Songs for a Mad King." "Cheap Thrills" would certainly be on my list of desert island records and I doubt if any other rock would be.

Eight or so years back, the best rock was not underground but up there on the surface where everybody could hear it on their own economy little transistor.

Best Handler being one of those people who likes driving ships and things is obviously entitled to his bias towards things that float around rather than those things which get from point A to point B through the invention of the air foil. But I am not on his side.

When I was a littler person than I am now and used t come down to Melbourne in school holidays, I used to get taken to Port Melbourne to look at the liners that were berthed there. Visits usually used to be planned to see a ship leaving with streamers and all. It was okay but I never did get off on it that much. Instead I would feel annoyed at having been dragged away

from the window from which I could spend many hours of bliss looking at the aeroplanes landing and taking off from Essendon Airport.

Leigh goes on to explain his love for heavier than air flight and to state that he doesn't think that dirigibles will be back due mainly to the aerospace companies' investment in heavier than air flight. He also points out that if lighter than air craft do come back then they will more likely be used for cargo than passengers.

Cats are truly very nice little people. Valma and I have two, Spot and Bill. Of course not all fans are cat people, John, Elizabeth and Jillian Foyster and Peter and Liz House have (ugh) dogs. Horrible noisy creatures. But if you are saying (in part) that we like cats because they remind us of women then what does that make women who like cats? You'd better not be saying that Valma has lebonese tendencies. I reckon that the reason people like cats so much is that they are 'toy' animals, by which I mean that while they are obviously wild animals they are in a package which is easily handled by us humans. Hold on while I go out and test this on one of ours.....

I shouldn't have gone and done that. I met Spot who was strolling down the hallway and picked her up to try out my theory. After a couple of minutes I had satisfied myself and went to put her down but she wasn't going to be in that. In the end we compromised and she is sitting on the other couple of pages of this letter, sniffing at the typer while I write.

Once more Leigh. I'm not after a fucking Ditmar!!!!!!!

John J Alderson Havelock Vict 3465

/John is another of those people who pointed out cat novels I missed. Evidently Leiber's THE GREEN MILLENIUM and THE WONDERER are classic examples. John also mentions Bert Chandler's THE INHERITORS/

Naturally cats must be aliens, otherwise they would be mentioned in the Bible like dogs, donkeys and women have been mentioned. / Alderson for MCP of the year?/ The fact that Egyptians mummified them adds considerable support to the idea and I must confess my surprise that von Danekin has overlooked this important clue. I trust you will send him the issue of MDR with this letter in and of course No 4 so he can get right onto this new lead.

Naturally politeness bids me express my sorrow that you and Mad Dan were unable to make UniCon II, but as it happens, there were only just enough girls there and the addition of two lecherous Croweaters would have easily upset the apple-cart. /Make that MCP of the century./



Joan Dick 379 Wantigong St. Albury N.S.W. 2690

July '76

(1) A constipated elephant! The mind boggles.

(2) Poor John Wyndham. Why can't someone write a darn good story without someone else, years later, seeing things in it that were never intended. I imagine that a biased mind could see all sorts of things in any book presented for analysis. When was THE DAY OF THE TRIFFIDS written and when did marijuana first explode on the scene of civilization?

// Oh dear, someone else took the article seriously. Honest, it was supposed to be a joke. I too dislike trying to read too much into books but I also enjoy reading too much into books. To overcome my quandry, I occasionally write articles making fun of my critical tendencies.

Joan goes on to state that she is a dog person, a terrible admission. She does however like Petronius in DOOR INTO SUMMER so all is not lost. ///

(5) // I made a typically Ortlieb pinko anti-military statement in reference to Joan's last letter.//

He //Joan's son// is being trained to defend his country and all those people who condemn him are the first to demand Navy action when the Russians become too active in the Indian Ocean or the Asian trawlers are poaching in our waters. World armament being what it is, I doubt very much if Paul will ever see any action against an enemy. I don't think he is any more dangerous at sea than the average motorist on the road.

// I must once more admit my anti-military prejudice. I think you will find it in a lot of us who went through the Vietnam bit. I was lucky in that the Witlam Govt got in in time to negate my call up but I still find it hard to respect an army which takes the role of aggressor, although I'll grant you that in Vietnam it was hard to tell aggressor from aggressee. I don't mind the idea of volunteer military forces, providing that the governments of the world don't use those forces to start something which will get people like me conscripted in.///

\*\*\*\*\*  
Jon Noble 2/208 Hereford St. Glebe N.S.W. 2037 22/6/76

I'm in the process of finding out what you (sorry - us) teachers put up with. (but think of all those articles on sf in schools I'll be able to do if I do get posted as a school librarian next year - it's unlikely but that's what they're training me for.)

// Don't worry Jon, you'll get the job. If NSW is anything like SA, the turnover in librarians is phenomenal. They all seem to get pregnant and have babies. I hope the same doesn't happen to you. Mind you, you could get a lot of money from the Guinness Book of Records or Woman's Weekly for something like that. I might however see if I can get a job in whatever school you become librarian of. I've never seen a library full of Tolkien and DR Who.///

The Wyndham article was fun - and you accuse me of making fun of LOTR. A few years ago, there was a sheet of bloopers made in the Higher School Certificate Exam that was circulated among NSW English teachers. One of them read something like "Triffids were giant plants with huge testicles that ejected a deadly fluid." although I still prefer "Mozart kept a small spinster on which he practiced every night"

There is at least one other Gummitch story. I can't recall the name of it but it was in THE BOOK OF FRITZ LEIBER (DAW). You didn't mention Leiber's WANDERER, surely one of the most famous cat in sf stories with Tigerishha (or something like that) and that line "even your great god Heinlein admits that cats are only second class citizens." (That's probably not quite correct - check it up - it's near the start somewhere.)

Keith Laumer had a cat called Eureka in GALACTIC ODDYSEY - a sort of offsider to the hero. Of course there are Andre Norton's cats, but it's so long since I read an Andre Norton Juvenile that I can't remember any references. Another Fritz Leiber cat reference, heard of the Grey Mouser?

Re your FANTASIA review, apparently there were several scenes that were not included in the film that were even better than those which were included. Speaking of animated movies, MGM is making a movie of LOTR - live and animation combined. Producer is Ralph Bakshi. It's expected to take another two years. There is also being made a Xerox TV special, an animated version of the Hobbit.

Before I finish - the cover- obviously Picasso - Jhim Picasso that is - brother of the well known fhred picasso and sister of "knees" Picasso.

~~~~~

John Bangsund PO Box 434 Norwood 5067 22/6/76

// John opens with comments to the effect that I shouldn't deliberately refer to my zine as crud. My reasons are quite simple. If I took what I was doing seriously, I'd fold up in a corner and die. MDR is for me a fun way of encountering other people. Hell, I know I'm a genius so I don't need to advertise the fact.//

I must ask the cats what they thought.

Ho-kay.... "What is Acapulco famous for?" you ask (rather oddly I thought). For a start, it's famous for not being in South America. I hope this assists you in your researches into parallels with John Wyndham. // Philosophical Gas; the accurate fanzine. Well Acapulco is near South America isn't it?///

Your first poem is the kind of thing Robert Graves has fun with- example, the confusion of images in "dog-god" (Anubis presumably // Cerberus actually//) and 'the river' (Cerberus?). and the upper world (Sirius?) Or have I mistaken you? You found it lacking anyway. So do I. I want to read the second stanza where you find the thing lacking, or at least guess what it might be. Sex? The ultimate fanzine?(It's been done.) A good white duplicating paper? (Can't help you.)

