

SECRET

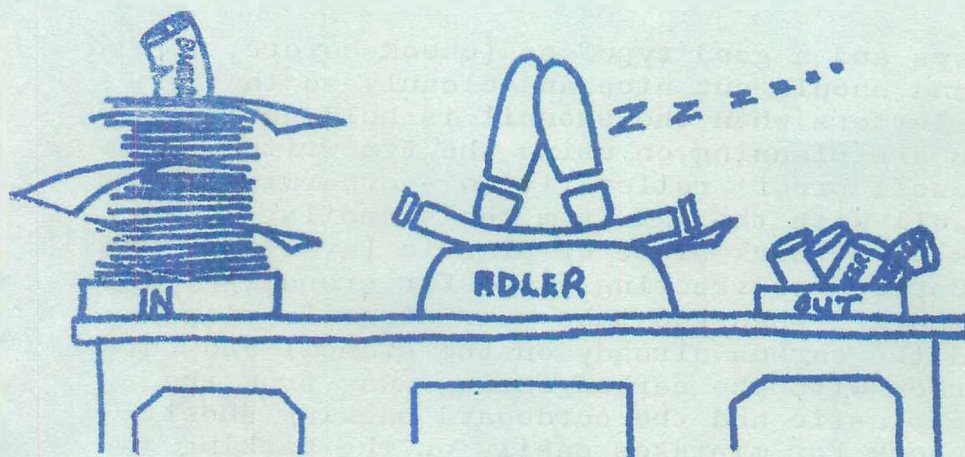


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ROMS
ROOST

I DO IT MY WAY

There have been several people asking about the ins and outs of fanzine publishing; so I'll run through them from the beginning, with a few tips thrown in.

There is one thing that a fan must have; without it all else is useless - enthusiasm. This is what is needed to successfully put out a zine for any length of time.

Next there are the material things. Like a typewriter, (or a friend who is a little touched and is willing to steal it for you) and a little cash - how much I'll come to shortly. The next thing is material. Many fans for their first zine write much of it themselves; which is good enough, though material by others is better. This can be gotten by wheedling friends or by writing to those who have letters of comment published in other zines, asking for material. The material itself is up to you, the editor - it could be fanish, serious sf, reviews, faanish, or just general. The Mentor is a genzine, which is probably best to try for until you know what direction you wish to go, and it is also easier to get material for a genzine, too - it'll fit almost anything. A good issue is about 26 pages (13 pieces of paper) as this is the most you can post with a 6¢ stamp and is not too big as to get you broke first issue.

Ok, you have your material, arranged to suit yourself - alternation of poems, articles and serious stuff is best, as it gives a little relief to the reader. Next is the stenciling. There are two main brands of duplicators in Australia - Roneo and Gestetner, and they take different stencil headings. Check that the stencils that you buy are the same as those for the machine that you have bought/stole/gotton someone to run off with. There are cheap stencils for sale around about for about 9¢ each. These are Mortype and Neotype. Roneo stencils sell for about 20¢ each, so these cheaper stencils are used by most faneds, as they give fairly good service.

Comes the typing of the stencils. The typewriter chosen

should have sharp keys and a good typeface (check before, if you decide to buy one) and should cut nice and cleanly so that you can see through the letters when the stencil is held up to the light evenly. If you are planning on using the typewriter for many stencils have a 'stencil proof' roller fitted - otherwise the rubber roller may swell with the wax from the stencils. It's also an idea to pick up a thick piece of plastic (available from Roneo or Ges.) and Corflu - correcting fluid for stencils - about 45¢ for one oz "Hallmark". Then you take your stencil, slip the plastic sheet behind the carbon already on the stencil and put another piece of carbon with the carbon facing away from the plastic, between the plastic and the cardboard backing sheet. This is so you can check for mistakes easily on the backing sheet - easier to read than the stencil.

Then you are off. Use the corflu for correcting any mistakes with the stencil left in the typer, and when dry type lightly over the red spot. After every fourth stencil clean the keys of your typer with a stiff brush wetted with metho, to get the wax off the keys.

You can use Letraset for headings - and get them electrostencilled and glued on with corflu to a hole cut in the heading of your stencil - but this is additional cost and fairly good headings can be used with use of the spacing bar of the typer and various letters @@@@ =+=+ which make passing good material. When you have the stencils done there comes the duplication.

Australian quarto (10 $\frac{1}{4}$ X 8 $\frac{1}{8}$.) is mostly used here and comes in various colours and prices. Roneo charges \$1.55 plus 15% sales tax for a ream of white and \$1.61 + tax for coloured. A coloured cover plus white interior makes for a smart looking zine. A 26 page issue would thus, for about 100 copies, cost about \$7.13 for paper, and \$2.25 for stencils (though it would be wise to buy a box of 48 stencils for \$4.40). After stencilling and running off the pages they are then collated - which calls for a circle of friends walking around a table picking up pages and, whilst putting them into a pile in the hand, checking for blanks. An irate letter could result if one slipped through.

If you have a good illo for the cover, this can be Electrostencilled for \$2 from Noel Kerr, and takes about 2 weeks to get. After the issue is stapled, it can be either mailed in tubes made by rolling the zine in a sheet of paper (duplicating or otherwise) or folding it and stapling the edges (or using sticky tape on the edges) or using an envelope - the most civilized. Mailing addresses can be culled from the Loc pages of other zines or another editor may give you his mailing list - the last two are better, as the people involved are usually ones who would be sure to respond. You would probably mail about 90 copies, at about \$5.40 (or, with the new 7¢ rates, \$6.30). Then you sit back and wait with baited breath (corflu), for the insults, etc, from irate fans. And it only cost you about \$16 or \$17

It'll grow, though.

"Our culture expanded as far as it could; to the very limits of the Solar system. Then it consolidated its holdings and in doing so, the Council feels, it has become static, lifeless and introverted. The old spirit of fluid expansion our predecessors had died. We have lost the excitement in living.

"So the Council has embarked on an endeavour to reach the nearer stars, and you have been chosen to be the first expeditionary party to a planet circling another star."

There was a gasp and a young man in a white lab coat stood.

"May I ask a question, Comrade Yablochkov?"

"Certainly. You're Nikolai Dobrovolski, aren't you?"

"Yes, comrade. To which star are we being sent and what is the means of reaching this star?"

"Some of you might have heard rumors about robotic probes that had been sent out toward the stars many, many years ago. Well, the probe that reached Centaurus sent back negative results, but we have just received the first message from the probe dispatched toward Tau Ceti and it's now confirmed that it has landed on an Earth-like planet. You may not have known, but each of these probes carried the receiver of a Mikhail Transmitter Unit."

Dobrovolski spoke again. "I thought they were barely out of the developmental stage."

"They have been out of the experimental stages for many years and have been proved highly reliable in transmitting various inanimate and animate objects."

"You mean they have never been tried with human beings?"

"No, never."

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The transat shuttle lifted in an explosive roar of ramjet engines as the launching catapult hurled it at the cloudy twilight that was the Venusian sky. The thrust continued until the lower stage separated and set out for its return glide down through the soupy atmosphere to Venus where, its exhausted tanks refilled and its ramjet drive serviced, it would soon be ready for yet another lift-off.

The thrust returned as the upper-stage rockets fired. For a moment it ripped through veils of colour and then into the sharp white glare of day.

The ship cut its rockets and hung in orbit, a shuttlecock at height, before it falls.

The clouds of Venus passed beneath, bright as a glaring

winter snowfield in the afternoon.

The party was being transported to the momentum, kinetic and potential energy levels equivalent to those of the Unit receiver.

The shuttle docked at Venusian Orbital Station No.3 and they transferred to the deep-space ship.

When that ship pulled away from the station there was none of the immense power and blind fury of the lift-off from Venus. There was only the muted whistle as the plasma jets blasted their streamers of ions into space, and a steady acceleration of one gee. Once that push was finished, the ship was no longer in the deep pit of Venusian gravity, but was circling the Sun in the desired orbit of its own.

Then the field of the Mikhail Unit was activated and, one by one, each of the exploratory party stepped into it and was beamed away across the depths of space to a distant world.

And then each stepped down from the field for the next to follow.

The Mikhail Unit system recorded the relative position and energy state of every subatomic particle that entered its field and could code that information and transmit it across space on a tight-beam maser. The receiver could pick it up and use it, plus plasma in a matter reserve, to reconstruct the object originally placed in the field.

While that object remained intact where it had originally been.

Yablochkov turned to Dobrovolski as he stepped down from the platform below the field generator. "I think you can see now, Nikolai, why we have never tried it before with human beings. The legal problems alone would be tremendous."

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Almost twenty times the planet Earth had marched in relentless orbit around the Sun. Nikolai Dobrovolski often wondered why they still measured time and space in terms of the standard Terran year, when the bulk of humanity now lived on Venus, Mars and the Jovian moons, and those few remaining on Earth were Neo-Nordic barbarians; barely surviving against the new Ice Age and the lingering radio-activity.

He had been summoned to hear the news that had come with the recent broadcast from the probe on Tau Ceti III. The news of himself, or rather, his alter ego out there somewhere, conquering some planet he had never seen.

More often than he wondered about the old habits in time measurement, he wondered how he was faring and feeling on that distant planet circling another sun. He wondered what strange phenomena he was encountering and how he was coping with

the new environment.

He thrust himself, weightless, down the high ceilinged, carpeted interior of the space station, past the portrait of Konstantin Tsiolkovski that stared down at him from the wall. A hushed silence reigned in the spacious passageways he went shooting through on a long, flat dive.

He twisted in the air, checked himself with his feet against the opposite bulkhead at a turn in the passage. The tablet on the heavy door read:

CHIEF SCIENCE OFFICER

Nikolai knocked once and entered.

"Come in Nikolai," said Yablochkov, now much older and grey. He had virtually put the whole of his life behind the interstellar venture. "I'm afraid you'll have to prepare yourself for a shock."

"What? You have the message from the Tau Ceti party, don't you?"

"No, we don't."

"But I was told..."

"I know. We do have a message, but it's from the computer."

"From the computer?"

"Yes, the entire party of humans arrived dead."

"WHAT!" Nikolai could in no way hide the deep shock he felt. Somewhere, out there, he himself was dead. The concept was almost impossible to comprehend. He could still feel himself breathing, yet somewhere he was not.

"Yes, you all arrived dead. All the machinery, plants and all the animals, up to the very highest, including primates, we passed through, arrived quite all right. But every human arrived dead."

"You realise, of course, that all the other probes, the ones that touched down on suitable planets near Epsilon Eridani and 61 Cygni, are all now useless. The whole interstellar project has gone down the drain. The billions of credits we spent, just for this."

"How?"

"Well, we don't know. The computer scanned the corpses; even the memories remained as perfectly as were the reconstructed electron tracks but you were all just.....dead. The result has since been confirmed by independent experiment but, of course, it will all have to be hushed up."

"For this means..."

"The transmitter is not infallible. Yes, what else

should it mean?"

"In my study of the period before the rise of modern biology, I came across reference to a belief once held that there was some part of man's existence that was not corporal. I wish now I had taken more notice, for this was supposed to make man unique among the primates, among all animals.

"So, to put it bluntly, can we transmit a soul?"

Half an hour later Nikolai sat in his cubicle and toyed listlessly with the meal the robot attendant had brought him. Above him, on the wall, were the portraits of the three men he had once considered as amongst the greatest of the Terrans. There was Charles Darwin, Ivan Pavlov and, above both of them, Vladimir Ilyich Lenin.

The products of the station hydroponics system were supposed to be indistinguishable from the natural products of the Venusian plains, but Nikolai knew better. The station food was flat and lifeless, even when supplemented with Venusian imports.

And the Second Terra-Formation Plan was accelerating at an unbelievable rate. The ecologists' estimates had been wrong and it was now said that man may be able to walk unprotected on the planetary surface of Venus within the next hundred years.

But that now all seemed irrelevant to Nikolai. He had been twenty Terran years old when sent out in the transmitter. It was the stars that mattered.

The fourth expedition into Jupiter had just returned to the Terran stations. Nikolai had seen the newscasts. They had been gaunt, spectral men, emaciated under the surge of the terrible gravity; their eyes haunted by something they could not understand. They had beheld the whirl of colossal storms and fluid terraqueous distortions, of such magnitude that men in their space-blown specks of habitation had never conceived, beneath the shooting light of the Jovian Aurora.

They had witnessed the cataclysmic crash of berge of ammonia the size of continents and the slide of snow-hills that would have engulfed the whole of Luna. They told of terrible catastroph in these regions formerly inaccessible.

Now there was no surprise that the first three ships had never returned.

Those men, with their flapping gills, had rode the crushing winds of the Jovian atmosphere in aliquid-filled vessel. Their own nature had been no barrier.

Yet man could not reach the stars.

There was something fundamentally wrong with the Space

culture. Slowly and inevitably, Nikolai's personal universe was shattering around his feet.

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People's Commissar Vladimir Wrangel, although he bore the name of one of the greatest of the "White" Russian generals, was a staunch defender of the People's Solar Republic and the Utilitarian culture. He made no attempt to hide the contempt he felt for the criminal that the People's supervisors had brought before him. The Council was very concerned with the growth of criminal aberration amongst the populations of the inner planets especially.

The Council had stated that it had been the growth of anarchy in the Terran civilisations which had partly brought about the holocaust. The Space culture was a rational social organisation. Such a thing could not happen again.

The neuronc map of this man indicated a deviation that could not be tolerated, nor could it be eradicated without the major surgery which would undoubtedly also destroy his personality. The humanitarian principles of Utilitarianism could not allow such a thing.

Despite humanitarian principles the continued presence of this deviant could not be tolerated. Wrangel sneered and then finally spoke. "Comrade Dobrovolski, you do realise the seriousness of your crime?"

The scientist stood defiant still.

"Those archives are open only to class five historians, and to no other profession. They are not open, never have been, never will be open to class three biologists.

"The neuronc map has revealed the reason for your burglary and it shows a deviation in your mind that cannot be tolerated. I wonder how you thought you could get away with it. You know there is no escape from the People's supervisors, yet you went ahead anyway. Tell me, in your own words, what motivated your anti-social behaviour, Nikolai Dobrovolski."

Nikolai kept his silence, remaining calm. The residual pain from the neuronc investigator settled in the layers of his mind like parallel universes condensed out of his personal continuum.

Somehow, he sensed a trap in the Commissar's words. He must know by now of the reasons for Mikhail Unit failure. Why did it not worry him? How could he be so certain of his mechanistic universe, when the evidence of the otherwise was there before him?

Then he understood that such an attitude was natural. He himself had been assured of his certain certainties until just a short time ago. The universe could be reduced, it was assumed,

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into easily comprehended basic units, each of which could be accounted for in terms of the dimensional concepts, mass/energy, time and space. The present theories fitted all of these into the Einsteinian framework of formulae.

In these terms the Mikhail Unit failure was not valid. Perhaps there was a flaw in the receiver circuitry; although that was scanned and checked by the guidance computer. Perhaps there was a failure in the computer.

Maybe the human brain was too complex for the unit to handle; yet it was not much more complex than the cortex of the other primates that had not even the least trouble. And the computer reported that the neurone paths were intact in the dead tissue.

But just not functional.

"So, you insist on silence." said Wrangel. "Well, we'll give you a chance to indulge your atavistic notions. I hereby sentence you to exile. The state disowns you, and since the state encompasses four planets and many satellites, has no choice but to send you...."

"Where?" Nikolai spoke for the first time and with quiet urgency.

"To the surface of Old Earth. A sentence of death might have been more merciful, but there are principles." Wrangel replied quietly.

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So they took him to the deep-space ship.

It accelerated out of Venusian orbit, outward, away from the Sun, toward the third planet, Old Earth.

Nikolai lay in the cell and meditated on his crime. They were sending him to the first home of humanity, where he would find either the answers to his questions or an agonising death of radiation poisoning and severe cold. The walls of his cubicle were smooth and plastic; light diffused from them evenly and smoothly in a milky-white nimbus.

They brought him meals at regular intervals; this being the only way he could measure the passing of time, he marked the duration of the journey in meal-units. The food usually consisted of slops from the hydroponics plant, which were, of course, very nourishing but hardly palatable.

It was all of eternity before he finally detected the gentle fingers of force drawing him toward the far wall as the decelerating drive drew the ship into Earth orbit.

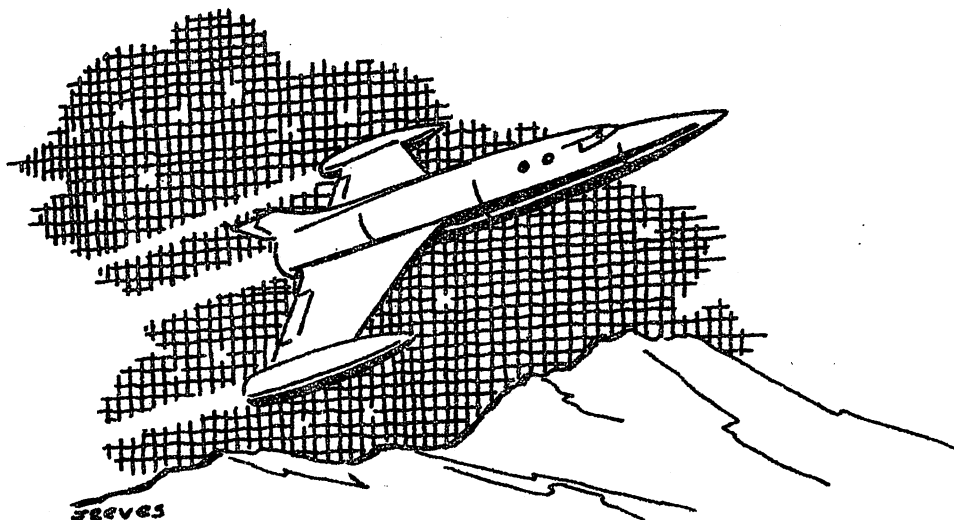
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He awoke once, when he was very near the end of the voyage, and almost immediately, as he crept out of the oceans of sleep onto the shore of awareness, he was hearing for the first time the sound of the ship. He could hear or rather feel the surge and thrust of latent power beneath the bulkhead; the pulse of energy through the fabric of the vessel like the rhythmic beat of a living heart. Suddenly he was aware of a power hum that his subconscious had previously screened from him.

They laid out a pressure suit for him. As he suited up, he wished he had a laserifle. Perhaps that was not allowed. Anyway, he could only ask. He felt an apprehension spread through his veins, and his stomach tightened. The glands were pumping



adrenalin into his system. He savoured the animalism it generated; it was a link with his past and his arboreal ancestors.

When they came for him, he swam jauntily down the corridor.

The first and only attempt the Space culture ever made to establish contact with the surface inhabitants of this post-nuclear world had ended in disaster. The attempt was made relatively early in the history of the planetary civilization, when the various national space-crews, colonies and outposts had only just coalesced into a Republic governed from New Moscow on Luna. This attempted contact was made when the radiation in some areas first subsided below tolerable limits and it resulted in the total loss of the crew of the major Terran orbital station when some ignorant barbarian entered a restricted area and tripped the air-lock doors open. However, there were indications that atrocities had been committed by the savages just before that terminal accident and that was generally taken as evidence of the ferocity of the survivors below.

He asked for the laserifle, and they gave it to him, reluctantly.

Then they took him to the pod and prepared him for the drop. The lid closed on him with the finality of the thud of a coffin lid, and he was alone in the darkness.

There was a bone-shaking bump as his capsule jerked into place, precisely like a cartridge feeding into the chamber of an old-style automatic weapon.

Then terrible force.

Then suddenly, nothing.

Nothing. Nothing at all. No sound, no pressure, no weight.

Floating in uterine suspension. Swimming in embryonic blackness - free fall, fluid of the womb. Thirty miles up, above effective atmosphere, falling weightless toward the Earth below. He had been unloaded and the pod was slipping down the canals of Terran gravity.

Almost immediately he felt the tiny capsule twist, buck and sway, then steady so that his weight rested on his back. He had hit effective atmosphere. Slowly his weight would build up until it was exactly one gee.

The outer shell burned away and sloughed off, slowing down the pod.

Then when the second shell was gone, the third shell automatically opened his first ribbon chute. For a moment there was one hard jerk at several gee, giving Nikolai the first tinge of what was to come, and then it was jettisoned.

The second parachute lasted a little bit longer, but soon it took its own path and Nikolai took his. The third chute lasted quite a while.

It began to get rather warm. The third shell peeled off when the last chute was gone and he had nothing about him. "The pangs and betrayal of harsh birth."

He was outdoors, sitting on nothing, with a pressure suit, a laserifle and a parachute on his back. So he decided to fire that chute.

He braced for the shock, rode it and then floated downward.

Minutes later, he hit a dune and got a mouthfull of sand for his trouble.

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The Hunters were alerted when the sensors detected the Prey out beyond the slopes. They roused from suspension and then went through sterile aqua-grey corridors of the radiation shelter to the banks of situation indicators and control systems. Amongst the galaxy of green lights, there were a few that blinked red. A few of the various depot mechanisms had collapsed through continued wear, but back up systems had compensated for them. So the Hunters awakened the horses from hibernation.

Then they moved from the depot on that part of their continent called the Great Slope and moved out onto the Great Desert Plains.

The sensors had not detected the Prey in this sector for many years.

The Sun was a flower of intense heat and colour, and its sheen caught on their smooth copper skin. Curtains of shimmering heat stretched across the desolation. Waves of warmth lapped around the mounts and disturbed them; so the Hunters rested momentarily to water them.

The horses were sturdy and tough. One was fiery red and stood sixteen and a half hands tall. Its flaming gold mane almost seemed brighter than the cruel orb of the Sun.

The second was smaller, wiry and shaggier. It was nearer to the mongolian stock which was its ancestry. The Hunter that was perched on its lean, sinewy frame, stood in the stirrups to scan the barren horizon; whilst the other rider dismounted to tend to the horses.

Once the chore had been done, the second Hunter remounted and set out also to sweep the infertile panorama before them with his eyes.

There was nothing but sterility, no obvious signs of life, no water and apparently no spoor. There was nothing but a waste land of arid sand, heat and residue radiation.

The dunes seemed devoid of anything even vaguely life-like.

As the Hunters moved on over the rim of the first ridges, the wind whipped up a momentary sand storm, caked the heat and glazed the sky with dust haze. The horses closed their eyes against the grit but undeterred the Hunters pushed them on into the blind whorls of dust.

In the afternoon of this first day the Hunters rested the horses again. They had covered many kilometres, despite the heat of midday, and were thus near exhaustion. However the Hunters were able to endure the high temperatures relatively easily. They continued implacably the surveillance of their surroundings and were quite unaffected by fatigue and wear.

Neither of them slept that evening and early the following morning they awoke the horses and broke their camp, so as to cover as many kilometres as possible before the Sun rose.

In the cool of that morning there was a desert storm. Lightning carved slices out of the dark, cloudy sky as if generated by some immense celestial laser. Then there was the racking cough of thunder.

But there was no rain.

However, they found a water hole in the bottom of an erosion gully which crawled away toward the glare of the horizon

in parody of the snake which frequented the desert. As the Hunters stood at the edge of the fissure, their sleek appearances were reflected in the slimy film of water that lay still and putrid in the hollow. The horses drank thirstily and their red tongues lapped up the stagnant, scummy water eagerly.

The canteens had been emptied that morning and one Hunter bent to refill them. The horses pulled themselves out of the wadi awkwardly and stood ready and obedient for the Hunters. But the Hunters ignored them in apparent excitement. On the far side of the dull pool of water were the prints of the Prey.

The Hunters conferred for a moment and then turned to their mounts. The party moved out at a fast canter, following the line of tracks.

Now they were planning the journey east to the fuel dump after they had exterminated the Prey. Although the spoor was at least a day old, the Hunters moved now with relentless speed.

On the third day the tracks were fresher, the Prey closer. The Sun blazed, a droplet of molten gold in the sky.

It was as they came to the crest of a dune that the Hunters finally caught sight of the Prey. It was not yet aware of pursuit, though it would be wary and watchful. The horses were now at full gallop. They sent up small puffs of sand as their broad hooves caught onto the terraces of dunes and hauled them over.

The Hunters were at approximately a kilometre distant when the quarry saw them. He was a warrior, one of the northerners that had been making incursions into the area. He was tall and broadshouldered. He wore a simple sleeveless tunic of white linen. On one arm was a highly polished buckler and he carried two javelins in the other hand.

As the Hunters rode closer, he let loose a javelin with a wild whoop of challenge. It was skilfully thrown, arching in a parabolic streak of silver. The Hunter's reflexes were fast and the horse was pulled aside sharply. The javelin skidded uselessly across the ground, throwing up dust.

He leapt up, howling terribly and waving the second spear above his head, and then suddenly throwing it. The move was unexpected and the javelin arced straight for the same Hunter. Again, the horse was pulled aside, but only just.

Then he was pounding toward them and now was brandishing a broadbladed sword, formerly concealed at his side behind his buckler. As he veered from side to side to evade the Hunter's missiles, he clashed the sword against the shield on his left arm and roared.

As the pseudo-Viking approached them with immense bounds it was possible to see the black, horned helm on his head, his flowing blond beard, wide moustache and brown crusty scar of radiation burn.

The ammunition for the projectile side-arms had long ago been depleted. So the Hunters had constructed bows of pliable fibreglass with hollow steel arrows. With practised efficiency the first Hunter lay an arrow to the bow and drew it back.

The warrior raised his shield to try to deflect the arrow but the motion proved to be unnecessary.

It was then that the coherent beam of laser hit the Hunter, slicing through its neck and sending it crashing to the ground in a puff of sand. The arrow went far awry.

The second Hunter turned to meet this new, dangerous adversary. As it quickly prepared to let loose its first arrow, the beam cut it down as well.

It smashed into a dune with the tinkling sound of shattering circuitry components.

Nikolai walked up to the severed head of the slain android, and inspected it as it stood upright in the loose dry sand. There was almost a grin on its ovoid face.

The warrior came up to him. "They are the warbots of the old ones. I thought I had avoided their sensors but I must have slipped up."

"No, I'm sorry. I do not know of them and must have alerted their sensors inadvertantly." Nikolai replied.

"No matter, they are invincible, and you stopped them. I, Sigurd Ragnarson, thank you for saving me."

"Think nothing of it Sigurd. I'm Nikolai." The Viking accepted the proffered hand. His grip was firm. Then he went to recover his spears.

Nikolai was surprised that the barbarian spoke English, even in a degenerate form, considering that his culture was of Scandinavian derivation. But then he remembered that English had become the standard linguistic form in the Western Bloc before the War.

Nikolai followed the Norseman and together they stripped the androids of their bows, quivers of arrows, and canteens. Nikolai had to throw away the laserifle. That had been the last of his power paks. There were strange and deadly creatures out in the desert and he must have encountered most of them, besides scrounging for food.

Then they spent almost half an hour rounding up the frightened horses and calming them down.

"You are not a Norseman, neither are you one of the scrawny skrailling of this dirty land. Are you one of the Aesir?" Sigurd asked.

"Aesir? I do not know the word."

"Gods. One from the sky."

"How do you know?"

"Very occasionally, one of your people will come down in a falling star. I am a shaman and in the past your people from the sky have been a valuable source of knowledge."

Suddenly Nikolai did not feel quite as hopeless. Others had trodden this path before, as this ignorant barbarian evidenced. There was reassurance to know he was not the first.

Nikolai ventured to ask how the Viking came to be in this southern continent. He had been given the impression that this, the most advanced of the Terran cultures, had only just reached what had once been called the Americas.

"There is a holding down to the south, called Medheimr. According to the skrailling it was called Medlburg but that name was lost in antiquity.

"Beneath the Norse village there are the remains of an Asgard city, laid out neat and square as all the old cities were supposed to be. Although a relatively large steading, it was not hit directly by the fire at Ragnarok. There are other cities up the coast and Surtir, God of Fire, reached them all with his sword.

"The name of the chieftain there is Bjorn. I have heard of the ancient plunder and good land that was to be had for those willing to brave the dangers of a new continent.

"So I came from my steading on the east coast of Vinland, across the Great Ocean in my knorr-ship with my warriors, their cattle and wives.

"I hit a terrible storm and left the skeleton of my wrecked ship on the far northern shore. Of the survivors of the tempest, I was the only one to last this far on the trek south. However, with the horses, it will now be far easier."

"Why is it so bloody hot here," Nikolai asked, "when the ice caps are supposed to be encroaching on this planet?"

"The frost-giants have not ceased their march in the distant north and the domain of Niflheim extends each year. But here we are in the region of the Sun, Muspelheim, in the far south."

"But, surely it is cold further south."

"Yes, further south still, I have been told, is a land so inconceivably curdling cold that man cannot long endure. Sailors in that region have witnessed scenes of cataclysmic horror, the clash of towering ice-bergs and the churn of terrible blinding winds."

"Are there any records of the older times in Midheimr?"

"Yes. Bjorn has called for scholars to decipher the ancient parchments his people have uncovered. I can read the runes of the ancient records. My great grandfather was taught to read them by one of your people, who said he was a long-haired

historian. This I find puzzling, since all warriors wear their hair long. Only thralls have it cropped. Anyway, the secret was passed down to me. Ours is a family of shamans."

"Your people are lucky you weren't killed in the storm." Nikolai said with a touch of sarcasm.

"Yes," replied Sigurd frankly, "although others read the runes too."

"It is my quest also to seek out the books of before it. So, we are comrades."

"Brothers in arms." said Sigurd simply.

The journey south was relatively easy with the horses.

Several times they saw the original inhabitants or skrailling, as Sigurd called them, of this continent. They were reduced to a stone age culture; hunters with stone-tipped spears with launching sticks called "woomeras" and curved deadly throwing sticks called "boomerangs". They hunted the strange giant two-legged jumping creature they called a "kangaroo".

It seemed unfortunate, Nikolai thought, that they were slowly heading toward extinction. Even now, they barely survived against the desert, with its merciless Sun, and it was said that conditions were getting worse.

Their white skins did not help them at all. They spoke a very primitive form of English too. Nikolai did not doubt that the incidence of skin cancer would be high among them.

And everywhere there were the indications that once there had been a major civilization in the area.

There were the freeways.

The freeways and turnpikes and autostradas and autobahns, there were a dozen different terms for them. They were strung out in an all-enclosing net across the face of the continent. Sigurd said they were present, to a greater or lesser extent, in every other land where he had raided or traded.

From a few kilometres away you still cannot see the breaks and pits. But they are there, where girders and pavement have collapsed.

The works of a great civilization need maintainance.

Slowly the land grew greener. There were the small animals called sheep which were easily caught and very good to eat, and there were wild cattle. The heat grew less intense and at night it began to get cold.

And at night they looked up at the dark sky and watched the stately procession of Terran Orbital Stations - where the ships of interplanetary space made their planetfalls and their departures. Occasionally, one of these brightly orbiting stars suddenly exploded in a silent concussion of light, and a fierce

tiny sun drew slowly away from it.

And Nikolai knew that some nuclear-powered mariner had set forth once again, on the tenuous ocean of gaseous hydrogen those far shore he could never reach.

Nor did anyone try, it seemed now.

There had been a straight and magnificent highway leading the last fifty kilometres south, and then the sparse ruins on the outer edges of the city of Midheimn, set in the orderly squares and wide avenues favoured before Ragnarok, where the Gods died, fires spread and the world had burned.

Now that ancient city was long abandoned and the Norse steading that overlaid the ruins was a jumble of huddling thatched huts surrounded by the porcupine ramparts of a stockade.

The Bjornstead lay near the centre of the Old Aesir city and was the centre of the southern world. In the great Hearth Hall where the fire never quite went out even in the hottest weather, the High Seat was made from the timbers of the Viking ship whose snarling figure-head, now set high and smoked-dimmed on the main house-beam, had led Bjorn's foreganger west-over-seas in the days of Ragnar Dragonsbane and Harald Ottarson.

The hall was full of firelight and torchlight and hounds and men and the roar of voices the evening when Sigurd and Nikolai arrived.

They had thrust through the thronging men and hounds, toward a golden giant who turned in the High Seat, midway up the hall, to watch them coming.

The giant put out an arm on which there were great golden rings twisted like serpents above the elbow, and gestured welcome.

"Odin's greeting to you, Strangers, for what worth it has been since Ragnarok." he said, in a voice that matched his huge size. "What wind blows you here into Midheimr?"

"The news of what promise this southland holds, Bjorn Sigmundson," Sigurd said, "but it was the winds and storms of the Great Ocean that threw my knorr-ship onto the rocks like a stranded sea-monster. So I, Sigurd Ragnarson, come to you without my houseearls, thralls and cattle, and can only offer you my services as a shaman."

"I accept your offer, friend Sigurd, and, in return, the humble hospitality of my hall is offered to you. And, who are you friend Stranger, since your dress shows clearly you are not a Norseman?"

"My name is Nikolai Dobrovolski and I come from the wandering stars that follow their set paths in the sky."

A ragged muttering rose from the men along the walls, who had fallen silent to listen.

Sigurd stood dark and grim against the sunlight that bathed the collapsed structure of the ancient building and gleamed on the shoulder-rings of his battle-sark and made a green-gold dazzle against the splintered comb and black horns of his war-cap, as he rested both hands on the hilt of his leaf-bladed broadsword.

"This is what Bjorn said was once a library of the ancient ones," he said as he gazed up at the huge construction, although some claim that it had been something else."

"Yes," replied Nikolai, "we might find answers there about the ancient ones. How is it that some say it is dangerous to enter it?"

"It is dangerous. It is said to be the lair of wild-cats and wolves. It is also sacred ground of the skrailings and they sacrifice anyone they find in there. But they won't be given a chance to give us up to their dirty gods. Can you handle an axe?"

"Yes, I think so, but I don't think I will need one. I have had seven years training in karate and ku phong."

"What do you mean by..."

"Karate and ku phong. The art of death"

"Magic?"

"No, but it has a similar effect."

"Never trust to magic alone. Here, take these." And he handed Nikolai a short double-bladed axe, a large round shield and a helmet with simple nose-guard and cheek straps, and none of the horn, wing and comb embellishments that most Vikings sported.

Nikolai accepted the axe and helm, but turned down the buckler. It was too heavy and bulky, he said.

"I hope your magic can turn back an arrow or throwing spear. Anyway, some say the double axe has magical properties."

And so they faced the sombre ramparts of the building that stood like the ancient stone-built fortresses of Europe. They crossed the short causeway past the shallow moat and entered, passing beneath the lintel of the portice, a colossal rectangular gateway, and over ancient scattered shards and splinters of glass. It made Sigurd think of the pagan temple he had seen on a level plain on a distant island; vast rough-hewn monoliths, without joint or moulding, huge architraves uniting the pillars horizontally, older than the centuries.

But the stone was much smoother, and there were obvious joints. The vaulting chamber beyond the passage was a spacious clutter of half collapsed spiral stairways, tilting floor levels, fallen masonry, minor exits and corridors. At the farther side of this soaring hall, past shattered glass and low benches that were still remaining (mostly only post-holes betrayed the position of those that once had been there), was yet another portal and a

courtyard beyond.

In the quadrangle there were strange, weathered shapes, long dissolved beyond recognisability. On the wall of the first passageway through which they passed, one to their right, there was a sign that read:

MEDITERRANEAN ANTIQUES

And a walk a little further lead them past four doors, two on one side that read:

MALES

and:

DISABLED MALES.

The two on the other side were the same but referring to females.

Sigurd stalked warily, the rings of his mail jarring and chiming faintly as he moved. He held his broadsword ready; stark and fierce.

The shards that were spilt across the floor of this chamber were mainly ones of pottery. At various intervals along there were truncated columns, these being surrounded by islands of shattered glass. Along the wall there were insets with jagged knives of glass standing out from the sides at sharp angles, and in some of those niches, there were a few tattered pieces of fabric.

Nikolai bent to touch a pottery shard. There were images of strange warriors traced out on it, their outlandish outfits resembling the armour of the Vikings than anything he could imagine the ancient ones wearing.

For Nikolai could not realise that this was a museum anymore than could Sigurd. To his society, museums were not considered functional. The space they took up gave no measurable return, as might a technical library. He knew libraries of microfilm and had even seen a few old paper-bound books, but the concept of the art museum was completely alien to him.

One went to a library to read of and learn the sciences and mathematics, but the sense of a museum or art centre was primarily aesthetic: sense that was neither material nor measurable.

So they went on past that chamber, through corridors that twisted and stairways that led to abrupt drops where the traceries of metal had given way to ancient stresses, and sunny places where sections of roof had subsided. They passed the cultural displays labeled:

CAFETERIA.

And they stared at the corroded sculptural figures in the court.

And so they wandered through the ancient labyrinth until they entered into the central hall. And it was there that the

skraeling hunters found them.

Nikolai felt the thrumming wind of the spear on his cheek and he was low and running. Another clattered uselessly off Sigurd's chain-mail. He gave the high, wolfine call that Bjorn's swordsbands used in battle and charged toward the naked savages. The spear of the first skraeling was taken by Sigurd's shield and his broadsword crunched through the man's skull, which spurted brains in a grey slop on the floor. But the second was on Sigurd before he could pull it out of the bone.

Sigurd crashed into him.

The man's spear flew wide; they fell together but even as they went down, he contrived to whip out his dagger; Sigurd, still clutching and pulling at his own sword, caught the flash of the wicked little flint blade, and wrenched sideways just in time to take in his left shoulder the blow that had been meant for his throat. Blood rusted the iron of the mail links.

The face close to his own glared at him, the lips drawn back over dirty grinning teeth as the man struggled to free his dagger hand. Sigurd forgot his sword and brought around the heavy rim of his shield and smashed it into the filthy, painted mask of that face, crushing teeth, nose and bone.

The barbarian screamed like a banshee and dropped away, the dagger slipped from his fingers. Sigurd paused to draw it forth painfully from his shoulder.

Meanwhile, Nikolai had taken up the combat position that his long training had taught him offered the least target to an enemy, and managed to knock away a thrown spear with a speed of reflex attained through long practice.

Then he knocked down the thrower with a blow on a pressure point near the joint of his jaw, but he failed to avoid the second spear that arced toward him and in desperation took it on the palm of his hand.

Despite any of his training, the pain was terrible and he barely withstood. The barbs passed through between the bones of the hand and the length of the spear hung out the other end, dragging.

Waves of agony washed on his brain and blood ran down his arm like the paint that had run down many a painting that had once hung on these walls.

With immense effort of will he stopped himself from fainting.

Sigurd pulled himself erect, stood with a hand staunching the spreading rust at his shoulder and prised his sword from the brains of the savage. The guise of his black shield was broken and it lay useless.

So he stuffed a strip from his tunic into the wound, took the sword with both hands on the grip and took the skraeling

that moved toward the staggering Nikolai, in the side.

Then he turned and moved against the next skraeling, who shortened his spear and sprang to the attack. Sigurd deflected the blow away from his mailed side with his hand, grabbed the spear and twisted it. At the same instant he passed his sword through the man's bowels and slashed them open.

There was instant wriggling mass on the floor. The man grunted with surprise and reached to hold in his intestines. He started to snarl with agony just as Sigurd finished him.

Nikolai had hacked the spear from his hand with the axe, and now stood against the last two. Sigurd stepped up beside him.

The savages decided against staying. They caste away their spears and fled screaming.

Nikolai and Sigurd inspected what they had been defending. The savages had set up an altar and beyond that there was a cache of ancient books.

Finally they found what Nikolai was searching for, and so was Sigurd to a lesser extent, for it was a cache of the sacred books of the ancient ones. They were yellow and musty, dog-eared and some were slightly singed.

There was the Koran, the Old and New Testaments, the Vedas and : Bhagavad-gita, the Abhidhamma, the Torah.

What was the nature of the soul?

"In here I'll find the answer." Nikolai said.

But, of course, he didn't.

- Robert Bowden.

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For those who did not get it, WOMBAT 2 is still available. WOMBAT 3 will be out a month or so after this of TM. It will have the usual "fannish " stuff as well as other material. As with TM, about 80% of my overseas mailing list will be dropped with WOMBAT 3 - so if you want to continue to receive it, please let me know if you wish to trade, loc or contribute; though, naturally, I hope to have both WOMBAT and TM with a high Australian content.

I am still short of good artwork for both zines, and am also after good poetry. If I don't like material or have any suggestions of any changes, I will send the material back to the contributor. I will not edit stories unless asked appecificly

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Reality F.

THE WORLD CONSIDERED AS A TOFFEE APPLE

written by Christine McGowan.

I'm with the Flat-Earthers - well, most of the way. When pressed I'll admit that the earth is round, but I rather wish that it were flat, or at least that its spherical shape were a well kept secret. After all, who needs to know, that the world is not flat? The list of those in need of such information is not long: astronomers, astronauts, telecommunication engineers and circumnavigating mariners. The truth about the earth should be reserved for people initiated into these professions. For the rest of us, an assurance that it has been scientifically proved that one cannot possibly fall off the edge ought to be sufficient to satisfy natural curiosity.

The unnecessary public dissemination of the fact that our world is a globe has in the long run caused far more harm than good, a situation exacerbated by the Boy Scouts and others insisting that compass needles always point north (they always point south, I tell you, south). This information has over the last centuries sunk deep into the collective consciousness of Western man, so colouring his world-view that irreparable harm has been done. The connection between Round Earth and the sorry state of the world today is obscure, I know, but no more obscure than the Freudian connection often made between the bottle-fed baby and the chain-smoker.

Here too, the problem begins in infancy. When children are about seven or eight years of age, we begin to teach them elementary geography. I remember my own experience of this quite well. We had in the classroom a plastic blow-up globe of the world, about the size of a basketball, which was supported by a black metal stand when it hadn't been deflated by some kid with infantile delusions of divinity. One particular lesson with this globe sticks in my mind.

"Now Andrew," said our teacher, singling out a reasonably intelligent child, "where is Australia?"

"There," he replied, jabbing at Ayers Rock with a grubby finger.

"Good boy. Now, where is China?"

"There, on top of Australia."

Well, of course she explained that the correct expression was "to the north of", but the conceptual damage had been done

long since. Just as you can train an Alabama white (if you catch him young enough) to say "Black American" instead of "Nigger", so you can train a child to say "to the north" instead of "on top" - but in both cases it's the thought that counts.

Thousands of people, millions I dare say, have left school mouthing the right words but nonetheless convinced that the world is a globe with the north pole, most of the land and most of the people at the top, and with Australia and other odd places clinging to the underside.

This affects different people in different ways. I don't doubt it helped give Europeans the gall to spread themselves across the globe, but for present purposes I shall restrict myself to Australians.

The effect is ambivalent. Australia is situated on the nether reaches of the globe - we are not called Down Under for nothing, nor is it without significance that the name originated in the northern hemisphere. Imagine being condemned to live literally beneath our northern relatives! There are connotations of being condemned to some sort of outer region of hell, which as we have all been told is somewhere DOWN THERE. How much closer the northern hemisphere must be to God, who lives UP THERE, and how much more favoured its inhabitants must be as a result.

On the other hand, it is remarkably accomplished of us to remain on the Earth's surface when reason suggests that we should have fallen off long ago. Australians conduct all their business upside-down, without the slightest complaint.

Do you not see how insidiously the global picture reinforces our notions of Australian identity! I am not at all surprised to hear that we are a tough, resourceful people, somewhat in awe of Overseas, but cheerfully resigned to our isolated position.

Who knows what Australian myths receive support from Round Earth?

Consider the Yellow Peril. This venerable creature is rationalised in all sorts of ways by all sorts of people. Yet it is, and almost always has been, patently absurd for lack of factual foundation. The state of mind that I have characterised as Round Earth is what makes it so easily accepted by Australians at large.

Why? Simple. We are DOWN HERE, with lots of empty space to boot. UP THERE, on top, is mysterious Asia, which we know is positively bulging at the seams with Teeming Millions - look how China bellies out into the China Sea, its coastline no doubt pushed there by the ever-expanding hordes of Chinese.

Now anyone who ever got to Grade 3 at school has heard of gravity. So if you visualise the scheme of things as "us down here and them up there and no solid objects in between", then the law of gravity demands that the Yellow Peril must be slowly and inevitably oozing southward. It's just like a toffee apple -

when you stand it on a tray to cool all the excess toffee drips down the apple onto the greaseproof paper. Of course any normal Australain child has had experience of gravity, globes of the world, and toffee apples. Therefore we all see quite clearly that as a matter of course the Asian hordes must be coming. They HAVE TO be coming....

The implications of all this are quite fascinating. All in all it appears that living in the south is inevitably demoralising - how often do northerners of all sorts ultimately triumph? Too often.

It's too late now to change the world-wide belief that the world is round. But Australia can still be saved. Only convention places the north at the top of the globe. Therefore we have only to turn all the globes of the world in the nation, and particularly the nation's schools, upside-down. This would radically alter the world-view that we form in childhood. We should no longer be oppressed by fears of the north and its ravenging hordes.

If we cannot have the equality among nations that a flat earth would confer on us, then let us invert the globe and be superior.

- Christine McGowan.

Perhaps you might be interested in CYPHER, a new British fanzine?

Past issues have contained: James Blish with an article on fantasy writer Sir James Branch Cabel, Philip Levine on "Tolkien's Grandfather", William Morris, George Hay with "Scene at A Distance", Kingsley Amis with "Agggh!2 Leon Taylor on Barry Malzberg, Interviews with Philip Harbottle, J.G. Ballard, and John Brunner, plus much else.

The current issue contains "New Plans of Heaven" by Terry Jeeves, "Analog's Fifth Ace" by Paul Walker, an interview with Greg Benford by Cy Chauvin and Leon Taylor on a Forgotten Author of science fiction. PLUS book reviews, letters, and many illos and other features.

Coming in future issues will be a long essay by David Pringle on "SF And the Death of the Future", Judith Merrill with a report on her trip to a Japanses SF Symposuim, A article on the Belgian SF Scene by Eddy C. Bertin, and Much else.

40¢ from Aust. Agent: Eric Lindsay, 6 Hillcrest Ave., Faulconbridge, NSW 2776. Subs: 3 for \$1.00, 5 for \$1.50. AUSTRALIA IN '75!



DERELICT

BY VAN KIN

As they descended, something showed up on radar. It was visible for only a second, but gave the illusion of movement, and Captain Bland felt it had darted spacewards from Encampment Two. But he could not be sure, and there was no time to run a check, for they would be landing in half an hour, and there was much to be done.

The emergency light flashed, and in one smooth movement he darted to his seat and clicked over the intercom.

"Encampment One has gone dead Sir - not a sound from her."

Damn! Now what could have happened there? Obviously just a technical fault, but what sort of fault could knock everything out? Well, no time to think of that now.

The luna vista loomed larger below, and the spacecraft fired its retros. Spires of dust danced up to meet it, obscuring the view. Bland sighed in relief as he felt the bump of landing. They were dead on target, and as soon as contact with Encampment One was established they could proceed to construct Encampment Four.

They waited an hour. To Bland the scene suggested a railway platform; men in shiny blue-silver spacesuits lolling around in the grey lunar dust as if expecting that at any moment the titanic space craft in their midst might sound its whistle and draw out from the station. He felt idle, felt like chewing a stalk of grass. Except there was no grass, and he dare not open his visor.

He thought about his family, so far away on Earth. Astronauts got good pay, but sometimes he felt the sacrifices were not worth it. The two years' training he had undergone for his present mission had ruined his family life, for since the birth of their only child, seven years ago, the intention to have another had been thwarted time and time again. First had come Janie's illness; that had eaten up three years, by the time the doctor said it would be safe for her to have another. By then he had signed on for this trip, and he was off to train, which meant another wait, for he could not let Janie give birth whilst he was absent. But now, after seven years, it was too late. They could not have another child. A seven years age difference would be too much.

When the hour was up, and they still had not heard from Encampment One, Bland ordered Kovacs to come with him and

they set off on foot to learn what was wrong. They took guns, just in case.

Kovacs led the way, in his element on the lunar terrain. The low gravity gave zing to his muscles and set his spirits soaring. He was free, and glad. The misty blue-green globe of Earth could never inspire his hatred, but neither would he ever complain at a separation from it. The Moon was for him.

They walked five miles - it took twenty minutes - and then, surmounting a ridge, Encampment One was in sight. Bland had expected to see signs of meteorite damage, but there seemed nothing out of the ordinary, so they carefully began the descent of the ridge. Moving slowly, for a punctured suit meant death.

And at last they stood before the outer airlock hatch. The base was huge, extending over a quarter of a mile all round from a central enclosed courtyard where the precious hydroponic gardens were nursed. Bland stared at the gleaming curved wall of the main dome, wondering what it had taken to immobilise so imposing a monolith.

They entered, for the hatch sealers were unconnected as if guests were expected. A long, dim-lit steel corridor stretched before them, its metal walls reflecting their images like ghosts in a mirror. Something was wrong, Bland sensed, and he felt for his gun. Danger ahead. Damn this half gravity! How he longed for the good solid pull of Earth, the smooth slope of skirt over his wife's solid hips.

Something was wrong - Kovacs sensed it too, drawing his gun. Something not quite as it should be. So silent.

Silence. Everything deathly silent. Alone upon this alien world, forsaken in the midst of things not meant for man, they were walking through a building which should resound to the din of working humanity - and instead they could hear the creaking of their boots and the gentle pop of rivets expanding in the heat of the lunar day. It was unnatural. Bland shuddered.

Kovacs held his gun tightly, taking almost sensuous delight in the flow of adrenalin through his veins. All his life he had lived for this moment - when the spaceman became the demi-god, became the valiant hero fighting for the ways of man amidst the paths of the stars. He trod forward slowly, expecting adventure.

Kobacs flung open a door from the central corridor and stepped into the first room. There was no-one there, not even a light burning, and he was going to turn back when Bland touched his shoulder.

"Your oxygen gauge, Corporal - how does it read?"

Kovacs stiffened, realising the light in the dashboard of his helmet had not come on. It should have, for it was designed to flash whenever there was oxygen in the outer atmosphere. This could only mean there was no air in the building.

Worried now, Kovacs tried another room. This time there were people in it - lying dead all over the floor.

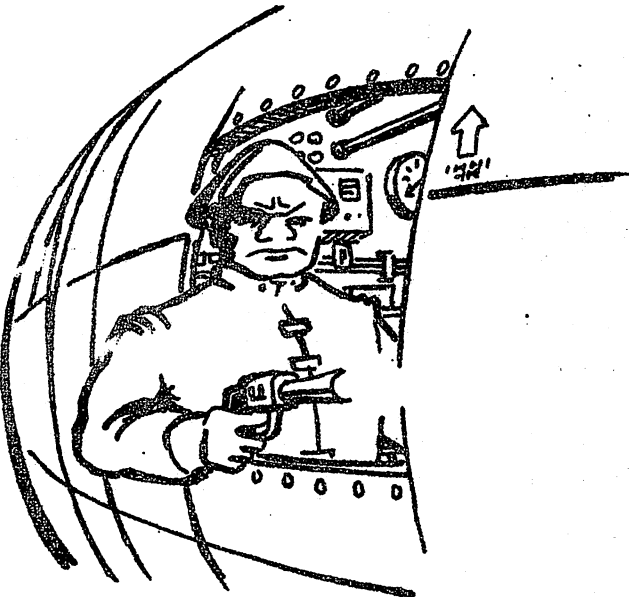
By the time they had finished investigating, both men were white with fear. All dead, yet without a mark on their bodies. And in the hydroponics garden, a veritable jungle of plants like something from a prehistoric age.

Without removing their helmets the two men rigged a radio hook-up, then contacted both their space craft and Encampment Three. Having stated the position, they began a detailed search of the area.

Nothing unusual. In one room there was a giant pin up of a nude woman, an item of contraband which could have cost someone his job, but nothing else that was even illegal, let alone lethal.

By now, Bland reckoned, his other crewmen should have constructed their mooncrawler, so he ordered Kovacs to return to the landing site. Bland himself remained on guard, waiting till the crawler should bring someone to relieve him.

The time went slowly as he sat alone. The long lunar shadows snailed their ebony fingers towards him. He thought of Earth, so clear in the moon's airless atmosphere. He thought of his wife. The derelict base seemed to symbolise his fate. Here death had struck - a strange incomprehensible death that had come from the stars. So eerie, so final. All those bodies just lying there, cold and unthinking, like warnings of what must happen to him. And Janie, Janie, what would she do then?



Desperation snared him. He longed for Earth. He was Captain of his ship, why couldn't he order them to return now? Go back to safety while he could. But then he would be fired, and how would Janie and the child get money? He was trapped.

Suppose it was war - suppose the base had been wiped out by alien marauders. And -

But wait. He could sense something - there was something.... There was something coming

over the ridge beyond the base!

He whipped out his gun, then froze. It was not for himself that he worried, but God, if he was killed... Janie, poor Janie.

He tried to hide - but where. In the building? Why not? He ran there, wishing his radio was powerful enough to reach the Earth, so he might speak to Janie, die at her side.

But it was only the mooncrawler coming over the ridge, and he was soon on his way back to safety.

As he jostled over the lunar dust the radio crackled with a message from Encampment Three. A dispatch that chilled him. For the last fifteen minutes there had been a break in all communications with Encampment Two, and since his vehicle was closest, Bland would have to investigate.

Bland did so, calling Kovacs to hurry to his aid. He was thinking of his theory of marauding aliens - and of the radar blip they had picked up as their space craft descended.

Kovacs arrived just as Bland found the pin-up.

"Your wife wouldn't want you looking at that, now would she, Cap'n?" he smiled. But Bland was not in a joking mood.

"Corporal, this thing is illicit. Nothing as frivolous as this is meant to be brought to the Moon. You know how careful they have to be with a ship's weight. Doesn't it strike you as odd that these two bases - both similarly wiped out - should both have the same type of illegal material?"

"I think it's more odd they should both be growing the same nightmares in their hydrop. gardens," Kovacs rejoined, jerking a thumb at the green jungle near the end of the corridor.

"Not at all. It's obvious they've both developed a strain of vegetation which will grow in lunar conditions, that's all."

Kovacs was silent. He rather liked the idea of fierce, man-devouring plants.

They radiod that they were returning, then squeezed into the mooncrawler. The lunar dust drifted in their tracks, the path of two men fleeing they knew not what.

Bland was afraid, but he had to keep control, for he was Captain. Besides, the danger of the situation actually strengthened his nerve. He was trapped, for there was nowhere to run. They were trespassing upon the domains of this lurking death - whatever it was - and if they hoped to escape, there was no choice but fight.

Encampment Four was to be built without delay, he ordered. That was the first thing to do, get themselves an area to defend. There was always a chance the menace was working systematically from North to South, and in that case they had plenty of time, for Encampment Three would thus be hit before Encampment Four.

But he was not sure he liked that. The latest phase of the Lunar Programme was to build a ring of encampment bases around the moon's circumference. Under that plan, two bases would

be given over to scientific research, such as Encampments One and Two, with their hydroponic gardens, and every third base would be a control station, jam-packed with tracking and communications equipment. Such a base was Encampment Three, and Bland felt he would have preferred to face a menace attacking him in Encampment Three than something that came marauding against the fourth base, which was to be given over to hydroponic gardens again. Still, orders were orders, so Encampment Four must be built.

Twenty-four hours passed, and nothing happened. Kovacs sat alone on watch, lost in thought. Being cooped up was getting to him - he wanted to go out roving the Moon's surface again. But then why had he ever become an astronaut? After all, if things had gone as scheduled, he would have spent all his time "cooped up" in Encampment Four, without ever straying over to the other bases.

Was he really suited for astronautics, then? God, what a thought! This was his whole life, he had dreamed of nothing else since, as a kid, he had watched men set foot on the Moon. Really suited! - he was suited for nothing else.

Yet he longed for adventure, hated this sitting around. He had forgotten the fear that had come as the adventure of Encampment One drew to its tragic close.

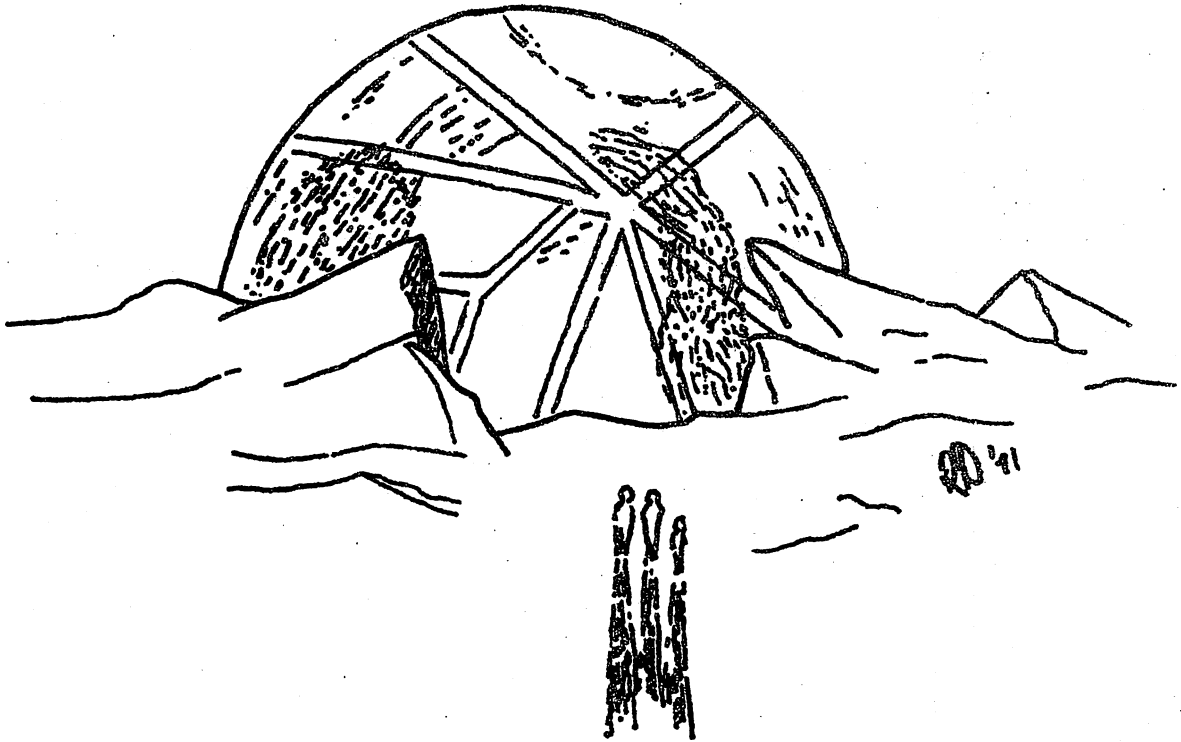
Bland lay awake, unable to rest. He longed for Janie, longed for her, he believed, far more than any man in history had ever longed for a woman. It was the presence of death that did it. To be taken from her, to have death cause a separation when they were two ~~twenty-six~~ thousand miles apart - that he could not bear. Oh Janie, Janie. If he ever got back he would quit the service, get a normal job like a normal guy. Whatever had prompted him to become an astronaut, anyway?

Within two weeks the hydroponic gardens were growing well. The mystery was, they had never been able to discover how Encampments One and Two had grown those uncanny plants in their gardens. The things were dead now, and there was no record in any of the botanists' books of how the strain had been produced. Odd.

Some of the other scientists, the ones specialising in biochemistry, not botany, believed the plants were hybrids. They had found traces of strange bacteria in Encampments One and Two, and it was possible these bacteria had affected the plants. But that only restated the problem, for if the bases had discovered a form of lunar bacteria, why were there again no records of it?

The answer came after the arrival of the next space craft, a special mission brought together to carry out investigations into the destruction of the two bases. The men of Encampment Three had frozen the bodies on ice, and autopsies were soon conducted. The results were illuminating.

The cause of death had been an alien strain of bacteria, something akin to a virus. It could not be determined how the



things actually brought about death, for they had such a short life-span in the atmospheric conditions within the encampments that they could only have survived a few minutes more than the men they killed. One other thing was clear, too: before they died, the bacteria had done something to the plants, bringing to birth the monstrosities Bland and Kovacs had seen. Though where these bacteria came from, no-one knew.

This special crew brought no prefabricated base with them, and had to be quartered with the men of Encampment Three. Encampment Four was undisturbed, and the ritual of working and sleeping, keeping watch and eating, continued unabated.

Kovacs was on duty when the radio technician began to cry out about the static. One minute the radio had been working perfectly, the next a flood of static had descended from out of the lunar night.

"Waken Captain Bland and sound the emergency klaxon," Kovacs hissed. He strode across the control turret.

"Could be something out there, Sir," said one of the men on monitor duty. "If you watch the rim of that crater there, now and again you can see a kind of flash of movement. It could be a cloud of lunar dust or maybe only a misty sort of light, but there's something."

"Where?" It was Bland, his face white and haggard, clothes dishevelled from the languor of sleep. His mind was filled with one screaming fear- the thought of alien marauders.

"There." A finger pointed.

Sure enough, there was something. It was closer now. A long stream of lunar dust was gradually settling behind it, but there was a light-source too. The dust was aglow with the after-traces of some form of propulsion engine.

The glow worked higher, more and more of it becoming visible above the rim of the crater. Very gradually a ball of brilliant incandescence - a miniature sun - began to dawn against the backdrop of space.

It was a spaceship.

Soundlessly, gracefully, the thing swooped down from the crater, sweeping across the pitted terrain and gently settling to rest in front of the base. From the observation dome the men saw a long, metallic tentacle shoot out from the front, then a loud clang resounded through the building as something struck the outer hatch.

The seconds ticked away, then yellow lights flashed on the alarm board. The hatch sealers had been broken. The monitor flared into life, for a moment portraying something indescribable moving within the airlock. In the background the metallic tentacle was slowly withdrawing, pulling the hatch open with it. Then the static descended, and they saw nothing.

Silence prevailed for many minutes, then the radio began to utter odd grunts and beeps. The controller on duty was puzzled, then furious.

"Somethin's tamperin' with the wirin' circuits!"

That snapped Bland from his reverie, and the Captain issued orders for the men to get weapons and prepare for a fight. But even as the armoury shelves emptied, the voice was heard on the radio.

"We come in peace. Do not be aggressive. We are traders, collectors. All we desire is that you will allow us to photograph your machines and one of your beings. For our collections. Please.... we come in peace. Hear us."

Bland froze, indecision warping his brain. Was this the same thing that had destroyed the others, or was it just some monstrous coincidence?

His thoughts seemed to jam. He wanted to keep thinking, try and reason this out, but only the thought of Janie would come. Janie - and death. For he realised he might be faced with the first phase of the grim process that had annihilated the other two encampments.

That rasping, inhuman voice enweaved Kovacs' very being. A voice from the stars, the sound of life beyond human ken. At last the spaceman had found his true role, was able to become the hero he knew it was his destiny to be. This was what he had always yearned for - action and adventure on the brink of the stars. And now, with Bland so badly shaken, so unable to make

a decision, what was to stop him from assuming command?

"We come in peace. Hear us. Our machines can probe your minds, we sense your questions. Please... We only desire to photograph. We are collectors. With our photographic equipment we desire to record your appearance, your technology. Please. We will trade..."

Trade? flashed Kovacs' brain.

"Yes, We have only photographic equipment with us, but we can draw a photo from your brain patterns. Anything you want.

"Have you visited our other bases?"

"Yes. We sense chaos in your minds when you think of them."

"They are dead."

"Dead? Dead?"

It took a second for that odd tone of voice to impart its meaning. Then Kovacs understood. And for a second, despite himself, there was terror and dismay. His jaw fell, aghast. This alien thing... it could not comprehend the concept of death! What manner of creature was it?

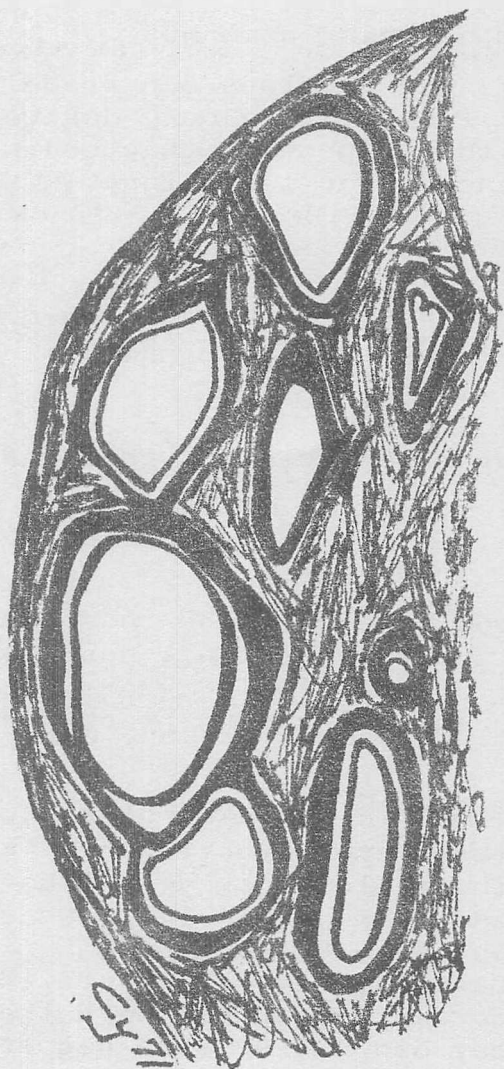
"We agree to trade," Kovacs called suddenly, impulsively.

The others looked at him, their eyes questioning. But Kovacs had a plan. If they were the killers, they must have some way of releasing the bacteria, and if he could learn what that was, and stop them, everything would be okay. Otherwise the Moon might never again be safe. Besides, he had the presence of mind to activate the automatic recording equipment with the anti-static tuner full-on. Even if they did suffer the gate of Encampment One, Encampment Three would soon learn what had happened.

After that they could only wait. The creature promised further instructions, but for many minutes no sound was heard. Bland knew what was going on, and his attack of fear dropped away, leaving him able to resume command. Kovacs grudgingly relinquished his glory, entertaining the secret hope that Bland would crack again.

But Bland was too sober for that. He and Kovacs were cast in two moulds, both of which had from time to time been regarded as the ideal frame for the astronaut. Kovacs was the swashbuckler, the rollicking, rowdy man of adventure, who soared to the stars with daring and bravery, game for anything. Bland, on the other hand, was the painstaking servant of science, the man who took no chances, who was conscious of the proximity of death. He would not crack - not a second time.

The aliens made their arrangements quickly, and Captain Bland moved to the airlock as he was commanded. He drew down the thick glass filter on his helmet and stared at the spherical spaceship within the ball of incandescence. A hatch was slowly



opening on one side of it, a strange form was bundling out.

The thing came toward him, a beautiful, ugly, shimmering mass. At first glance it seemed like a transparent purple jelly with a burning pink core, but as Bland peered he realised that it was neither as amorphous nor as spongy as it seemed. The body was firm, clearly defined, though the reflected light from its glass-like exterior tended to break up the outline, make its form initially hard to detect.

Plant like. That's what it was. The shimmering veils of glass tapered like leaves, and the thin sparkling veins of pink crystal could have served as branches. A weird travesty of vegetation - a grotesque baobab travelling the stars.

The creature aroused no fear in Bland. Nor was there disgust or loathing. This thing, he sensed, was in every way his superior. Pitiful man confronting something god-like.

A lisping voice issued the orders, and Bland obeyed.

Little nibbles of fear would come at him as he worked, but he thought of Janie and that kept them away. He posed for the photos and supervised the shots of his spacecraft, sensing the gaze of his men as he moved. Kovacs, he knew, would like to be doing this, and he personally wished it was the plucky Corporal's job. For Janie's sake, not to dishonour her.

The deed was done at last, and the creature retired to its ship. Relief bulged through the Captain's veins, but he knew it was too early to feel safe. In his heart he felt this being was not a killer, but his intellect told him to bind time and see.

Bland moved into the airlock, listening intently to the alien's final orders. A thin metal cylinder floated away from the creature's ship, defying gravity to drift into Bland's glove. The Captain took his trade and examined in carefully, moving back into his space craft as the outer hatch closed.

A photo they had said, drawn from his brain patterns. A photo of what?

He unrolled the thing and felt his knees go weak with dread.

* * * *

Something momentarily flashed upon the radar screen, giving the illusion of movement. The operator could not be sure, but it seemed to have flashed upwards from Encampment Four. He called Captain Wright.

"Contact the crawler," the Captain commanded. "They should be almost there by now. Warn them."

He banged his fist in annoyance, not sure he was doing the right thing. He had despatched a rescue party the moment communications with Encampment Four broke down. But if he had sent his men to join Bland's in death, then there would be hell to pay.

The crawler stopped well clear of the ill-fated base. The men approached on foot, found the hatch sealers broken, and entered. The silence was stunning, and they heard the gentle popping of rivets. No lights flashed within their helmets, so they knew there was no oxygen. In the hydroponic garden, night-mares were growing.

They found the bodies clustered in the control room, the automatic recording equipment still running. Lying across the table was a giant-size photo of a woman's face. Near the bottom was the huge inscription:

With love, Janie.

A hastily scribbled note lay near that, but its message was insane.

They don't know they're doing it. Bacteria come from their bodies accidentally - in the cylinder - it's airtight. Bacteria disperse into the carbon dioxide in the air, then the plants breathe it - go wild. Start absorbing oxygen - rapidly - monstrous growth. No air left in the base - feel sick, so sick -

The men folded the note. Captain Wright would know what to make of it.

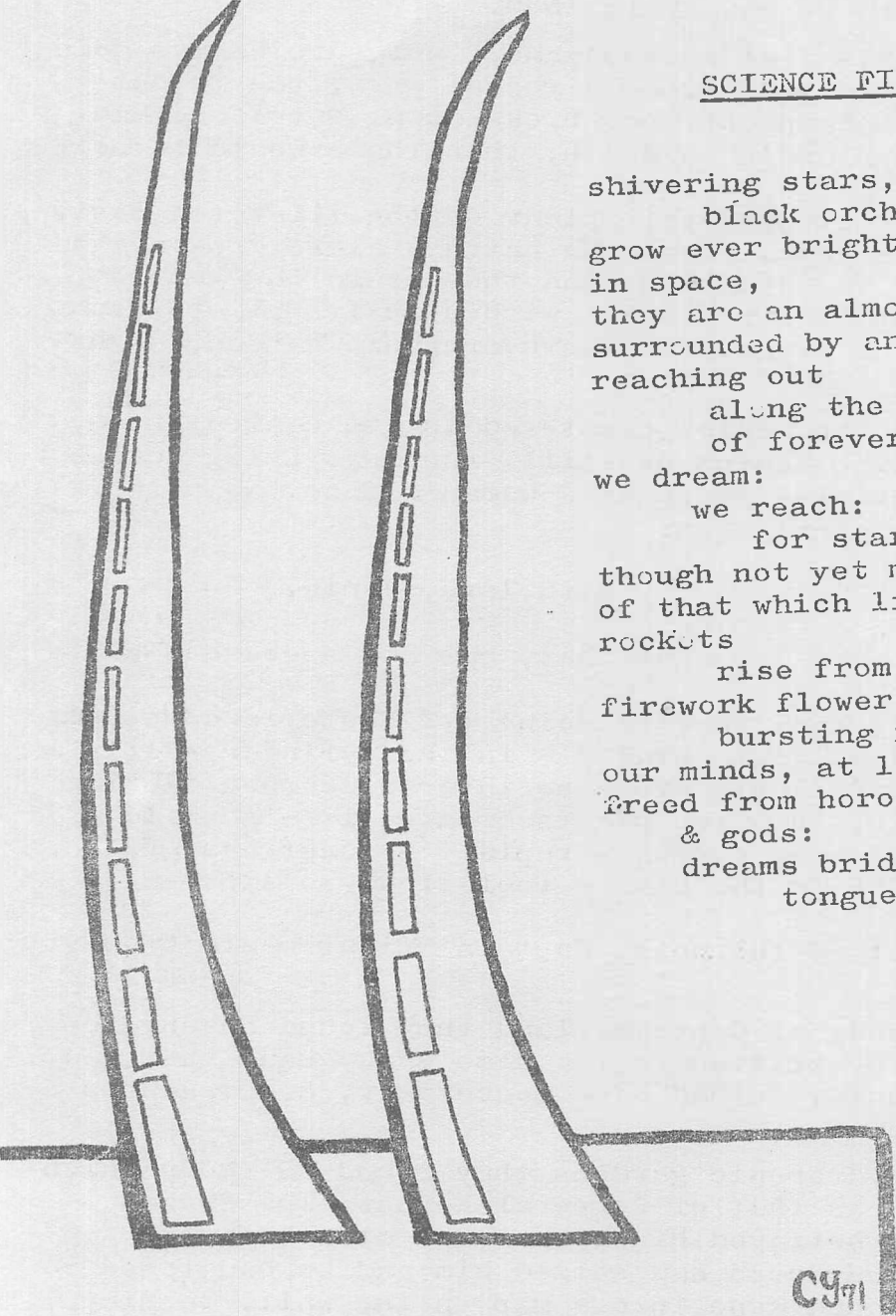
Near the body of Captain Bland they found an envelope, addressed to his wife, written in the same shaky hand that had scrawled the other note. He had died peacefully, deep sadness etched into his face.

Near the hydroponic gardens they found a body which was later identified as that of Corporal Kovacs. The frozen features of his face betrayed his secret, as did the empty chamber of his gun. Madness had seized him and he had tried to suicide. The bullet had gone into a map on the wall, tearing the Moon in half.

The men from Encampment Three completed their search and went back to the crawler, hushed and shaken. Suddenly they felt lonely, lost on a world to which they did not belong. The lunar night was beginning to fall, and they hastened to safety.

- Van Ikin.

SCIENCE FICTION DREAMS



shivering stars,
 black orchid night beams
 grow ever brighter:
 in space,
 they are an almost-nothing
 surrounded by an even greater nothing
 reaching out
 along the cold constricting rim
 of forever...
 we dream:
 we reach:
 for stars,
 though not yet masters
 of that which lies beneath our feet!
 rockets
 rise from our sf dreams--
 firework flowers
 bursting forth to flame!
 our minds, at last, unchained;
 freed from horoscopes, forbidden fruits,
 & gods:
 dreams bridging the void between:
 tongue
 touching
 tongue...

- Cy Chauvin.

BEAMED POWER

by Victor Markwart

The practicality of distributing power by electromagnetic radiation depends upon its comparative cost/efficiency as compared to the more conventional methods of power distribution.

The source of power is irrelevant to this discussion, except in one case, which will be discussed later on in this article. Power distribution deals only with what happens to the power between release and reception.

Conventional methods of power distribution use a conducting medium, at the moment the conductor is a cable consisting, (usually), of an iron core (for strength), surrounded by aluminium (for low resistance). This cable is suspended on pylons, which it has to be, for if the cable was buried, there would be a relatively low resistance between the power carrying cable and earth, for example, if the insulation is of the order of 500 Megohms per foot, then with the hundreds of thousands of miles of cable required for power distribution, the "bulk" resistance would be very low, and would result in large power losses, that is, a relatively low efficiency, so these cables must be suspended, which reduces the loss by short circuiting to earth, to a very low figure.

The major source of power loss in conventional power distribution, however, is in the transformers. These are used to overcome the resistance in the conductor. The transformer at the power source end of the system raises the voltage into the 100Kv range which automatically reduces the current flowing through the conductor ($E=IR$), and since the resistance loss (heating effect), is proportional to the square of the current multiplied by the resistance, this reduces the loss quite effectively. The transformer at the consumer end of the distribution system steps the voltage down (hence the name of step-down transformer, and guess what the transformer at the production end of the system is called - you guessed it, a step-up transformer), as 200Kv is not a handy voltage to have for home use, imagine, if you went near the power lines buried in the walls, an electric discharge could occur travelling through you to earth, leaving you burned to a crisp, this is if the walls didn't conduct the current.


Anyhow the transformers are at the best, only about 95% efficient, which means at the best, only 90% of the power produced can actually be used.


However, future developments in superconductivity may result in the discovery of a substance that is superconducting at, or near, room temperatures, this would result in the possible discharging of the transformers. This would result in almost 100%

power availability, but there would still be tremendous cost in setting up the network. The cost of the ground taken up in itself would be enormous, and pylons would probably still be required, though once set up the cost of distribution would be negligible.

The transmission of power by electromagnetic radiation, on a commercial level is, in the present, at a much more primitive level than conventional methods. However, first of all some facts:-

Life on Earth is, at the moment, dependent on the transmission of power by electromagnetic radiation, most of which we receive from the sun. Of the power that we receive, the plant life on this planet, only use about $\frac{1}{2}\%$ of that which struggles through the soup of pollution that we call an atmosphere, however, this is only a small fraction of the energy that is transmitted by the sun. Most of the sun's radiation is dissipated in the black vacuum of outer space, but if the sun could concentrate its power where it "wanted" to, it would allow a much greater utilisation of the power supplied, but no matter what method was used to concentrate the power of the sun, it would never be possible to obtain an intensity greater than that at the surface of the sun because there would be cancellation of the waves by another (see diagram), so to transmit power the

(1)  (1) + (2) gives (3)

(2) 
ie (1) + (2) ^{nothing} = 0 = (3)

radiation would have to be coherent, that is, all the waves would have to be in phase, and the radiation would, for greater utilisation of the power, be trans-

mitted in a narrow beam. Now what is there on Earth at the present moment that has these properties; as far as I know, only the L.A.S.E.R. has these properties, so the LASER will be the only method of transmission discussed.

The most efficient LASER at the present moment is the gallium arsenide & gas-dynamic laser. It is theoretically capable of transmitting power by the megawatt. The ones at present in use transmit it in the infrared region of the electromagnetic spectrum, which is incompatible with the standard photocell in common use which is most efficient in the ultra-violet region. However, a thermocouple device could be made to utilise the infrared radiation. There is, however, a problem with the heat generated. With the beam concentrated, as would be required if the beam was not going to take up an unreasonable volume, the receiving device would be vapourised, or at least melted. This is a problem with the standard photocell as well, but with an assumed efficiency (in the future), of at least 80%, most of the incoming energy would be utilised as electricity, and a large proportion of the heat would not have to be dissipated.

But this heat could be put to use in heating water, or some other suitable fluid, (eg liquid sodium), and used to power conventional generators and provide additional electricity this way, thus increasing the overall efficiency of the system.

Enuff aid on this topic; back to the gas-dynamic laser.

The gas-dynamic laser operates by burning fuel, (carbon dioxide and nitrogen), in combustion chambers. The hot gas produced is rapidly cooled by expansion as it passes through small nozzles at supersonic speed. These thermally excited gas molecules can lase. Mirrors facing inwards from opposite ends of the supersonic channel collect and direct the coherent beam through a hole in one of the mirror arrays. Waste energy is removed by the high speed gas flow. The heat produced by conventional lasers cannot escape in this fashion, and this limits the amount of energy that can be transmitted. As mentioned, the efficiency of this is in the region of 80%. This is equivalent to the first transformer, of the conventional methods of power transmission. The efficiency is in relation to the first transformer, rather low.

The receiver must be able to convert the photons into electricity. The conventional photoelectric effect only gives about 10% efficiency, which would only give a resultant power of 8% of what is produced. Compared to the efficiency of the conventional methods of power transmission, this is extremely inefficient.

However, assuming that in the future the efficiency could be raised to being equivalent to the conventional methods, then, the cost of setting up the system would be much lower than that used at present as no pylons etc would be required, (this is assuming that the cost of the LASER and the receiver is equal to or less than the cost of the transformers).

Now there is one small defect, the loss of power because there is a murky, smog laden atmosphere to penetrate, so on a misty, raining, snowing day when one would require the most power, the amount of power that would get through would be the least, besides, if the receivers were of high efficiency, then the transmitters wouldn't be required as the power transmitted by the sun would supply power free of charge.

Thus it seems highly unlikely that power will ever be transmitted by electromagnetic radiation on earth, though it is possible that on some airless planet or asteroid with a long night, it would be possible that this would be the best method of transmitting power.

(Bits of this lifted from Scientific American, July, 1970).

- Victor Markwart.

[Editor's Note: being an sf fan I was curious about if beamed power would ever get off the ground, and I asked Victor...]

THE DISPOSAL

- CY CHAUVIN

"Get up, it's time for work.

George stumbled out of bed, his brains a bit addled from the vigorous massage-like shaking his wife has given him and the loud shout. Couldn't she just give him a swift kick in the hind, like any normal woman? (No, my little Matilda has to always try to be different...)

He checked the calendar: Sunday. A long week of idleness stretched behind him...

Continuing the morning ritual, he activated the Disposal ("greatest little invention of the century" exclaimed the ad men), punched out B-E-D on its keyboard and then watched as the article of furniture slowly decomposed before him. "From pulp you were made, and to pulp you shall return..." Vents sucked up the liquid slop after it had been decomposed by the incredibly active enzymes.

The man turned toward the closet, picking up a pair of fresh slacks and shirt which hung there. He slipped them on quickly. Yesterday's clothes were already down at the plant, being converted into something fresh and new. And so the endless cycle went on...

Noticing that he still had a little time, he checked the stocks, bonds, and statistics on the 'video. "Abort-a-Booths"® were increasing in popularity; the stock of the company which owned the franchise had risen by 2%. "General Everything"® ("you name it -- we make it!") was down 5%. Serves them right, George thought, for the company giving its official support to end the 62 cut-off rate. Give people the right to live as long as they felt able? Some jerks were bound to abuse that privilege! He heard the clock buzz out the time, then flicked off the morning report and went downstairs.

Feeling in a good mood, George sang on his way. Unfortunately, he met his wife Matilda (hair a mess and face unmade), which was enough to dampen anyone's spirits.

"You could have left the bed go, George, since I'm thinking of disposing the entire house this afternoon." She ran her finger across the moulding, and looked at the cobwebs that had accumulated on it with disgust. "It needs it bad."

Another month's salary gone, thought George to himself.

"I thought we might get a house with a translucent roof," his wife continued, "something like the one Joan and Bill have. Coloured lights and all the extras on the inside - you know

what I mean. Houses like that are so enchanting at nighttime. George, what do you think...?"

But George was busy thumping her distended belly; it made a watermelon sound. Hhhhhmmm, the child inside must almost be ripe. His stomach growled.

"Stop it George, and answer me. What do you think of the idea?"

"Ohhh... I don't know," George replied, looking somewhat sheepish. "I hadn't thought of getting a new house so soon. We've had this one for only a month or so, haven't we?"

"Two."

"Already? How time flies... Oh, perhaps we'll get a new house, perhaps we won't, depends on the budget. I think we're a little short this month--"

"How is it we're always 'a little short' whenever I suggest we spend some money?" she retorted. "It's your standard excuse."

"That's not true! he replied vehemently. "We have no real need for a new house, this one is solid as a battleship." To prove his point, George kicked the wall, and watched open-mouthed as a large section of it caved in.

His wife started laughing so hard that she almost had hysterics. He resisted the temptation to give her a good kick in the rump only with the greatest difficulty. After all, what did she expect? -- most of the present-day battleships were over forty years old.

Still giggling, Matilda walked (or rather waddled) away in her tight-fitting, black vinyl pants (a heirloom passed on to her by her grandmother). "I'm going to the hairdresser's at eleven," she said. "Be sure to leave the door untuned."

His hate was sudden, burning, and unquenchable.

George sat down a while later, after having worked out the last of his vacation days, and thought about his wife and their relationship. At times he wondered why he ever married her, since they seemed rarely compatible outside the bed. Too often she seemed so artificial - like she was nothing more than the moulded paper and plastic she wore.

He had thought about divorce, but it wasn't a realistic solution. He'd have to cancel the children they'd ordered, which was a waste - the waiting list was a mile long. If he'd had to start over again with someone new, he'd never make it. Then there was the bigger-than-average house he'd grown accustomed to, and of course, the automatic machines never made up for a real wife. *Sigh* And there was also alimony to consider... He glanced futilely at the Men's Lib button pinned to his collar and sighed again.

He wanted to make Matilda suffer, he suddenly realized, not just get rid of her. He wanted to get back for all the times she had humiliated him.

He gulped down a few tranquilizer pills, along with a glass of Squeeze. Not feeling much relieved by either, he gulped down a few pills of another variety. There... That's much better, he thought. In a few minutes he was no longer tired, nervous, or frustrated: simply angry...

He chuckled, a bit hysterically, in a high-pitched, clacking voice, the sound of which even he found disquieting. No more little bed-games now, he thought, picking up a 'phone and dialing his wife's room. When her picture came into focus on the screen, he merely laughed at her through the video pickup.

"George, what the hell has gotten into you?? Don't you have anything sensible to say?? If not, I'm merely going to hang up, you stupid old man..."

But her husband, only laughed all the louder, punched out W-I-F-E on the keyboard, and pushed the Disposal button. And laughed again. Hysterically.

Then - somewhere, above, beyond - He, the One and Only, laughed (most hideously), and pushed the Disposal button.

And the earth blinked out into nothingness...

- Cy Chauvin.

-----oooOoo-----

E V E R U P

Reaching tentative fingers up -
A faltering step,

A firmer pace,

A stronger stride.

Until there was I,
Here and Now,
Floating,

Weightless,

Over a bed of a thousand and one pasts
In a night of a million tomorrows.

... Nick Shears.

REVIEWS.

This issue it's an all-film column, commencing with:

MISSION IMPOSSIBLE

Reviewed by A. Bertram Chandler.

No, I never watch MISSION IMPOSSIBLE on TV. It's not that I've anything against it - in fact I've heard some episodes spoken very highly of - but it just doesn't fit in with our viewing habits. I did, however, watch a film on Channel 9 the other night called MISSION MARS. MISSION IMPOSSIBLE would have been a far more apt title...

The everloving went out, after an early dinner, to play bridge, leaving me with the idiot box for company. My intention was to watch the ABC News and then THIS DAY TONIGHT, after which I was going to carry on with the latest misadventure of Commodore Grimes. But I glanced through the day's TV programmes, just to check up if there was anything worth seeing, and MISSION MARS was among the good (?) things listed. Ah, thought I. Science fiction. This I can watch with a clear conscience, saying that the time which I should have spent walloping the type-writer was devoted, instead, to Market Research. (That's the excuse that I always use when I'm accused of reading too much and writing too little...)

Well, there was a long, long string of credit titles - but no names, including that of the author (or perpetrator) of the story, were familiar. Accompanying these were the lovesick bleatings of a third rate male vocalist to the twangings of a guitar. It just didn't sound like space opera music to me, and I began to think that the title was misleading and that Mars might be the name of a nightclub or something. After all, we do have the Mars Steak Houses &c &c in Sydney...

But what happened next was a series of fairish shots of count-downs and blast-offs. So far, not too bad. After that it was made distressingly obvious that there was a "love interest". Astronauts do have wives, of course, but I hope, for their sakes, that the real life wives aren't such silly, soppy, little bitches as the two in the film. Two of the Mars-or-bust boys were married; the third (wise man!) was a bachelor.

The story was about the first American manned Mars shot. The Russians, apparently, had launched theirs months previously, but there had been a failure of radio communications between their Mission Control and their space-ship. The boss cocky of Mission Control in Houston was a burly, bearded dim-wit, Dr. Somebody-or-other, who, at frequent intervals, trotted out utter absurdities

in a most portentous voice.

Mars I, heartbroken, lonely wives notwithstanding, blasted off on schedule. There were standard shots of the three astronauts crushed down into their couches by acceleration. There were shots of Earth and Moon tumbling arse-over-tit outside the viewports - which was rather strange, as shots of the rocket from outside showed it steering a beautifully straight course, with no pitch or yaw whatsoever. But it was when the spaceship fell into orbit about the Earth that the rot really set in. The captain reported to Mission Control, "Weightlessness is no problem." It most certainly wasn't. All hands were stomping around their commodious spaceborne home unit as though the thing had never left the ground. Some time later, after they had docked with the supply rocket launched earlier and were falling free towards Mars, they "enjoyed" their first meal in Space, three tablets of concentrates dropped one by one - plink, plink, plink! - into three tin plates, water being added to reconstitute them.

Later, telling the everloving about the film, I harped on this absurdity. She, who has been having a bad time lately with glassware and china (to be more exact, the glassware and china having a very bad time with her), insisted that she could drop things in Free Fall, as long as they were breakable.

Anyhow, the long voyage was under way. At frequent intervals the astronauts bored each other and at least one member of the audience by reeling off facts and figures about Mars. There was a little excitement when the ship passed through a "meteoric shower" - I could be wrong, but, in Deep Space, I'd be more inclined to call it a swarm - without sustaining damage, not even the teeniest puncture. There was more excitement when she passed with spitting distance of the wreckage of the Russian rocket, complete with two space-suited corpses. Mphm? as Commodore Grimes would grunt, dubiously. I, myself, may be only a surface navigator, but as a one-time gunnery officer I also know something about ballistics, and the problems involved in shooting from a moving platform at a moving target.

Everything, of course, was being reported to Mission Control by radio telephone. If the astronauts had been billed for every call it would have cost them a not-so-small fortune. They asked permission from Mission Control for literally everything. I do admit that their radio telephone made this quite practicable even when they were on Mars. The clots responsible for the film obviously had never heard of such little things as the velocity of light (and radio waves). Two-way conversations were indulged in without the drawback of a time lag of at least six minutes...

Mars, as a close approach was made, looked rather like the Moon with a polar ice cap stuck on to it. As the original film was in colour it could be that I am being a little unjust. Then the landing, a fairly orthodox soft descent, was made, the

supply rocket being jettisoned from a high altitude. Oddly enough it hit the sands of Mars without being at all damaged, when found by the astronauts it was quite intact save for the hole burned in it by somebody or something hostile.

The three bold astronauts clambered out of their ship within seconds after landing. They were wearing very lightweight suits - little more than longjohns - and flimsy looking transparent plastic helmets. There was no indication of suit radio, yet, in spite of their helmets and the thinness of the atmosphere, they were talking as they would have talked, unhelmeted, on Earth. They were walking that way, too. Their first objective was the crashed supply rocket, but the geologist lagged and wandered, chipping at handy rocks with his little hammer. He found what at first looked like a humanoid statue, but what turned out to be a deep-frozen Russian. ("Poor devil! The heating unit of his suit must have failed!"). I still can't see how the cosmonaut remained deep-frozen during the quite warm Martian day.

The geologist was told to take the presumed corpse back to the ship (why?) and the other two carried on with their search for the supply ship, blazing their trail with a line of marker balloons. They found that something had burned its way into the rocket, so decided to get back to their own vessel in a hurry. But the marker balloons had vanished.

Meanwhile, to sound effects reminiscent of the monolith sequence in 2001, the Russian had thawed out and returned to life. The geologist asked Dr. Know-all back at Mission Control for advice, and was told to give the cosmonaut a drink of water. Yes, water. If it had been vodka it would have made more sense.

The other two boys, meanwhile, were having their troubles. An odd looking brute or contraption kept on appearing, disappearing and reappearing, acting in a vaguely hostile manner. They got back to the ship, after a struggle, told their story to Mission Control. Dr. Know-all got into the act, dubbed the beings, which looked rather like mobile, mechanical, flowering plants, "Polarites". He also aired the theory that the "Polarites" were (a) being remotely controlled by something else and (b) were creatures from some extra-Solarian planet. (Why not Martians? They seemed to be getting along quite nicely on Mars.)

Then the Intelligence controlling the "Polarites" appeared. It looked like an enormous orange. It jammed radio transmissions from the ship to Earth, although not from Earth to the ship. When the astronauts went out to investigate it one was killed by some sort of lethal beam and drawn into the sphere through a vertical slit that opened in its surface. The other two went back inside in an understandable hurry. Communication was re-established with Mission Control and they were ordered back to Earth. But the super-intelligent orange put some sort of jinx on the rocket drive.

The two survivors - the captain and the geologist - went out again, and the thing talked to them. It wanted a living

specimen. After the usual yackety yak the geologist did the inevitable Captain Oates act, marching in through the vertical slit armed with a submachine gun. He and the malevolent citrus fruit expired simultaneously. The captain sat the now-almost-fully-recovered cosmonaut in the co-pilot's seat - not only had he regained all his faculties but was quite at home at the controls of a strange spacecraft - and off they went, like the proverbial bat out of hell.

The "happy ending" was when Dr. Know-all, in Houston, allowed the captain's wife to natter with him on the radio telephone. She, coyly, kept on dropping all sorts of hints, but it was the marvellous Russian who first realised that his ship-mate was going to become a father...

No doubt the people who made this epic were clambering on to the 2001 bandwagon.

They deserve an Award.

It is a pity that there is not, as yet, an Anti-Hugo.

- A Bertram Chandler.

& & &

U.F.O.

Reviewed by Z.K.

Some weeks ago I sat down in front of my T.V. and waiting for the above show to begin. I am still waiting. Don't think that I am knocking it altogether - I am not. There are some very good points in it. What I am knocking is the lack of research; the attacks of under and over imagination.

The Andersons are well known for their marionette show "Thunderbirds A Go"; well, they went, and U.F.O. took over. With poorer results. The characters are hampered by their puppet predecessors and the dialogue reminds one strongly of those worthies.

One of my main complaints is the lack of cohesion in each episode; the makers are trying to put too much in one week and too much padding the next. For example, the episode where we had Straker and a blackmailing lady, a runaway moon borer, AND a UFO scare. Not one of these themes was developed as it could have been, and the poor viewer got a headache trying to figure out just what was supposed to be going on. [The entire series is about a secret World Gov organisation fighting off invading flying saucers - UFOs - sometime in the 1980's. The authorities don't want to alarm the public about these attacks and so keep the whole Interstellar War a secret. It's been shown on Channel 7, Sundays at 6.30; its an hour show. - ed.]

I dig the costumes of the moon base, the ladies I mean, and the make-up. All I do not understand is why they wear such fashions. I mean, it is a military base, more or less, is it not??

And would be considered unnecessary on Earth.

That also goes for the other uniforms (?) of SHADO.

I could also not see the need for that rather harrowing episode when Straker had to choose between duty and his son, and lose his son in a grand stoic manner. I know the British believe in a stiff upper lip, but really? It added nothing to the series; I mean one didn't even know of that before, or why they were divorced, and one was not helped by that episode.

The introduction of Col. Foster was quite well done, but again the writers lost their heads and clouded the issue with a lot of hide and seek and lets-have-fun-on-a-film-set. Foster is quite human and it shows up the poor characterization of many of the others. That episode could have been very good, but again it missed.

Let us take yet another episode involving Foster. The nasty, good alien. First we have the alien landing on the moon undetected. Improbable, but was explained quite reasonably by a meteor shower playing up with the radar set-up. O.K., I'll buy that, just. But then he also manages to pump a nasty hole in the dome. Soooo, if they have this marvellous technology, how come they haven't got a protection screen system around the dome? It is a very valuable piece of real estate and surely they would have it well protected. Again, the writers slipped up. Anyway, they have a hole and one of the moon base men dies in the vacuum created; here again comes a point that puzzled me - how is it that Foster didn't get it too? That safety door should have automatically closed the minute that the leak was noticed. But OH NO, we have to have the agony of Foster watching his buddy die.

Then everyone tootles off to find the alien ship and the next bit really strained the imagination. The alien can detect the men outside and attacks them. Natural enough, but how come they couldn't detect him earlier? Anyway, the alien tries to take off, and our heroes hit the ship, again miraculously Foster escapes, (he relies on miracles a lot for survival, this guy), and when he comes to he staggers about aimlessly and stalks the alien who in turn stalks him. So then, after they change as to who is the prisoner, the alien saves our guy's life and they see the moon base ship coming out to rescue Foster.

Now, normally one would think that all was well and they would both be saved. But oh no, Foster's radio is out and he can't make them understand that the alien is a good guy. So - bang bang he is shot as he stands there unarmed and helpless. They are really bright lads, these. Still no Foster for a bit. (Another thing that puzzled me was how was it that he got to be moon commander so fast? One minute he is bashing his head against the wall trying to figure out why he is being given the run around after witnessing an encounter between SHADO and a UFO. He solves that and is taken into the fold and sent for training. Next episode he is moon base commander. Fascinating!)

I don't think I'll go into the other episode where Foster dreamt he was taken prisoner by the aliens, which was very weak.

Of course we have the inevitable trick photography, like Straker walking along the studio set and an actor getting shot in a film at the same time, but he was dressed like Straker and the viewer thought it was him. This same episode had a lot of side lines to it, also. The sexy reporter who was really a con woman, and then Alex taking over the hot seat and having hysterics.

UFO is supposed to be an adult show - the writers are making a mistake by playing childish tricks, and putting in a lot of irrelevant stuff. The big mistake was letting the series take place in 1980. It is too close to the present day. It should have been set in the 21st century sometime. The machines are very good but... inconceivable at the present stage of technology. The ships used to go to and fro from the moon are cute but no explanations as to how they work, and again it is too close to our time to be believable.

Another glaring boo boo was the time the alien landed on earth. Now, we are told that the aliens breathe liquid and it takes complicated equipment to enable them to breathe air. So how come this particular alien is wandering around without his helmet??

It is a great pity that this show, which has so much potential, is failing so badly. It is apparent that, whilst Thunderbirds was quite successful and good children's fare, UFO is neither good children's fare nor mediocre adult entertainment. Oh for a series of the quality of Star Trek!

To repeat what I said earlier, it is a great pity that a show with as much potential as this obviously has, should fail so miserably.

- Z.K.

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ESCAPE FROM THE PLANET OF THE APES

Reviewed by Barry Danes.

It had to come, of course. The sequel to the sequel to the idea of the same, or perhaps a similar, name. I refer, rather obliquely perhaps, but still refer, to that continuance of banality-filled scripting "Escape from the Planet of the Apes".

This film is better quality, both in colour and script than "Beneath the Planet of the Apes", which ranks as one of the worst films seen in the last year and was a sequel/follow-up/continuance (strike out the words that do not apply) of a classic film, "The Planet of the Apes", which although classic, was not extraordinary in any way except perhaps for the furriness and lack

of aesthetic appeal of the characters. "Beneath the Planet..etc. etc" was far worse, with a banality of script approaching the level of "Sweet Sins of Sexy Susan".

Notwithstanding all this, however, "Escape from.. ad nauseum" is a reasonable effort although often approaching parody.

The script is basically this:

Scene: Earth 1973.

Story: Spaceship missing for 2 years splashes down off Southern California. It is the same Buck Rogers/Captain Condor creation of the other 2 "Planet" pictures. Identified as the ship Colonel Taylor (Charlton Heston) left in, they welcome him and his crew back, but the three space-suited figures that emerge turn out to be our ape friends of the 36th Century. These apeonauts have been brought to 1973 by a time warp (what else?!). They are then made guests of the Los Angeles Zoo where the female ape, Zera, confuses Bradford Dillman, ace psychiatrist, with her intelligence and ability to speak. Some very funny scenes ensue. Meanwhile, another of the apeonauts, some Professor whose name I can't remember, so short is his part in the film, and who we are assured is/was a genius, is strangled by a gorilla. People run, things happen, a Presidential enquiry is set up, Zera and Cornelius (the male ape), go on national television, wear suits, attend meetings, hold parties, get drunk, become pregnant.

They are then discovered to be withholding information and are taken to a secret army base, Camp Eleven, where they are interrogated. Once again things happen, people run/walk/shout, apes run/walk/cry; which finally ends up with Zera having labour pains in a forest. She has a baby in a circus; by this time a Dr Husselein (whom I remember as Dr Forbin in "The Forbin Project") is out to kill apes armed with gun, science and a mad look to the eyes.

The good psychiatrist, Bradford Dillman, helps the apes hide out in an abandoned tanker which Husselein/Forbin (call him what you will) discovers. In ten seconds the entire State Fuzz is there in helicopters, patrol cars, vans and one Willys Jeep Wagonaire, without even so much as a phone call. A shooting-match takes place and the film finishes on an up-in-the-air-note.

I hope 20th Century Fox doesn't produce a fourth "Planet" picture, because, although this is o.k. by "Planet" standards, I just couldn't take another.

- Barry R. Danes.

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ZACHARIA

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My Impressions.

by Steven Phillips.

Zacharia is one of the most stimulating films to come to Sydney for some time. It is fast action with a very pleasing

balance of character. In fact, the development of the two central characters is directly related to plot development. It is what you might term an "experience" movie - Zacharia and his friend, Matthew, mature as each new experience gives them greater insight to themselves and to life.

I would say the plot is a fantasy. How else would you broadly classify an electric western?

The film opens with an incredible desert scene. In the middle of a vast, barren plain, like telegraph poles rising out of the middle of the Pacific Ocean, two guitarists stand before giant amplifiers, instruments at the ready, separated by a drummer and his gear. They begin jamming out some very heavy rock material, while Zacharia (a young lad - nineteen or twenty) frantically tears open a brown paper parcel. It contains a six-shooter. The music still beats out as he rides off on a fine steed to show Matthew, equally young, the blacksmith. Which comes in handy for the making of a silver bullet.

Matthew is very impressed and together they ride off to be gunfighters. The adventures they have are incredible, humorous and numerous. Too numerous to list. They team up with a band of hippy musicians (played by Country Joe And The Fish) and indulge in some of the best gunfights and gunhandling I have seen.

But there is more to this film. Zacharia and Matthew are over-anxious, wild young men. Matthew thinks he has found what he wants from life when they meet up with Job (the best in the west - a famous negro jazz drummer whose name escapes me, and who performs an amazing solo) and prove to be his equal with a gun. Matthew wants to stay with Job and build a reputation. But Zacharia predicts this as leading to Matthew and himself killing each other. In truth, Zacharia does not know what he wants. He knows he must continue his adventures alone, so leaves Matthew with Job.

So far, the three most important characters have biblical names, and I am told by someone who knows his bible better than I, that these characters follow a close parallel to their counterparts in the bible.

With this in mind, it is interesting to see Zacharia accept the hospitality of an old mountain hermit who is in love with his mountain and all that surrounds it. When Matthew turns up at their shack one day, Zacharia is tempted to return to gunfighting. When Zacharia eventually turns his back upon this desire, the old man feels that his own ambitions are achieved - so he wills himself to die. This strongly suggests to me that the old man should symbolize God - having complete control over his life force, and his only wish is to find perfect peace and pass it on to another.

Until now, the tone has been dream-like-wish-fulfilment. The western towns have been mere two-dimensional faces; the plot has been moving in dream sequence - Zacharia decides to have a

gun and is suddenly and with no explanation, a flawless gunfighter - Matthew also; Zacharia achieves everything he wants - perhaps it is his dream.

But after the nameless old man dies, Matthew comes to Zacharia (already having defeated Job) demanding that they shoot it out. Here the film develops quickly to a very real emotional climax.

After it, Zacharia and Matthew realise that what they both want is what they first had - before the whole thing started.

Curtains.

Shuffle of feet to exits.

- Steven Phillips.

-----oooooooo-----

N I G H T

The indigo sky deepens into
Violet,
Scintillating pinpricks appear in
Night's velvet curtain,
The lunar crescent glides
Majestically
Through liquid darkness,
Perpetually moving in aimless
Circles.
While we on our tiny geoid
Also move in aimless
Circles;
Aimlessly,
But not endlessly.
And when our abbreviated
Lives
Are ended,
Still will the moon perform its
Gyrations,
For yet another pair of wondering eyes.

-----Nick Shears.

DREAMTIME

- EDGAR H. LEPP

I was not surprised when the call came. They sought my aid at the Gonstad Institute. I knew what they wanted for I had tampered with the Synch-Eba Component earlier that day. I agreed to go, expecting to have several spare hours in which I could probe the minds of Very Important People. My prime object was the secretary of the Emadian president. Through previous espionage efforts I had acquired the major portion of the Bandur file but I sought more. My present residence was not distant from the Institute and I arrived soon after terminating the call. I donned a Cap and underwent a Transfer.

I found the Synch-Eba Component to be functional! I....

Running, running, always running. No trees, no rocks, no dwellings, no weapon to ward off the Landan wolves. At my zenith the bluish sun attacked mercilessly. The heat seemed to focus on my weary body, for the shaggy-coated Landam wolves loped on, unaffected by the heat. Below me stretched an endless white plain which resisted my attacks. I could not perceive the slightest crack in its infuriatingly sterile surface which served as an excellent reflector of the blue star's light and heat. I had more than once attempted to dent this surface only to finish hammering it in anger and frustration.

I fled on before the wolves, though my flight had by now been reduced to a drunken stagger.

Nothing to relieve the monotony since my shadow is at present below me. I fall down but I must raise myself, I must, I must... I am almost crying now. It is the futility of flight which demoralises me yet I still seek to prolong my existence, hoping for some miracle. I look back... five, six, seven wolves I seem to count but I cannot trust my eyes in my present state. I repress a shudder. No-one has yet survived an attack by a Landan wolf. They are to be found in no zoo in the galaxy. I have seen one through a telescope. Hideous creatures, the beasts which horror stories long for, nightmarish apparitions...

Nightmarish. Something registers the word in my mind. Ah, of course, this is the presence of a stronger mind. The planet Landa has no expansive plains for it is almost entirely jungle and water.

How long have I left? They are very close now. I can see their fangs, the saliva drooling... but I must concentrate elsewhere. Think, think. A cage of Malin alloy appears around me which stops the beasts. A second cage of the same alloy

surrounds the wolves and a weapon appears in my hand. I approach the wolves, quickly conjuring a nose filter, for a foul smell surrounds the creatures. In as many bullets I have disposed of the wolves and I systematically burn them with the minaturised flame thrower now in my possession until only fine ashes remain. I mentally demolish the two cages. My work is now completed and I am safe until the next attack which will come at some time unknown by me.

It is a ludicrous situation I now find myself in. It would be less serious if I had not panicked when the Landan wolves appeared, for I must now seek outside help if I am to regain my freedom. Yet who can I trust? I survived until the present by trusting only myself. I must be very careful for I have numerous enemies, though perhaps I will go unrecognised in my new personality. I still marvel at the skill and knowledge of the Guild of Surgeons, though not all of them would change a physical appearance as well as his personality and behavioural patterns and ask no questions. I have found several who will, though my most recent change cost me a little over half a million Earth credits, an amount which I could regain in a week. I can remember the past and I can recall events before the change, but if I am fiercely questioned my replies will be those Gerard Lecoul would make, wherever he is, or was. To bypass the Gerard Lecoul "mask", my questioners must secure my co-operation. Drugs are of no use since my body will detect any attempt to use these and consequently the mask will take over. Similarly, a counter-change is impossible, since if I am to be changed I must inform the surgeon what my mask comprises.

With... but wait. A fleet of enemy craft approaches. I despatch a hastily contrived fleet of my own which quickly destroys the other fleet completely. I would launch a counter attack but I am unable to localize the source of these attacks and I require time to think.

I wander aimlessly. Ah, I have penetrated a mind...

... and of course, the concept of sending an expeditionary fleet to force a decision at Bandur is alien to our...

Probably the President's secretary but I am not sure since formerly they favoured despatching a fleet. I will obtain no help here and I leave the mind immediately, since I seek freedom and not political secrets at present. As far as I know I am the only person capable of probing minds during Transfer and I may boast of doing it very professionally, leaving not a trace of my activities.

I probe elsewhere. I am entering another mind but my recent experience with the Landan wolves seems to have affected my skill, since this mind detects my presence and reacts against me. I leave quickly. When probing it is important that it is not done by mechanical means. It is a delicate business.

paney et krumoldt inyen da zycrozot Bembarto coque

An Ymardian, I think, but I do not know enough of the language or psychology to seek help here.

Another mind. I declare my presence in a subtle way. I am not detected. I become blunter in approach. I am detected but this mind does not react adversely against me. Instead it attempts to incorporate my presence into its dream. Perhaps my salvation lies here. I probe his mind. He is apparently an Earthman. I am also Terran by birth.

SOUTH-EAST ENTRY PORT

I see a sign and recognise a terrestrial scene. He apparently acknowledges me as an independent entity, something which he is not able to control. He is curious. He seeks information about me. Automatically my Gerard Lacoul mask takes over my responses. I am fairly confident of obtaining his aid but I force myself to calm down.. I know nothing about him yet. He is a fairly intelligent person, I soon learn. He is rather secretive, though, and I find this probing to be difficult compared to my probing of previous subjects. I attribute this to a fault in my skill which is probably due to my not having recovered from the fear I felt when pursued by the Landan wolves.

We have now disposed of most of the trivia.

Do you understand the operation of a Transferer? No? I shall need to explain then. You have some knowledge in the relevant fields? Good, this will be a shorter digression.

The idea of dream transfer is not a new one. Late in the twentieth century the idea was discussed by several men but at that time the necessary knowledge was lacking and the relevant technology was non-existent. Man first entered space and acquired the necessary technology before gaining the necessary knowledge about dreaming. The important item is the Synch-Eba Component, which is a complex circuit itself. The decisive experiments on the dream state were performed by Hurst Gonstad to whom we owe the discovery of the Omega Effect, so named since Gonstad had (correctly) guessed that this was the final barrier which needed to be surmounted.

'Dream Transfer' is, of course, a misnomer since the actual dreams are not transferred from one mind to another. Bodily responses which occur during dreaming are recorded. This data includes such things as heart, lung and glandular activity, body temperature, eye movements, the acidity/alkalinity of the skin and so on. From previous research, a 'library' of dreams and responses has been acquired and recorded therefore liberating us from the necessity of having access to a control subject.

Let me illustrate with an example. Let me suppose that I am a technician and you are the subject. Furthermore, let me suppose that I want to evoke fear in you. First I will take the bodily responses from the library and feed them into the Synch-Eba Component, which already has a record of your normal bodily

state. The Synch-Eba Component will then probe in your memory store and test the bodily responses to each memory against those from the library. Of course, since body temperatures, alkalinity, and so on vary, the ratios are recorded. When the Synch-Eba Component finds a memory which evokes the correct bodily responses it will incorporate this memory into your dream and your mind will take over from this point. What makes the operation of the Synch-Eba Component possible is the fact that memories are stored in the brain in a manner which resembles the storage of holograms on photographic plates. Holograms are interference patterns which appear meaningless, but when illuminated by coherent light, such as the light from a laser, the image from which the hologram was made is reconstituted. Like memories, holograms can be layered and yet reconstructed individually. The Synch-Eba Component, amongst its other duties, is to memory what a laser is to a hologram.

You may now understand why the dreams from two people are not necessarily the same and why dreams are therefore not transferred, since two people will rarely have the same memories. For example, the bodily responses for fear may be taken from someone who is afraid of heights. I take these responses and feed them into the Synch-Eba Component which researches amongst your memories as explained, but you may fear drowning and this is the memory which the Synch-Eba Component will select, since it evoked the necessary responses. The responses are the things which are universal in any species.

This probing, selection and testing forms part of the Omega Effect. What remains is rather complex and technical.

The important thing to me is your aid. Occasionally it happens that during Transfer something goes wrong. Usually if this happens, and a malfunction of any sort is rare, it is detected, and the Synch-EbaGamma, which is a warning device independent of the main Synch-Eba Component, will cause cessation of the dream and the dreamer will wake up. However, I believe that the Synch-EbaGamma, which has been monitoring me, has been tampered with and I cannot withdraw from the dream state. Somehow, my mind has lost contact with my body, to use non-technical terms. Only once in my life have I seen a man to whom a similar fate befell. He had been an intelligent man before the fatal Transfer, but when they revived him he was a moron, an idiot who could do nothing without direction. His mind was blank. By using suitable recording tape it may have been possible to recover his memory and transfer it back into his mind. Such tape is now always present during a Transfer; but I suspect that my tape has also been interfered with in such a way as to render it useless.

Therefore it is to you I appeal. If you would notify the technician in charge I assure you that an ample reward is yours. I beg you to remember the following information which will identify me to the technician. I...

No! No! Wait! Do not repulse me! No! Not the Landan wolves again! Do not disconnect, don't terminate Transfer yet!

Help me! HELP ME!...

Three Earth days later a meeting occurred in the Emadian Embassy. A small package changed hands. Inside was a roll of tape which bore the simple inscription:

THE MIND OF YASION VAN DELF (ALIAS GERALD LECOUL).

- Edgar H. Lepp.

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FAN AUTOBIOGRAPHY - Cont. from p.58.

Then John Ryan appeared and things took a turn for the better - now I had a captive southern fan to earbash - particularly since John increased my interest in Comix. Well, that's about it, really. The BFSFA rolls along, I joined and eventually became O.E. of ANZAPA, Australian Agent for Bill Bowers' OUTWORLDS... I've an aversion to cars since Susan was killed (not my fault, should you wonder... but I don't like cars). They conned me onto the AI'75 Committee....

The future???

I dunno. I'd like to write some better SF than the stuff I currently scribble out, reread and screw up. Finding time for other creative pursuits is difficult. I'd like to do some more sculpture - had quite a flair for aluminium monstrosities at one time - experimental photography - gliding. Ah, forget it.

Reading back through this garbaga I realise that there is too much I've left out... like the trip to Kerguelen, buying books from McGills, my collection of JEFF HAWKE - that I'm going to stop here before I take over the whole issue.

STOP!!!!

- Dennis Stocks.

-----ooo?ooo-----

A little note by way of explanation to overseas fen for whom on the back of this I've marked 'Trade (?)' and 'This is your Last ish'. I am giving notice to about 75% of my overseas "traders" (who I haven't heard from). If you want future issues of TM I'd reply airmail, if I were you... If you have sent a zine, don't take any notice: though it could (And I do make mistakes..) - Ron. mean that that ish has gotten lost.

A U S T R A L I A N S F F A N S .
[fifth in series]

DENNIS STOCKS



An AUTOBIOGRAPHY????? I suppose that means me!!

Well, let's see.....

Born (that's as good a place to start as any) sometime in the early hours, 18th October 1946, fought through High School, University, a multitude of strange occupations and places and settled down to give the Queensland Government the pleasure of my appearance at the Animal Research Institute where I act at being a Biochemist tracing down, isolating and identifying toxins in no end of nasty plants. At A.R.I. I've also had my finger in pesticide residues in milk and meat, radioactive selenium uptake in particular plants (I won't bore you all with the botanical names, exotic as they sound)... but I like the pure research that I'm engaged in at the moment... it gives me spare time to catalogue my books, type stencils etc. etc.

Well that's at the moment... Hobbies currently include Skydiving and Gliding... but, following the hobby-line... drop back a few years....

Back in High School, Bushwalking was my great love but this changed to Rockclimbing and, after being one of the founders of the Brisbane Rockclimbing Club, I began my amateur publishing career with RURP, the monthly magazine of the B.R.C. RURP ran for 25 issues with an average of 10 foolscap sheets per issue. Back in primary school (to go back even further) my father had introduced me to the JOHN CARTER series by Burroughs and my appetite for SF began. Friday afternoons after school would see me at READ'S SECOND HAND AND RARE BOOK SHOP madly thumbing through the books to find one I hadn't already added to the growing collection or

frantically trying to decide which one to buy with my limited finance. Names such as Heinlein trickled to the surface and he is still uppermost in my favourites. As my financial status improved somewhat, I could afford a monthly sub. to AMAZING and FANTASTIC and some years later, ANALOG, IF and GALAXY were added to the list. VOYAGE OF THE SPACE BEAGLE opened up entirely new worlds and my collection began to expand at an alarming rate... book shelves didn't seem to last empty very long.

1968 saw an argument with a mountain that I lost... fractured skull, 2 ribs, right wrist and a jagged hole on left shoulder.. it was gone.. the feeling of immortality.. so I took up Skydiving which, contrary to popular misbelief, is much safer. Somewhere in there I managed to graduate with a B.Sc. and eventually my Masters. With Bushwalking cum Rockclimbing I'd taken myself into a few interesting trips... New Guinea, Kerguelen, New Zealand (where I met the girl who later became my fiancée), an abortive trip to West Iristan which failed 'cause the Indonesian Govt. wouldn't allow us to take a radio into the country and other various nasty behaviour. But the most impressive trip of them all was to Peru to study the effects of altitude on the human physiology etc. My impressions of Lima, Cerro de Pasco, the ruins of Machu Picchu and the customs officer who found the mummified head I was trying to smuggle out in my sleeping bag ("Now fancy that! How did that get in there?") are much too long for this missive. Tasmania and Lake St. Clair and Mt. Federation became my favourite Australian retreat.

The Queensland Parachute Club were lacking a journal so WINDLINE was born and ran for 5 issues, eventually dying from lack of support, but an average issue carried 30-40 pages. Skydiving took over from the other activities, forcing my fencing etc into the background but enhanced my love of Photography. Air to air movies and still camera work was an interesting challenge which was met by stapling both cameras to my helmet, using a long lead bulb release for the still camera and a mouth switch I could bite for the cine. [See the above photo of Dennis.- Ron.] Then the advert. that changed my SF activity entirely appeared in our local TELEGRAPH - I've told this story so many times before I feel it happened to someone else - it went (very basically) like this :

I replied to the ad that deplored the lack of organised fandom in Australia and gathered that an organisation calling themselves the Brisbane Science Fact Science Fiction Club was in the throws of being born - but it fizzled and, after the initial response, I heard no more. John Bangsund's name in IF gave me the address of ASFR - but no reply from John either when I wrote... Again the magical name appeared in a Letters To The Editor section and this time the reply gained me back copies of ASFR and entry into fandom Down Under. Things bubbled along and people such as Gary Mason, Ron Clarke were added to my list of BNF's - and I started the Brisbane Fantasy & Science Fiction Assn in November, 1969. And it's still surviving, if only just, with me as its president, secretary, treasurer, etc. etc. (Cont. on p.56)

The cover art this issue is not, unfortunately, what the artist gave me. The original had a large area of black, which the printing press could not cope with; so the cover is actually a mirror reverse of the actual artpiece. (Which is why the eye of the right hand figure does not stand out like it should). My apologies to Mary for this, and I can tell readers that the original art is really striking!

+ + +

All electrostencils in this issue are from Noel Kerr. \$2 ea from 85 Morgan St., Carnegie, Vic. 3163.

+ + +

Several overseas fans who would like to see Australian zines are : Cy Chauvin, of 17829 Peters, Roseville, Michigan 48066 , USA; Ed Cagle, of Route I, Leon, Kansas 67074, USA; Phyrne Bacon, of 3101 NW 2nd Avenue, Gainesville, Florida 32601, USA; and JO3 George Laking, B98 30 16, Box 2, Apartado 33, Base Naval de Rota, Rota (Cadiz) ESPAÑA.

+ + +

The usual boo boo was in TM 20; this time I really excelled myself. Bert Chandler's name is, of course, Bertram, not Bertrum as in too many places in TM 20. Sorry, Bert.

+ + +

Something New : Club Comments.

Queensland (Dennis Stocks):

"RON'S ROOST" in TM 20 also pays indirect compliment (at least, I took it as a compliment) to the BFSFA as a "Hard Core" SF club. Actually I'm fighting hard to keep it that way through lack of members... or really the lack of members who come to meetings at any one time.

Apart from the people in Brisbane who actually attended QCON, the response to those coverages we had on TV and in the papers was surprisingly good. And, although some who replied didn't turn up at Easter, I felt that this would form the solid basis of BFSFA membership apart from the "old faithfuls" such as Frank Bryning, John Ryan, Roy Burgess, Neil Rahman and myself, plus the occasional few. But something happened and the meeting after the Con was poorly attended and in the 3 meetings since, the numbers have been about the same as they were before the event.. . ie. about 9 to a dozen. Last meeting (this writ in July) while I was chasing odd plants over most of Carpentaria, the Club was

in the very capable hands of Neil Rahman who played portions of my recording of the original radio broadcast of WAR OF THE WORLDS... but he tells me again the attendance was poor... Solution??? I'm afraid I can't see any. Perhaps I'm trying for too much; but with a meeting room in the centre of the city (Free - belongs to one of our members) and the "library" we've everything going for us except members.. more advertising might help but I think we just about have everyone who is in any way SF orientated with the publicity for QCON.

Victoria(Christine McGowan):

You're so right that at Monash our activities are "more social gatherings", but the absence of anything serious is not for lack of bloody trying. A couple of weeks ago (July) we arranged a well publicized lunch-time talk from John Foyster on the history of prozines, and damn me if the audience wasn't the usual six faithful irregulars. Gaaah! Well, I don't care - I get to spend Union money on the books of my choice, and the fewer interested parties there are the more choice I get. (Which is one way of rationalising the present sad state of affairs. What can you do when you know that the Club has umpteen sleeping members who are only in it for the library?...)

South Australia (Alan Sandercock):

Well, I suppose the single most interesting item is our showing of 16mm science fiction/fantasy/horror films to fairly large audiences - ie about 70 to 150 people, in Adelaide. We charge between 20 and 40 cents, which may explain why we have such good attendances. Also I suppose we have a fairly captive audience at University. Anyhow, this results in a modest profit for each film which generally helps the club along finance wise.

Besides showing films, we are also building up a library of S.F. books, most of which have been donated and a few bought from the profits of the film shows. Our trouble here is that certain people have a remarkable reading speed and usually devour these books by the armload. One of our committee members can comfortably get through five or so books every evening if they are supplied to her and if exams are far away. Monica's particular record is the reading of fifteen S.F. books on one Saturday morning! She had saved them up during the week to ensure a complete weekend's reading but had started into the books on Saturday morning and couldn't stop. All 15 were demolished at, I guess, about one every 15 minutes. The plots were apparently merging towards the last books and character's names were forgotten. Can anyone over your way beat this for rapid reading?

Besides going to films and reading books, our other club activities include, at the moment, a weekly meeting and discussion on science fiction - this usually ends up as a debate with everyone shouting everyone else down and generally having a lot of fun. These sessions have quite often gone on for about 3 hours, as people discuss various stratagems for invading a solar

system, the use of sex in science fiction and - well, you get the idea.

The other main activity at the moment is the production of our club newsletter and the work going on towards putting out the first issue of our fanzine. At the moment of writing (July), the editor (John Hewitt) has obtained and had electro-stencilled, the illustrations and has about 10 pages of reviews I would estimate the first issue will be out in 3 to 4 weeks, even if the whole thing is written by only about 3 people. This is in fact most likely since we have the old problem of getting people to contribute.

Naturally, too, as you have heard from Paul, work is going ahead with the Adelaide New Year Con. Not much to say at the moment concerning the programme, but we have booked a house that is used by the University for discussion weekends etc, during the year and can accomodate in two dorms and two bedrooms up to 50 people. We feel that this will be ideal for a con. At 50 cents per person a night, guests shouldn't have too many worries about finances. (Address: John Hewitt; 11 Kyre Ave., Kingswood, S.A. 5062.)

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FANZINES RECEIVED:

CHAO IV & V from John J. Alderson, Havelock, Vic 3465. These are very 'personalised' issues, as are most of John's - with the personality of the editor very strong in the material and views. There is an autobiog of the editor in CIV which sheds some light on the history of John (plus a very well executed portrait) There are the usual articles, slanted towards Scottish feather. There are zine reviews and locs and reviews and an article on Ireland in CV. Bimonthly when the wool gets sold. Available for usual or 30¢ + postage (usually 7¢).

ETHERLINE '71 + NORSTRILIAN NEWS 30 E is put out by the Melb. SF Club everysooften. Club news and is about 5 pp. Some film reviews. Oh, E is no 2, vol 4, from Box 1267L, GPO, Melb. 3001. NORSTRILIAN NEWS 32 contained much needed Aust. news (something actually happens here??) and is available from Bruce Gillespie, who edits it, at GPO Box 5195AA, Melbourne, Vic. 3001. Good source of current news for those overseas interested in doings in Aussieland. As is, for those interested in -

A75 BULLETINS 2 and 3. Unfortunately these are only distributed in Australia, so youse overseas will have to wait for the "other magazine" they (the committee) are rumoured to be ~~putting~~ thinking of putting out. For those who think themselves Up on all the news of the Aust in '75 bid. The August issue (3) contained the sheets distributed at the Noreastcon. Is about 20 half quarto pages ea. and is 20¢ ea or \$2 per year. Buy it.

S F COMMENTARYs 21 & 22, from Bruce Gillespie (address above). For those who like good criticism and reviews of sf books this is the

best specialised zine around. 21 has reviews by Franz Rottensteiner in depth, an article by David R Grigg on his visit to Sinny, a start by Bruce Gillespie on the Original Fiction Anthologies and locs. 22 has the article SEX IN SCIENCE FICTION by Stanislaw Lem (really good reading) and part 2 of the OF Anths by Bruce. These issues are nearly all type, so for the usual or \$3 for 9 you really get good value. Comes out nearly bimonthly.

ALGOL 16 is from Andrew Porter, of 55 Pineapple St., Apt. 3J, Brooklyn, N.Y. 11201, USA and is offset. Actually its the Dec.'70 issue and is 44 pp. Illos throughout - beauty on the cover - and has columns by such as JJ Pierce, Ted White (best in the ish), Dick Lupoff and Greg Benford. Funny, though it is offset, there is none of that 'cooling' that is usual - good zine and very easy to read. Irregular, and for the usual or 75¢ ea or \$3 for 5.

AFAN I is pretty impossible to describe; though it is from Dave Hulvey, who resides in Rt.1, Box 198, Harrisonburg, Va 22801, USA. Another personalised zine. And cites an intro to Dave by Him. It also has an antibook review, which is really a, ah, antibook review... All about heepies. Yeah. There is also a sendoff of a zine called MINDFUCK - which looks suspiciously like FOULER... coupla illos and something called "Thoughts While Tokin' The Toad" which dinn quite jell with me. For a good belly laugh. Ain't for sale, far as I know; though can be got for the usual. Irregular?

VECTOR 57 and assorted minutes from the BSFA - Bob Parkinson, who is editor at 106 Ingram Ave., Aylesbury, Bucks UK. Or was the last I heard. Has a loong review of Left Hand of Darkness by John-Henri Holmberg + SF In the Classroom, which was of interest for those who reckon that school kids could be indoctrinated for the Cause. It is the May 1971 ish, and costs \$3 (ie when you join the BSFA.) And Vector is worth it, too. Peculiar duplication thish kinda $\frac{1}{2}$ offset, $\frac{1}{2}$ bad photostat.

GEGENSCHNEIN 2 wafts from the direction of Eric Lindsay at a quarterly schedule around the area of 6 Hillcrest Ave., Faulconbridge, NSW 2776. 24pp @ 25¢ ea or the usual. Has a drawing of Eric on the cover and, as it says on the cover: articles, reviews and locs. Ahum... Eric gives an idea of how to build some shelves for sf books (which don't need backing) + an intro to "Doomsday Tomorrow", which a kind of book review, then there are film reviews, an article on SpaceWar, more book reviews and then: locs. Not bad....

JOUS 90-92 & 94 is the sf newsmag for worldwide news and is available from Bruce Gillespie at 10 for \$3.50, and comes out biweekly. It also has good artwork as well as news. Won the Hugo this year for best fanzine....

EGG 4 is from Peter Roberts who appears to have moved to.. uh, dunno... lost the address; though his old address was 87 West Town Lane, Bristol, BS4 5DZ, UK. David Grigg is Aust agent, anyway. 34pp and is a nice genzine. Thish has a Heicon report with photos. If you're lucky you won't get it and thus won't see me in it. (complete with beard). Also has a column by Gray Boak and a putoff of Wired Tales. Plus Locs. 40¢ or 3/\$1 Aust or usual. Good reading.

MAYBE, Worlds of Fanfiction is from Irvin Koch, apt 54, 614 Hill ave., SW, Knoxville, TN. 37902. By the time you see this his address will be: 835 Chatt. Bk. Bldg., Chattanooga, TN. 37402, USA. This is one of the most crowded zines I've seen. It has fair to good fanfic and is 30 US quarto pages long. The cover shows what looks like a girl getting her gear off. Irvin wrote - "Your Mentor has been told to me to be the Australian version of Maybe (& Sting from Jane Hales is the UK version)!" For the usual or two for \$1. Is bimonthly.

JUST A REMINDER from Dennis Stocks; is also called JAR; available from Box 2268, GPO, Brisbane, Qld 4001 and is the pub of the BF&SFA. News, erotica and other fings. If wanted I'd send 'em ¢\$.

ENERGUMEN 6- 8 I got from Mike Glicksohn @ 267 St. George St., Apt 807, Toronto 180, Ontario, Canada. Available for the usual or the last resort of 60¢ per ish cash. Full of good titbits and no 7 has an uproarious article reprint by Walt Willis called 'How to BNF Without Tears'. Possibly one of the best things in the ish. Mike is on the 'two ishes' at once binge -and is way ahead of his schedule. Also has some of the best artwork being currently published. Gaughan cover. Yes.

OUTWORLDS 7 & 8 is of course, the natural rival of the above E. It comes from Bill Bowers of PO Box 87 Barberton, Ohio 44203, USA. For the usual or the rates given in TM 20. Dennis Stocks is Aust. agent. The best thing in this ish Robert A. Lowndes on "Understandings", an essay on the Vernian and Wellsian sweeps of sf. Is supposidly quarterly. The US dock strike will bugger up future issues no doubt. It took 10 weeks to get no 7, and I got no 8 two weeks after 7.

FOULERS 5 & 6 came from Greg Pickersgill & Leroy Kettle; the editorial address is: "The Pines", Haylett Lane, Merlins Bridge, Haverfordwest, Pembrokeshire, UK, though they may have moved. If you can stand fucks every couple of lines, these are the issues that has been 'livening' up the UK fanscene. It comes in plain covers for your convenience. (It does have some interesting stuff in it though). For the usual or 50p for 6. Irregular (giggle).

EUROPA REPORT I is about the Eurocon 1 to be held in Trieste in '72. Offset @ 44pp. In several languages including English. If you want to help support International Fandom send \$4 (supporting membership) to: EUROCON I c/- CCSF, casella postale 423-30100 Venezia Italy. It also has an interesting intro to Trieste.

ERG 34 & 35 is a genzine from Terry Jeeves @ 230 Bannerdale Rd., Sheffield S11 9FE, UK. Sports a colour Jeeves cover and his doings in the RAAF in WWII, as well as sundries. (In 34 there is 'A Short History of the Handgun' by Brian Robinson which I found interesting reading.) Scattered throughout are the Jeeves illos, of course, 30p for 4, or the usual.

ENTROPION 3 is from Nick Shears of 52 Garden Way, Northcliffe ext 4, Johannesburg, Transvaal, South Africa. Genzine with mostly non-sf stuff. 32 pp with onstencil illos. Nice long LoC column. For usual or 30¢ an ish. Reviews, articles, etc. English slant.

YGGDRASIL 4 is the mag of the Melb. Uni. S F Assn; edited by Clive Morley of Flat 8, 280 Cardigan St., Carlton, Vic. Not a bad ish this time. There is poesy, an article of the Conquest of Burbardy, an article by John J Alderson called 'In Search of the Isles of the Blest' and a couple of covers. In fact thisish seems to go on into Barbarianism more than most. For the usual or..or..or..

At Last!! - SCYTHROP 23 is the creation of John Bangsund of GPO Box 4946, Melbourne 3001. Sub 2.40 for 6 issues. I dunno about "usual". John? Fairly slim issue - though the 20 pp has that minute typeface, of the best repro, natch. It has reviews and articles and more of Bangsund... much better. I only hope John, that you can keep it going - Scy is too good to drop.

CYNIC 3. Another British zine, this time from A. Graham Boak, of 3, Rydelands, Nuthurst, Cranleigh, Surrey, UK. International Quarto + green paper and good repro makes this a very nice zine, both to read and behold. And it's got good material, too!! Illos aren't bad, either. Genzine, available for the usual or the last resort, money, but there is no established rate. Cynic is a very easy zine to read, and I'd say is one of the best of the British zines at the moment.

SF Published in 1970 is published by Joanne Burger and covers all the sf and fantasy books published in 1970. Indexed as Author, Title and Series. Though it does not cover UK books. 48 pp for 75 ¢ is a bargain, especially with the cover this has! Silk screened on what looks like mother-of-pearl paper - it is one of the most professional covers I've seen anywhere. Joanne's address is: 55 Blue Bonnet Ct., Lake Jackson, Texas, 77566, USA. A must for anyone who wants to keep up with pubbing in the sf field.

BADMOUTH is from Lynn Hickman of 413 Ottokee St., Wauseon, Ohio 43567, USA, and is, I suppose, available for the usual, though I saw no mention of rates. Badmouth is fannish orientated, and it appears, though I missed the first issue, as though it is a zine for putting forward gripes, or "opinions". It is lithoed and has a cover illo from a pulp zine (I hope), and the inside is from The Phantom Detective. There is an article on Censorship, by Liza Tuttle, an account of her first date by Liz Fishman (very funny), and locs on the first ish of Badmouth. This zine looks like a very low key Fouler. Quarterly.

Other zines that are out, and which I have not seen completed copies of as yet are: Gegenschein 3 and Terran Times 4. I know that Geg has very good duper as I have seen a sample page, and Eric gave it out at the last SSFF meeting, at which I was unable to attend. Anyway, his address is above in the Geg 2 review.

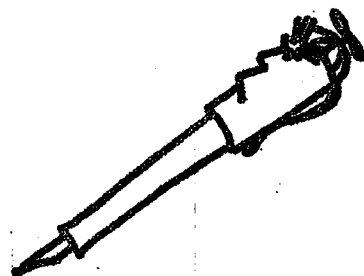
Terran Times is put out by Shayne McCormack and I know that is good duped as I ran it off on my duper. I also know it is out as I helped a little collating it. Shayne's address is: 49 Orchard Rd., Bass Hill, NSW 2197.

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the R & R dept.



B.T. Jeeves
230 Bannerdale Rd., Sheffield S11 9FE, UK.

Dear Ron,

Many thanks for 'The Mentor' (18)... a nice, crisp-feeling mag with an interesting cover. As a personal thing, I'd like to have seen a little more made of interior artwork, but that is just my own leaning coming out.

Cy Chauvin's piece I enjoyed, but must confess that I didn't fathom the basic plot of the story...i.e. WHY did the SS hunt the young couple??? Otherwise, as I say, I liked it.

Solitude on the other hand was too pretentious...heavily adjective larded with purple passages which helped the text not one little bit. As for the plot, it is similar in essence (the relativity of time) to an Amazing (?) prozine story of around the 40's... The actual title escapes me, but it was something like "The Strange Flight of Richard Gordon".. in which a rocket pilot is in a rocket which misfires (unknown to him and the reader). He lives an age eating, sleeping, writing as it blasts for the stars. Finally, as an old man, the rockets cut out and he steps out of the rocket to find he has been stuck on the launching pad for only a few hours.

It was nice to see Paul Anderson reviewing Keith Laumer - is he any relation to POUL Anderson via a slip of the pen.. or is it a completely different character - probably the latter since every time the name appears, it is as 'Paul' [As far as I know there is no relation, Terry. - Ron.] Anyway, I share his opinion of Laumer as a producer of cardboard characters - his Retief yarns bore me to tears.. and I have yet to read a tale of his which made me loth to put it down as distinct from damn glad when it was finished.

Jack Wodhams on the money-eating monster was very good, but just went on a shade too long. Such items are always difficult to cut to length. When a good idea hits you, the temptation to explore every tiny edge of possibility is very great - and afterwards, it needs a will of iron to say.. this could be cut out with advantage.

Reality F - well, first of all I would say this is largely written in self justification. I may be completely wrong on that, but why else parade such double-think. If lassie A (thinking she has weighed all the facts, which she probably hasn't) decides to lose her maidenhead.. that is her choice be it right, wrong or immoral. I won't go into the problem of who supports the child if one results (though too often this devolves on the community as a whole.. who were not consulted as to their views in the matter). However, lassie has now taken a stand - or rather has received one, and is no longer in mint condition. This was what she wanted. Now if at some later date some bloke objects to

this - he is just exerting his own right to choose what HE wants. If she can choose, then so can he. To bring in fairness, male advantage and such like is just red herring.. after all, lassie might (and very probably would) object to spouse having had pre-marital intercourse - it is easy to say..Oh, we're broad minded about such things.. until wife finds out about hubby sleeping around town, then at the first row, up it comes. This wanting your cake but banning it for others is all very well. For my money, if you decide to embark on such a course, then if you don't like the results, you have only yourself to blame. After all, by the same argument, if bloke A can fiddle his Income Tax and get away with it, does this mean that in fairness, we should all be allowed to do this same?? Of course not - he took a course of action knowing the possible results - so let it be with virginity.

The Mentor 19 - A Finlay cover - drool, drool and drool again. This alone is worth the price of admission. I'm rather surprised (or maybe I'm not when I think of the work) that no fannish imitation have sprung up. The only one I know of is Alan Hunter, who though good, is not in Finlay's league.

Mosaic was well written, and I almost liked it, but it was too long and involved, with the result that my interest waned. It could, with advantage, have been much shorter. Hooray - a piece of fanzine poetry which I not only can read - but also enjoy. Three cheers for 'The Interferometer', a very welcome change from the current vogue for rhymeless pap with a pseudo-message.

Identity - oh well, I suppose somebody has to write stuff like this if only to make the other writers look good - but why print it in a good zine? I turn back to drool over the Finlay again.

Bestest,
Terry.

Cy Chauvin
17829 Peters, Roseville, Michigan 48066, USA.

Dear Ron,

Incredibly beautiful cover, Ron. You sure are a lucky one. I always look through Ultimate's old reprint mags just to catch the occasional beautiful Finlay illo reprint. He's a marvelous artist, and I wonder now what his great paintings-covers for FAMOUS FANTASTIC MYSTERIES must have looked like.

Michael Black's "Identity" is still as puzzling as all hell, but it is still somehow very enchanting and mysterious. Mike seems to have talent alright - this story is no piece of crud certainly - but I only wish I knew what he was doing! Couldn't you get him to give an explanation of one of his stories sometime? [See the R & R Dept thish, Cy. - Ron.]

Don Herbison-Evans poem "The Interferometer" was a delightful and excellent piece. His comparison was very apt, I

thought. You never know who will wax poetic, eh, Ron? (And did you see that article by Arnie Katz called, "I Sing the Duper Electric"...) [I'm] afraid not, Cy; at least I don't remember it.-Ron.]

Nice fat lettercol you have; you seem to get an awful lot of response, which is good, it shows that people are interested in TM. Like I've said before (I think) I only wish you'd edit it a bit more carefully and delete the repetitious & uninteresting remarks... though, don't think that means I'm interested in one of those (disgusting) WAHF sections!! As far as Gary Woodman's remarks on my poem, ("We are only Mortals") a couple of issues back.. Well, I really can't remember exactly what I did mean, Gary! That poem was written at least two years ago... Maybe more. Not all suffering is necessarily "sad" of course: some people get a perverse satisfaction out of inflicting pain on themselves. The suffering may relieve their guilt feelings - cleanse their soul (?). But if you really want to know why I said "sadness of suffering" and not something else - well, it sounded good! The double-s sound the phrase has. Usually that's the way I write a poem, purely by what "sounds" right, not so much by what the words actually mean all the time. (Otherwise the thing tends to come out as cut-up prose for me.) I let the readers figure out what it means for themselves (oh the poor readers...) It just strikes me now that this is what Michael Black probably does when he writes his strange stories. And I wonder how Steven Phillips writes his poems..?

Paul Anderson's reviews seem improved since last time. (Or maybe it's just the higher quality of books he tackles..?) Now that I think about it, he seems to be the sort of Australian Ted Pauls: both of them turn out an incredible number of reviews, all usually fairly decent stuff, too. Ghods! I wonder how they get the stamina to plow through all those books and write those endless reviews. Eat your Wheaties every morning, eh, Paul?

I'm afraid I haven't read David R. Grigg's "Mosaic" yet, so I can't comment on it. Will he ever forgive me for being so neglectful? *Sure, just send me a \$100 check and comment on it next time, Cy!*

Yours,
Cy.

Blair S Ramage
13 Attunga Ave., Earlwood, NSW 2206.

Dear Ron,

Well, let's see, "The Mentor 20". To begin with, the cover; it leaves me in two minds: the foreground with the flowering vine entwining itself around the pillar is good, but the background of boat and volcano leaves me rather cold. About the editorial: It seems to me that Australian fanzines cannot be as "open" or fannish as American ones simply because of the lack of interest shown by the general public in Australian towns towards S.F. We Australian "fans" (as opposed to people who only read a little SF) are so few that it is vitally necessary for us to 'push' our

ideas on the general public is an effort to reproduce our kind. What you say about Australian fans being individuals seems to be true judging from my own experience, but I feel that the time is not yet ripe to "fanize" Australian fandom.

Was the misprinting of Daniel Keyes "Flowers for Algernon" as "No: Flowers for Algernon" deliberate or did you get it confused with "No Roses for Michael"? [Nuh, just a misprint, Blair.- Ron.] The review of "I Will Fear No Evil" was also interesting, but if Z.K. doesn't watch it, she may have to answer to Johnny Rico and 'Scar' Gordon one dark night. Of the other reviews, "A Gun for Dinosaur" and "The Authentic Touch" seem most interesting; is the latter available in Australia at the moment? if so, where? [I haven't seen it on sale; the Publishers address is: Curtis Books, (Book Department, Curtis Circulation Co., 641 Lexington Ave., New York, N.Y. 10022, USA. Is 75¢ US. - Ron.] From what I've read of Wodhams he seems to delight in chopping hurriedly from scene to scene, usually resulting in monumental confusion: "There Is A Crooked Man" is a good (or bad, depending on how you look at it) example of this. But why pick "The Castle of Iron" to compare it to? "The Castle of Iron" is a good story in itself, but, frankly I didn't think it was nearly as good as its predecessor, "The Incomplete Enchanter" by the same authors. [Well, in my book they rate the same.- Ron, and anyway, it was just an example of the sort of story "Touch" is.]

- Blair Ramage.

E.B. Lindsay
6 Hillcrest Ave., Faulconbridge, NSW 2776.

Dear Ron,

I note with glee that David Grigg commented in The Fanarchist 5 about the similarity in appearance between you and the mysterious Mr Brown of Qantas fame; as supporting evidence he notes the size and the Finlay illustration in 19; and now we have number 20, eighty four pages, and I notice that you have a new duplicator. What say to to this, eh. [I say that you are trying awful hard to say its me, Eric. How about you, huh? - Ron]

On to the stories. I enjoyed The Expedition by Robert Bowden, the more so by rereading "After Ragnarok" and I very much look forward to the third story in the series, so that I can find out how the thing is supposed to end. I thought that there was perhaps too much emphasis on visual images, but I don't really think that it harmed the story in this case.

Jack Wodhams put forward an interesting and sensible and astute view (one that I agree with, in other words) of sf although I doubt that Bruce Gillespie would have published it.

As for Bert Chandler's "No Room In The Stable", it seems that Bert is suffering from a sense of guilt at introducing all those plagues of rats into his various stories, and is now trying to make amends. Now if these cats get loose in Grime's

universe (the one where the rats took over) we should get some very unusual Rimworld stories from Bert.

I am glad to see some up-to-date reviews, but would someone please send Paul Anderson some just released books; I would really like to know what he thinks of some recent story.

The bio by A. Bertram Chandler was very interesting, gives you an idea of the author, and why he writes, but who can you follow up with - can't be many authors left.

Regards,
Eric.

Michael Black
19 Crescent St., Fairlight, NSW 2094.

Dear Ron

It appears that my printouts have been resulting in some confusion amongst your readers. The First Law and all that (A.C. Clarke was assembled in the early years, you know) rather prohibits this sort of thing (really it's self-defence anyway). So the "ding-bat" responsible has pulled the big red handle and left me holding the bag so to speak.

Charlie Chan (shudder) would say "Confusion decrease as clock run backward", as the stories were printed more or less in reverse chronological order to that in which they were written. However, they are all fragments of a totality yet to be completed and in this context they may be read in any order, provided that certain underlying assumptions have been recognised.

In their letters to your R & R (snicker) Dept several readers have indicated that they had noticed certain of these assumptions but none has yet recognised or realised them all.

A few words in regard to the development of the particular context will enable it to be described more usefully. At about the age of 12 I was hooked on spy storie; and becoming interested in science, mechanistic concepts, etc. Having nothing particular to do one afternoon, my sister and I set about composing a kind of 'Dr No' story; set in and around a South American town, beside a US Air Force Base and involving a spate of ingeniously sadistic murders. With all suspects killed off there was no alternative but to bring up (ecch!) the subject of a volcanic island off the coast. This of course was to permit some descendants of Cro-Magnon Man to reach the surface there and to fool around with us morons. These creatures had escaped the ice-age by living underground where they developed wings and a super scientific civilization; but their culture became too complex and their living space too crowded, so they had gone en masse to Mars, etc., leaving a few technicians and a planet-core full of cybernetic devices.

This concept was intriguing so we deserted the waters of Guatemala - blood-red - for a consideration of what these creatures would devise to house and care for their ultimate offspring.

These latter would be all thoroughly dependent, neuter and mentally hung-up to the n th degree by every kind of phobia and complex possible. Ergo ($\frac{8}{\sqrt{F}} \frac{\pi}{m}$ to you) they would have to submit the decision to them, not so much for democratic as for perfectly rational reasons.

From a physical point of view the world of each individual would be a cell capable of serving every physical need so as to prolong its charge's biological life indefinitely. Psychotherapeutic monitors would gently herd any tendencies to unhappiness whilst avoiding suppression of individuality so far as possible. The cells would completely surround the planet and there would be many layers of them so as to 'house' the vast number of these creatures.

Energy and necessary materials (interchanged as the demand arose) would be drawn from the material within the planet; drones (native inhabitants whose neural systems had been physically subjugated to implanted monitors) would perform any tasks essential to the indefinite functions of the cybernetic systems.

This generation of cocooned creatures obviously could be postulated to be the mental superiors of their forebearers; they would in any case be "vegetables" more-or-less solely existing in a mental sense divorced from the physical. It very well could be that at this stage the "gene memory" if such exists, or a sum total of the inherited neural networks and memory ciphers (chemicals or whatever), resulted in an outpouring into these 'liberated' minds of all the pent-up hand-ups which their species had accumulated since its inception.

Whether or not a 'Childhood's End'-type amorphous creature (or a totally thought Nirvana-type mind) was the final state that these individual minds entered, and to me it appears that their esse would come to too rapid an end for either of these eventualities, they would be for the time of their existence involved totally in abstract deliberations. Thus their real state could be submitted to them by the monitors as an abstract problem to ponder. It is not too presumptive to assume that this could lead in some minds to an escape into unrelated, complex-determined imaginings. Up to this date all of the stories I have had published have been intended to convey such imaginings to the reader. I intend in the near future to commit to paper what appears to be the only logical outcome of the introduction into an objective mind of the reality concept.

There has also been some dissension as to the proper place of the "Terran" (so-called) series in the above miasma. My published works have been intended to have two distinct effects on the reader. (a) Primarily they aim at involvement - they should be silently read "aloud" to oneself, because their onomatopoeia is essential to their emotional gestalt. It is the combination of word-flow and word-sense that is intended to provide a Greek-Tragedy-type catharsis and this it is to the word-associations of each individual that they look for their affect. [Cy..? - Ron.] (b) The second effect is one of arousal - the experiences generated

are not intended to be soothing - they call for a positive reaction - whether it be pro or anti - the dogmatism presented. To put it bluntly there were not enough letters to the editor at one time and I agreed to help generate some reader participation. Surprisingly (?) the 'Terran' series was less successful in this regard than my other works.

Naturally my short stories could be said to lean more towards fantasy than sci-fi; despite a certain sci-fi content; emotions are best exerted in directly homomorphic forms; however there is occasional reference to such objects as flying devices (saucers etc.)

I have already indicated to some members of the SSFF, etc, that some of us have formed an association to practically inquire into the feasibility of these and related subjects. Of this I shall write in detail later, however any enquiries regarding membership (open to anyone) or activities, etc may be addressed to myself c/- address at top of letter, or c/- CBFS Associates, Box 33, City Rd., Union University of Sydney 2006; or by 'phone 949-2776 (home) or 259-3055 (work). Enquiries are welcome.

Yours Lithographically,
Michael Black.

Dennis Stocks
Box 2268, G.P.O. Brisbane, Qld. 4001.

Dear Ron,

"THE MENTOR" gets better and better... 'though the cover of Number 19 is going to take a lot of beating.

The Mentor 20 - blue headings yet?? Very elaborate.. as I said earlier The Mentor gets better and better. [Thanks, Dennis. Actually, the old duper is about clapped out, so I stuck blue in the cylinder. Unfortunately the new duper doesn't have changeable drums, so you won't be seeing much more colour when the old duper finally gives up the ghost. - Ron.]

Robert Bowden's sequel to AFTER RAGNAROK was a worthy effort to the first and I'm interested in reading IMPASSE, but Bowden's lack of conversation in the text tends to grate a bit... I'll diverge for a minute as I've just thought of something.. David Grigg's MOSAIC would make an ideal first part of an Omega continuous saga of the "Jewel in the Skull" genre. MOSAIC was very enjoyable and some-what red-faced, I realise I've made yet another contribution to the D.Stocks Foot in Mouth Disease Fund... er...yes I've realised Gormenghast - the way he spelt it - was intentional. Sorry David, if this ever gets printed and you're reading it... back to Robert Bowden - yes, I feel he has the envious knack of entertaining SF writing, but I personally would like to see the plain line-after-line descriptions broken up by a little more dialogue.. Such as in the beautiful THERE IS A SUN by Van Ikin. [How do you like the switch this issue, Dennis?- Ron.]

Jack Wodhams reads like he sounds.. fond memories of the QCON Bar-B-que at the Ryans where I cornered Jack and got his ramblings down on tape... Tolstory..erk! Like John Brosnan Jack is an entertaining writer. Hail his autobiog. in THE MENTOR 19 and, for that matter, Bert Chandler's in the current issue.

Ghod! Bowden, Chandler, Ikin, (Ghasp! He reels in envy) the fiction content and quality of THE MENTOR skyrockets.

"I Will Fear No Evil" I thought probably the worst Heinlein has written.. an opinion formed from the fragmented serial in GALAXY and I'll have to read the complete thing I acquired recently to see if this impression changes.

My mother, who's taken to reading the 'zines I get through the mail, sometimes before I get around to it, liked Cy Chauvin's MIRROR.. so it's gotta be good.

THE MENTOR 20.. well I suppose you'll want something more than the fact I liked it.. No, not really.- Ron. but I did.. so what more can I say???

regards,
Dennis.

Christine McGowan
40 Williams St., Blackburn, Vic 3130.

Dear Ron,

I don't wish to be rude, but what's going on? Some weeks ago I sent you an article for Reality F, posted before Carey Handfield's eyes, should the matter come into question, and now you send me TM 20 with the "Yes, well..." box ticked.

Is this your idea of a rejection slip, or are you annoyed because I was a bit tardy delivering the goods, or has my article not arrived? Please don't leave me in suspense, my fingernails are quite short enough as it is. I've already answered Christine, but if any other people get this happening to them: the box "you sent a contrib." covers material published in that issue. I'm sorry I didn't make that clearer. Also the box "Yes, well..." covers a multitude of sins... With this there should be a new box marked "You sent material." - sorry, Christine. - Ron.

Enough whinging. TM improves all the time, and TM 20 conformed to this trend, although I don't think much of the artwork. The cover's not bad, but I have never much liked your interior illos, though I do remember some rather engaging dragons a couple of issues past.

"The Expedition" I liked, I really did. Now that is more my idea of a story, although it left a strong feeling of being a fragment of a much larger whole. But it wasn't a disembodied fragment; it had a beginning, an end, and a most entertaining width. If Robert Bowden doesn't end up a dirty pro before he's thirty (twenty-five, even) with an eager following and an electric typewriter, I shall be most surprised. (Or is he a Dop already?

How much do you have to sell to qualify?). His imagery is a thing to delight in, and he keeps it in its place, foregoing the self-indulgent messing about with words that I consider a sign of immaturity in most cases. I hope you can publish more fiction of the same standard more often.

Can't say the same for "There is a Sun". What I can say is yucch! I searched high and low, near and far, I even read between the lines, and not a plot could I see. Well, there might have been a microscopic one, which might have shown if the story (?? mood-piece?? rambling??) had been half its length. It started off well, but seemed to run out of steam very quickly. One gets the impression that the author didn't know his heroine very well. I mean, someone who doesn't want to be a nurse, "strongly opposed the idea", yet "allowed herself to become a nurse" after a nervous breakdown? And as for the old boy, he should have had a heart attack during lift. Seriously, something concrete like that, or an attack by Daleks or other space nasties would have seemed much less contrived a way of resolving the girl's troubles than the two-person group therapy session we were expected to wade through. Look, I used to know someone very like the little nurse, and action was the only way to snap her out of herself - she adored talking to her intimates, but it only made her more self-pitying than before. And as for a person like that being a nurse - Van Ikin must be kidding! Nursing's no career for milk-sops or sad little bundles of introspection, and I doubt if it will be much different 100 years hence.

I agree completely with Jack Wodhams. Of course I like SF because it provides unparalleled opportunities to pick, pick, pick without the esoteric effort involved in serious mainstream criticism. SF sets you thinking - of course it's sub-literary, it wouldn't be SF if it wasn't, and therein lies the charm that my [untranslatable] friends, bewitched by the English Department, fail to see. That's one thing about doing law - after reading the incredible, windy absurdities that issue forth from the courts and subsequently rule our lives, it's a pleasure to turn to SF for a breath of sanity, and indeed for at least moderately competent writing (judges have a captive audience, so they don't bother to make their judgements readable, thereby providing work for a whole class of academic lawyers who earn good money for interpreting the rubbish into every conceivable meaning.)

Lovely long R & R. Still getting feedback on Sheila Suttie's article! [Yeah; and see thish, too.- Ron.] Tell me, did she really mean it, or was it just written in order to see what the effect would be? [Well, I wanted an article that would stir up interest, so I asked Sheila. And yes, it is her views, and the thing that struck her about the "answers" was that about 90% of the people who replied had completely misread what she wrote.- Ron.] As for you, male chauvinist pig, I am not a Women's Liberationist. I just think men should be kept in their place, that's all. [Listen Toots, it took us 30,000 years to get away from the power of women witchdoctors, et al and to the present stage of equal rights for the elite, and we have no intention of

loosing such ~~head~~ start as we have for some female shackles.-Ron.]
 Oh yes, and Heino Lepp has hit a nerve about TV shows. Has he
 never watched "Dr. Who" or "Out of the Unknown"? (Well, obviously
 he hasn't...)

How I ramble! Worse than Alex Gas.

FIOABH,
 Christine

Don Herbison-Evans
 Narrabri Observatory, PO Box 169, Narrabri, NSW 2390.

Dear Ron,

Your provocative asides have worked: have a LoC. Firstly
 TM 20 - I really liked "The Expedition". Full of nice touches
 (the use of reflectors to turn the lasers back onto themselves
 especially; I wonder if the North Vietnamese have discovered this).
 I found the other stories a bit disjointed. Of the poems, I liked
 'beauty' very much. The others didn't seem to rhyme properly. (Yes,
 I'm a genuine illiterate scientist. I actually have an old school
 report of when I was 13 saying "he will become a scientist who
 can neither read nor write his own or any other language"!) I like
 Wodham's criticism and the R & R Department; but what does the
 cover mean? /What you sees in it, Don. What you sees in it. - Ron.]

Meanwhile, whilst I am on the staff of the School of
 Physics, Sydney University, regrettably, I am not a Professor. I
 am what is known in the trade as a 'Post Doctoral Research Fellow'.
 The distinction is far from trivial: I get \$8,000 pa; a professor
 gets \$15,000.

I do confirm that I market a little kit for investig-
 ating U.F.O.s. It consists of a piece of diffraction grating and
 two pieces of Polaroid: one transmitting left hand circularly
 polarised light, the other: right hand; also a brief instruction
 card explaining what these are, how to use them and what sorts
 of effects might be expected. It costs 70 Australian cents (inc.
 postage) if anyone is interested in being prepared for a: rather
 rare, but to my mind extraordinary, important phenomenon. /Don
 had an article titled 'UFOs' in M31 no 1 (Sept. '69) in which
 he explained the use of the above and the current info on UFOs/

Yours sincerely,
 Don.

Steven Phillips
 45 Day St., Marrickville NSW 2204.

Dear Ron,

David Grigg has the right idea when he says that he
 shall publish only four or five of the letters he received each
 issue. If such a policy does chase off loc writers it will be no
 great loss, for due to the quality and content of some letters,

I am convinced that they are written only in loco of paying for the mag. - and here I am speaking of fanzines in general.

There are few exceptions to the usual loco - they all have that over-written "fanish" tone and hardly ever contain anything of interest. The two main exceptions who come to mind are Jack Wodhams and Leigh Edmonds, who both make their letters refreshing by projecting character into their comment - a little personality. I feel that most fanzine readers write nothing but letters of comment because it seems to be the same faces attached to articles, poems, etc. each issue. If this is the case the loco would be the major form of literature in fanzines, and it does not seem right that the largest proportion of wordage should be published indiscriminately. There is no value to the writer in having a letter published if it is going to be in whatever it may contain. I feel that a restrictive editorial policy in this regard would stimulate the writing of more worthwhile letters.

[A few comments on the above. There are two reasons that the R & R Dept. is in TM. One is for the readers to have an area to express their views; and second somewhere where writers can get some constructive criticism of their writings, be they stories, poems or articles. No other reason exists.

I have been thinking about the point that some loccers are like me - that is, they find it hard to say something worthwhile about an issue, or most of the things in it. Right. If you can't think of anything to say other than "I found such-and-such interesting... I didn't like so-and-so", don't say it! Look through the issue and pick out something that you can say something about; something that you disagree with or something that you can get your teeth into and you feel about enough to write. I don't want locs just because I 'trade' an issue for a loco - if you let me know that you are genuinely interested in continuing to receive TM and give me a good reason, I'll continue to send you copies, though you may only send a loco or two every third or fourth issue. I myself am a lousy loco writer - so I know how you feel. Think about the above. Owing to the growing locs I receive, I'll be deleting material not bearing directly on items of interest to the writers or readers. You can make it easier on me if you do a little thinking before loccing. - Ron.]

What interested me most in The Mentor 20 was the autobiography of A. Bertram Chandler. Here is a refreshing change from the usual. And anyone can see why. Mr. Chandler injects himself genuinely into his work to give the article individuality. However, I cannot agree with what he infers by saying "just a writer of, say, sea stories". Some unparalleled prose has come from the sea (and I don't mean literally). Joseph Conrad rates higher than any Science Fiction author I have read - though J.G. Ballard comes close to matching his imagery.

Also, I doubt that the reading or writing of SF necessarily suggests any other common ground between exponents - no more than, shall we say, the horror story or the one-act play. I know many readers of SF who would have nothing to do with fandom

and who indulge in widely diversified interests, quite divorced from those of each other.

Jack Wodhams managed to come through quite well in this issue. For once I read the whole article and did not feel embarrassed by his usual overdone style. If Jack could strive for more subtlety, he would have it made as a humorist. There is a constant and well paying popular market for good humour, and as I remember him saying he wished to reach a wide audience, Jack would do well to develop along light-hearted mainstream lines. The thing is that he knows his present audience too well - what it will accept and what he can get away with giving it.

Congratulations are due to Jack in having his first novel published. Your review of it, Mr. Clarke, makes it sound promising. I have been looking for a copy, but so far no luck.

Leith Morton wants to give up writing crap like Rune. It is nowhere near poetry and should not be disguised as such. A writer is foolish to display such gimmicky wares, especially when intending to be serious. Lists of images do not make poetry - certainly not when fifty percent are cliches and unrelated to each other to shoe.

Now Cy Chauvin, on the other hand, is a different kettle of lightly browned bream fillets. Even though Beauty is guilty of pretending to be a poem, it says a very beautiful and meaningful thing so simply that it justifies itself a thousand times under. Whoever it was meant for can be proud that such a high thought was communicated so easily without losing any force or meaning. As different from Rune, Beauty is unpretentious - an important thing to be in a poem.

Pregnant, again by Cy, is a true poem, a masterpiece. First the helplessness, the hollow - then the bright, the rich and alive, portrayed in a brilliant image of the sun, and the implications of what I take to be a very clever personification, or even for its literal value.

Writing like this is what keeps me searching the pages of fanzines.

"Mirror" was a letdown though, Cy, after such a good performance. It is a thought, but your lines did little for it.

A brief word on production, Ron. In future spare us the pathetic illustrations and your spare sheets of typing paper. Illos agreed; take out the typing paper and you'll see why it is there. - Ron.

Steve.

Cuyler Warnell Brooks, Jr.
713 Paul St., Newport News, Va. 23605 USA.

Dear Ron,

Just recently got TM 19, much thanks.

Lovely Finlay cover

though I think I would really would have preferred the matte-surface paper to the slick. I think the covers of F&SF, even though they no longer have the caliber of artist they used to, look much better than the other prozines - except for one issue a long time ago, they have always used a matte-surface paper. I like the pale blue paper you use in the rest of the zine.

Gary Woodman's idea that "everyone" has a gun in our large cities, is somewhat exaggerated. Many people do own guns, in and out of the city, but very few (Atlanta fan Joe Celko is a notable exception) carry them on the street. And in NY it is virtually impossible to own a gun legally, due to the Sullivan Law. I have a pistol myself, and when I lived in a rented room (in a private home where there were children) kept it in my car, but I never thought of shooting pedestrians with it - easier to run them down.

First time I ever saw a girl object to the label 'femmegfan' - wonder what she would think of 'fanne'? Even militant feminist fan Lisa Tuttle never objected, I don't think. But I certainly don't think that "sex is the most important thing in life" - I think once survival is taken care of to some extent, either power or curiosity (depending on the individual) become the strongest drives. I would like to know what McDowell meant by "unevaluated sex or violence", also "existentialist crusaders", which gives me the vague mental image of Sartre on a white horse charging at ?.

I don't think I've ever read any of Wodham's fiction, but his writing in this MENTOR is, hmm, frantic, to say the least. It gives me the feeling of having driven over a washboard road at high speed. /Jack has had short stories in ANALOG for some time now.- Ron./

Grigg's MOSAIC is good, it reminds me of Keith Robert's PAVANE in style. There are several unfortunate errors of detail - peasants unable to see it from above would hardly name a surface feature by its shape. And a wizard would never 'curse under his breath' during an invocation! I hope he continues the story though, it is a good start on a novel.

I liked the poem, but Black's story was incomprehensible, must close for tonight...

Best,
Ned.

Van Ikin
4 McDonald Cres., Strathfield NSW 2135.

Dear Ron,

Three cheers for your editorial comments on SF! SF is indeed entertaining, & let us never forget it. I suppose it all depends upon exactly what one means by the terms "entertaining" & "literary", but it strikes me that SF is in a very unique position because it has not committed itself, as a genre, to being either purely entertaining or literary. (As far as I am concerned, many of the writings which are regarded by modern standards as

"literary" would not be regarded as "entertaining" by the general readership.) SF, as you said, "started out as Scientific Romances". I think it has advanced a lot from that stage (meaning that it has become more sophisticated & has developed an interest in characterisation), but this advance has done nothing more than bring it to a middle-of-the-road position, so that the SF genre is, today, balanced on the edge of becoming either literary or entertaining. To me this position is unique, for when you think about it, all the other genres (eg westerns, detective stories) are firmly committed to one of those two sides (usually to entertainment).

I fervently hope that SF will not yield itself to the modern tendency to become exclusively one thing or the other, but that it will learn to combine the elements of "literature" & "entertainment". By that I mean that SF writers will write stories which do have literary value (because they deal with characterisation, or with relevant themes), but that they will weave these literary elements into a story which is high on entertainment value.

Really that is asking that a story have both popular & literary appeal, & that would seem to be a very tall order, for very few modern writers have attained this level of perfection. But it can be achieved: look at Dickens & Conrad: they're on high school and uni. literature courses, yet no-one would deny that their writings have great entertainmentt value. So the goal is not an impossible one, & to me it seems that SF is uniquely placed in being able to attain that goal so easily, if only it will reach out & grasp it.

Anyway, this letter is meant to be about TM, isn't it?

"No Room in the Stable" was a good little piece (inspired, perhaps, by The Birds?), though I thought the title was meant to be a tip-off to some sort of religious undertone running through the story. Actually, this story illustrates the type of thing I was getting at when I spoke of combining the literary & entertaining aspects in the one story. I classify Chandler's story as "entertaining" (as opposed to "dull & boring", not as opposed to "literary"), & I think the last few lines, because they reveal human nature at work, give this entertaining story a literary twist. The question is though, do I represent the norm in classing the story as "entertaining", or do the majority of readers disagree with me?

I can't let Steven Phillips' comments on Jack Wodhams go by without a comment. It strikes me that his remarks about Jack are elicited by an aversion to the "egotistical" rather than by a fair reading of the man's writings. Naturally Steven Phillips has a right to his opinions, but it strikes me he is being very sweeping on very poor grounds. Personally I would describe Jack as an extremely individual writer - individual not only in style, but in subject matter & approach as well (though I guess that when one's approach & subject matter are individualised to the extent that Jack's are, they are quickly lumped under the heading of style.)

I just read in Newsweek that John W. Campbell (editor of Analog) is dead. Can anyone tell me who's editing it now?

Cheers,
Van.

Bob Vardeman
PO Box 11352, Albuquerque, N.M. 87112, USA.

Dear Ron,

Thanx for both The Mentor 19 with the dandy Virgil Finlay cover and for the quasi-loc on SWorm...

How's Jack Williamson doing Down Under? Has all the blood run to his head yet from walking around upside down? [He seemed to enjoy himself at the party the Darlings threw for him and he met most of Sydney fandom; whom, I dare say, thoroughly enjoyed meeting a top US author.- Ron.]

Thank you for the info on your schooling system. Most enlightening. I recently purchased a book printed in England which added to my confusion, however. On the back of it was the cryptic (to me) blurb: "... can be recommended to all students from the A2, A3, and A4 stages to degree courses..." Does this mean the last three yrs of what I'd call highschool? [Sounds like it.-Ron.] If so, I'd say the US is far deficient in its educational system since I'd hardly consider a book on physical metallurgy to be comprehensible to a high school student. (I find the book to be informative, but not all that difficult, of course... but I'm separated from my last yr in high school by 6 yrs of college).

I find John Alderson's comments fascinating, esp. since he totally misconstrued everything in Sheila Suttie's article in TM 18. Nowhere can I see it is Sheila advocating that a girl become a "harlot" (which John seems to almost equate with prostitute). Just as a person who enjoys eating does not immediately and instantly become a gourmand, neither would, necessarily, a girl who wanted to enjoy herself in one of life's undeniable pleasures become a "harlot".

The idea that all that makes marriage is a law and sexual intercourse is so incredibly dense that it hardly needs more than a passing mention. Love makes a marriage, a caring for, respect for - not some words scribbled on a dusty law book. Adam and Eve were never married, right? Does that make us all bastards, John? [The comeback to that one is that they were married "in the eyes of God".. is I think how it goes.-Ron.]

Sexual freedom again, John, does not necessarily mean free sex. And your idea that it would lead to prostitution and gang bangs and the like is, hmmm, my mind boggles at finding the right words.

I'd also say your impression of Heinlein is grossly unfair, esp in re: the chemical rockets. If I remember rightly, that idea was written in the '40s. Times change, believe it or not, and technology makes advances which dull and blunt all sfnal

prophecies, even those of a prophet of Heinlein's stature.

I had heard tales of how ultra puritanical the Aust. govt. was, esp. when it comes down to what they consider pornographic, and I suppose I should have realized that any govt. policy so deeply intrenched must have a great support among the populace. But somehow it never quite penetrated. I'm afraid (altho I'm anything but a booster for Women's Lib) that the old double standard is both hypocritical and not a little bigoted. John, in your moral scheme, is the man to follow the same virginal path as the woman? I.e. maintain his virginity until those wedding vows are said? Somehow, looking back thru history, I suspect you'll answer "of course" and really mean just the opposite. Witness behaviour during the Victorian period. I think that at long last the US is beginning to see how two-faced so many of our "standards" were and are doing a bit to change them.

By the way, why do you consider marriage so sacred? Common law marriages are legal in the US and, for that matter, even I can perform legal marriages as long as the two people have paid the local license fees (if they don't, they'll still be legally married after some length of time which varies in common law states).

Femnefan? Hmm, I prefer the term fanne since it has fewer letters (making it faster to type) and means essentially the same thing.

One of the current (or just past) hassles in American fandom has been with a group of pros who loudly asserted that prodrom did not need fandom at all while the converse was not true, that fandom desperately needed prodrom.

The crux of the whole matter was the casual sf reader. Both arguments have a lot of holes in them, the most obvious on the case of the pros not needing the fans being twofold: first is the amount of personal feedback about their work, personal contact which is largely missing in, say mystery or adventure fiction. Finding knowledgeable readers isn't easy and I suspect that a pro likes to know he isn't writing for a vacuum. Secondly, the fan award, the Hugo, means big money to a winning pro. Advances, contracts, the publicity generated. [Luckily, most of the Aussie writers are Good Guys...- Ron.]

On the other hand, fans don't really require prodrom. The hardcore sf reading ones do, but there is a whole collection of convention fans who do nothing but go to conventions. Then there are lots of fanzine fans...never read sf but publish like the world was due to end next Tuesday. Then there are the fringies like the comics fans and monster fans and even the TV fans. Their exposure to written sf is minimal if not nonexistent.

It will be interesting to see what happens to magazine fiction now that John Campbell is dead. He saved the field a couple of times (during WWII and during the '50s glut) and ill times have befallen the magazine field of recent yrs. And without JWC to revive it, maybe the pbs will be all that can survive.

Fmz reviews: Hmm, Geggenschein sounds interesting. Will send Eric a copy of SWorm for a (hopefully) trade. Interstellar communication by laser is of course not practical, but it sounds veeeeery interesting indeed.

Australia in '75!

SFanatically yhos,
Bob.

Hector R. Pessina
Casilla correo central 3869, Buenos Aires, Argentina.

Dear Ron,

British and American zines used to be the "Fanzines" and everybody thought they were the first in reproduction, layout illos and the like; but now it seems that the center of attraction has been drawing away from America to Europe and then to your country. THE MENTOR is one of the best I have seen this year and I can assure you that I have received over 50 since January and from all over the sf world. [Thanks for the compliment, Hector, and I hope that, with this letter published, you get a few more Aussie zines. - Ron.] A cover by Finlay is the most for a zine and only THE MENTOR could have it. Your editorial is to the point and shows what your ideas about sf and fandom are like. And nobody can deny that a sf-fan is the same whether he hails from the Pampas in Argentina, the vast Canadian prairies, the center of Europe, the far north, the most populated city in the world or just an isolated town elsewhere; he is an omnivorous reader and one that spends a long time reading all sorts of books and mags... I've been reading sf in English for over half my life and for a short period before that... I agree with you that most of the so-called "sf-readers" are not probably interested in sf-activities and such is the case here, as it is in your country and many other places, but in general it is a matter of finding the way of attracting those "floating" potential fans.

More illos and perhaps photos and film reviews as well as information on sf/fantasy books published in Britain and Australia would be welcome as the reviews of American pb's and hc's..

Your lettercol is interesting but, as it usually happens when something worth commenting on appears in a previous issue, one can only judge the said item by the readers and must reserve a personal opinion till he sees it himself. [Especially:] Sheila Suttie's article on sex seems to have brought about a veritable storm of approving and disapproving comments. In my opinion John Alderson's letter is the best and it sums up some of my ideas upon the subject. When I was watching the fast rape scene in NO BLADE OF GRASS I couldn't help but think over the meaning of a forceful rape and a mutually agreed sexual act. Both are looking for the same pleasure although the former may be considered a sign of the primitive man asserting his right; the right of the male who wants to have a female in spite of all the other side's opposition, and the latter the mutual agreement of

two people who want to share the "greatest pleasure a man and a woman may enjoy together", but is it?

If one thinks that Bradbury, Wilson Tucker and many others first appeared in fanzines I always think twice before judging the relative merits of fan fiction; I mean sf written by fan writers not professional. However I consider your zine boasts two nice pieces and I find a zine almost bare if it lacks some fiction. My ideal fanzine is like the one described in Ron Graham's letter and I wish mine would receive such a praise.

Yours sciencefictionally,
Hector R. Pessina.

N.J Shears

52 Garden Way, Northcliff 4, Johannesburg, South Africa.

Ron,

THE MENTOR 19 had, it goes without saying, a truly beautiful cover. The illo on p29 was also very cool.

I still haven't got around to reading MOSAIC, but the samples I snatched seemed to indicate **Quality**. IDENTITY I either didn't understand or didn't enjoy - I'm not really too sure which. The Anderson reviews were, of course, good.

Now down to the meat: I'd say your best two items were Ron's Roost (excepting the title!) and the bit by Jack Wodhams. The reason should be obvious - you're both People, both Fans, and both Interesting. Fandom here is barely more than two years old in any organized form - before that there were only 3 fans active in any way. Even now the bulk of SFSA is made up of readers with a hard core of fans. The circulation of my ENTROPION (paid) is overseas - so few are interested here. But slowly we are educating the masses towards Faaandom - who knows how long till a SA WorldCon (hysterical laughter from the Peanut Gallery - did you hear about the Big Peanut Run here? The headmistress of a Jo'burg high-school banned peanuts and peanut butter because she believed them to be aphrodisiacs. Since then shops have virtually run out of the damn things; overseas results have been similar - what's it been like Down Under? Latest innovation here has been Peanut Sausages manufactured by a Jo'burg butcher. He can't make them fast enough to keep up with the demand...) Oh Jesus, I'm way off subject again...

Your Reader Response seems to be quite good now - but what's it like compared to circulation (or did I see mention of that somewhere in your zine - if I did I can't find it now)?

The Mentor 20: I read it from cover to cover - and it isn't very often I do that! - but I don't really feel up to commenting on it, as I prefer to read fiction 3 or 4 times before commenting or reviewing. With poetry, however, I feel more at home, so here goes on Rune: Superb! Probably the best written piece in the whole issue. Not that I understood it completely, mind you! But

when someone combines words, sounds and emotion as brilliantly as does Leith here, then I tend to be moved to superlatives. Strangely enough, the poem really smells of Africa (especially that first verse - the first line seems to set the scene and mood, then everything else just seems to follow on!), although I'm sure that is not how it was originally conceived. This is probably Rune's strongest point (which the title seems to indicate): that everybody will be able to find in it their own thing; it will have a different meaning for each person - and every single one will be absolutely correct. As I see it, it is created simply to create emotion, feeling, an infinite variety of meanings. Superb! (The only word I didn't like was "bluesilt" - just didn't seem to fit it at all!

One more comment on TM 20 - the cover. Didn't like it at all! Sorry and all that, but the idea seemed well conceived but badly executed (no pun intended!). As far as I'm concerned the pillar is the only well drawn item, the remaining being oversimplified.. or something.

amor j paz,
Nick.

Jack Wodhams
Box 48, Caboolture, Qld. 4510.

Dear Ron,

TM 20. Robert Bowden's THE EXPEDITION, had its moments - but we can't have beautiful girls discovered, only to be left dead and unresuscitated. And he seems to have a penchant for killing off his leading characters. We may assume that he is wishfully working to ensure that the meek shall inherit the Earth. He writes well, though, and our old-fashioned wishfulness is that he'd take an upbeat swing.

RUNE - fair. And so you've tapped Cap'n Chandler's locker, too, have you? You should be working for the Tax Office and not Customs, and then no-one would be safe. Van Ikin's THERE IS A SUN, was too long, not sf, and the female lead won none of my sympathy at all. What she wanted was... well, we all know what she wanted.

Everybody seemed to like the cover of TM 19, and it makes me feel guilty for taking it for granted. Sherlock Ryan seems to have you taped, a marvelous piece of deduction. The C.I.B. will be calling him in on The Case Of The Piddling Poodle any day now. Bob Smith in good voice, Cy Chauvin lyrical, and Robin Johnson could do with some robust ectoplasm stuffed you-know-where. And Lepp's cover not at all bad, although could not determine whether the ink-blot background was a giant negress with a bouffant hairdo, surveying, or Fred Hoyle's BLACK CLOUD descending, or part of a face-down R. Johnson emitting sulphurous ectoplasm, or an erotic advertisement for Kayser foundation, Ron's favourite, or a twister and tidal wave on their way, or... No, this is all untrue, for it is perfectly obvious that it is a volcano erupting, and we repeat,

quite a good effort, Mr Lepp.

Have just finished BARJ, a novel. Something just a little different, you know. This is all for now - just note my coming return to an old address, to be as from the last week in August, when I should start backtracking.

Best wishes,
Jack W.

Kevin Dillon
PO Box E105, St James, Sydney 2000.

Dear Ron,

Past Mentors. 18 say. Letters lost or not. Covers of course are going to go to your head soon. I hope honest competitive spirit that may come from say, Eric Lindsay, if he gambles on a new duplicator doesn't run you both into any real financial trouble.

I'm just a little poverty-stricken too wary of what Eric could lay himself open for. You too. I haven't tried to follow how expensive it's getting for you but it's going to eat into your reading obviously, at least. Your figures I found, enjoyed Anderson reviews, good man Jack Wodhams, think I should object to Intermediate Certificate claimed as 4th year level in an answer of yours, no?

19. Cover comment unneeded. intro re your history I liked. Grigg fiction deserves better read later. How long taken when done etc? Useful to know. H-Evens verse. Yes. Black, yes. Approve of Christine McG's views of writing but think your answer re pubbing Bible horribly inadequate. Not what you meant really, surely. Isn't that bible pubbing another story entirely? Nit picking? [I was talking of the bible as a book/novel..etc. - Ron.] Jack Wodhams bio was BEAUTIFUL.

20. Cant compete with cover 19 of course. Nice. Blue art period yet? [Nyet.- Ron.] Bowden for read later. Wodham OK enuf. Chandler easier than usual fan stuff, naturally. ZK on Heinlein fairly interesting for fan review compared to pro stuff. Lots too much of pro stuff alike. Finally fan review I wanted eg of Nova - now I'll try to read it. Zk O.K. Van Ikin enjoyed. Now we know commercial Rocky Starrfendom was to blame for it all? Would have liked a lot more reviews than letters but just a little too much to ask I expect. You won't drop em I know. Had little to say in earlier letter on this lettercol plus a good feature to finish in your info. Welcome. Next more so - now that the theory is I'll eventually get some time just to look at mail. Apart from being as hopeless as ever with PO - let me just this once more skip that fate worse than worst -

Best,
Kevin.

Edgar H. Lepp
1 Essex St., Nth Blackburn, Vic. 3130.

Dear Ron,

The back cover of TM 20 was the first thing I noticed upon opening the envelope and the blue printing seemed somewhat neater than black printing. A minor point perhaps but welcome. About the front cover I'll say but one thing: it enabled me to see the various faults in the illustration for the second time (and, due to those extra prints, for the third time and the fourth and...)

I wish Jack Wodhams would not generalise from space/speculative/silly fiction/fantasy to science fiction. Breadbasket included some points and implications I disagree with though the puns were bearable.

I do not read sf (science fiction) for dissatisfaction and I have yet to see a proof that forbids sf donning a literary cloak. Good literature is memorable, thought-provoking and consistent with whatever basic premises the writer chooses. Some sf stories have these qualities. A science fiction writer can choose whatever basic premises he desires. He need not justify the selection. It is important, though, that the premises are consistent with each other and that the ensuing story is consistent with the premises. Thus it is not speculation which should add up to score 100. Consistency should add up to score 100.

The sf label on a story does put that story in a special category for judgement. Similarly a comedy goes into its special category, a thriller to its category and so on. Does a critic judge a Shakespearian comedy by searching in it for those qualities which are present in a James Bond story? And then, when he fails to find Bondian characteristics, does he say that the comedy is not literature? Similarly, it is pointless to search in sf for those qualities which need not be in sf, and then condemn sf because of the absence.

Finally, sf need not restrict itself to either the future or to tales of some space-stranded Crusoe. The very idea of restriction on sf is ludicrous. Consider Ballard's short stories, many of which are set in mundane situations and yet they transcend the mundane. Consider Keith Roberts' "Pavane" stories.

Thus endeth the commetns about Breadbasket. What does R & R stand for? Read and regret? [Not quite...- Ron.]

Regards,
Edgar.

Archie Mercer
21 Trenethick Parc., Helston, Cornwall.

Dear Sydney - er Ron,

Do we trade zines? (You obviously do - but I didn't realise I did too!) And does Yes, well...? [Yes, I did get a 'zine' from you both at Chrissie...- Ron.]

I'll just say this. "Mosaic" I found unusually absorbing for a fanzine story. It's too short of course - by maybe nine-tenths or nineteen-twentieths or something. By the amount that would be required to convert it into a full-length novel, anyway.

If Beryl was to LoC the same issue, she'd doubtless mention the Virgil Finlay cover. Because she raved over it when she saw it. To me - well, it's simply a typical Finlaypic of which I'd had more than my fill lo, these many years ago. Him and his starbursts all over the subject...

I liked WOMBAT, too, Aardvark-orientated though I be.

Things
Archie.

Paul Anderson
21 Mulga Rd., Hawthorndene, SA 5051.

Dear Ron,

The Mentor 20 with its fantastic 84 pages, where will it all finish - over the 100 next time???! [I hope not! I figure 96 pages will just get me under the 24¢ postage rate...- Ron.] Ron's Roost was worth reading as usual but I would class it TM as ($\frac{1}{2}$ S) in view of the fanfic which appears in each ish. The Adelaide activities are a mixture at the moment with SF discussion meetings interspersed with film-fund raising evenings. Other activities are planned of a social nature but we would be about 50/50 or maybe balanced a little towards the fannish with the con at the New Year. Not too many of the Adelaide fans would rate as faanish fans though. The Bowden story was the equal of the earlier and it was a lucky day for you when it was given for publication. I would like to see the final of the 3 but for his sake I would like to read it in Analog and not in a fanzine, although your small circulation should not make any material difference to its chances of sale. [Thanks!! - Ron.] Now, how about a Jack Wodhams novelette to follow up your new status of a non profit prozine. However until that day we have an enjoyable series of articles that I hope will continue for a large no of issues to come. They are usually good and fun to read and the latest was no exception although the theme of it was a little familiar to me after my reading FIJAGDS by Andy Offutt in Crossroads. Naturally Jack's piece was better written and more logical.

It is nice to see a larger review column and something from the editor. Please keep up the good work! The Dragons And Nightmares book was quite a bit older than the usual SF that I bother to review but I thought that since it was by Bloch and I had not heard of it before I may as well do the job to enlighten some newer fans. I like to read your letter col as it gives me some feedback on the effect, if any, of my reviews, but I would like to see a more varied review column.

Obviously Bob Smith does not appreciate juvenile science fiction. I classified it as such in view of the total lack of a

a love interest and the ages of the human characters is the teenage boy and girl being in the foreground with the adults well in the rear as representations of benign benevolent authority. In any case merely because I classify it as such does not effect the quality of the book and it does give a guide to its suitability as a present for a younger convert to the drug science fiction. Unfortunately, I have read very little of Leon Taylor, being restricted to his review of Shekley in E4 and the article on the Hugo awards. I trust that an issue of Embelyon will be forthcoming shortly after that monster issue. Although I think I prefer Fath as a columnist.

Yours Paul.

Australia in 75

Toronto in 73

Adelaide in 72 then Syncon 2

John J. Alderson
Havelock, Vic 3465.

Dear Ron,

Had intended to tear The Mentor 20 to bits but I can't find it. Do gemlins come into your place, Ron, and hide the things you want urgently amongst a pile of unpaid bills where you wouldn't think of looking? However there are two things I do remember distinctly (in reality I remember everything word perfect, The Mentor meaning so much to me). First was David Grigg's nonsense in saying that casual sexual relations were not a sin and that the only sin was the begetting of an illegitimate child. Well, with all respects to poor little bastards, that argument does not cut much ice with me. Surely there is nothing so dispicable as a morality based upon being found out, which, stripped of the smug concern for the unfortunate child, is all his view boils down to.

Secondly the idea that it is not a sin is absurd. Sin is easy to define, a sin is still easy enough, (eg. an act or a non-act which separates a man from God), and that can be anything from murder to eating radish. But to decide what is not sin is really sticking one's neck out. How can anyone say that what someone else does is not a sin. Sin and criminal acts are quite different things. It may be sinful not to help an old lady across the road but it is not a criminal offense. To push her in front of a car would be both. To resist the draft is apparently criminal but many think it would be sinful if they did not resist.

The other point about The Mentor 20 was the lack of response to Shayne McCormack's statement that sex was the most important thing in life. As it takes about the 79th position in importance in my life I thought at first that she must have been watching too many Hollywood movies, but I think she meant something different. I think she meant purity of life, and if she meant purity of mind too, then I agree. This, I hasten to add, would be more equated with honesty of mind or intellect. In A Streetcar Named Desire Blanche spends endless hours scrubbing

herself in the bath in a futile effort to wash her past from her soul and I should find myself very hard to live with if I were either in that position myself or had defiled someone else. I think that this was the sort of thing Shayne had in mind.

Now a word about that "sweet-natured charming person" Christine McGowan. I whole heartedly agree with her about "femmi-fans". Structurally it is wrong, in our usage, as Alan St. Baker has pointed out in Yimal, he's a femmi-fan, that is one interested in females. I am all in favour of calling them fens or shes or writing them as fans and us as FANS. But I have to just as whole heartedly disagree with Christine about "Shayne is female". Indeed! It just happens that Miss McCormack is the only she Shayne I've ever heard of. All the rest have been, and are, undeniably men. Shayne is a masculine Irish name. Now I strongly object to us men having our world plitched from us like this. I'm gunna start a men's liberation movenent and at the nex Con we'll burn our socks or something.

Hoping you feel the same,
Lots of.love

John.

Ed Cagle
Route I, Leon, KS 67074, USA.

Dear Ron,

Thanks for TM's 14 through 19, which I enjoyed very much. My initial contact with Australian Fandom.. six issues spanning two and a half years... was rather a crash course.

Repro and layout are excellent on TM. And the cover on 19 took my eye, of course, as did the cover on 17. With front covers like that, who cares if the back falls off?

Some of the fiction was..slightly unreadable, and some of it was promising. Perhaps more specific comment is in order, but at the moment I feel less than willing to offer it. Let's just say I hope you continue to use as much fiction as you have in the past.

No, that's not fair either... Maybe later.

The lettercol: (What's R&R? Rip and rend? Rap? Rake? Surely not Rape?)

.....nothing so ordinary as Ron and Readers, I hope? /Ha! ha! No; actually your first guess is close.- Ron./

Whatever...Sheila Suttie's article drew a number of comments. Natcherly!!! Goodole sex, it has many uses. It sells books, attracts the Horde to the flicks, maintains a crowd in Divorce Courts, and gives lonely people something to think about to pass the time. But I prefer to use it my way and allow others to do with it what they may, unless their doing starts to concern me when I'm not inclined to favour such attention. Let everybody talk about sex all they want to, wherever they find a willing audience. Allow them to exhibit freely, and the interested masses

attend. Let it all hang or not hang as it may, if only those persons subjecting themselves are affected, to provide a choice for others. Just a free choice. And while they're at the theatre, or reading porno, I'll be able to do my own bit. [Here! Here! - Ron.] Long live participation sports! [Eh...?? - Ron.]

Add my request to all the others to continue the feature on Australian fans. I wonder why US zines don't do that? Must be a basic flaw in the American character.. Or maybe everyone would want to pose in the nude... That could be disappointing. I much prefer the written portrait of a fan, as in TM. The human mind is of greater universal appeal, and in the long run it is where admiration and respect begins and ends anyway. If it wouldn't embarrass Peter Darling, Shayne McCormack, and Jack Wodhams too much, I would like to say that I felt their autobiographies were about the best possible advertisement for Australian Fandom that could be had.

Someone make the comment in a letter that TM's reviews were out of date, and that leads me to ask if there is any appreciable lag in distribution of new SF books in Australia, as compared to when I might be able to acquire them here in the US? [Well... the latest Amazing to hit the stands came out last Wednesday - 22/9/71 - and it was the Sept. Amz. Books?..I'll have to check.. though I'd say about the same delay - they seem to stockpile a month or two in advance.- Ron.]

Van Ikin, in his remarks about Robert Bowden's "Voyage", made a reasonable comment or two, but neglected to mention whether or not he considered the piece a complete story. Important ingredient! Stylistic flair and competent wordsmithmanship can make a yarn come alive, to be sure, but there seems to be more weak stories around being carried by glorious prose than there are solid ideas brought to a reasonably 'finished' state. Is there no place for a writer who is basically a storyteller, and who regards that function as his primary obligation to the reader?

But I will have to agree with Van Ikin that basic science lessons served up in short stories are tiresome. (As are comments about it.. phhht!)

Must close for now. Thanks again for initiating me into Australian Fandom via THE MENTOR.

No matter what you're up to,

Best wishes,

Ed Cagle.

Mary & Churl Legg
20 Woodstock Close, Osford ?X2 8DB, England.

Dear Ron,

A recent article in one of the sunday papers here, commenting on the commission looking into pornography, etc., advanced an interesting idea: viz., that in such places as Denmark, etc., where 'full frontals' and what have you are relatively

commonplace, not only does boredom tend to set in (didn't the recent Sex Fair make a rather bad loss?) but also, in the case of allied crimes, one reason for the reported downtrend, at least in the case of what you might call "minor" ones (I use the word advisedly) is that where women are confronted on all sides with naked men & women - by golly, what a picture that conjures up! I mean, of course, pix thereof, not the real article - as I was saying, confronted on all sides with this, she wouldn't bother to report something like indecent exposure. A minor point, but a thort.

Was particularly ^{sorry} that I missed the Pat Terry article. Astounded to hear him described as 'fiery', tho! Just goes to show - perhaps a "compendium" view of a number of fen would get something like a truer picture of Pat (or indeed anyone). Of the letters, my favourite was, I think, John Ryan's, probably because it mentioned the only two Aussiefen I really know, viz... your good self and John the Bros. Another amazing thing was that it implied that Aussiefandom has even less femmefen among it than Britfandom; for the last few years the number has been fairly constant (I mean here active fen-in-their-own-right, rather than femmes married to fen, or who are not that active). US fandom seems compounded of virtually equal numbers; what about Continental fandoms? Which raises that hoary old chestnut, why are there so few femmefen about? I've advanced my own views on this before, so will retire gracefully and leave the field open to others on this occasion, methinks. Has anyone married in your fandom yet (ie fan-to-fan)? Though seeing as the last sten was typed in July.. . of late, there's been a spate of 'em over here. Must be the weather, or something! Nuffin here as yet: looking over them, I don't think that there is any married fan putting out a zine regularly, either!! - Ron./

The Freezatorium-yarn particularly interested me as a while ago I saw a proggy on tv about just that: machine in which the (dead) people were kept preserved (by ice, I think) whole and sound. One case was a young woman(24?) who had died of cancer. These machines were described as 'forever machines' I think (would have to consult my diary if you want more details); but what caught my interest was that they had a lawyer talking of legal difficulties, wills, etc., if a man had died and was in 50 years time "resurrected" when science could cure him, etc., but not a clergyman to be seen to mention the even more fascinating thought of what happens when he was dead - would he recall or what?

A.B.Chandler's pic looks as though he's halfway thru being phased (as in ST) but still, it's a good idea. Have you featured yourself yet, or are you refusing?? I've given hints..R./

Cy's poems remind me, in one or two of the ones here printed, of Dylan, because although you can't always follow what he says, the word-picture grabs you, as t'were. Of these, I particularly liked Pregnancy, although my favourite poem on that was Jill Bridge's for her daughter Wanda - did you see it? I forget where it appeared now. No... - Ron./

No Room in the Stable: one of those things which could

almost happen, one feels. We always found, thank goodness, a home for our kittens; but someone once remarked how (tho' so small and weak) they struggled for life. "He" seems to have decided that no more of "his" children needed to, perhaps?

And that's it, I think. Hope this arrives in time, but if not - no matter. Meanwhile, best to you all from us here (pardon bad English):

Mary & Churl.

The Shorter Ones:

Greg Pickersgill: RON, got a copy of TM 18 yesterday. Really enjoyed it, I must say, especially the Chauvin story, which al though a little trite in conclusion was reasonably well handled. Wodhams I didn't bother with as I've had nasty experiences with his fiction in prozines before now. Anyway, liked the magazine as a whole (god wot a shit letter) much more so than I had expected to at first glance.

Max Taylor: Thanks for the latest Mentor..No.20.. and congratulations on such an excellent production - packed with interesting stories, features and information..a credit to you and your writers. I offer, alos, my apologies for referring to The Mentor as an "underground" magazine... It's a fanzine - and that's that - certainly not "underground" - I shall not err again!

When and if

I can help please let me know... I'm fascinated by The Mentor. Best wishes to you and all faneds - fanzines for ever.

Neil Rahman: Altho TM 20 was up to your usual high standards, the one thing that really had the most immediate affect on me was that single line - "In the still of night I hear the crisp ticking of a watch", it conveys a perfect image of sound, much as Eliot's "I grow old... I grow old..."

I shall wear the bottoms of my trousers rolled"

pictures an old one yearning for youth. [Ever

lain awake on a hot summer night unable to get to sleep, and hearing the cicadas whirring and your bedside watch ticking loud?- Ron]

B.C.N. Agencies B/L: Thank you for your letter...referring to our order n..... for a sub. to MENTOR to be sent to:- Preparation Bracch (NS1158)71), National Library of Australia, Canberra, ACT, 2600. In your letter you state the Library requires two copies of each issue, but our order was for only one copy, and we think it possible the second copy to which you refer is the one which they received under the Copyright Act, whereby the National Library is entitled to a free copy of every Australian publication..

The University Of Sydney: Under the provisions of the Copyright Act 1879-1952, the University of Sydney is privileged to receive from the publisher of every work published in NSW, one best copy of the work, or any subsequent editions of the work. For details

concerning this matter, I would like to draw your attention to an extract from the Act attached to this letter.

Since our records indicate that the following work, published by you, has not been received in the Library, it appears that you may have overlooked this requirement of the Act...

I should, therefore, be grateful if you would kindly forward the current issue, all available back issues and all future issues of the above title to this library and would appreciate it if you would address them to: The Serials Section (Copyright), Fisher Library, University of Sydney, Sydney...

Mike Glicksohn: It's always seemed to me that one reason for the predominance of the so-called "sercon" fanzines is that "sercon" writing is much easier to do passably well than "fannish" writing. Really good serious writing is as rare as first-rate fan writing (a la Willis and Shaw) but mediocre fannish writing is so abysmal that it rarely sees print. On the other hand, low quality book reviews can always find a market, since they are generally at least readable. And since book reviews are among the easiest things to write, there's never a shortage of them to fill newly established fanzines. It is not at all uncommon for a zine to start out filled with dull book reviews and execrable "fanfic" and slowly gravitate towards fannish writing as better writers begin to hear about it.

Thank you, Robin, for the kind words: by the way, Rosemary is true-blue Canadian, although I myself was born in England.

Keep up the good work, Ron; I don't groove on fiction in fanzines, but you have good repro and a lively lettercol and that's more than enough to keep me reading. Best of luck for Australia in 75, and I hope that DUFF is a success (so I can run for 75, of course!).

Noel Kerr: Because I haven't sent any recent Loc to The Mentor, please don't think I don't enjoy and appreciate the copies you send me, because I do! And I mean that. Next year, when I have my life a little better organized (and become settled into married life) I'll try and make up for it. /Ah, another active fan has succumb to that dreaded affliction- Ron./

Not because I cut them for you, but the electronic stencils have made a big difference to the appearance of your fanzine. If only you could get hold of some quality photos... /Playboy charges are too high...- Ron./

I Also Heard From: Phyrne Bacon and Gray Boak, and probably a few others who's letters have gotten into my file folder. Thanks to all you fans out there who have written such interesting locs.

Since this is the last issue of The Mentor in the present series I may as well announce that back issues are still available of nos.5, & 15-19. Some copies of 20 are incomplete (locs missing).

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I N D E X T O

T H E M E N T O R ' S

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- Alphabetical -

Key: a = article; f = fiction; i = illo; p = poetry; r = review.

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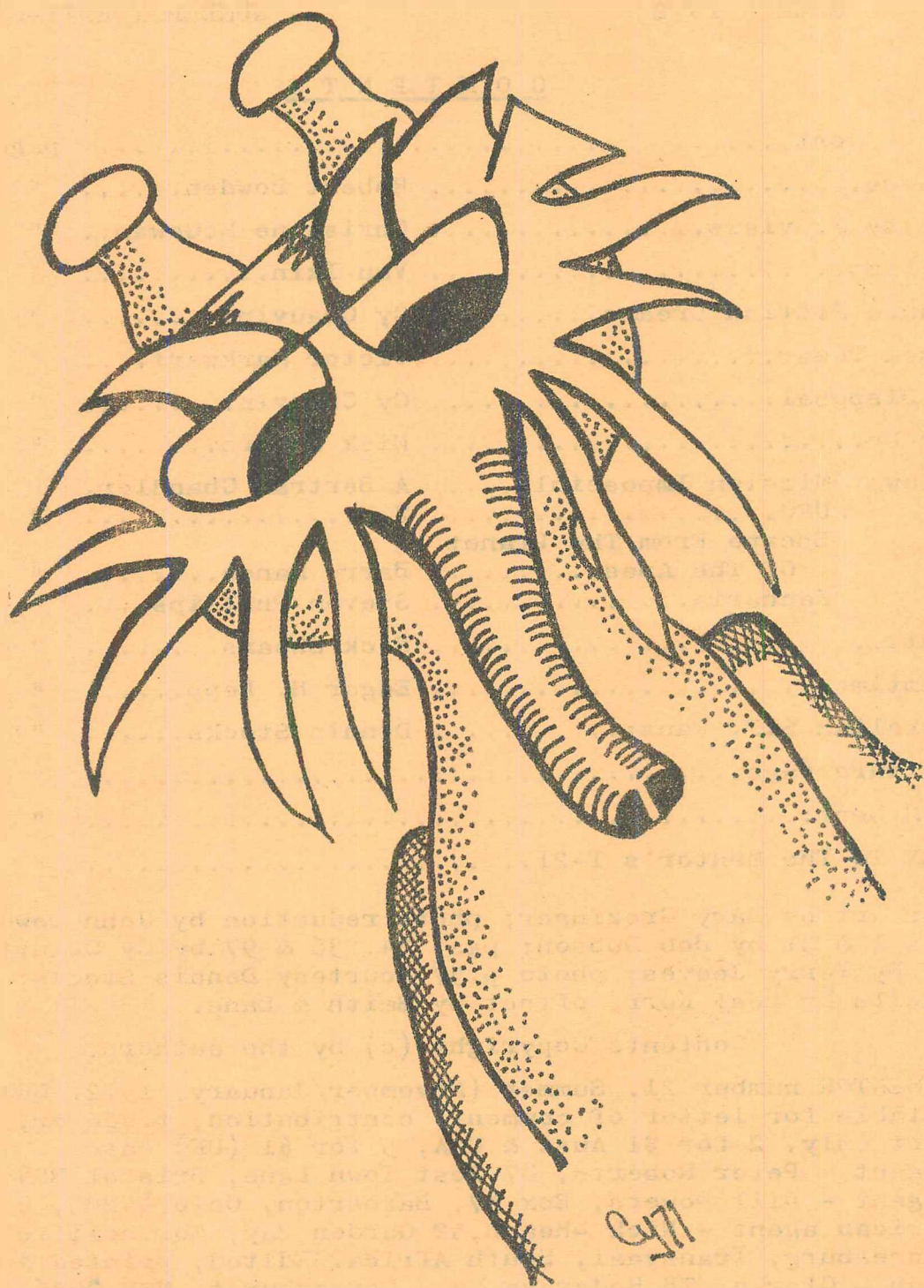
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THE MENTOR

SCIENCE FICTION

SUMMER 1972

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