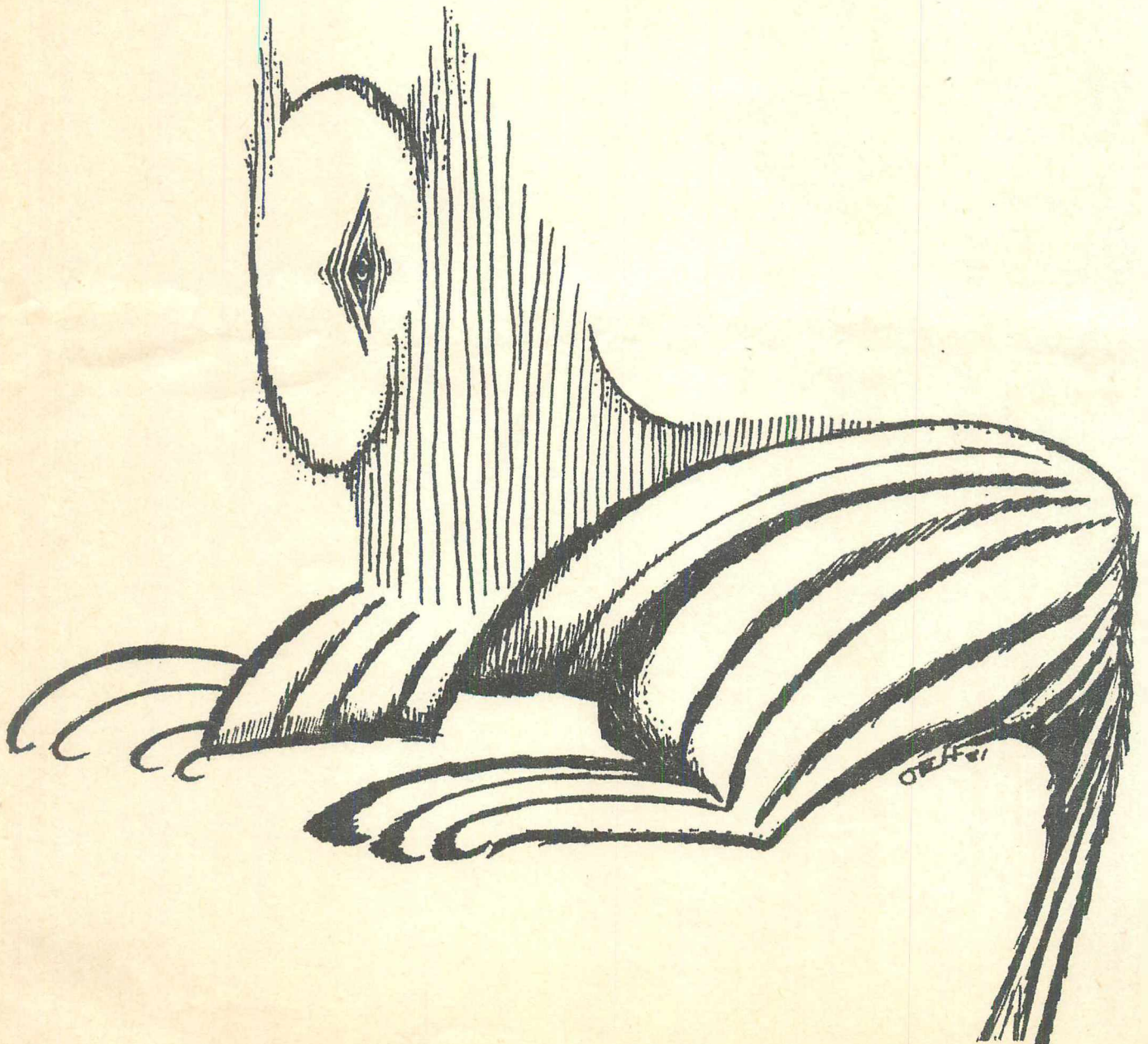


# THE MENTOR

37

APRIL 1982



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REGISTERED BY AUSTRALIA POST PUBLICATION NO. 12122

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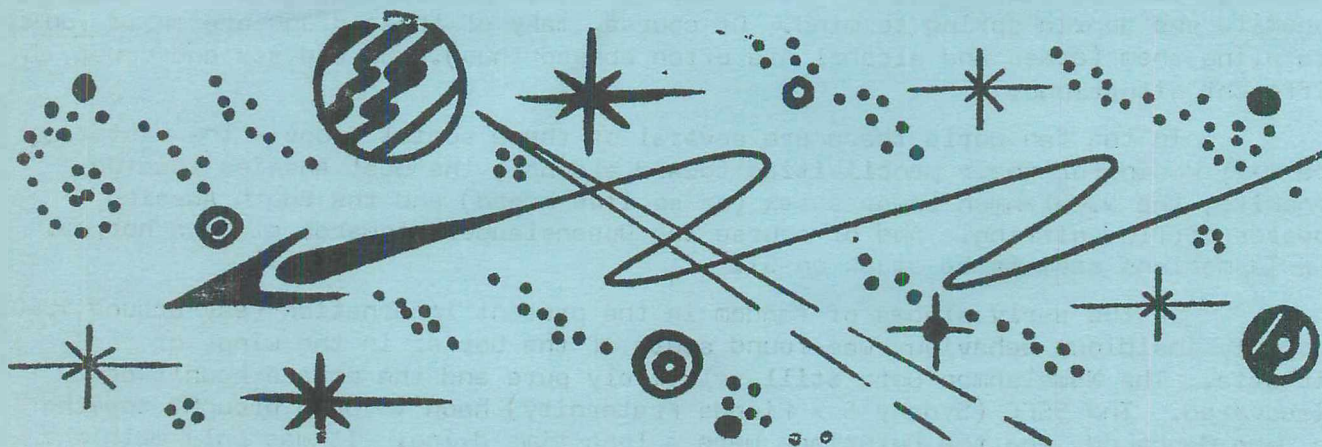
SCIENCE FICTION

APRIL 1982

NUMBER 37

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THE MENTOR, ISSN 0727-8462, is edited by Ron L Clarke of 6 Bellevue Rd., Faulconbridge, NSW 2776, Australia for R & S PUBLICATIONS. Phone (047) 513667. TM is published every second month commencing February. Available for \$1 single issue or for the usual. Cover is by Judith Hanna; illos: - Debbie Gamble p.7; April Beare p.10, Mike McGann p.1, 16, 19, 23, 31, 34; Kerrie Hanlon p.27. Proof read by Gay Williams & Susan Clarke. Last stencil typed 28/3/82.

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# CULTURE CONFLICT

BY JOHN PLAYFORD

Precious, precious oil. The big tanks were full of the fossil fuel. A thousand barrels lay in each. The factory flowed around them, injecting, extracting, refining. Robots and mechanical waldoes moved around on their appointed tasks, journeying with that precise and measured aim that characterizes unthinking volition. Inside the control nub three men and four women spun out the day. Two were idly monitoring the controls. Two were measuring each other up, deciding whether or not to make a pass. One was reading a badly-printed, badly-written novel. The other two were playing cards. Within a grit-filled access tube a box counted, reached the appointed microsecond, and a surge of sizzling power was released, to flow through it. Once. Twice. Thrice. The box activated.

They say the flames were visible twenty clicks away.

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The tricycle squealed to a halt, pushing him heavily against the seat belt. He remained silent, staring at the landslide suspiciously. Danny swore. Jessa merely scowled and cut the engine.

"Any ideas, Tribune?" she asked scornfully.

He unclipped the shiny metal buckle strapping him to the soft leather seat.

"I'm going out to have a look. Coming, Sheriff?"

The corners of her lips tightened. She hesitated a moment.

"Oh hell, yes. Danny, stay at the controls."

Danny nodded eagerly, like an impatient puppy. Westzon pulled back the loose handle and pushed the door open. It swung almost silently. There was an unnerving quiet in the warm air. The tactile sensation of the needle gun pressing against his bare skin, under his arm, felt comforting.

From the other side of the tricycle he heard Jessa's door slam shut. He walked forward to the pile of rubble that lay at the foot of the cliff. The sun beat down harshly on the scene and a thin layer of perspiration formed on his forehead.

"That's a remarkably concentrated slide," he ventured.

Jessa came up behind him.

"It does happen, Tribune."

He grinned savagely. "Sure. Look here, I do have a name. Westzon. It may not be fantastic, but it's all I have."

"Yes... Sir and Master."

He spun her around, his hands gripping her shoulders. "Westzon. I insist." Danny was watching anxiously from the tricycle window. But Danny he could handle.

"Allright. You've made your point. Now let me go or I'll bust your face open."

His fingers sprang away from her. "We're allies -- Jessa."

She spat on the ground. "Yeah? You have a nice uniform, Westzon. Nice black. Shiny silver. Real classy. You're a public servant. I'm a servant of the people."

"And the law. The law the Technos makes."

Suddenly her face seemed to collapse. Her body slumped as if some terrible weight were pressing down on her from above. He noticed how exactly her sea-green clothing matched the colour of her eyes.

"Yeah," she whispered. "The law. Sometimes I ... almost regret it. Sorry if I've been a bit brusque. This is the country. Things are different here."

He kicked a head-sized stone with his boot.

"I know."

A sound came from the pine-covered forest below the road. There was a slight whistling noise and an arrow leapt through the air, a line of sun-reflecting white, and bounced off the tricycle's bubble window. Jessa pulled Westzon down to the ground and Danny switched on the engine in a panic. He smelt the earth under his face and experienced the sensual totality of danger.

A clip-clopping came from the direction of the forest. They poked their heads above the rubble. Emerging from the swaying pines was a woman in faded denims on a horse. She had a bow in hand, quiver on the saddle. She was topless. In this heat it probably wasn't a bad idea.

"Howdy, folks. Did I scare you? Sorry. Guess my aim isn't what it used to be."

Jessa remained down. Westzon picked himself up and dusted his clothing. "That depends," he answered, "on what you were aiming at."

"Pig."

His eyebrows drew together as he remembered childhood slang. Pig. Policeman. Tribune.

Jessa had pulled her pistol out. (Funny thing, the way old customs can linger on. Needle guns weren't permanent. Not like chemical projectile weapons. Pistols made things black and white, life or death.) She stood up, grasping it with both sunburnt hands. The silver ring on one finger stood out. She held it on the rider without adjusting her aim, her body tensed for the backfire.



The rider put her recurved bow on the saddle. The pistol was lowered a few centimeters.

"You from Edensville?" he asked, as politely as he could manage.

"Yep."

"The road's blocked."

"Sure." It was a statement of fact.

"Why'd you do it?"

The sudden question caught her slightly off balance, causing her to lose a second of time formulating her answer.

"Do what, mister? We don't command mother nature here. We live with her."

"It won't buy you time, you know. We'll walk the last klick or two."

Jessa broke in. "Christ, you're crazy. I'm not going up there without transport."

"If you wish you can go back with Danny. Get a helicopter to pick me up. I'm not ordering anyone to do something if they aren't willing to go all the way with me."

She stepped up into the tricycle sullenly and spoke to Danny. Westzon clambered over the unsettled rocks carefully. The horse-rider came up to him, dismounted, and looked at the arrow. It was split in the middle, useless. She placed one end of the bow beneath the sole of a foot in a flowing motion, heaved, and unstrung the other end.

"I'll come up with you, stranger. Edensville is always courteous to its guests."

The tricycle's engine hummed loudly, like the sound of a gigantic mosquito, and it began to reverse. All of a sudden it stopped. Jessa got out. Her green-suited figure moved determinately over the landslide, seemingly ignoring the dangerous cravices which could so easily swallow a foot.

"Hell's bells, man, to hurt my pride is one thing, But to wound my conscience is another!" She put her pistol back in her embossed leather holster. "I'm a pretty crass conversationalist, aren't I?"

The horsewoman glared at her.

They began to walk.

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He pulled his sweat-wet shirt off. The wind, hot as it was, played cool on his back.

Diane was her name. He laughed and she was angered until he told her about the classical connection. Diana, goddess of the hunt. Jessa sneered at her ignorance, but he suspected the ignorance was deliberate. Edensville despised the past -- and the future.

"How much further?" he asked, wheezing.

"Just around the next bend."

His legs felt rubbery. He was not used to walking. In public office he had grown lax in his exercise. In his youth this would have been nothing. Youth? He was only twenty-eight. But then, the Plague War had wiped out seventy-per-cent of the last generation. In this world he was old.

Seeming to sense his thoughts, Jessa halted.

"Let's rest a moment," she said. Her hair was blown lightly in the breeze. It was short-cut, hastily cut, the sign of a responsible Sheriff of twenty-five. He almost flittered a moment, then resolved back into seriousness.

"Diana --" he said slowly, thinking he might sound out some facts. "Who's the boss person at Edensville?"

"Why, Mackey. You know that." It was too glib somehow, a little too quick. Something was subtly wrong. "He founded the sanctuary back in '97."

"The year of the Plague."

"Why are you asking all this stuff. It's no secret."

He went off at a tangent in order to unbalance her. "You know this land isn't yours. It belongs to the Technos. Used to be a National Park."

She stroked the horse's head. It was a superb horse, coloured deep brown. Its coat glistened. It snorted and reared its head.

"Technos? Isn't that the same kind of government that allowed the psycho-manipulators to mold Humen's minds, the chemical warfare factories to flourish, that even allowed the Plague War to be fought?"

"You don't allow wars, honey child."

"Don't get smart-arsed with me, brother. Edensville is a refuge from your world. We see your Technos for what it is."

"And what's that?" asked Jessa, not unsympathetically.

"Evil. The dearth of true Humen. No one works anymore. You freeze the dead."

"That's a bit oversimplified, but basically true," he conceded. "So you don't freeze the dead?" He cursed the girl's reticence.

She shifted on her horse uneasily. Fear was in her eyes.

"Better tell, Diana. I'll find out."

She shook her head.

Jessa spoke. "We get all kinds of trouble with people who bury the dead, Westzon. Country people are naturally conservative. Why does it have to be, anyway? Why not leave them in peace?"

He didn't like the questioning tone in her voice. "Election promise, my dear, as you're well aware. The Technos promised Human immortality, or a chance at it. They got their mandate, they made the law. Anyone who rejects a chance to live again is a fool. In any case, cryogenics is secondary to the main problem. Let's go." The final sentence was just that, incisive, a knife cutting through the swirling, hot air. They resumed the journey.

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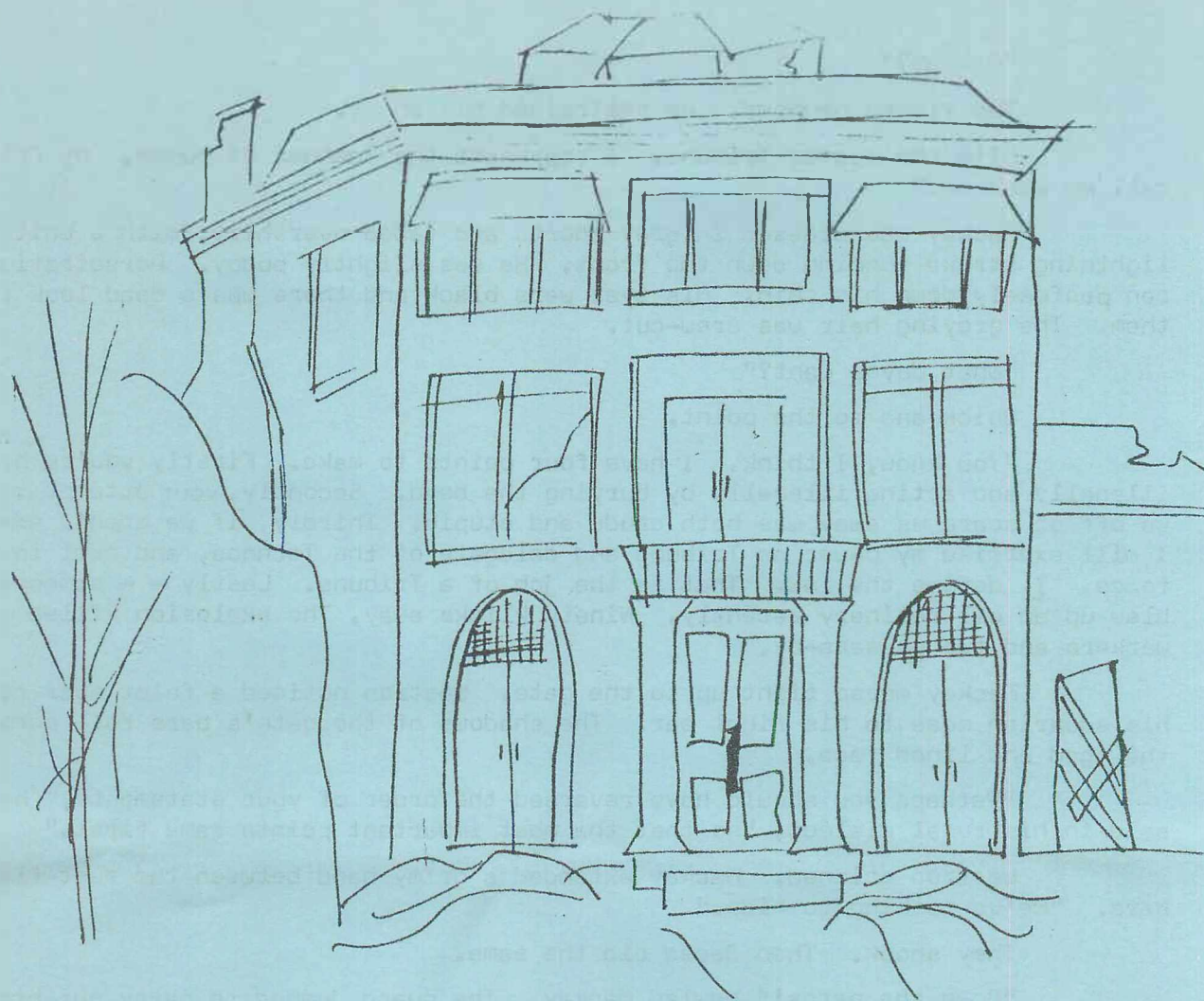
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Edensville was an abandoned hotel atop the mountain-hill that stood up, a blister on the flat and dreary countryside. At least, it had been abandoned by the original owners.

They stood outside a gateway. Inside the courtyard half-a-dozen people were visible in various multicoloured clothing, some were stripped to the





waist. Two children ran around naked. The most incongruous feature of the scene was the trio of horses. Westzon felt a brief nostalgia for the world of the past. These people used horses....

"We're not savages," cut in Diana, seeing his expression. "I'll get Mackay. Wait here, folks."

A figure armed (rather casually) with a double-barrel shotgun operated a control and the gate opened.

"Electric power," muttered Jessa.

"As she said, they're not savages. But they rely, I think, on the outside world. If everyone were like them we'd soon be running around with swords sticking each other in the guts."

Jessa snapped at him. "Nonsense! Civilization is strong."

"Only so long as there is plenty for all. It's when the pie is limited that the crunch comes. Everyone wants a piece."

The Sheriff didn't deign to reply. Perhaps his words had cut a little too close to the bone.

A figure walked up to the gate. He looked ancient, possibly fifty. He walked with a tired, yet still persevering gait.

"Mackay?"

The figure grunted. He restrained his anger.

"I'm the sector Tribune. I represent the Technos of Humen. My friends call me Westzon."

Mackay was dressed in grey shorts and faded overshirt, with a white lightning stroke running down the front. He was slightly pudgy. Perspiration ran profusely down his chin. His eyes were black and there was a dead look to them. The greying hair was crew-cut.

"What do you want?"

Quick and to the point.

"You know, I think. I have four points to make. Firstly you're here illegally and acting illegally by burying the dead. Secondly, your attempt to block us off or scare us away was both crude and stupid. Thirdly, if we aren't admitted I will exercise my power as Tribune and delegate of the Technos, and call in armed force. I define the law. That is the job of a Tribune. Lastly -- someone blew up an oil refinery recently. Ninety clicks away. The explosion killed seven workers and two passers-by."

Mackay moved right up to the gate. Westzon noticed a faint scar ran from his squarish nose to his right ear. The shadows of the gate's bars fell across the aged and lined face.

"Perhaps you should have reversed the order of your statements," he said in his rural dialect, "so that the most important points came first."

Westzon grinned. Mackay extended a grimy hand between the rust-flecked bars. "We've nothing to hide."

They shook. Then Jessa did the same.

"Open the gates!" bawled Mackay. The guard jumped to carry out his instructions and the steel barriers creaked open.

"Welcome to Edensville."

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The table was packed with food. A deer was roasting in the fire (the smoke of which stung Westzon's eyes) and cans of beer were being opened rather freely. The smell of burning flesh was strong.

"What makes you think that we're responsible for the, uh, accident at the refinery?" asked Mackay.

"Suspicion is not fact," said Jessa. Around them the conversations continued. The entire population of Edensville, over thirty, was enjoying the feast. Westzon noticed that Mackay's eyes often flicked towards a small, dark-haired woman with a lined but still beautiful figure. She looked old enough to have been in the Plague War.

"Who is that woman you keep looking at, Mackay?"

The erstwhile leader choked on his food.

"Huh? That's my wife, Eloise. You have this bad habit of drifting off the line of conversation, brother."

"I like to jump to conclusions."

The older man guffawed. "That can be awfully dangerous, Tribune Westzon."

"Only if one is not .. competent."

The smile left the other's face, to be replaced by a scowl. He picked up a can of beer and doffed it in one long, drawn-out drink, to the accompaniment of slow clapping by the others.

"A fight!" called one.

"A fight, a fight, a fight," came the chant.

Mackay indicated two men -- but only after secretively flicking his gaze at Eloise. Westzon had not drunk much, but it seemed to be going to his head. The room felt as if it were contracting and expanding for a moment. Colours sharpened. One of the men was strong but running to fat, the other lithe and young. The younger one had a black jacket with a swastika (emblem in the Hitler War) on his back.

"We expunge our personal demons this way, Westzon," Mackey explained. Jessa looked interested.

The fat one stood facing the other and swung a ham-sized fist. The other did not move a muscle, not even twitching an eyelid. The huge knuckles struck, felling the lad.

"Not fair!" shouted Jessa. "Why didn't --"

"Hush," said Westzon. "Wait."

The young man staggered to his feet awkwardly. His opponent grinned, hands behind back. The swastika-jacketed one rubbed his jaw, dripping blood, and swung viciously.

This time the fat man fell. He got up fairly quickly, and when the young man was knocked down a second time he did not rise.

Mackay sighed. "Too bad. A bit of a disappointment, eh, Westzon?" He seemed to want to upset the Tribune's sense of decency. Westzon felt odd.

"What was the tension over?" he asked quietly.

Mackay shrugged. "A woman, what else?"

He received a slice of venison and some potatoes, ate a little, and then spoke again.

"Tell me, do you realise what the law is as regards Minimum and Maximum Guaranteed Income? Now that the automated factories are working again there is plenty for all. But you don't take your money."

"We won't take something for nothing," said Eloise, speaking for the first time. Her voice was soft as honey, soothing and persuasive.

"It... it isn't for nothing," Westzon said, gesticulating with his knife. "It's for peace. The Technos is wise. Look, I respect your little enclave. I wish I might leave you alone, to your hunting, your farming, and your fighting. I wish I could have a booze and leave here in good humour. No one wants to stop you working."

"It wouldn't be you," said Eloise in her silken voice. "It would be the opportunity you offer. Our members would leave for the material addictions of life, the brazen luxuries they would grow used to ever so gradually."



"Right," said Mackay. "You'd tempt us and end Edensville. You're the snake in Paradise, Tribune."

The Tribune's grey eyes burned with an intensity that made the scar-faced Mackay flinch. "Somebody blew up that refinery, friend. Somebody wants conflict. Negotiation has in-betweens, but not conflict. Secret conflict."

Mackay acted bewildered. "I don't know what you're on about. Let's eat." He shouted at a serving girl, slapped her bottom, and drank another oan of beer., to the frustration of the Tribune, whose head suddenly spun. He felt he was getting nowhere. He asked Jessa to radio the helicopter not to come, at least until the morning, and returned to a dingy, dust-covered cubicle for the night.

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The morning dawned early on the mountain-hill. It stood out from the surrounding land, like a sun-bathed island in a sea of darkness.

Westzon rested on the decaying railing, wondering why he was here, whether it was all really necessary. Edensville had the resources to have made the bomb; but then, so did most everyone in this day and age. Why should the self-professed primitivists risk their paradise? Why should they risk the wrath of the Technos?

He sighed. It would be so easy to brain-leach them. The Technos was wise, however. Brainleaching would wait, until after he had determined their guilt. Or innocence.

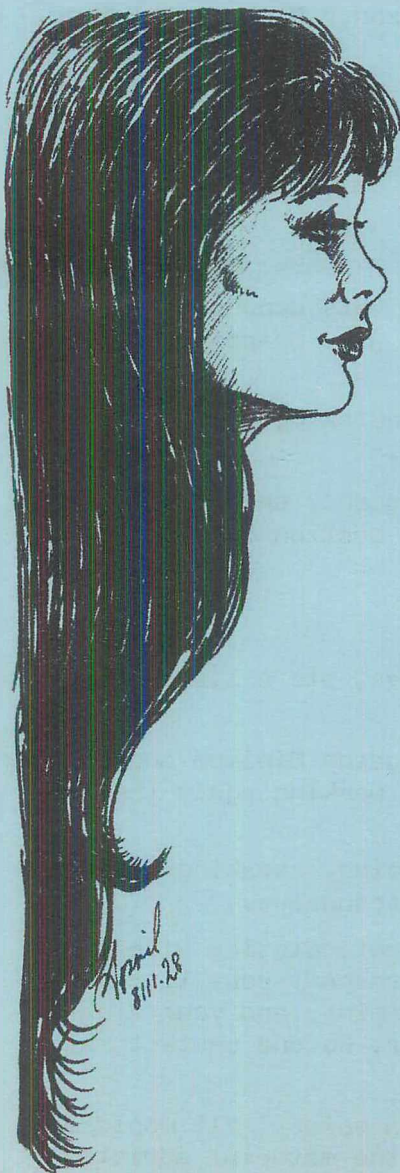
Footsteps sounded behind him, clicking on the crusted contrete. He turned to see a just-woken figure in an ancient black-grey dressing-gown. Eloise.

"Good morning, Tribune, hale and welcome," she said.

"Hale. You have a glorious sunrise. It's been some time since I saw one, though I must say the pleasure has been more than compensated for by the aché in my back from your so-called bed."

She laughed. The sound was that of a stone skipping on a placid lake. For a moment Westzon saw her as she was in her youth, saw the creature behind the encroaching lines that had attracted Mackay. Her eyes shone with magnetic power.

"Westzon... I really think you should leave. You won't find what you're looking for here. The Technos has been mislead. We're not fire-breathing radicals. Edensville is a retreat from the world." She sounded eminently reasonable. He almost felt like agreeing.



"Sorry, but I have my job."

She leant on the precarious railing.

"Why not make a thorough search with Jessa and go? The other offenses are minor. There are thousands of lawbreakers who are more worthy of attention than us. Why not, Westzon? Why torment us, why kill our little world? When we are turned into fully-fledged, placid little Humen who run around like the rest of the planet, the Technos will have killed our spirit, you know that. I realize you despise us, but surely there's something worthy in our striving for our goal. Even Sheriff Jessa sees that."

"You may be right." He stirred uneasily. "However, my orders come from Year-King Light himself. The world is resting after the pain of war, Eloise. Every little disturbance throws a bigger ripple than it would have before the Plague War and mass death."

"I wouldn't call an entire petrochemical factory little."

"No. Perhaps not."

A long-drawn-silence came between them. Westzon felt he owed her something.

"All right. Even the Year-King only rules twelve months. You appreciate I am not neglecting my duty? It's only that Edensville seems unlikely now. Perhaps I am weary."

She laid a comforting hand on his shoulder.

"Come inside. Rest."

On the balcony above them Mackay stood warily, watching the figures retreat. After a minute the smouldering anger in his eyes burst into flames.

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The 'copter had arrived, first as a thundering boom, in its jet mode, then as a near-deafening whirr of ultrafast blades. It was coloured the bright blue of the Technos and the white Ankh stood out on either side of the nose-cone. The wind from the dying rotors blew across the old landing-pad of the former hotel.

'Why is it we need symbols so much?' he wondered. Maybe they were each frantic to remain Human in an age of desperate, though deceptively diffuse, change and menace.

The pilot stepped out. He was a Chthone. The steel-muscled arms gripped heavy scanning equipment and easily unloaded it. The Chthone could not, of course, feel pain above the minimal level of awareness. His reinforced body might be useful to Westzon. The trouble with Chthone was that they thought they were immortal, and when they lost the argument to a plastic-nosed bullet or poison-coated needle it was too late.

The Chthone saluted just as Jessa appeared, rubbing sleepy eyes. Her green irises seemed flecked with gold in the morning's light.

"Ready, Sir and Master. At your service, Sheriff. I am designated Johnny-Snatch-Back."

Westzon took out a map.

"Right, we're going to start with a scan of the surrounding countryside for twenty clicks. Then we go over Edensville in detail. Johnny-Snatch-Back

takes the basement and cellars. Jessa, you take the first and second floors. I'll handle the third floor and the other uprooms. OK?"

The last comment was rhetorical. It took them the rest of the blazing hot day to go through the land, the yard, and work their ways across the hotel.

When night fell they assembled at Westzon's cubicle.

"Did anyone find anything?"

Johnny-Snatch-Back shook his massive head. The only wholly obvious and disconcerting thing about his un-Humaness was his eyes. They were covered by light-sensitized, built-in goggle-bubbles. Under the electric bulb's harsh illumination the bubbles were a tinge darkened, the slate-grey eyes within unmoving, like dirty glaciers.

Jessa whispered. "No luck, either."

He let out a half-sigh of relief. "Great, though this means the job must go on. At least they pay me well."

No one smiled at the old cliché. Jessa brought out a writing board and wrote on it with her feather-tipped stylus.

Wtch it, we're being listnd to.

He raised his eyebrows. She moved her hand over the board, cancelling the message and wrote rapidly again.

Maybe being wtched too, but mst risk it. I found this on 2nd flr, undr a carpt. They mst mave missd it in their hurry.

She took a tiny, matchhead detonator out of her shirt pocket. It lay on her sunburnt palm, an indictment.

Westzon was shocked, but he pointed to the stylus and made a questioning motion. She scribbled again. The Chthon looked on impassively.

They may be more dngrous than u think.

"Well, I think we better take the equipment up to the helicopter now. We'll make the interrogations afterwards."

The door burst open. Mackay was there and more men were behind him. He grinned.

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"You want some help, Tribune? We'll lug up some of your equipment for you."

"No bother. Thanks for the offer, but some of this stuff's delicate."

"Ha ha, my boy's'll treat it like china. You remember china? Used to be a luxury item. There's nothing we like better than to help out the ailing Technos, eh boys?"

A chorus of muted laughter answered him. Westzon and Jessa relinquished their loads and led the way up the decaying wooden stairs. Johnny-Snatch-Back held his under his arm and would not give it up. His grunted refusal was accepted by Mackay's men. They admired strength like the Chthon's. It would be hard to reconcile their hatred of Technos technology with him, but then it was hard not to hero-worship, at least a little, someone who could last ten minutes without



breath, go without food for two weeks, break bones, or move at three times normal speed.

The Tribune was worried, and he sensed Jessa was too. This move was so obvious, it reeked of disregard of judgement. Up to ten men surrounded them and all had weapons, concealed or otherwise. For all the Chthon's power Westzon couldn't regard him as adequate insurance.

"You didn't find anything, did you, Tribune?"

"No," he answered, keeping his voice level. Mackay slapped him on the back.

"Fantastic! That's really good, man. I'd like to give you my personal thanks for your co-operation with us, sir. Dropping the other charges was really decent of you."

"That's all right. It's within my discretion as Tribune."

"Of course, of course. I hope the next one we see is as good as you, Westzon. Ah, we're nearly there."

They came to the head of the stairs. Mackay opened the door a little way and gestured for them to go first.

Outside the stars were starting to come out. Around the 'copter, in a vague semi-circle, were the other adults of Edensville. Diana and Eloise stood among them. Each person held a blazing torch in one hand. Only the children were missing.

"Very dramatic, Mackay."

"I thought so." He smiled slyly. "Drop your weapons, please."

Jessa threw her pistol to the ground. The Chthon, who had a shotgun planted in the small of his back, reluctantly relieved himself of a score of weapons ranging from crude to weird.

"And the needle gun, Westzon," said Mackay.

Irritated they had found out about it, he drew it out carefully and threw it on the heap. The swastika-jacketed youth he had watched fight the other night scooped up the weapons and distributed them. Mackay took the needler. Westzon's eyes wandered to the lightning bolt sewn on the leader of Edensville's chest. At this moment it seemed singularly appropriate.

"I'm sorry it had to come to this," said Mackay.

Westzon shrugged. "So am I. I'm not surprised that you didn't realise it, of course. You, personally, would have a psychological block."

"Huh?" Mackay scratched at his chin dubiously. "What are you on about, Tribune? Have you cracked? We didn't have anything to do with that bombing. We're just-- well, we'll go with a bang and not a whimper. Peace ain't grand when it's the peace of the grave."

"Crap, Mackay. You bombed it. Jessa, show him the detonator."

Jessa took it out. Mackay stared at it and went livid.

"You scum! You planted it. The Technos is out to get us no matter what. Well, we don't want your filthy robot-products or your Guaranteed Income." He snarled and liften the needler. "Free men and women know how to die, Westzon."

"That detonator's no plant," he said calmly. Mackay slapped him viciously. Johnny-Snatch-Back stirred, but he held up a hand. Warm blood trickled down from a corner of his mouth, onto his chin, and ran down to his collar.

"Don't try and get out of it Mackay." The middle-aged man stood there, his index finger trembling on the fire-button. But the finger did not tighten.

"Eloise!" he bellowed. She came forward. "What's the Tribune on about! Tell me. You were talking to him this morning."

"As I said," she murmured, "I got him to get this over with. Come on, Abe. Give them a scare and kick them out."

He grabbed her. "There's more to it than that." Suddenly Mackay began crying. The sight was odd, the tears flowing quickly and yet Mackay's face was set stone-like still. "That's all, Eloise? Are you sure that's all?" She nodded.

"Mackay," said Westzon softly. His opponent turned. "When did you first meet Eloise?"

"'97, just before Edensville began. Why? And don't be disrespectful or I'll pump you full of needles, so help me God."

He spoke, and his clear voice rang like the sound of sword on anvil.

"Psychomanipulator!"

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Mackay's face seemed to crack open, revealing inner emotions. The Tribune turned away from the sight, then continued to speak.

"All these years she's been fooling you. The government of this sector, when it was a country, was one of the most skilled in the use of psychomanipulators. She's got every trick in the book -- body language, hypnotic implants, drugs, and I'll even bet she has a supply of epidermal drugs. I think she used them during last night's party. She's trained in crowd control and mind manipulation. Somewhere outside of twenty clicks from here there must be a prototype brainleaching machine from pre-Plague War times. She took some of you, hypnotized you, got you to plant the bomb, and then wiped your memories."

"No!" growled Mackay.

"Yes!" Has she ever been gone for long periods? Have there ever been memory lapses among your people?" The population around them stirred.

"Why you -- there have been lapses, but the aftereffects of the Plague War live on. Eloise! Tell me it isn't true."

Her voice was strained. The taughtness was mirrored in her face. "Why no... no, it's not true. How could it be, Abe? And even if it were, why should it matter? We've always set an example against their... Communist ways."

'Of course!' thought Westzon. 'They were programmed to be fanatically anti-Communist.' Not that the Technos was Communist, but it was vastly different to the pseudo-capitalist and liberal democratic country that had existed in this sector before the Plague War.

Eloise continued, her voice rising and the subtle inflections gaining the crowd's sympathy. "Someone has to show the world there'd discontent. Their society is evil, it's warped, and it's up to us to eliminate it. It's better to die on our feet free than to live as gutless slaves kneeling at the altar of the Technos. Technos of the Humen, bah! Half the Humen hate it for what it's doing. Tyranny of the Technos is the word."

The crowd muttered angrily. Suddenly Mackay straightened out.

"Allright! You people have always been behind me, behind Edensville. Let's wipe out our mistake."

He whirled and raised the needle gun. Johnny-Snatch-Back moved. A blur of colour, he raced past, knocking two people to the ground, and flew at Mackay. Needles spat at the Chthon. The body hit Mackay, sending him sprawling, and struggled a moment to raise itself. Then the Chthon succumbed to the sleep drug.

Simultaneously: a follower moved forward and shot the Chthon in the head, denting it severely and killing him; Jessa kicked a woman flanking her in the pelvis and grabbed a crossbow; a man swung at Westzon but was felled by a karate chop.

"Kill them!" screamed Eloise. People moved forward, but were impaired by the blazing torches in their hands and those dropped on the rooftop. In the distance a faint buzz could be heard. Mackay struggled out from under Johnny-Snatch-Back's body and grabbed an ancient submachine-gun. He growled like some prehistoric caveman and swung it up.

Before Mackay could act, with the suddenness of lightning, the world exploded around them. Every member of the group save the Tribune and Jessa was hit by a torrestial hail of grain-like bullets which exploded with awful force.

Six jet-pack troopers descended on pillars of flame. Theirs was the faint buzz of a moment ago. Now it was like the roar of avenging angels. Westzon stared, horrified at the slaughter around him. Torches guttered out next to red-stained bodies. Jessa screamed.

The leader of the troopers raised his visor. "I'm sorry, Sir and Master. We only had an instant. Our guns are computer controlled and we had only time to tell them to avoid you."

He could only stare unbelievably at the carnage.

"How?" shouted Jessa. "How?"

The leader looked at her sympathetically. His dark hair lay damp on his forehead. The complex secondary controls of his equipment could be seen before his mouth in the helmet's bottom.

"I suppose I can.. though you won't know tomorrow. The Technos does not live by stupidity, Sheriff. As the Tribunes are the servants of the Technos so the Technos is the servant of the people. We cannot evade responsibility as our forefathers did before the Plague War. All Tribunes have microminiature equipment implanted in their brains. We can hear and see everything they do. Unfortunately, we cannot yet read their minds." He turned away and began ordering the troopers to search the hotel, then called on his radio for transport to remove the bodies.

Jessa turned to Westzon.

"We won't know... in the morning."

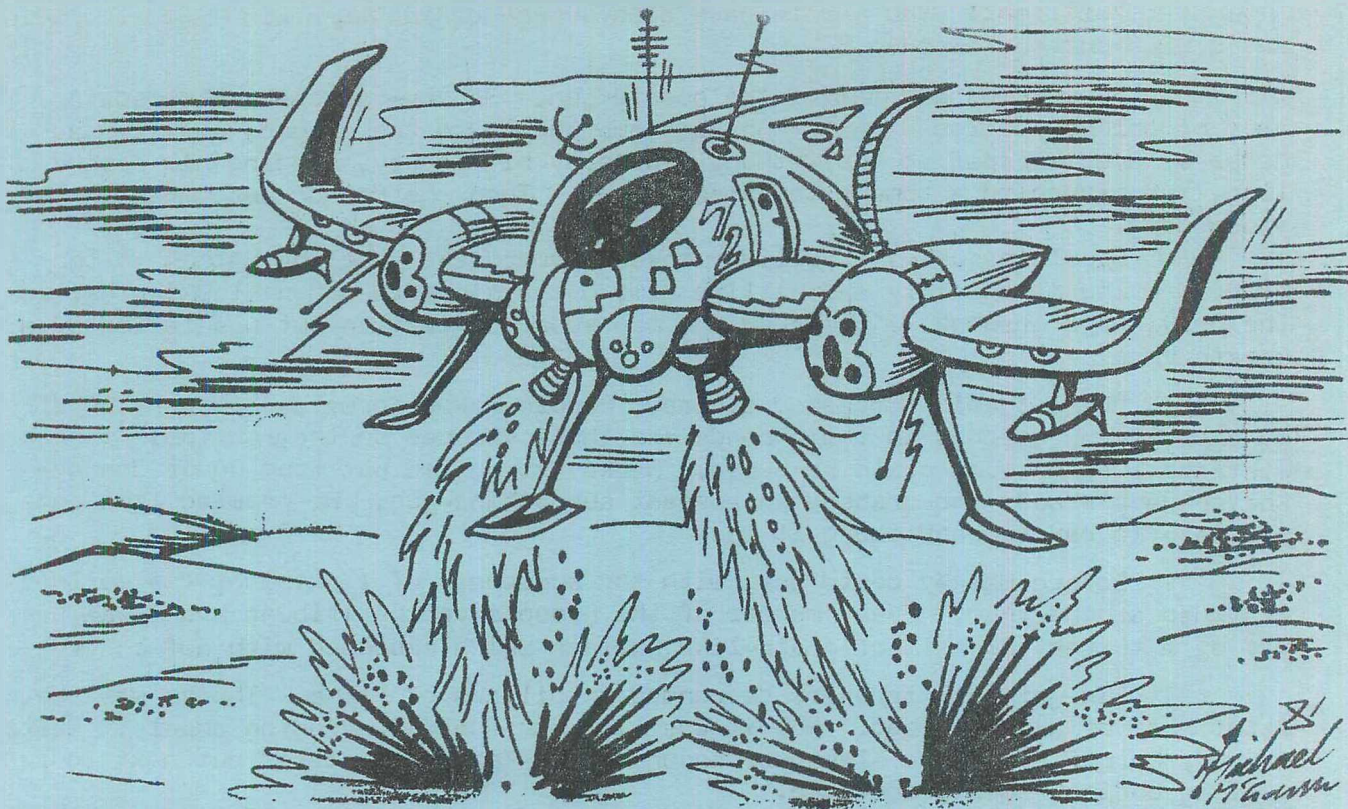
The shock wore off him.

"Christ. I killed them. I killed them with my cursed job, with my own brain. Maybe the Technos is evil. Maybe Mackay was right. I hope their souls dream quietly."

"This is what Eloise wanted," whispered Jessa. "Release. The fight was unequal and she knew it."

She leant against him. Suddenly he kissed her fearfully. more out of





numbing insecurity than passion. In the morning, he knew, this would remain. "They'll let us stay together. How about it?" She nodded. He spoke again, face trembling ever so slightly. "I hope you're right. I hope for our future that today was the last dying gasp of the old world."

Slowly they walked towards the rotting stairs, uncertain of their world, even of themselves.

THE END

—oOo—

# GRIMESISH GRUMBERLINGS,

*A COLUMN BY A. BERTRAM CHANDLER.*

## THE CURSE OF NED KELLY

When, late last year, I typed THE END at the bottom of the final page of KELLY COUNTRY I thought that, Kellywise, my troubles were over and that I should be able to drag Commodore Grimes, kicking and screaming, back from his Long Service Leave and sign him on for another series of misadventures. To date I have managed just one 10,000 word story; the rest of my time has been fully occupied by Kelly hassles.

Does the unquiet ghost of Ned Kelly have it in for me? I wonder. If so, why? Is it because in my story there was some hanky-panky between Ned's beloved sister Kate and the Englishman John Grimes (not the John Grimes but an honourable ancestor), with skinny-dipping in the billabong by moonlight and seduction on the shore thereof? Or is it because I made the point that the Australian Revolution could not have succeeded without considerable help from outside any more than the American Revolution could have done? (After all, the decisive action in the American War of Independence was the Battle of the Chesapeake Capes between the British and French navies.)

Or could money be the trouble?

Many people -- starting with Ned's sister Kate -- have cashed in on the Kelly legend, with plays and books and films and have done far better financially for themselves than Ned ever did. Could all these ill-gotten gains be sent back in Time to the real-life hero of all these works then Ned Kelly would never have needed to embark upon his bushranging, bank-robbing career. And then none of us would have had anything to write about. Yet another Time Travel paradox...

But as things are, Ned must be regarding all the playwrights, film makers and writers as a shower of bludgers, making money from his misfortune.

Anyhow, I finished KELLY COUNTRY. I had the final arguments with Susan about certain episodes. I did some tidying up. I decided to put the Australian marketing of the manuscript in the hands of a major literary agent who has an office in Sydney. (Quite some time ago, when I was dissatisfied with my usual English agent, I decided to put my Pommy affairs in the hands of this big company but discovered that they were utterly clueless regarding science fiction. I was



obliged to return to my original agency. And then, not so long ago, I used the Sydney office of the major literary agency to handle film rights negotiations, to draw up the contract and all the rest of it.)

The literary agent got the original copy of the manuscript to market in Australia. I wanted another original typescript to send to my New York agent and a good, clear carbon copy for my Japanese publisher and another one to send to the Literature Board of the Australia Council as proof that I had been doing something to justify my Senior Fellowship. So a rather scruffy carbon copy was put in the hands of a firm handling all kinds of office work, including professional typing. I told these people just what I wanted and their manageress assured me that I should have three "perfect copies".

Well, the literary agency was very slow in reading the manuscript. The professional typists were very slow in getting it typed. It so happened that on the same day I heard that the literary agency had decided not to handle KELLY COUNTRY and that the professional typists at last had their job finished. My first call was to pick up the original copy. I had a long talk with the local director of the literary agency. He had liked the book, but... It were the science fictional aspects of it, the flickering back and forth in Time, that had put him off. Oddly enough he had especially enjoyed the Battle of the Tasman Sea sequence, a chapter which Susan had not much cared for.

This particular agency, as a matter of fact, is rather notorious for its extreme reluctance to handle anything out of the ordinary. I was reminded of the story about Ian Fleming and Paul Gallico. Ian Fleming, then a journalist with no works of fiction in print, showed the manuscript of the first James Bond novel, CASINO ROYALE, to Gallico. Gallico was enthusiastic and advised his friend to lodge it with his, Gallico's, agent. The agent said that it was unsaleable. Fleming found another agent, who proceeded to do very nicely out of Bondage. That first one must have been kicking himself ever since.

My next call was to the professional typing agency. While I was enjoying coffee and a yarn with the manageress I flicked through the pages of the work. I found a typographical error - Grimes spelled Grime. There were apologies and the offending pages were taken away to be corrected. I did more flicking through and found more errors. There were profound apologies and promises to correct every error that I found. I said that I wanted to get everything in the mail the next day and that I would make my own corrections, in ballpoint, in my usual manner.

There followed twelve solid hours of proof-reading, during which I tallied over two hundred typographical errors. (Probably I missed a few). A common one was "navel" for "naval". And Brest, the French seaport, was spelled "Breast". In four pages sentences were missed out, making nonsense of the narrative. But finally, on the Friday afternoon, I was able to do all the heavy mailing - one copy, registered, to an Australian publisher in North Ryde, one copy to the Australia Council, one copy to New York and one to Tokyo.

More days went by. I thought that it was time that I heard from the local publisher, with whom I had had a telephone conversation before posting the novel. I rang them. It had not yet, they said, arrived. I rang the Australia Council. Their copy, although unregistered, had arrived in good time. There was telephoning back and forth between the publishers and myself, as a result of which I made enquiries at the Potts Point Post Office, where I was given the usual form to fill in and advised to ring the North Ryde Post Office to make my own enquiries. The North Ryde Post Office had no record of any resistered parcel's having been delivered to the publisher.

Shortly thereafter, however, I had a telephone call from the publisher's



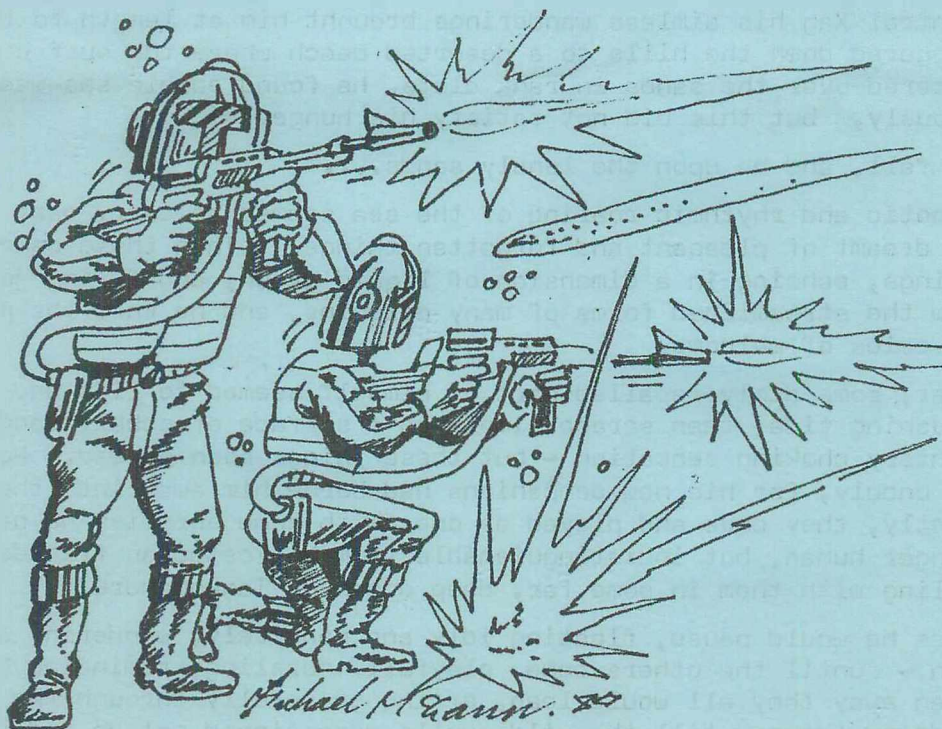
office. The manuscript had been found. It had been delivered by ordinary mail and thrown into the slush pile....

After all the above I'm wondering what Kelly-engendered disasters are heading my way from New York and Tokyo.

But, as Kelly said, such is life.

- A. BERTRAM CHANDLER.

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ADVERT: For anyone who is interested, there are still five (5) copies left of the Molesworth HISTORY OF AUSTRALIAN FANDOM 1935 - 1963. Price is \$3 from this zine.

# THE TRANSITION

BY PETER A. KELLS

On the world of Tarkomandre, in the southern kingdom of Xag, there once was an outcast, driven forth from the midst of men - though he never knew his crime. Such was the way of things on Tarkomandre.

None were permitted to give him shelter or sustenance, but only to drive him forth with stripes and abuse. Thus he wandered throughout a long Tarkomandrian year. Wraith-like, ever weaker, and ill he became, living only on roadside herbs and furtive fruits stolen from orchards by night.

From central Xag his aimless wanderings brought him at length to the coast, and he staggered down the hills to a deserted beach where the surf boomed mournfully. Scattered over the sands in rank clots, he found edible sea-weed which he devoured ravenously, but this did not satisfy his hunger.

Evening fell, and he upon the lonely sands....

The hypnotic and rhythmic roaring of the sea seemed to carry part of his mind away, and he dreamt of pleasant and forgotten things. Then there came strange pipings and chirpings, echoing in a dimension of liquid green, and flying joyously towards him he saw the streamlined forms of many dolphins, and he knew the pipings and chirpings for cries of welcome.

From afar, some dimly-recalled part of himself seemed to lift and float and tumble on a rushing tide, then scrape limply on a surface of pebbly sand. And there came a momentary choking sensation - but these things soon passed. No, they did not worry him unduly, for his new companions had borne him away into their midst, and gaily, exultantly, they dove and played as one. With some surprise he perceived that he was no longer human, but indistinguishable from his cetacean friends, and leaping and revelling with them in some far, deep ocean of Tankomandre.

Sometimes he would pause, floating idly and pensively, wondering at his strange transition - until the others came, playfully nuzzling; reminding him of his new life. Then away they all would leap, arcing gracefully through the pellucid Tarkomandrian waters, till the wild swells were tipped golden and fiery in the oceanic sunset....

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# S. F. A. - THE ALTERNATIVE.

## FANZINES RECEIVED:

### Australian:

Cygnus Chronicles 10 & 11 - Neville Angove, ACT.  
Nemesis 2 - Uni of Adelaide SF Assn., S.A.  
The Sacred Cow 5 - Allan F Bray, S.A.  
Thyme 6 - 11 - Andrew Brown & Irwin Hirsh, Vic.  
The Ravin' V3 N.1 - Stephen Dedman, W.A.  
Ornithopter 8 & 9 - Leigh Edmonds, ACT.  
Xenophilia 1 - 3 - Richard Faulder, NSW  
Rhubarb 81 2/4, - John & Diane Fox, NSW  
Crux 5 - Mike Hailstone, ACT  
WAHF-Full 7 - Jack Herman, NSW  
Sikander 6 - Irwin Hirsh, Vic  
Fith 3 - 5 - Seth Lockwood, W.A.  
Norseman Review 1 & 2 - Mark Loney, W.A.  
Forerunner 6 - 8 - Shayne McCormack, NSW  
Nibwin 4 - Roman Orszanski, S.A.  
Q36.G, No.1 - Mark Ortlief, S.A.  
Positron + 8 - Gary Rawlings, NSW  
Boyant Strudel 6 - Mike Schaper, W.A.  
Crux 4 - James Styles \*not MH's zine.  
The Peter Principle 1 - Peter Toluzzi, NSW  
Weber Women's Wrevenge 4 & 5 - Jean Weber, ACT.  
Tales of Terra Nova 2 - Gay Williams, NSW.

### Foreign:

Out of the Blue 3 - Harry Bell & Kevin Williams, UK.  
Yandro 253/4 - Buck & Juanita Coulson, USA.  
Aerial/one shots - Graham Ferner, NZ  
Science Fiction Review 40 & 41 - Dick Geis, USA.  
Erg 76/7 - Terry Jeeves, UK  
Lan's Lantern 10 - George Laskowski Jr, USA.  
Scottish 82 - Ethel Lindsay, Scotland.  
L'Altro Regno 7 - Michele Martino, Italy.  
Wild Fennel 15 - Jack & Pauline Palmer.  
Arena SF 12 - Geoff Rippington, UK  
New Canadian Fandom 2/3 - Robert Runde, Canada.  
Science Fiction Digest 20 - Skel & Cas (Skelton), UK.  
Fanzine Fanatique 41/2 - Keith Walker, UK  
Just Me 2 - Michael Wallis, Canada.

It looks as though NSW is still the top fanzine publishing state.

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There follows an article sent from a US magazine which a correspondent in the USA thought might be of interest to those who think the population is rising too fast:-

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## MALE CONTRACEPTION -- NEW BREAKTHROUGH!!

The newest development in male contraceptives was unveiled recently at the American Women's Surgical Symposium held at the Ann Arbor Medical Center. Dr. Sophia Merkin, of the Merkin Clinic, announced the preliminary findings of a study conducted on 763 unsuspecting male grad students at the large Midwest University. In her report, Mr. Merkin stated that the new contraceptive - the IPD - was a breakthrough in male contraception. It will be marketed under the trade name "Umbrelly".

The IPD (intrapenal device) resembles a tiny folded umbrella which is inserted through the head of the penis and pushed into the scrotum with a plunger-like instrument. Occasionally, there is a perforation of the scrotum, but this is disregarded since it is known that the male has few nerve endings in this area of his body. The underside of the umbrella contains a spermicidal jelly, hence the name "Umbrelly".

Experiments on a thousand white whales from the Continental Shelf (whose sexual apparatus is said to be closest to mans') proved the umbrelly to be 100% effective in preventing production of sperm, and eminently satisfactory to the female whale since it doesn't interfere with her pleasure.

Dr. Merkin declared the umbrelly to be statistically safe for the human male. She reported that of the 763 grad students tested with the device, only two died of scrotal infection, only 20 experienced swelling of the tissues, three developed cancer of the testicles, and 13 were too depressed to have an erection. She stated that common complaints ranged from cramping and bleeding to acute abdominal pain. She emphasized that these symptoms were merely indications that the man's body had not yet adjusted to the device. Hopefully, the symptoms would disappear within a year.

One complication caused by IPD and briefly mentioned by Dr. Merkin was the incident of massive scrotal infection necessitating the surgical removal of the testicles. "But this is a rare case", said Merkin, "too rare to be statistically important." She and the other distinguished members of the Women's College of Surgeons agreed that the benefits far outweighed the risk to any individual man.

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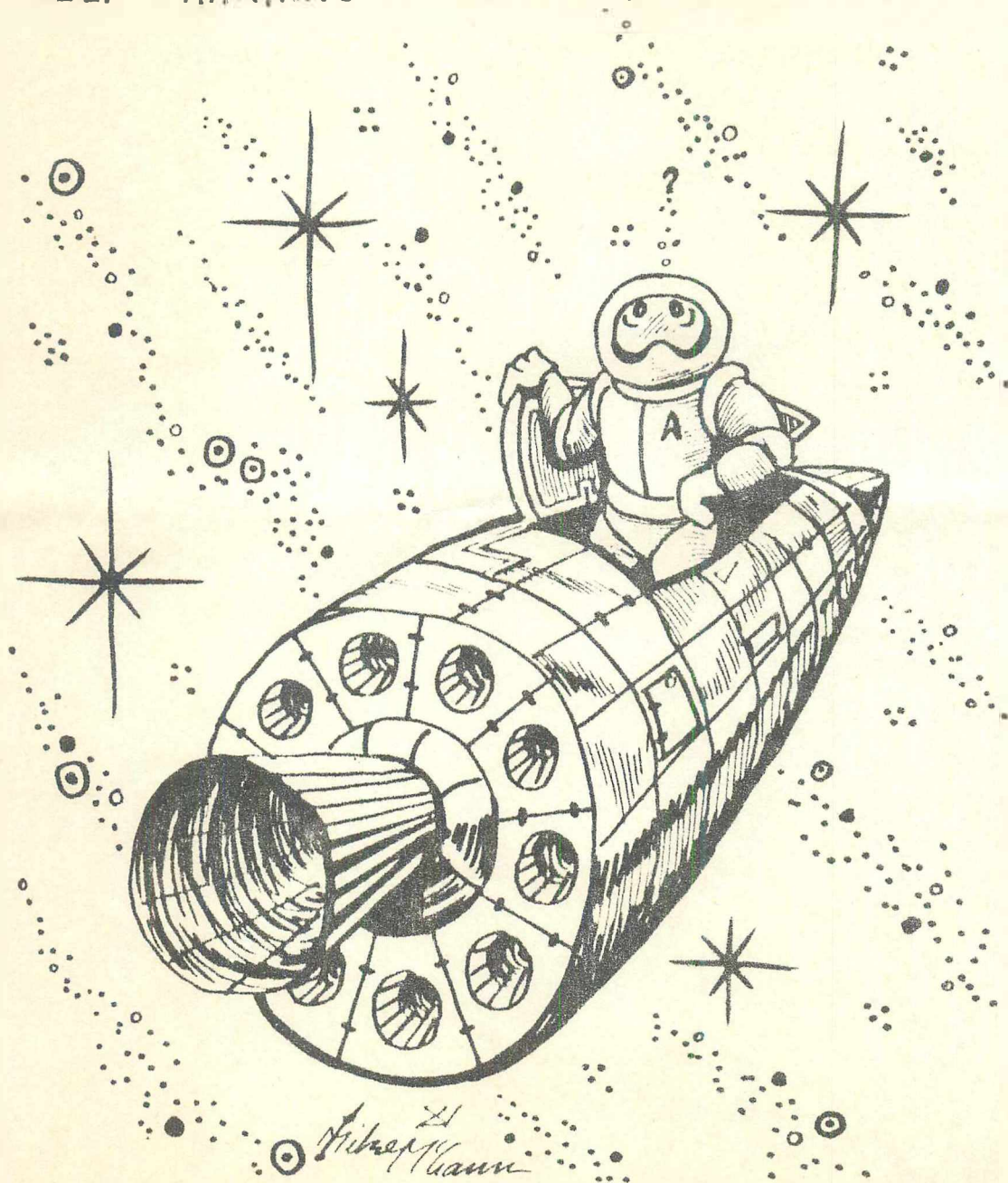
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## SCIENCE FICTION SPECIALIST BOOKSHOPS IN AUSTRALIA.

|         |                                                       |                                                                    |
|---------|-------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|
| NSW:    | Galaxy Bookshop<br>106 Bathurst St.,<br>Sydney.       | The Land-Beyond-Beyond<br>has reportedly moved recently<br>Sydney. |
| S.A.h / | Standard Books<br>136 Rundell Mall,<br>Adelaide       | The Black Hole<br>11 Chesser St.,<br>Adelaide.                     |
| Vic:    | Space Age Books<br>305-307 Swanson St.,<br>Melbourne. |                                                                    |

There was reportedly one in ACT, but I misplaced the name & address Jean Weber sent.

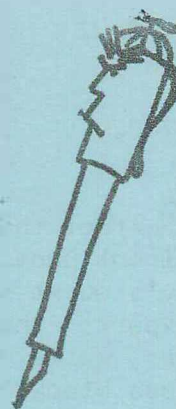
**SPACED OUT!...** IS FINDING YOUR-  
SELF THINKING ABOUT HOW BIG SPACE IS!?







## The R. & R. Dept.



Harry Andruschak  
PO Box 606,  
La Canada-Flintridge,  
Ca 91011,  
U.S.A.

Concerning "where are the female fanzine article writers?" Going about their ways because male fanzine pubbers are too goddam lazy to get off their duffs and actively solicit articles. Most of my fanzine articles pubbed in ITB were written by direct request. Exception, Charles Burbee. And there I actively asked to re-print his FAPA articles... and I seem to be the first faned to do so for many a year. Why?

If, as you noted, a lot of good fanwriting is going on in apas...well, I reprint Charles Burbee. Andrew Porter reprints Robert Silverberg's FAPazine. Gil Gaier reprints his own apazines. The habit is starting to spread among US fanzines. So... why don't you ask the female writers for permission to reprint their best apa efforts?

✓Mainly because I don't belong to any apa's. Don't particularly want to, either. I'm more an sf reader than a faaan (which reminds me of a sheep) - so between that and putting this zine out and a family - takes up most of my time. - Ron.✓

Or male writers, to be fair about it. Must be some good stuff in the apas. I remember some gems in PPLESAUCE that really deserved wider circulation. I had an article by Poul Anderson in IVB 1 - a reprint from LASFAPA. It was a gem.

Other sources can be tried. I reprinted an article by Ray Bradbury that appeared in Perry Rhodan, thus escaping the notice of most fans. The overwhelming response was that it was a good article, the best thing in IVB 2. I have no sympathy for faneds who complain about lack of articles. My own opinion is that they are not soliciting hard enough. How about reprints from the 1930's, 1940's 1950's? Must be a lot of interesting stuff new fans haven't seen. For that matter maybe reprints of the best of the earlier issues of THE MENTOR which fans like me have not seen, and probably never will?

✓Unlike the USA, Australia has not that many zines that a faned can't mention that he is short of material and he can get some good stuff sent him by the next issue. And of course it is amazing how much good material he can get from those new fans/readers just by asking, rather than concentrating on those established fans who are sometimes in a rut with their output. - Ron.✓

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

I hope I'm correct in believing The Decadent Anti-quarian was supposed to be both funny and meaningful. It's amusing for its satire on a particular style of fantasy fiction and for its caricature of the fanatic who lets his enthusiasm grow beyond the proportions justified by the importance of its source. But I also sense a moral to the story to the effect that unconventional ideals of beauty and inspiration can exist. Several prominent photographers, for instance, have complained about the fact that New York City's worst slum areas look too beautiful when photographed with color film by an expert; the subtle hues and the myriad shapes of crumbling boards, rickety stairs, walls unfit for human habitation, and so on can be aesthetically splendid unless black and white film is used. The lack of color somehow causes the slums to retain their true horror.

Gay Williams' conreport was pleasant reading. I must confess that her dramatic moment on a park bench with the temperature two degrees above zero celsius didn't make its proper effect on me, because Hagerstown has been experiencing some of its coldest weather in many years including one recent morning when the mercury hit ten below zero on the fahrenheit scale and I didn't go to bed all night, trying to get some sleep on the sofa fully dressed under the misapprehension that my furnace was about to self-destruct. I do wish you'd provide some captions for the photographs, though. Your Australian readers will undoubtedly need little or no information about them but the best I can deduce is that Gay is the young lady most frequently shown and all the scenes are relevant to various parts of her article.

At first I wondered if John J. Alderson might be pulling my leg with this learned discussion of car and chariot. But then I thought about some of the implications of his article and I realized how right he is. There's his emphasis on ra as a sun-god's name, for instance. It didn't take long to remember how Ray Washington, Jr., was the CosmicCircle's director for the American South. There you are: Ra as the beginning of the first name and a definite synonym for the sun in the name of the organizations. Then there was Jimmy Taurasi. The ra is in his name and he published a fanzine entitled Solor, having failed to look up in a dictionary the proper way to spell solar. G.M. Carr was a famous Seattle fan about a quarter-century ago whose career reached its climax when she was attacked by an elevator; the parallel between name and vehicle is obvious. Terry Carr was the vehicle through which Carl Brandon came into existence.

It's a good thing I read A. Bertnam Chandler's column instead of listening to him read it from a podium. I always suffer agonies of embarrassment when I'm not sure if I should laugh at this or that point in a conversation or a speech. It would have happened when he reached the anecdote about what he said when he was about to cut the red silk ribbon. Somewhere in the more remote recesses of memory I seem to sense the existence of an account I once read about the ribbon-cutting being done by the wrong person at some big moment in Australia's history. But I wouldn't have dug out that particular memory in time to laugh at the right moment if this had been an audible narrative and I would have looked puzzled while everyone else in the audience was snickering.

[Bert gave the GOM speech at the recent MEDTREK Star Trek Con in February. He was heard to say that the audience had all laughed in the wrong places. -- Ron.]

Lan Laskowski might have mentioned another problem that has had an effect on the amount of farm land still in use in the United States. It's the inheritance tax situation. For years, Maryland farmers who grow old have had a major problem if they want to bequeath their land to one or more children so the farm will stay in the family. The second generation can rarely afford to pay the





inheritance tax on a large farm and the machinery and other equipment which is used to run it. Recently there has been some legislation to make things easier to keep family farms going after the owner's death.

As usual in his articles, John Alderson sounds so sure of his facts and so well versed in his subject matter that I'm reluctant to challenge any of his statements or to disagree with his basic premise (TM 35). In this particular case, criticism would be even riskier because the communication problem which may be paralleled by great differences between conditions in Australia and those in the United States for bio-dynamic houses and gardens (and up here, we'd call the garden a yard although some people have a garden in their yard). I can think of so many reasons why it would be hard to follow John's advice but many of them may be peculiar to this area. The entire valley in which Hagerstown reposes has limestone just under the surface, making it hard to dig as far as John's instructions require. The growing season is probably more abbreviated and the winter weather more severe which might require more sophisticated measures for utilizing natural resources to provide heat and food. There would be terrible problems with various sources of damage: human vandals, thieves of both the human and animal types, and insect as well as fungus damage. Some features of John's arrangements would run foul of various laws; in fact, there has been a big fuss just a few miles from Hagerstown over someone's effort to have a few ducks wandering around his property. Then there would be tremendous pressure from neighbors whose ideal of a home is an unbroken expanse of lawn surrounding the house, with identical other lawn-surrounded houses stretching in every direction; anyone who tried to be self-sufficient in this way would be accused of spoiling the neighborhood.

It it's any consolation to Bob Smith, there's no sure way of knowing if Mozart's music was played less rapidly in his lifetime than today. He didn't leave metronome markings (and those left by later composers have been frequently



challenged). Occasionally you can find a passage in a diary or letter telling when an 18th century opera performance began and ended or how long a symphony concert whose program is known lasted, but this leaves unanswered such questions as how long intermissions may have been, how much time was occupied by applause, and if there were encores. One apparent clue to performance speed involves writing for the human voice: in theory it might be possible to get a rough idea of how fast a passage went by noting places where the composer probably expected the singer to pause for breath. But this is a shaky foundation for speed calculations because singers received more thorough training in the old days and might have developed better breath control. Besides, there are vocal passages in Bach and certain other composers which seem downright impossible for human lungs to sing unbroken so it may have been customary to take very quick gulps within a passage which seems to be meant to be sung without interruption. Even the phonograph age hasn't solved all such problems. I've read published arguments on the question of whether Rachmaninoff played his own compositions in public the way he recorded them. Some old timers think he may have changed some tempos to fit the time limits of 78 rpm sides or may have grown more reckless and played faster with a large audience to inspire him in a concert.

My copy of the Eney Fencyclopedia is number V9. Even if some copies have the same letters and numbers, the confusion can't be as bad as that which Elmer Perdue deliberately created in FAPA for years by typing volume one, number one on each issue of his FAPazine, pour épater le bourgeois.

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Buck Coulson  
Route 3,  
Hartford City,  
IN 47348,  
U.S.A.

Geez, you mean Australian cons don't have huckster rooms? I'm appalled. Only US con I've been to without one is Spacecon, because too few people come (under 50) and the con committee can't afford one. But there are always three or four hucksters selling out of their rooms. (I'm one of them...) But I want Gay to know that any American guest is likely to be a better and wittier speaker than a mere Englishman... (Canadians are pretty good at speaking, too, if you can drag them away from the poker table.)

If Peter Kells isn't an enemy of technology, I'd hate to read a letter from someone who was. I do tend to be an enthusiast about science, possibly because I require insulin to control diabetes, cromolyn sodium to prevent emphysema, a combination of spironalactone and hydrochlorothiazide to keep my blood pressure normal, glasses to aid vision, a furnace to keep from freezing in the winter (average nighttime temperatures have been around -25°C the last month or so), and so on. So far, technological killings have failed to equal the percentage of deaths per country produced by the Black Plague; I think we can manage to survive them.

Well, Alderson may have suggested the production of alcohol and methane as by-product of a piggery for the first time in Australia, but the US has already had newspaper articles about the idea (several years ago) and plans for making the equipment required are available from a commercial publisher. (I did not keep track of who and what because I'm not a farmer and have no use for the equipment, but I read the articles.) I'm sure Alderson's system would work for a small group of farmers. Whether it would produce enough surplus to support the miners, smelters, and manufacturers required to produce the machinery... I think it would. Enough to support authors, musicians, painters and other non-essential people - I'm not at all sure. Schools, to turn out new chemists and engineers and physicists? Doubtful. The system will work fine as long as it's a part of society; I think it would run down in a very few generations if it was the whole basis.

If Bob Smith wants a really modern stf approach to Courtney, I submit "who balled Courtney's shoats?" (How many of your readers besides Alderson will know what a shoat is, I wonder?).

I don't know where Raymond Clancy got his idea that the early religionists decided that "Creation was a thing of unbreakable law". The Catholic Church was hardly an "early religion" in the sense I meant, and it was still selling its ability to intercede with God in medieval times -- didn't he ever read about Martin Luther? Magicians and the early religions both built their reputations on their ability to influence whatever gods there were for the benefit of society or individuals. As a matter of fact, one of the biggest arguments in the US right now is over whether or not Creation is natural law or one of God's whims; "obeying the laws of nature" is one of the last things any religion worries about.

Whoa, Hailstone. Even without winds, tidal pull creates ocean movement. Also, oceans might freeze eventually, but all fresh water would freeze a lot quicker; I can't lay my hands on the freezing point of saltwater at the moment, but it's a lot lower than 32° F. And oceans lose heat less quickly than land does; six months of no sunlight might be enough to freeze them, but I doubt it. (And with the oceans warmer than the land, we'd still have winds, anyway.)

Lost Atlantis? Is Kells real? If he is, you can have him. Anyone who could read Donnally without realizing the whole thing is nonsense has a mind so wide open that the wind whistles through it.

---

John Playford  
16 Ellerslie St.,  
Kensington Gardens,  
South Aust. 5068.

I regret using the words "bleah" and "aargh" in regard to Peter Kell's poetry. My criticism of it would be that it is saying nothing new, and is, more importantly, turgid and overblown. My letter may have been "vulgar", but then I've never claimed literary greatness for my letters. I am just about the worst letter-writer in Australia.

He's also correct in that my stories are depressing and crude. The world the characters live in is depressing. However, my writing style isn't crude (though it's more direct than most) and I am promoting uplifting values -- humanity (be it bestial) against machines, and nobility of spirit (be it in a non-human).

As far as Atlantis is concerned I wonder if Mr Kells has heard of the endlessly promoted Thera volcanic explosion theory? It seems to be the only one solidly backed up by scientific and archaeological fact. It puts "Atlantis" in a place of historical greatness -- but puts paid to any idea of a lost Atlantean "supercivilization".

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Kim Huett

Nice to see something from Sue (in TM 35), even if it is so short. It helps to bring a greater balance between male/female contributions but it would be even more pleasing to see some work from NSW 2001. other Femfans. Don't get me wrong, I was pleased to see Susan's story and I for one would not object if you could talk her into contributing a little, please. Actually the story itself read a little like a continuation of possible man/machine relationships that started with John Playford's Trilogy. The point of the story was well made but unlikely in the case given. Where a machine is caring for a human being the instructions would be a good deal more complex. For example the woman should have been able to tell the machine to



dial an ambulance, the fire dept., her husband, etc or some similiar action. Still, in a wider sense, the point has a lot of validity in that people are going to forget that a machine of that complexity is still limited in it's actions and reactions. This problem is apparent already and has been around a while and always will be until people learn that a machine is not a human and is going to be more limited than one.

Reflecting on Bob's reflections, it seems to me that he has discovered (at least this is what I think he has discovered - or at least one of the things he has discovered) is that now Fandom is sharing SF with a large non-Fannish readership. True, these readers have always been there and at times they have been as large as the present group. However, now there is a second factor that has only recently emerged, ie. the respectability of SF and I do not mean in the literary sense. Sure a lot of people still consider SF in the same light they always have, but now the media and a few big selling books have introduced a very large percentage of the population to SF or more probably, Sci-Fi. Now these people don't think it is that weird but treat it as they treat Westerns or Love Romances; socially acceptable, but they wouldn't read it themselves.

What this means is that your average reader of SF no longer feels like a social outcast or at least not to the same extent. So he no longer feels the need to join Fandom to find people who will accept him as normal. This is having several effects on Fandom as a whole that I can see, bringing about changes which will most probably be permanent. The first is the Fannish sense of humour which at one time was an important means of Fans bringing themselves closer together, in order to counterbalance the rejections from non-SF readers. As the need to feel family-like has decreased so too the amount of humour has decreased. Not a good thing in my view, as most Fans and even the semi-Fans need some light entertainment or they go mad.

I hope that Bob continues with his reflections and points out a few of the other changes that have occurred in the last decade or so.

I was pleased to see the story by Julie Vaux in TM 36 as I have read her description of this world in Weber Woman's Wrevenge which made it sound a very interesting and complex world. It was short but quite interesting, though it could have been longer. If Julie doesn't cut off all material to you how about another story set on Comorri, only a little longer?

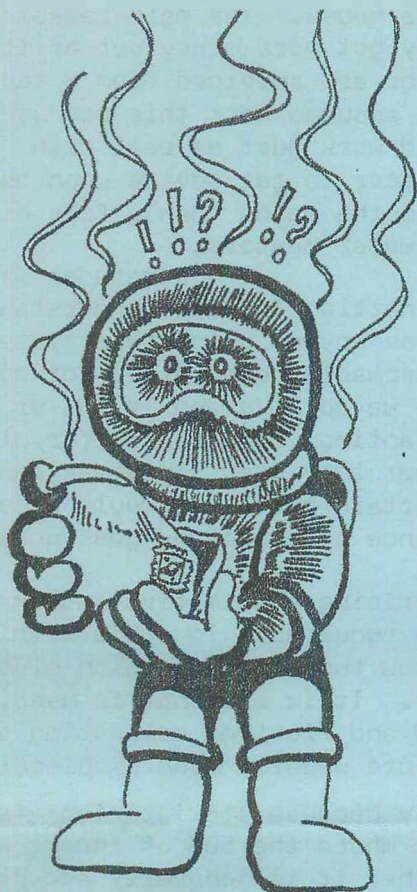
Would Burt Libe be talking about the two volumes by Cyrano De Bergerac published in one volume in the SF classic line edited by Harry Harrison and Brian Aldiss, or is Burt on the track of some other fiction by the man?

Bruce Weston  
10 Cartmell Way,  
Balga, Perth,  
West. Aust. 6061

In the past couple of your fanzines there was been a lot of waffling in A Bertram Chandler's column! It seems he is a permanent resident of the Mentor and I detest such provoking garbage. There is one section of the Mentor I will miss altogether! I found the artistic drawings out of this Universe and outrageously weird. (Pointing to no picture in particular).

In your last issue of TM 36, i utterly reinforce my view point that A. Bertram Chandler should permanently stay in England and then he would have some think to whinge about! While intensively grudgingly reading through "Nothing like a good whinge", it came to my attention that Life wasn't meant to be easy! Mr Chandler should know by now that nobody likes to hear or read a good whinge! From my point of view there is a lot of that going on in Canberra. So i hope these ex-Poms discovered a new and constructed way of whinging.





**"SPACED OUT" IS FINDING,  
THAT PEACE MESSAGE WASNT!**  
*Michael McEwen*  
© 1987 P.C.

John J Alderson  
Havelock,  
Vic. 3465

Peter Kells,  
for all I care, can  
continue to be very  
annoyed about my

dismissal of Donnelly. I have a great respect for Donnelly's research but his dates are muddled, nor can Plato's dating of the catastrophe be accepted as reasonable... several scholars believe a nought should be cut off the figure. For the very good reason that Egyptian history is not that old. Furthermore, I am anything but convinced that there were ever ice-ages. That western Europe was under ice quite recently is evident, but in an ice-age, no: no more than Siberia is in an ice-age now. I am aware that civilisation in western Europe is now believed to predate that of Egypt and whilst I personally believe there was an Atlantis quite recently I cannot at present prove this and it is not generally accepted, so I did not use the evidence. Despite what people think, I am quite careful of my facts.

Re the bio-dynamic house etc. Perhaps Kells had better read that article again. I said that self-sufficiency could be obtained on something like half a city block, that is one twelfth of an acre. Oh yes, I grow my own fruit and vegies and for all intents and purposes the vegetable growing area is about 100 square feet - not because I haven't space, I have, acres of it in fact, but because cramming everything together

helps cut down work, weeds, pests and water use, a vital factor in my case. I could grow a great deal more than I do on that area, but I don't need to. My orchard however is quite large and most of it gets used for making wine. But then of that 100 square feet I grow enough beetroot to make 16 gallons of beetroot wine. Anybody who starves to death on a city block is either a fool or too bloody lazy to use a tin-opener.

There are, of course, certain by-laws that make things difficult; the main purpose of which is to make one dependent on other people. However, in most areas ordinary garden fixtures such as trellises and duck ponds don't require permits, or at least no-one in their right mind asks for them. As Neville Angove mentions, many animals are hosts for diseases to which people are subject. Regrettably human beings are also great spreaders of disease. However, most of these troubles that may be carried by manure is overcome by using anaerobic compost.

I did not gloss over the difficulties of badly sited houses. The whole purport of my article was to say what could be done and most people, knowing what they would like to do, then call in some sort of expert. It may be necessary to get a permit to attach a glasshouse to an existing house but it is not just to glaze the sunward wall as one does in

difficult sited houses. Of course its nonsense to muck around with a Kubota house by blocking up the ventilation. One only alters the ventilation of houses one is trying to convert to something like the Kubota house. The main reason plumbers use copper pipe instead of poly is that they get more money out of it. In my area all except very special hot water services are serviced from a tank on the roof to reduce the main's pressure. I naturally assumed thtt this was so everywhere. However all the systems I outlined would work just as well with copper, at much greater expense. However it is a matter to get advice upon because if the hot water systems can be connected directly to the mains then a fair bit of expense can be saved, even with conventional hot water heaters.

Nematodes are killed by such plants as marygold. I know of no poisonous nettle, indeed I understand that the more vicious they are, the better. Of course anyone using this system will exist past the first generation - it's been reasonably commonplace for centuries. The system may be a bit more compact, but after-all, we do live and learn, or we should. Gardens should be divided into zones for planting. The reason for planting herbs at the kitchen door is so the cook can grab what they need almost as conveniently as from a cupboard. It does only apply to certain herbs, it would be pointless for fennel, for instance, for it is harvested once per year and goes under fruit trees to keep down wogs.

Re the query on pressurising a primitive methane digester. That digester will stand all the pressure required. To achieve this the effluent outlet is between five and eight inches below the effluent which gives a pressure of between five and eight inches of water. It is all that is used. A simpler digester is made from using an ordinary pond and floating collecting plates on the surface. I didn't mention this because they are usually made of plastic.

All sorts of odd statistics float about, largely because statisticians feel the need to do something to justify their position. Where the 50% of income spent on food originally came from I don't know, but I gather it is generally accepted. However when Angove queried it I checked with the Commonwealth Year Book. I divided the total grocery bill of the country by the total of wages and salaries and turned it into a percentage to get 55% of wages and salaries spent on groceries (and meat). This figure excludes people like farmers on the one hand, all grog on the other, and possibly a lot of "prepared" or take-away food. Obviously the food bill is vastly higher than it should be. In my grape-picking days I spent about one fifth of my income on food: to wit I ate something like two pounds of steak, one pound of bacon, two dozen eggs, perhaps ten pounds of vegetables (fruit was mainly free) and several litres of icecream per week. I know others, living out of tins etc who spent over two-thirds of their income on food. At present I spend about five dollars on food per week (no meat at present, that would double it). I have seen women buy a 100 dollars worth of groceries at the supermarket in Maryborough (they stock some interesting cheeses, the only reason I go near them), and I doubt if many men are earning more than \$150 per week here.

[I'm not so sure, John. When I was doing Economics at Sydney Tech the generally accepted level of income spent on food was about 20% (as it was just about the one item which wasn't rising with inflation) and with the main portion being spent on accommodation (about 35%). Sue spends about 20% on food (going on taxed salary) and about 18% on accommodation (ie morgtgage - Ron.)

To conclude, to fully work a garden one man cannot handle more than a quarter acre and this would give a great surplus. To work, as I suggested, a city backyard would not occupy a full day though one can always be busy in a garden, probably about 20 hours per week. After-all, I never assumed for one moment that the householder wouldn't be doing something else. To be self-sufficient doesn't mean that one doesn't eat oysters, it simply means that one is no longer dependent on oysters.



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

Julie Vaux's short-short story was most enjoyable. Teachers, and especially ex-teachers like myself, probably enjoyed it more than most. I think that this story shows the value of Julie's previous exercises in world building pure and simple. Now that she has universe more clearly defined, at least partly as a result of the exercise in clarifying her concepts on paper first, she can concentrate on bringing situations to life without having to concentrate on the background details.

Bert Chandler's problem is one that afflicts everyone with some special area of expertise when they run up against someone writing in that area. Unfortunately, it seems to me that when an author does "research" they tend to accept only the material which backs up the point they are trying to make, and ignore that information which is inconvenient.

Gerard Ashworth's cartoon that follows Bert's article is enjoyable. Unfortunately I can't say the same for his full-page strip. While I admit that he's captured Duke's mannerisms fairly well, even when intoxicated events surround him in a more logical (I didn't say rational) manner.

Thanks to Judith Hanna for her detailed analysis of John Alderson's article. It rather seems to be the case that his sermons tend to fall apart when probed in depth by someone with some degree of expertise in the field. Judith is correct in advocating the recycling (which can only be partial, of course) of organic material back to the form. However, I must take exception to her belief that the soil micro-flora is burnt out with chemical fertilisers. Certainly, used at too high a rate, this would be the case. In general, though, chemical fertilisers are only added to the soil in sufficient quantities to make up for past or projected depletions of nutrients. Actually, we rely on certain components of the soil micro-flora to break the chemical fertilisers into available forms, so we're hardly going to do anything to jeopardise its activities.

While it is true in the ultimate that, as Raymond Clancy says, nature will take care of overpopulation, the human ability to manipulate the environment is staving off the full impact of human population growth, rendering the human impact on nature more severe than would otherwise have been the case. In physical terms the raw materials may not have been destroyed, but the general effect of the manufacturing process is to make the materials less available.

It doesn't take nudity to make the skin more sensitive. Like the person Diane Fox cites I can't bear to wear synthetic fabrics, or at least the pure item. However, this is not a matter of texture, but is a result of synthetic fabrics' total inability to absorb moisture and allow the passage of air. I rather took exception to her referring to large-scale technology as 'macho'. That sort of feminist sexism we can do without, since there's no evidence that large-scale technology is a consequence of the human male. "State" technology is a bit suspect, too. Certainly in this country, and in most western countries I should think, large scale technology is more the province of big businesses, with the state taking a regulatory rather than an entrepreneurial role. Really what I think she means is 'High' technology, implying a high machine input. In this context I suppose it is valid to refer to pesticide spraying and drugs for hyper-active children in this way. However, I can assure her that one doesn't 'breed' better insect predators. Aside from the points that you raise in relation to this, which illustrate that biological control, at least in its research phase, is very much a high-technology undertaking. The real problem, of course, is one of educating the public. We could reduce our use of pesticides now if we so desired, but the public would have to be prepared to live with, for instance, marks on fruit, whose only objection is one of aesthetics.





Peter A Kells  
P.O. Box 1670,  
Southport Station Rd.,  
Qld. 4215.  
1983.

I took exception to the  
editor's rather disturbing  
endorsement of the use of  
drugs to control children.  
I think that whether they  
are hyperactive or not is

beside the point. Perhaps Ron should consider that such a horrible practice, in a wider application, would mean the doping of whole populations via the water supply, in order to control their rebelliousness, or recalcitrance to perform certain tasks. The differences are purely quantitative; both examples smack of Fascism and it's concomitant perversion of technology. Anyway, it has been proved that hyperactivity in children is caused by artificial colourings and flavourings. We must treat the cause; not the effect.

[I'm sure there were no 'hyperactive' children before artificial flavourings were used, Peter. The point is that using drugs for medical use isn't a new thing - they have been in use for thousands of years. Also most of the comments on this have been from people who haven't had to cope with hyperactive children - single males and females, or at least childless. - Ron.]

It may surprise some to learn that not everyone wants to live in a weather-controlled, antiseptic-scrubbed, squeaky-clean, pepsodent-smile world! For whose benefit would this sinister weather control be? Anyway, weather control would mean yet more expense; more bills. You can be certain that a "Weather Control Commission" would be set up (another damned bureaucracy) and that we should receive from them a quarterly bill.

In reply to Richard Faulder's comments on my previous LoC - probably he is right in claiming the necessity of a vastly decreased population, before a totally robotized technology would be feasible. My idea was that by such means, humanity would reach a kind of cultural plateau, where we could return to a more natural and satisfying way of life, while still enjoying the benefits and products of the robotized technology. In essence, we would no longer have to become machine-like in order to benefit from our machine civilization; nor would we have to become beasts to live naturally. Now, Richard seems amazingly certain that such a civilization has never been upon the earth. I suppose this is a reasonable enough conviction; one would expect such a culture to leave immutable traces. But this is only because we are conceited enough to assume that any culture rivalling our own in importance would necessarily have developed

along our own disastrous lines. But other kinds of Utopia exist beside the technological. The machines of Utopia already exist among us in the form of plants - which could supply even our present technology: (a scaled down version of it) with all it's energy and raw material - augmented of course by solar energy in it's more direct form. But for this to eventuate, we don't need new machines; we need new attitudes. Attitudes like non-aquisitiveness, which may be inculcated in the young as easily as it's disastrous opposite. And we would need a philosophy of economic stasis, instead of the present commitment to endless, insane Growth and ever greater profit. (The present system, incidentally, needs periodic world conflict in order to survive). In a world where economic stasis (equilibrium) prevails, prices would never vary, save from natural causes. I cannot say whether a static population would be a necessary precursor, or an outcome, of such an economic order.

I would like to see the Earth in the hands of people who care for it, who are prepared to think small. This planet is incapable of supporting too many big Thinkers; our technology has given them too much power. Let the bastards go and dismantle Jupiter if they want to - on the condition that they don't come back.

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Julie Vaux                      Errata for TM 37 re my story: "There follow" should read  
14 Zara Rd.,            "here follows"; "Irwin"?? No Comorri called Irwin. The sentence  
Willoughby,            should read "Karha's brother Kharan"; Centre is centre. Sorry about  
NSW            2068.    those typos and misreadings of your handwriting, Julie. - Ron./

It may be of some interest to you to know that Carvad is quite literally an historic town, being one of the oldest on Comor and one of the first places to rise up, thru a drifting mist, from the deep wells of my mind.

A comment  
on Judith Harna's letter - whilst I agree with her critique of John's dating system I can not with her statement that Bralgu and his Djanggawul sisters are not "historical". Many legends are history seen from a mythic viewpoint. The sister's Dreamtime journey around the sacred sites may be a memory of the rituals of the first shaman's thru the "Real" world.- the Dreamtime-the "Astral Realm". A magical journey transforming and releasing its power for human benefit.

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Joseph Hanna-Rivero A410871  
N.1 Technologist APP Course,  
RAAF School of Radio,  
RAAF Base, Laverton,  
Vic.            3027.

I very much like the yellow pages contrasting with the blue cover. The cover, what can I say - excellent, some great fan art by Mr. McGann (as usual. Keep printing Peter Kells' fine poetry. His work is very evocative and suggestive. I especially liked The Demons of the Deep... His well chosen vocabulary of words like "ghastly, ghoulish, eldritch laughter" to suggest evil is very reminiscent of the style Shakespeare employs in such plays as Hamlet "lecherous, trecherous...etc." and is very effective in setting the mood of the poem.

I also enjoy the Spaced-out series and as Diane Fox mentions, it would be a great idea to make a book or portfolio of these. I didn't like, however, Gerard Ashworth's cartoon strip this time - mainly because it was too cramped and hard to read. I always think that book reviews in fanzines/prozines are a good idea because they give an idea of other peoples' tastes in SF. Perhaps you could find space one day for a fanzine or film review column.

I must get that book you reviewed,



"Science and the Supernatural.." I've always been interested in the psychic and paranormal mainly because they are such little known subjects and arouse a great deal of thought and speculation. I'm trying to track down issues of the Aust. mag Paranormal and psychic australian monthly which was published in the same place as Futuristic Tales. Anyone who knows where I can obtain issues of this mag and can let me know, I would greatly appreciate.

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Diane Fox                      At last some fiction from Julie Vaux - using the fascinating  
PO Box 129                      background world we've had glimpses of. Rather a slight story but  
Lakemba,                      a beginning, anyway. Gerard Ashworth's Hunter S Thompson Meets The  
NSW      2195.                      Mothership was hilarious - and proof that you shouldn't take drugs  
if you're paranoid (they tend to bring it out more, as they usually  
reinforce a person's basic emotional traits). Actually this would be much more  
like the reaction of the average earthling to alien contact! We're paranoid I  
suspect, as a species. /But if paranoid is the norm, they wouldn't be paranoid,  
would they? - Ron.]

Jean Weber's comments on mixed plantings, stimulated by John Alderson's article, reminds me that my father has been trying this. He has a small backyard garden for vegetables but has also planted marigolds - they apparently are repellant to nematodes (eel worms) and hence keep these pests away from the other plants. The marigolds make a very attractive show of colour. They are supposed to be good in curries and salads. I haven't tried them but have tried nasturtium leaf (very nice pickled!)

Re your comment on hyperactivity. It is widely thought nowadays that much of this is due to the unwholesome effects of commercial food colourings, flavourings and preservatives, which act as stimulant drugs. (to be countered by sedative drugs...).

A nasty scenerio - heroin is probably cheaper to produce than most drugs - and said to be actually a lot less dangerous than many (the high death rate of addicts is due to blood poisoning, overdoses, "additives" put in by callous pushers, lack of proper food, etc). A future government might give school children daily injections - thus rendering them docile, co-operative (they wouldn't want their supply cut off) and extremely passive, yet still able to work and absorb some information. (After all, many prostitutes etc are junkies so it doesn't put the brain completely out of circulation - a prostitute has at least to be aware enough to get the money out of the customer...). It might shorten the kid's life-spans but they would certainly live long enough to produce another generation of obedient junkies...

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Ralph Silverton                      I've had severe second thoughts about the publication  
47 Turrumurra Av.,                      of my letter, having no wish to raise the sleep-inducing ire  
Turrumurra,                      of J Alderson, or insult P.A. Kells, who, as a prose-writer,  
NSW      2074.                      is no mean talent. Nonetheless, I still feel that Forbin's  
"Poem", Alderson's yawnsome speculation on the word "car",  
and Kell's verse should never have been printed.

Hopefully they'll improve, though  
in this respect Alderson might be in need of a second brain.

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# S.F. BOOK RELEASES.



STARWORLD by Harry Harrison. Panther SF, published by Granada Publishing Ltd. 208 pp. A\$4.95. On sale now.

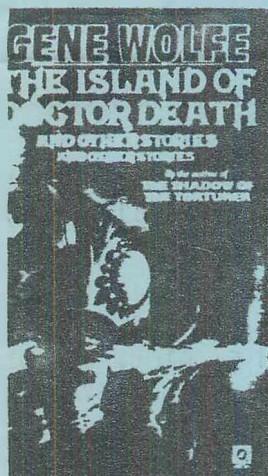
I started reading this novel after I had finished Lord Valentine's Castle - and it suffered as a consequence. Harrison's space opera really showed its faults when up against the better written novel.

Starworld continues the To The Stars Trilogy with a blood-and-guts type space opera. This sort of thing was being written in the 50's and 60's by Ed Hamilton and Ian Wright. Not a deep novel (there aren't many of them) and would be a good gift to an eleven or twelve year old. It features characters going by the names of Thurgood-Smythe and Jan Kulizok. I wonder if Harrison is still on the Galaxy Rangers kick?

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THE ISLAND OF DOCTOR DEATH & OTHER STORIES... by Gene Wolfe. An Arrow paperback, dist in Australia by Hodder & Stoughton Aust. 410 pp. A\$7.50. On sale now.

Buy this book. It contains fourteen stories which would be first rate in any collection - their all being included here makes this a bargain. The stories include The Island of Doctor Death; The Death Of Doctor Island; The Doctor Of Death Island (I couldn't resist that..); The Hero As Werewolf; The Eyeflash Miracles and nine others. All well written and all enjoyable. The subject matter is varied but all through this anthology (and I read it through without any break - that is what shows how good an author is at his craft) the pace never lets up and the ideas never stale.

These stories rank with some of the best I've read - if I had read them in the prozines they would all have left an impression - in anthology form they make a rich feast.

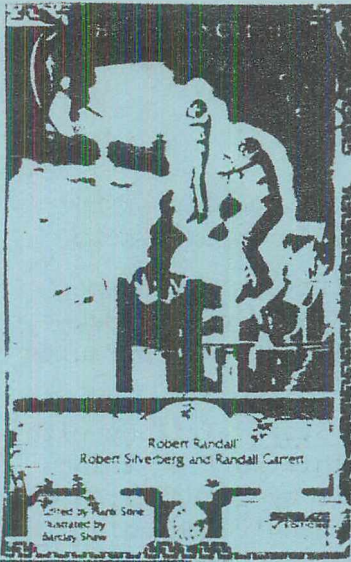
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THE DAWNING LIGHT by Robert Randall. Starblaze Editions/The Donning Co, Publishers, 5041 Admiral Wright Road, Virginia Beach, Virginia 23462, USA. 174 pp, 14cmX21cm. US\$4.95

This is the sequel to the earlier novel by Robert Silverberg and Randall Garrett titled The Shrouded Planet. It carried on the story of the planet Nidor and how the Earthmen attempt to alter the society for their own (benign?) ends. Told from the aliens point of view it gives the



'aliens amongst us' a new twist. This is an illus. volume, though it uses chapter headings from the first volume.

The afterword by Robert Silverberg throws interesting light on how the two young(at-the-time) authors wrote and sold the two volumes to Campbell. It's 1959 origins still wears quite well two decades on, and The Dawn Light still makes good light reading.

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ELFQUEST - BOOK ONE, by Wendy & Richard Pini. A Starblaze Book by the Donning Co., address as above. 160 full colour pages, 21.5cmX28cm. US\$9.95.

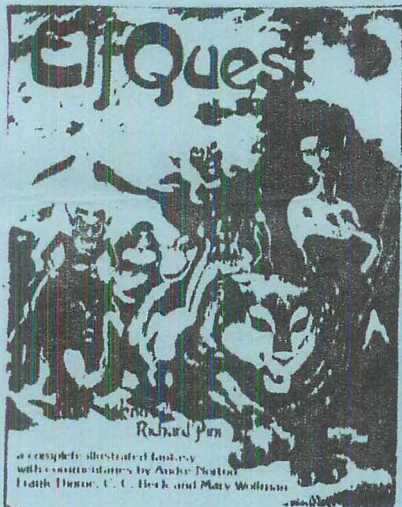
If you are at all interested in fantasy/comic books then this volume will be of interest to you. In fact, if you are interested in works of imagination at all this will interest you. It follows the adventures of a band of elves from the time they arrive on earth from another dimension (presumably) to the time they are driven out of the forest they inhabit and are forced to cross a great desert and find on the other side another lost tribe with other talents. The plot is heavier than most comics and the standard of drawing very high. I found the features of the elves off-putting at first, but grew to accept them and found myself engrossed in the story.

By all means purchase this book (more than just a comic) - you will find that many adults will enjoy it.

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FRANKENSTEIN LIVES AGAIN! by Donald F. Glut. Starblaze editions: the Donning Co, address as above. 157 pp, 14cmX21cm. US\$4.95.

The blurb says that Glut is the author of THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK; this book reads like it is the paperback version of a B-grade movie. Apparently it is the first in a series - I think one book would be enough for anyone. From the time Frankenstein's Monster is found frozen in a block of ice in the Arctic worshipped by a bunch of nutty eskimos, through the unfreezing and being brought back to life (he is virtually immortal, you see), to the taking over of his consciousness by a horror vendor, this novel is plowing through the backblocks of Germany with gorgeous aplomb.

This book is ok for that odd laugh, but mostly at the author, not with him.

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MISSION

MISSION

MISSION

A Novel

PATRICK TILLEY

MISSION by Patrick Tilley. Published by Michael Joseph Ltd; dist in Australia by Thomas Nelson Aust P/L. 395pp. 21.5cmX 14 cm. A\$8.95. On sale now.

When I saw the blurb on the back of this novel which said "What would you do if, through an unexpected twist of fate and time, you came face to face with Jesus of Nazareth? In the flesh..." I thought - what the hell have I got here? This has either got to be weird fantasy or some maniacal writings of a religious freak. And I'm not going to enjoy it. Oh well, one out of three isn't bad.

Tilley appears to read at least some sf - he mentions Gernsback and Asimov. The whole novel looks to be internally consistent, though some passages seem to have been written by a different person. And it is about The Man. The Risen Christ, in fact. This book gives all the good guts on what actually happened back then, and gives some idea of how the Message got lost in the shuffle of re-writing the Book (Tilley used a lot of capitals throughout.) It even tells you all about God - in a way which reminds me somewhat of L Ron Hubbard.

As a straight story it reads well; with the "religious" elements it has the makings of a cult novel. Basically it tells the story of a time-travelling alien who co-exists in Joshua of Nazareth's body... all quite complicated, but I enjoyed it never-the-less. I enjoyed it, if only for the freshness of experience of The Man's message, undistorted by the interpretations of the last 2,000 years of Christian (and Islamic) dogma.

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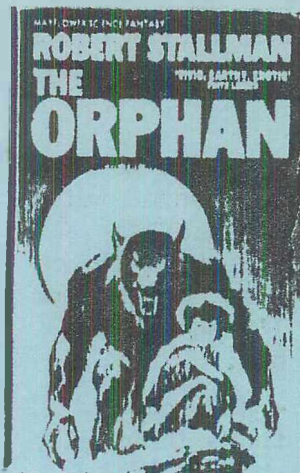
THE UNLIMITED DREAM COMPANY by J.G. Ballard. Published by Triad Granada, dist. in Aust. by Granada Publishing (Aust) P/L. 220 pp. A\$5.25. On sale now.

For the first 2/3 of this novel I thought Ballard had been stuck back in the '60's when he wrote The Drowned World and The Crystal World - all quite boring, especially when he kept repeating himself with the same images and descriptions. For a Ballard book, this novel is quite consistent - it actually ends clearly (or as clearly as any Ballard story).

Written by a young man who is slightly deranged (just how so is filtered through in the course of the story) who manages to steal a Cessna, fly it several miles, and crash it into the Thames. In doing so he manages to kill himself/ escape from the wreck as it sinks.

Though it isn't spelled out, having read other Ballard stories, the reader knows what actually happened, but goes along with the author so as to see what internal inconsistencies he comes up with. As mentioned above, the first 2/3 is pretty pedestrian - it is in the last seventy pages that Ballard breaks out of the mold and strikes into a new direction.





THE ORPHAN by Robert Stallman. Mayflower science fantasy. Dist. in Aust. by Granada Pub. (Aust.) P/L. 251 pp. A\$5.95. On sale now.

This is the first book of a trilogy, and from reading this volume, the completed project should be a work that will end up alongside those of Pangborn and the character John of the silver-stringed guitar.

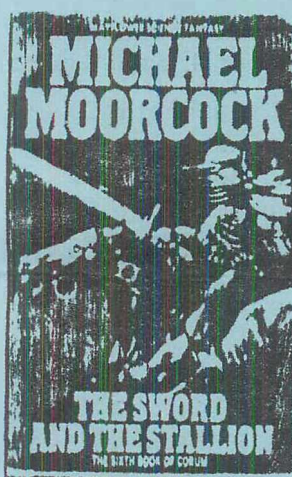
The plot flows along like a deep river and the eddies and twists make fascinating reading. The little pieces of children's worlds shown makes the novel more believable. Basically, the story is of a "Beast" who lurks within what one could call "Sheep's clothing" in the way of humans. What its origins are and what its ultimate destiny is, only the author and the other two volumes will tell.

If you like well told fantasy you'll like this book.

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THE SWORD AND THE STALLION by Michael Moorcock. Mayflower science fantasy. Dist. in Aust. by Granada Publ. (Aust.) P/L., 171 pp. A\$4.95. On sale now.

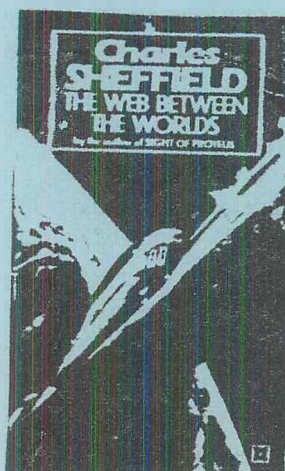
Why do I come into trilogies on the last volume? This is the final Book in the Chronicle of Corum and the Silver Hand. Corum is the Champion Eternal and this novel follows the saga in his continuing fight against the Fhoi Myore. It is typical Moorcock fantasy and begins, after a time, to become boring. I read half the book and found myself beginning to tire of the endless schemes which changed, but were ever the same. Then the magic caught on and I finished the novel in one fell swoop. Which proves something, I suppose.

Some readers like fantasy and can read reams of the stuff in sitting after sitting. If so, you will want to add this to your collection. If you are not a staunch Moorcock fan, then I suggest you read the earlier volumes in the Chronicle and see if you like Prince Coum.

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THE WEB BETWEEN THE WORLDS by Charles Sheffield. An Arrow paperback, dist in Australia by Hodder & Stoughton Aust. 277 pp, A\$5.95. On sale now.

This is the book that Arthur C Clarke referred to in FOUNTAINS OF PARADISE as being much the same as, and released within months of, FOP. It is also a damn good "hard" science fiction novel. It is similar to FOP, up to a certain point, but the similarities are outweighed by the differences.

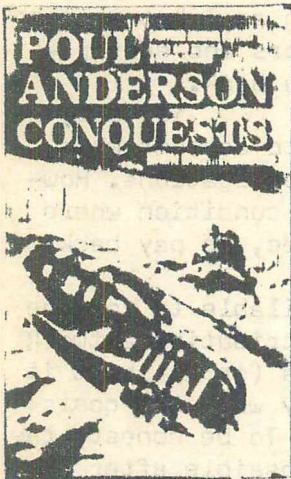
From the time Rob Merlin was taken into the confidence of Darius Regulo to the time he eventually found out why his parents were murdered (during which he was born into an Antarctic gale with death awaiting him) to the end of the novel, when Regulo's daughter shows that the Universe is not governed by laws which go easy on homo saps, I really enjoyed this book.

WEB is complementary to FOP and they both can be read without detracting from one another. Recommended.

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CONQUESTS by Poul Anderson. Panther science fiction, dist. in Australia by Granada Publishing (Aust) P/L. 250 pp, A\$5.95. On sale now.

This collection of Anderson's stories has a common theme: war, and the attempts (or society's attempts) to go beyond it. There are seven stories, ranging from the spacefaring people in King's Who Die, to the sociological theory in Licence.

It the past much has been made of Heinlein's "fascism" and Anderson's political views and his ideas on war. This volume, being about that one subject, gives a more balance: showing of Anderson's views, as the stories range from the years 1955 to 1964.

Anderson's ideas and smooth writing show up well in this context and, as mentioned in a review above, this is where the author's craftsmanship shows up.

A good rousing adventure story, or philosophical, whichever way you want to read them.

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BOOKS available from Cory & Collins (PO Box 66, St. Kilda, Vic. 3128) include the following releases: ENVISAGED WORLDS, edited by Paul Collins - H/C A\$9.95; OTHER WORLDS, edited by Paul Collins - H/C A\$9.95; ALIEN WORLDS, edited by Paul Collins, - H/C - A\$12.95; DISTANT WORLDS, edited by Paul Collins - H/C A\$12.95, P/B A\$3.95; BREATHING SPACE ONLY by Wynne Whiteford - H/C A\$12.95, P/B A\$3.95; THE FOURTH HEMISPHERE by David Lake - H/C A\$12.95, P/B A\$3.95; LOOKING FOR BLUCHER by Jack Wodhams - H/C A\$12.95, P/B A\$3.95; RYN by Jack Wodhams - P/B A\$3.95; LANCES OF NENGESDUL by Keith Taylor - P/B A\$3.95; SAPPHIRE ROAD by Wynne Whiteford - P/B A\$4.95.

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RELEASES from Thomas Nelson Aust. P/L include, as well as the book reviewed above - HAN SOLO AND THE LOST LEGACY by Brian Daley - A\$2.95; (Sphere); TIMESCAPE by Gregory Benford, Sphere, A\$5.95; NIGHT'S MASTER by Tanith Lee, Hamlyn, A\$3.95.

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BOOKS REMAINDERED in Sydney in the last month or so include: MOCKINGBIRD by Walter Tevis - \$1.95; LEGACY OF THE STARS - 35¢; and THE LUCK OF BRIN'S FIVE by Cherry Wilder - \$1.



Jackie Causgrove  
Ohio,  
U.S.A.

Sometimes we fans accumulate Obligations when we haven't requested/expected them, and discharging these debts can become troublesome. For quite some time you have been sending me your zine, THE MENTOR. I owe you for this favor -- and it is a favor, I do enjoy reading the material you publish, and find my enjoyment increasing as I become more familiar with the zine's flavor and format and with its contributors and editor -- but I am in a bit of a quandry about exactly how to, well, pay you back.

You see, I used to publish a reasonably regular (taking fannish standards into account when using that phrase) fanzine, and it was a simple matter to "swap" obligations. However, a certain combination of circumstances have brought about a condition where I'm not currently able to publish. Therefore I am unable to trade, to pay back my debt in that time-honoured fashion.

There are other options available to someone who wishes to respond to a zine -- writing letters of comment, contributing artwork or articles, or sending stamps or even \*gasp\* cash. But for eones (or at least it seems so to me) my cash situation has made it impossible to comply with the costs involved. So what course should a person in my position follow? To be honest, the most straight-forward path is to send out a postcard as soon as possible after receiving a zine from overseas. If I should actually comment on the zine the editor may be led to believe that a pattern is being established, when it is impossible for that to be the case (unless I won the Ohio State Lottery....) and that would be deceiving on my part.

So, in the main, I remain silent, not wanting to lead on the editors who have sent me their works in Good Faith. Sometimes, though, my guilt spurs me into at least attempting to let the fanned know that his labors have not gone unnoticed -- even if they aren't being properly acknowledged -- and that I have appreciated receiving the zines which have been sent out in blind trust that they'd be welcomed. That's what this letter is for; to let you know that I accede to your decision to lop my name from your mailing list due to lack of response, but also let you know that I have enjoyed the issues of THE MENTOR which I've gotten. Your 'gifts' did not fall into a black hole, and they are being taken care of (I've filed them in with the balance of my fanzine collection), and I do thank you for sending them.

Perhaps, someday in the unforeseeable future, I may find myself once again in a position that publishing will again be feasible. In that circumstance, I would like to establish a trade situation, or at least be able to loc regularly before being re-entered on your mailing list. With my current income I just can't keep the balance in equilibrium.

Thank you for the courtesy of the letter, Jackie. I know with the present economic situation all over the world this situation will be effecting fandom more and more if it gets worse. I publish for many reasons -- ego-boo, to give writers who are just breaking in to fandom an opportunity to publish their work (this applies to artists, also) and to see a thing which is almost entirely my own work come out. The main reason, though, I haven't mentioned yet -- the communicating and sharing the enjoyment of such with someone else, be they in the same geographical area or in another Hemisphere. That 'black hole' is a deadly thing -- but when someone sends a letter like the above then I know that the zines I send off aren't going in to limbo. And it tells me why I'm not getting a response. But it also tells me that the person is enjoying the "product" I am sending out -- the zine. Which, for me, is reason well enough. -- Ron./