

# THE MENTOR

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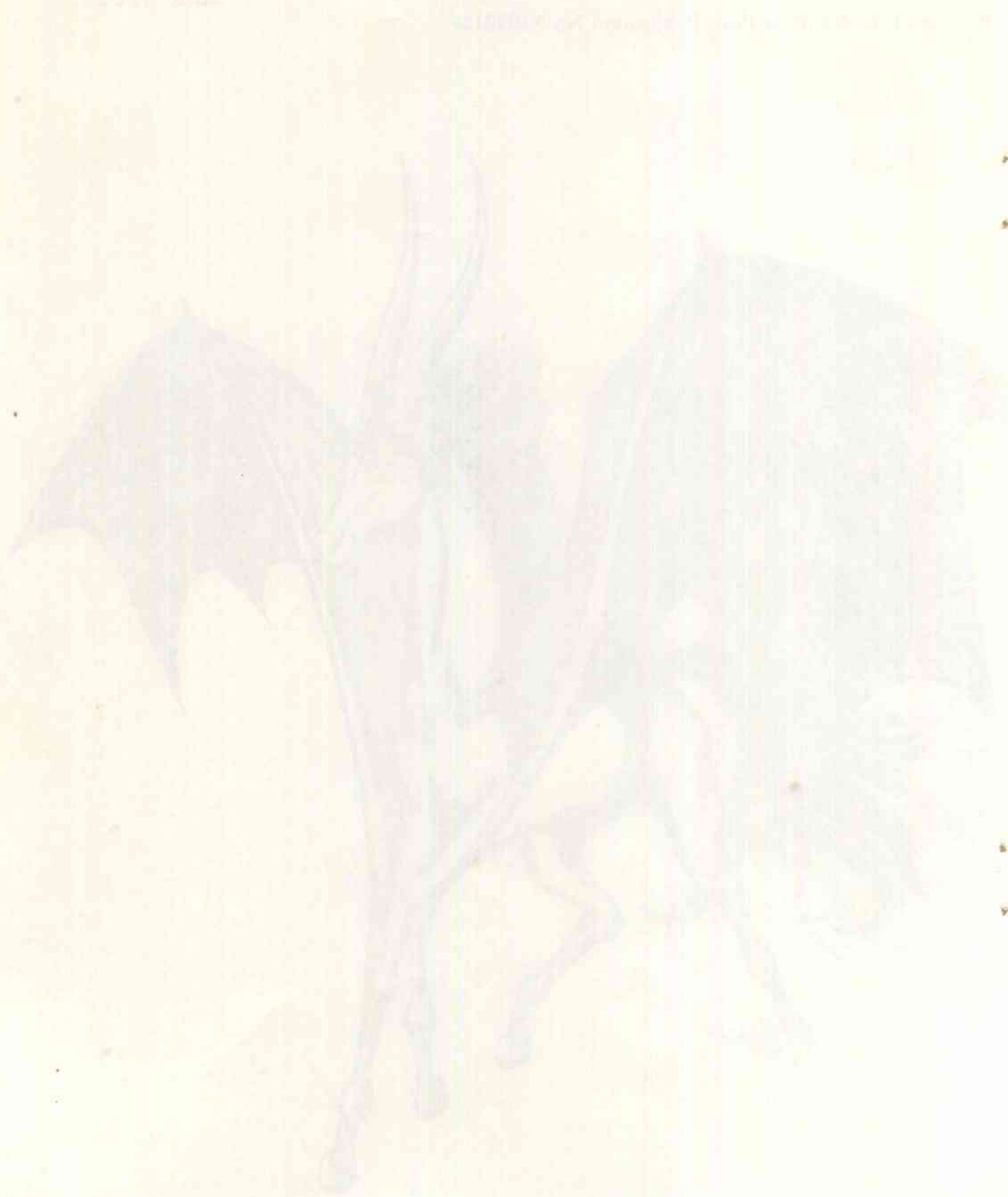
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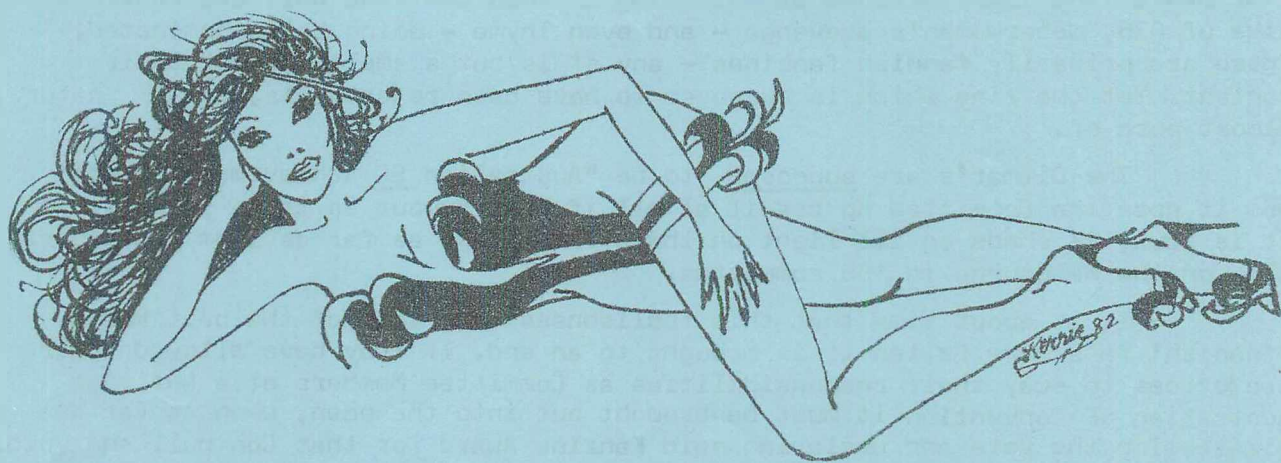
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## RON'S ROOST

### DITMAR AWARDS - A SCENT OF CORRUPTION?

Open warfare seems to have broken out between those fans responsible for the Ditmar Awards presented at Tschaicon at Easter and the SF media fans who were members of that Con. There is a rumour going around that at least twelve convention members nominated a certain ST fanzine for the Ditmar Award as Best Australian SF Fanzine and the Committee disallowed it as it was not 'science fiction'. Now if this is the case I would be very interested to know, because if a SF media zine is disallowed as not being sf then what the hell are fanzines the like of Q36, WeberWoman's Wrevenge - and even Thyme - doing being nominated. These are primarily fannish fanzines - any sf is but a small part of their content. Yet the zine which is supposed to have been rejected is, by its nature, almost pure sf.

The Ditmar's are supposed to be "Australian SF Achievement Awards", and it does the Committee no credit at all if that rumour is true. In fact, if it is true, it sheds an ill light on those fans, who, as far as I am aware, are also on the Melbourne in '85 committee.

It is about time that this foolishness that some of the best known 'fannish' fans have fallen to is brought to an end. If they have allowed their prejudices to sway their responsibilities as Committee Members at a National Australian SF Convention it must be brought out into the open, even as far as disallowing the vote and declaring said Fanzine Award for that Con null and void. Of course they could say that because it was a club zine .. which would be a poor excuse.

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With the recent rise in postal charges for Category B postage and the announced rise in October, most Aussie zines will be restricting their mailing list even further, so if you are notified that this is your last issue - you had better believe it.

# THE HISTORICAL BASIS OF MYTH

BY JOHN J. ALDERSON

No end of nongs and worse have attacked my findings in anthropology (and everything else) that I have written, and as most of them are the equivalent of flat-earthers and geo-centred universes, I shouldn't really worry. When Judith Hanna criticises me it is a different matter. She writes with some knowledge of anthropology and she criticises my fundamental uses of evidence, and her attacks being well based, deserve attention.

This is the more so as in reality I am an historian using mythology and anthropology (and archaeology) to extend the meaning and range of history. It is very easy to take any myth and say that it has and can have no historical basis, but... one is on very dangerous ground indeed; that is, the needle in the haystack logic. I began my career, so to speak, by reading Frazer's Golden Bough at the age of fourteen, and since then I have spent a great part of a lifetime studying anthropology in some form or other, and I state categorically, if my methodology is wrong, then so is that of Frazer, and virtually every other anthropologist who has ever used myth. I may say that in 1972 I became intrigued as to what really happened in the Garden of Eden and I've spent the past decade in finding out. When my researches are completed I expect to push the frontiers of history back to the Neolithic era. Obviously the historicity of myth is important to me, and so is the validity of using parallel myths and ethnological usages to fill in and explain gaps. I maintain that this is classic usage.

Müller was the virtual founder of mythology. He regarded myth as explanations of nature, that is, the gods were personifications of natural events, etc. etc., and the vast array of sun-gods, storm-gods and the like stem from his time and philosophy. There is undoubtedly some truth in his ideas, but they are not the final answer. And therein lies the difficulty. Science is bedevilled by fashionable theories, a nonsensical idea that one single theory can account for everything. It won't, but it doesn't stop scientists, like politicians and dress-designers, from trying to devise theories that will wrap everything up in a neat parcel. I emphasise that there is truth in all these theories but absolute truth in none.

After Müller came the psychologists who regarded myth as a projection of the unconscious. It is significant that when Velilovsky wished to attack Freud he set out to demonstrate that the myths on which Freud based his theories were actual history. At the same time Graves was saying somewhat the same in The White Goddess and Brendt in Djanngawal accepted the historical basis of that myth cycle. Still later it became the accepted theory that myth was the story of a ritual. There is truth in all of this and none of these ideas can be totally dismissed (as Hanna does with "myth's a symbolic tale"..this is also true.). Now I am aware that some students in Australia shy clear of any comparison of Australian myths with overseas myths, and indeed I received a kind letter from the editor of Oceania (I think it was) rejecting an article on the grounds that whilst it might be very interesting to compare Aboriginal myths with



overseas myths the the practice was not valid. He did not state why.

Now let's examine the value of history in myth. Does myth have any historical basis? I'll start from the known and proceed to the unknown.

You may as well be shocked now. I am starting with Ned Kelly. I hardly need argue that Ned Kelly was an historical figure, nor do I need to argue that the official documents relating to him, and the unofficial ones are authentic (this has nothing to do with their truth). But when Keneally wrote The Inner History of the Kelly Gang, and Clune, The Kelly Hunters, their use of historical evidence, of oral evidence (tradition and folklore and legend) their efforts were to extend the myth; and Douglas Stewart's play Ned Kelly deals wholly with the myth, however historical it might be. But the myth had already begun in his lifetime and at the time of his death Evans said in The Diary of a Welsh Swagman that it was a feud between Irishmen. Now some of you are already tearing your hair and have started a loc to Ron without reading further, that I am mistaken entirely in the nature of myth. Am I? What you say about the myth of Ned Kelly may well apply to all other myth inasmuch as shown of all the ballyhoo we may only have the history left. But let's draw our conclusions of the Ned Kelly myth.

1. It has undoubtedly an historical basis for the machinery of the story.
2. There is undoubtedly a body of folklore, folksongs and ballads developed, and developing around Ned Kelly (that is, it is living folklore).
3. There are legends and traditions concerning Ned Kelly.
4. There are geological locations associated with Ned Kelly.

But where is the myth? you ask. Yes indeed it is hard to put one's finger on it; myth is very difficult to define. In fact I've read some writer's who deny that the Aborigines have a mythology - because they have no gods or goddesses. You ask that question now, I may well ask it later on.

Let's pass on to the next stage.

Every people have a "creation myth". Most people are aware of the best and most widely known, the Genesis story, but very few know what it is, or even what a creation story is. Genesis indeed has two, and not what you think, either. The Australian creation story is The First Fleet. In Victoria we have two, one centring around Batman, the other around Fawkner. South Australia found their's around Light. But the creation myths became more personal - every Australian town has one and we have just had an era of local history writing which put these myths in print. Their historicity is not in doubt. It is not without significance that most of these towns which have had their creation myth stabilised have themselves become stable and are now growing in population instead of dying. These myths are vital to a people.

So vital are creation myths that when the Children of Israel found themselves in Egypt they put their creation myth into writing - the story of the patriarchs. The earlier story in the beginning of Genesis is not the story of the origin of the world as lots of people think, but of the Semitic people. The book of Genesis was several centuries old when Moses was born - oh yes, I know who compiled it just as I now know who wrote the books of Moses.

Now, I have no doubt that both the creation stories in Genesis are as historical as that of The First Fleet. The compiler of Genesis as well as recording the historical narrative of Abraham (for instance) added, as good measure, some legends (Gen. 25). As well as this, the Koran contains a mass of other legends and the entire Arabian peninsula overflows with folklore of Abraham. And there

are various geographical localities associated with Abraham.

Obviously the Eden story, being further back in time, has had its legends overlaid, but nevertheless they are present, and so are the geographical localities. If there is doubt on these, remember, next time you walk along Flinders Street in Melbourne and see the plaque stating that this was the spot where Batman said "This is the place for a village" that this site was a compromise amongst historians who could not and cannot agree on a site only 150 years old. But there is no shadow of doubt as to the historicity of the statement.

In the story of the patriarchs we may have some legend, some tradition (it was written down no later than a century later) but it all purports to be history, and probably is. Where then is the myth? The myth lies only in the fact that it is a creation story. That is, the myth is the spirit or the truth of the bald historical narrative. The term poetiomyth is often used because myths seem to be made poetic.

But not only do peoples, and families, have creation myths, so do organisations, religions, cults and political movements. The story of the Djanngwul is the story of the founding of a cult and various cult sites. Now the cult exists and so do the cult sites and there is no reason whatever to believe that the cult was not founded by the Djanngawul and the onus of proof otherwise must be on the sceptic. They are obviously then historical for there is no reason to believe that the words of the song cycle are not quite ancient and the jealousy with which the accuracy of the words are maintained amongst the Aborigines does not allow much room for change. (Incidentally, the accuracy with which a folktale can be passed on is evident from Ireland where folktales collected recently are virtually word perfect with the same stories preserved in 14th century mss.)

But one does need a sense of humour when dealing with myth. When the Djanngawul went about "making country", what were they doing? They were simply discovering, exploring. This is evident with the myths of the demi-god, Maui, who fished up many islands including the North Island of New Zealand. That is, he was an explorer and discovered them. But what of the South Island, which is "The Canoe of Maui"? and Stewart Island, which, if I remember correctly, is his anchor? This is simply a poetic addition to the myth. Maui went ashore and climbed the Kiakoras and saw (fished up) the North Island, so in poetry the South Island became his boat. How do we know this? Because besides the myth we have traditions which tell us so. So when the Djanngawul made country, they discovered it whilst exploring, and it is the record, in song, of the discoveries of ancient explorers which constitute the Aboriginal song maps. Now, when Maui discovered New Zealand, it is a myth. When Captain Cook does the same thing, it is history. Evidently the difference lies, not in the historicity of the event, but in the telling of the story.

So much with myths which also relate to places, but what of more universal myths which often do not; for example, stealing fire from the sun.

The Aborigines had a complete and beautiful cycle of fire-stealing myths and it runs the entire gauntlet explaining how things get their "heat" from the sun to the woman's vulva. Branches of the myth spread to Torres Strait (a different people) and I suspect, I cannot confirm it at present, to New Guinea, and also, I fancy, connecting with the Polynesian Maui fire-stealing myth - but I haven't found the connecting link. However, due to the breaking up of the culture of the Queensland Aborigines, the myth is lost and we have only the legends. In Victoria we have only folkstories. So in Queensland we have legends, that is oral history pure and simple, and the myth has been lost. But the legends,



shorn of their poetry are significant enough, and when the myth is compared the myth makes sense, or the essential part. Then legend is that, for reasons unspecified, the women refused to cook the men's meat and they have to eat it raw. The men, accordingly, "steal" the fire from the women. But we take too simplistic a view of the ancient meaning of fire. The story of Maui stealing fire is most illustrative. He stole the secret of making fire. And this is the important point of the story. The Greek Prometheus apparently stole the secret of preserving the fire in the pith of the fennel. But the Queensland stories give us the identity of the gods of the Greeks (and most other people). They were simply the women. Remember this and the whole batch of stories where women were created second becomes plain: women had lost their godhead. Now it is my turn to ask, Where is the myth? Shorn of their godhead, we have a simple story of women refusing to cook the men's food and a man stealing the means of making fire and doing their own cooking. I've seen women





try the same stunt in this day and age, with much the same result.

So, was Prometheus an historical character? Probably not under that name ("forethought"). His brother Epimetheus ("Afterthought") has just as unlikely a name, but many a historical character is known by a name bestowed on him after his death. It does not alter his historicity.

Well, what about the vulture tearing at his liver? It might have been wishful thinking on Hera's part, or she may have eaten it for breakfast and the fact glossed over. Prometheus was contemporary with Herakles, who is reputed to have freed him. Herakles is one of the most complex figures in mythology, whose birth is given as 1320BC by Zafiropulo in his reconstruction of the Bronze Age in Greece (Mead & Wine). The fact is that the Bronze Age, primarily the age of Greek myth, is gradually being reduced to history. The history embedded in the myth is not disputed by these scholars, but meanings of the trappings might be.

I stick by the historical value of the circumcision ritual of the Aborigines (as in the Djanngawul myth) and the Hebrews as in Genesis for the very good reason that the motivations for the practice are the same, that is, the men took over the religious rituals, though in both cases women did maintain their own ceremonies, but they now had ceased to be for all and were for the women alone. I am very much aware of the integrated nature of society and it is because of this very nature of society that we can fill in missing gaps in knowledge. For example, any society which has a purely masculine religion will have a purely feminine religion as well.

The search for the history within a myth can be difficult. It took me ten years to discover who the serpent was in the Eden story, but I have still got to prove it. One has to strip away godheads, totems, personifications and word plays. The ancients made a lot of puns (no pun intended), and one has to cut giants to size, raise up the fairies, and remember the ancients had a proneness for exaggeration (it's probably hereditary). Then there is some mysticism, eg. the Doge married the sea, Celtic princes married the land, and above all, some myths were made so that only the initiated would know the real story. These latter can be stinkers. As Kipling said of the interpretation of native laws, there are thirty nine ways to interpret it, and all of them are right.

- John J Alderson.

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JUST OUT: Fanzine Production - Mimeo, a 10p booklet on how to prepare, type and set up stencils for fanzine production. An R & S PUBLICATION, with text and illustrations by Ron Clarke. Available for a  $\frac{1}{2}$  quarto SSAE with a 40¢ stamp on it (35¢ in NSW).

# GRIMESISH GRUMBERLINGS,

A COLUMN BY A. BERTRAM CHANDLER.

A COOK'S TOUR OF CONVENIENCE FOOD COUNTRY

Grimes, my series character, acquired a nickname early in his career. Gutsy Grimes. This has nothing to do with his courage but refers to his liking for food. As so often is the case with series characters he takes after his creator.

In my younger days, when I was an apprentice and then a junior officer in a tramp steamer company notorious for its meanness, I became something of an expert on what are now called convenience foods. In those times very few merchant vessels ran to domestic refrigeration. Before leaving port to begin what was usually a long voyage the big icebox on the poop would be stocked with fresh provisions - meat, fish and vegetables - and blocks of ice. For the first week or so the feeding would not be too bad. And then, as the ice melted, the process of putrefaction would begin. Finally, after all hands had been subsisting on a diet of boiled potatoes and butter, the master would order that what was left in the icebox be jettisoned to feed the sharks and the gulls and the stocks of preserved foodstuffs broached. There would be a "salt horse" straight from the "harness cask" and salt pork. I am still fond of corned beef - but the refined version that one buys from the butcher's shop is nothing like as flavour-some as the salt beef of those "good" old days. There would be the various things in cans.

Canned beans have changed very little over the years and are still a good stand-by. But I do, now and again, pine for them in their original form, when they were known as pork and beans. That piece of salt pork: was never very large but it added something. And then, quite suddenly, it vanished altogether. Canned corned beef seems to have maintained its standard and I still like it. Canned corned mutton was... boring. I never see it around now, nor do I want to. There were canned sardines, of course - but they were much, much better when they were embalmed in olive oil. There was canned salmon. There were canned kippers - so-so - and canned pilchards and herrings. A most unpopular fish was canned smoked haddock; it had the texture and flavour of cardboard.

There were the various things that required heating up. One that sticks in the memory was Ox Cheek. Despite its off-putting name it was a quite tasty, meaty stew. The sausages were good, so was the tinned rabbit. The chicken,

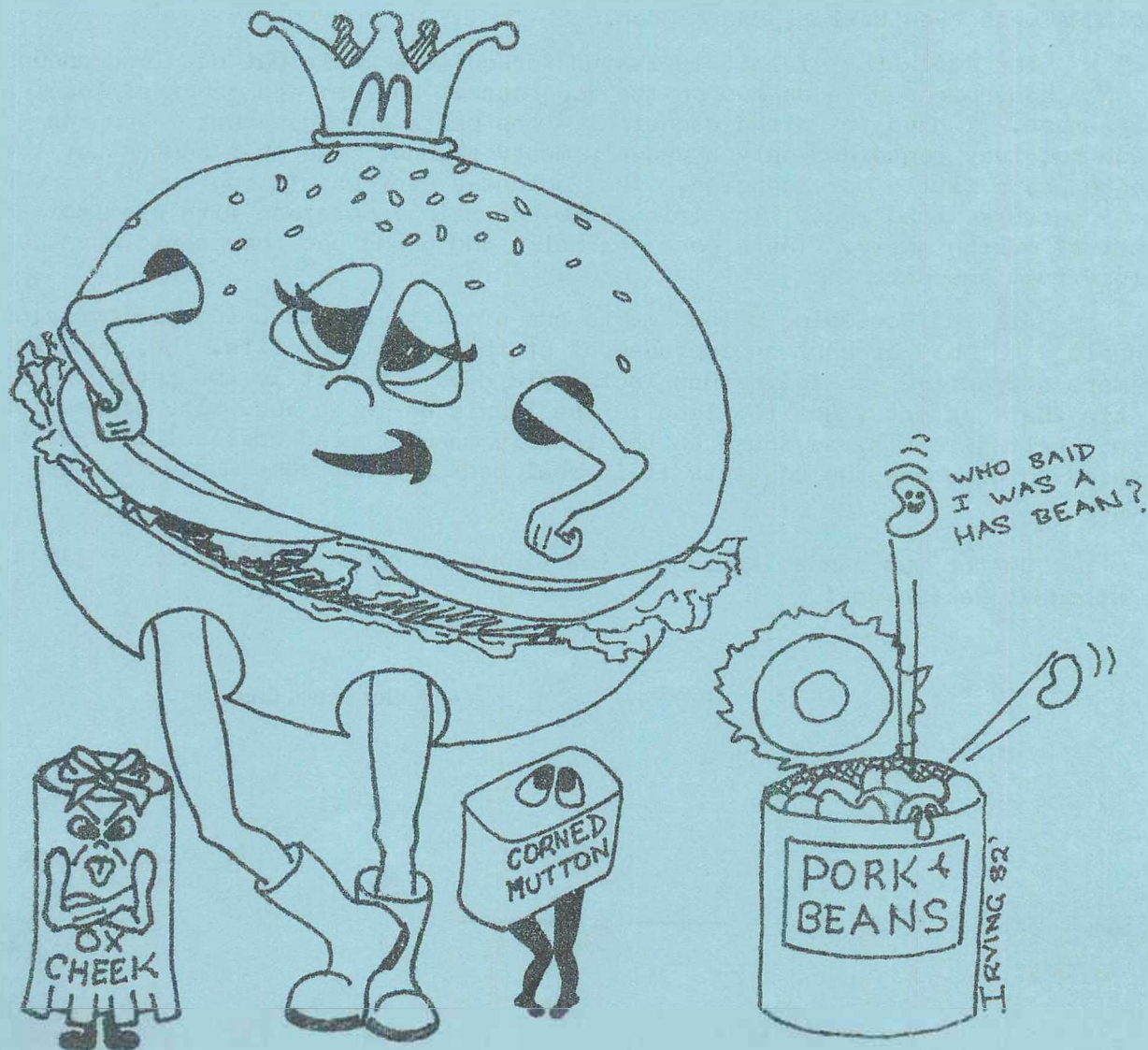


however, was invariably flavourless.

After a few years in tramp steamers I graduated to vessels of a much higher class, with capacious cold storerooms. For every day of a voyage, no matter how long, there would be fresh meat and vegetables every day. Canned foods were carried only to be regarded as occasional luxuries rather than necessities - tinned fruit and icecream as a dessert, a salmon salad as a lunch-time first course, and so on.

At home I usually keep a few tins as stand-by foodstuffs. Sardines - the genuine Portuguese ones when I can find them - salmon and tuna, both of which latter can be used in fried rice or a Kedgerree. Beans, of course, and corned beef, with which, at short notice, I can produce what I call "lazy man's chili con carne". (Slice and saute onions, add chili powder and chopped garlic and a squeeze of lemon juice, stir in cubes of corned beef and cook through, serve with boiled rice.)

Now and again, however, I find myself in a situation where I must either subsist on convenience foods or starve.



When I first started spending the greater part of each summer week at the nudist club I had a caravan on a part of the grounds where electric power was not available. In those days, however, there seemed to be a far greater variety of tinned foods than there are today - all manner of exotic goulashes &c that required only heating up to produce a tasty meal. Then I was able to get a caravan site with electricity and, at the same time, a battered old refrigerator that still performs well and an electric frypan with which I can cook a small joint and the accompanying vegetables.

And then, after my official retirement from the sea, there has been the occasional spell of "baby-sitting". Sometimes the laid-up ship has been alongside in which case her various systems are plugged into a shore power outlet, with, in consequence, a usable refrigerator and electric cooking facilities. Sometimes - as now - the vessel has been moored to the dolphins in the middle of Snails Bay, with a bottled gas lantern and a bottled gas cooker provided for the shipkeeper. During each of my twenty four hours tour of duty I have relied upon convenience foods for my evening meal. At first I was lucky. One of our local supermarkets had in a large stock of Yugo-Slav goodies, both in cans and in those tough, metal foil envelopes. In the case of the beans with sausages it was real sausages. The tripe was very good. The stuffed cabbage and the stuffed capsicums were even better, And so on.

The stock that I laid in lasted for quite a while but not long enough. The only convenience foods now on the supermarket shelves are those of local manufacture. I have tried the cannelloni - the pasta envelopes were genuine enough but they contained only a vaguely meaty sludge. The meat content of the lasagne was a little more genuine. The Cantonese Beef wasn't bad but there were more vegetables than meat. The Irish Stew was mainly potatoes with a smidgin of a sort of mutton jelly. There were meatballs and Beans but they could have been moulded from sawdust.

All the foregoing brings me to one of my favourite whinges. Improving technology has not brought an improvement of the quality of life. Oh, we now have far more attractive packaging than in the old days - but it is the contents of the tin that one eats, not the label. The labels on those Yugo-Slav tinned foods are not half as pretty as those on the locally manufactured ones but if meat is supposed to be among the contents it is real meat and not some characterless sludge.

Oh for the canned sausages, the tinned ox cheek and the tinned liver and bacon of yesteryear!

-- A Bertram Chandler.



# AUSTRALIAN SPACE SCIENCE AT THE CROSSROADS

BY JANE BROOKS

In his article "Space Astronomy in the 1980s - Australia's Role?" Professor D S Mathewson, Director of the Mount Stromlo and Siding Spring Observatories writes:

"I believe that Australia is snoozing in blissful oblivion to the Space Age, and that we are soon in for a rude shock when Space Age science and technology developed by other countries puts us into the Scientific Third World."

It is unlikely that there would be anyone in Australia who would wish the above fate upon our nation. Fortunately, it is avoidable, especially if our Federal Government can be persuaded to make funds available for one Space Astronomy project and one Radio Astronomy project which we can afford, and which will put Australia at the forefront of Space Science. The two projects are "STARLAB" and the "AUSTRALIA TELESCOPE". Neither received any funding in the August 1981 Federal Budget. The following explanations of the projects and their usefulness to Australia will, I hope, help readers to understand why it is essential that they receive funds in the 1982 Budget.

## AUSTRALIA TELESCOPE

Following World War II, Australian scientists were amongst the pioneers of the new science of Radio Astronomy. They possessed sufficient expertise to attract funds from other countries, such as the USA, enabling instruments such as the Parkes 64m diameter radio telescope to be built here. As a result, many of the most significant discoveries in Radio Astronomy have been made by Australian scientists. Now, the Parkes Radio Telescope is twenty years old, and has been surpassed in sensitivity and resolution by newer instruments belonging to other nations. There is also the emerging problem of proposed extensive copper mining near Parkes, which will threaten the "low noise" environment. If nothing is done to update present facilities and build new ones, the instruments now existing will run down due to age in five to seven years, meaning that Radio Astronomy will die.

To overcome this, it has been proposed that a 6km long array of 22m diameter dishes be built at Culgoora, NSW. This array would be used in conjunction with the Parkes Radio Telescope, NASA's 64m dish at Tidbindilla Deep Space Communications Complex, and a smaller antenna at Siding Springs. If this project can be started in 1982, it will come into operation in 1988 in time for our Bicentennial Celebrations. This project has been named "AUSTRALIA TELESCOPE" because it is a totally Australian project with an Australian manufactured content of 80%. It draws on expertise that is already acknowledged by the rest of the scientific world as being at the forefront in all relevant areas. This expertise has already produced "INTERSCAN", the new microwave landing system for aircraft which was developed here by the CSIRO Division of Radiophysics, and will soon be in airports across the world.

As mentioned earlier, the major part of the "AUSTRALIA TELESCOPE" will be built here in Australia, thereby introducing Space Age technology to our industries. This will help to give our Nation a soaring jump into its Third Century; not only because of probable exciting discoveries in Radio Astronomy, but also because of spin-offs into space communications technology.

Australia now has the opportunity to build a World class instrument in the field of Radio Astronomy. It will be World class because of the linkup between radio antennae across the country, by satellite and ground links, giving detail finer than any optical telescope, whether it is on the Earth or in Space. It would have a higher resolution, operate at a higher frequency, and have superior performance for spectral line observations than the very Large Array in the USA. It would be the only instrument capable of making high quality maps, at radio frequencies, in either Equatorial or Southern regions of the sky. It would complement the excellent ground based optical telescopes already existing in Australia and Chile, and also Space telescopes observing in the x-ray, Ultraviolet and Infrared bands. Without the "AUSTRALIA TELESCOPE", the Southern sky, which contains some of the most exciting astronomical objects such as the nearest galaxies (magellan Clouds) and the centre of our Galaxy, will remain uncharted at accuracies required for future astronomy. Valuable work such as studying, with Radio Astronomy techniques, the stability of the Australian continent and the drift of our neighbours New Zealand, Papua New Guinea and Antarctica also will not be done.

A decision not to fund the "AUSTRALIA TELESCOPE" will be seen as a Government decision to discontinue Australian Radio Astronomy; a science in which we have been World leaders. This would be a tragedy of enormous proportions. Australians who wish that Radio Astronomy should be kept alive and well in this country can help, by contacting their local representatives in Federal Parliament and stressing the importance of obtaining Government support for the "AUSTRALIA TELESCOPE".

#### *STARLAB - An Australian-Canadian-USA Free Flying UV-Optical Space Telescope*

STARLAB is a unique type of space telescope designed to operate from the ultraviolet through the visible to the infrared region of the spectrum. It will be capable of high resolution imagery and spectroscopy over a wide field of view. The length of STARLAB (telescope plus instrument package) is 5 m, with an outerdiameter of 1.5 m and weight 200 kg. It will represent the ultimate in advanced technology in the electronic, optical and mechanical areas. The Space Shuttle Transportation System will place it on board a NASA Space Platform in a circular orbit of 450 km altitude, where it will telemeter the data to Goddard Space Flight Center for demultiplexing; the Australian data will be sent via the NASA link to the Deakin Telephone Exchange for distribution to the various astronomical institutions. Each mission will be of 6-12 months duration and a total of about 10 missions is envisaged over a 20 year period commencing 1989. The division of observing time between Australia, Canada and the USA is 1/3, 1/3, 1/3 for the lifetime of STARLAB.

The proposed division of responsibilities is -

- (a) Canada constructs the Telescope (ROM costing \$30 million)
- (b) Australia constructs the initial Instrument Package consisting of a camera, spectrograph and detector system (ROM costing \$25 million)
- (c) NASA develops the Space Platform and bears the cost of the first two launches and flights on the Space Platform. This involves all services connected with launch, integration with the Platform, operation in orbit, retrieval and the ground data system.



STARLAB will be uniquely important to the solution of the central astronomical problems of our era. It will certainly be the most powerful tool of observational astronomy in the next few decades and will advance enormously our knowledge and understanding of the Universe. At optical wave lengths STARLAB will see twenty times fainter objects and one hundred times more detail than the largest of ground-based telescopes. This will enable us to look back in time to almost the moment of Creation of the Universe. STARLAB will tell us as much as it look back over some 15 billion years to our past - a past which is violent, dynamic and one of rapid evolution.

STARLAB will also measure the ultraviolet emission from the Universe which ground-based telescopes cannot observe. This window will surpass in excitement even the radio window because it contains the strongest emissions from the basic elements of hydrogen, helium, carbon, nitrogen and oxygen.

Although STARLAB is of paramount importance to scientists, it is of equal importance to Australian Industry because it is a "seed" project from which the Australian Space Industry can grow. Without it, Australia will miss the compelling challenges of the New Age and therefore will miss the whole meaning of our epoch. Australian Industry wants this stimulating challenge, judging from the dramatic response to the STARLAB Industrial Symposium.

The Australian Government has committed itself to a Space Programme by its procurement of the domestic communication satellite. As the lifetime of these satellites is about seven years, replacements are required regularly. Australian Industry wishes to gain the capability to design and build the successive generations of these satellites, a financial carrot of at least \$400 million per replacement.

Because of its great size and small population, Australia's needs, both for defence and resource management (forest, crop, mineral, water and oceanographic), are particularly suited to satellite surveillance: a crystal ball is not needed to predict that by the middle of the 21st century, Australia will have at least 20 multi-purpose satellites in orbit. Some needs will be satisfied by flying equipment on NASA's Space Platforms similar to that planned for STARLAB. Much of this equipment will draw on the expertise gained in building the instrument package for STARLAB with its special systems for detecting ultraviolet, visible and infrared emissions. Australian Industry has openly stated that it sees STARLAB as natural lead into this booming business - hence their great interest.

STARLAB represents the greatest challenge Australian technology and science has had. Not only will there be enormous gains to be made at the very frontiers of science but it will establish Australia as a country whose industry is capable of tackling problems at the frontiers of advanced technology. In the eyes of the world and in the eyes of Australians, our national prestige will reach an all time high. The benefits to Australia are incalculable. It is doubtful whether another opportunity for Australia to participate in a project as meritorious as STARLAB will present itself in another 20 years. By that time Australia will be incapable of competing with other countries in the high technology arena. It is now or never!

The Australian Possibility Studies of the Instrument Package of STARLAB:

Professor Don Mathewson, Director of Mount Stromlo and Siding Spring Observatory of the Australian National University has made a submission to the Department of Science and Technology for \$3.425 million to complete by January 1984 the feasibility studies of the Instrument Package. \$1.855 million of this amount would be required in Fiscal Year 1982.

Development of low light detecting systems using photon counting techniques commenced at Mount Stromlo Observatory in 1976, and these detectors have been outstandingly successful on the telescopes at Mt Stromlo and Siding Springs. More than \$2 million have gone into this R & D programme and NASA has acknowledged that MSSSO leads the world in this field. The concept of the Ultra-Large Format Counting Array (ULFPCA) was put forward by MSSSO to accommodate the wide field of view of STARLAB, and the Joint Science Working Group has stated that it is the "front-runner" for the detector system on STARLAB. A "bread-board" version set up in the Electronics Laboratories at MSO, works well and by June 1982, a mini-prototype will be ready for testing on the telescopes.

Since June 1981, MATRA Espace, a French space company, and the engineers and scientists at MSSSO have been producing a report on the STARLAB Instrument Package which has been widely distributed throughout Australia and the international scientific community. The collaboration was formalised on September 9, 1981, when a Memorandum of Understanding between MATRA and the ANU for the design and development of the Instrument Package was signed. This MOU will terminate if no funds are provided for the programme in the 1982 Budget.

A STARLAB Industrial Symposium held at Mt Stromlo Observatory on December 1 and 2, 1981, gave MSSSO/MATRA Scientists and engineers the opportunity to describe the technical details of the Instrument Package to representatives of Australian Industry and Government Agencies and to seek their involvement in the research, development and construction of the components of the package which lie within their area of expertise. The two day meeting was attended by 45 industrialists, 17 representatives from Government Departments, 6 Government research scientists and 19 engineers and scientists from Universities. Leading officials from MATRA Espace, British Aerospace, UK and TRW, USA were present. The response to this stimulating challenge to the high technology sector of the electronic, optical and mechanical industries was dramatic and already fourteen companies are working unsupported on the Phase B studies until August 1982. In addition, eleven Government Agencies and Universities are consulting on the project.

Canada's National Research Council has funded the Canadian feasibility studies for two years and NASA has given top priority to the development of the telescope in Canada and the space platform in the US, however, this will need to double by August this year and rise to 21 in March next year.

The current plan is for the three countries to sign the formal commitment to the project in January 1984, in anticipation of the 1989 launch. The total cost by 1989 is expected to be \$25.5 million, of which more than 75 percent would be spent in Australia.

Despite all these incalculable benefits to Australia, "STARLAB", like the "AUSTRALIA TELESCOPE", did not receive one cent of funds in the last Federal budget. Fortunately for us the "Memorandum of Understanding"



MATRA and the ANU has enabled the feasibility study to go ahead. However, the MOU will be terminated unless "STARLAB" receives some funds from the Federal Government in the 1982 Budget. Once again, a favourable Budget decision is essential for Australia's future scientific and technological well-being.

If our Federal Government thinks that we can afford to contribute one of our most priceless resources, our young people, to a peace keeping force in the Sinai Region, surely it can be persuaded to make available some more money for these two projects which will pay for themselves in the long term, because of the boost they will give to our local industry.

I urge you to contact your local Federal MP and Senators, and stress the necessity for the Government to fund "STARLAB" and the "AUSTRALIA TELESCOPE". A strong showing of public support for Astronomy in Australia could make the difference between both projects being given a "go" instead of a "no" by our Government next August.

*Jane L. Brooks*

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The information about the "AUSTRALIA TELESCOPE" and "STARLAB" has been taken from the following documents, which were kindly provided by Dr R H Frater, Chief of the CSIRO Division of Radiophysics, and Professor D S Mathewson, Director of the Australian National University's Mount Stromlo and Siding Spring Observatories.

THE AUSTRALIAN TELESCOPE for Astrophysics, Geophysics and Geodesy.  
CSIRO Division of Radiophysics Information Sheet "THE AUSTRALIA TELESCOPE"  
an Australian Synthesis Telescope by B J Robinson

OUTLOOK Space Astronomy in the 1980's Australian Role? by Don Mathewson

STARLAB INDUSTRIAL SYMPOSIUM Mount Stromlo Observatory, December 1 & 2, 1981.

STARLAB An Australian-Canadian-USA Free-Flying UV Optical Space Telescope  
January 19, 1982.

# S. F. A. THE ALTERNATIVE

## FANZINES RECEIVED:

### AUSTRALIAN:

Thyme 14 - Andrew Brown and Irwin Hirsh, Vic.  
The Ravin' V3 No.3 - Stephen Dedman, W.A.  
Wahf-Full 8 - Jack Herman, NSW.  
Forbidden Worlds 6 - R. Mapson, W.A.  
Q36 H - Marc Ortlieb, S.A.  
Weberwoman's Wrevenge 6 - Jean Weber, ACT.

NEW: Pariah No.1 - Gerald Smith,  
8 Framley St.,  
Frankston,  
Vic. 3199.

### OVERSEAS:

Re Kong 5 - Bruno Baccelli, Italy.  
Science Fiction Review 42 - Dick Geis, USA.  
A Foreign Fanzine 5/6 - Roelof Goudriaan, The Netherlands.  
Skug 4 - Gary Mattingly, USA.  
Gypsy 2 - Joyce Scrivner, USA.  
S.F.D. 21 - Skel & Cas Skelton, U.K.

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## CONVENTIONS:

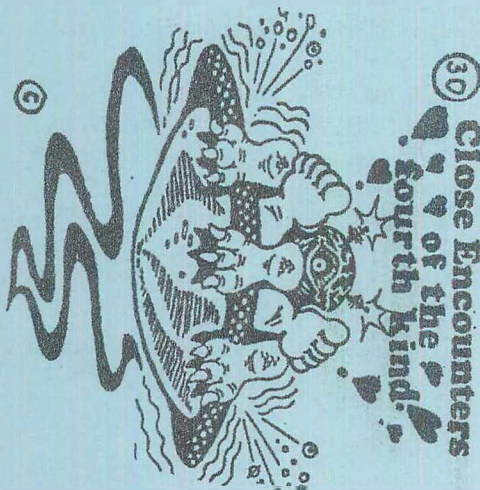
PlergbCon,  
PO Box 2128,  
Loop Station,  
Minneapolis,  
MN 55402 USA.

SEPTEMBER 10-12, 1982.

US\$8.00 pre-registered; US\$15 after August 15; no one-day memberships; US\$3.00 supporting.

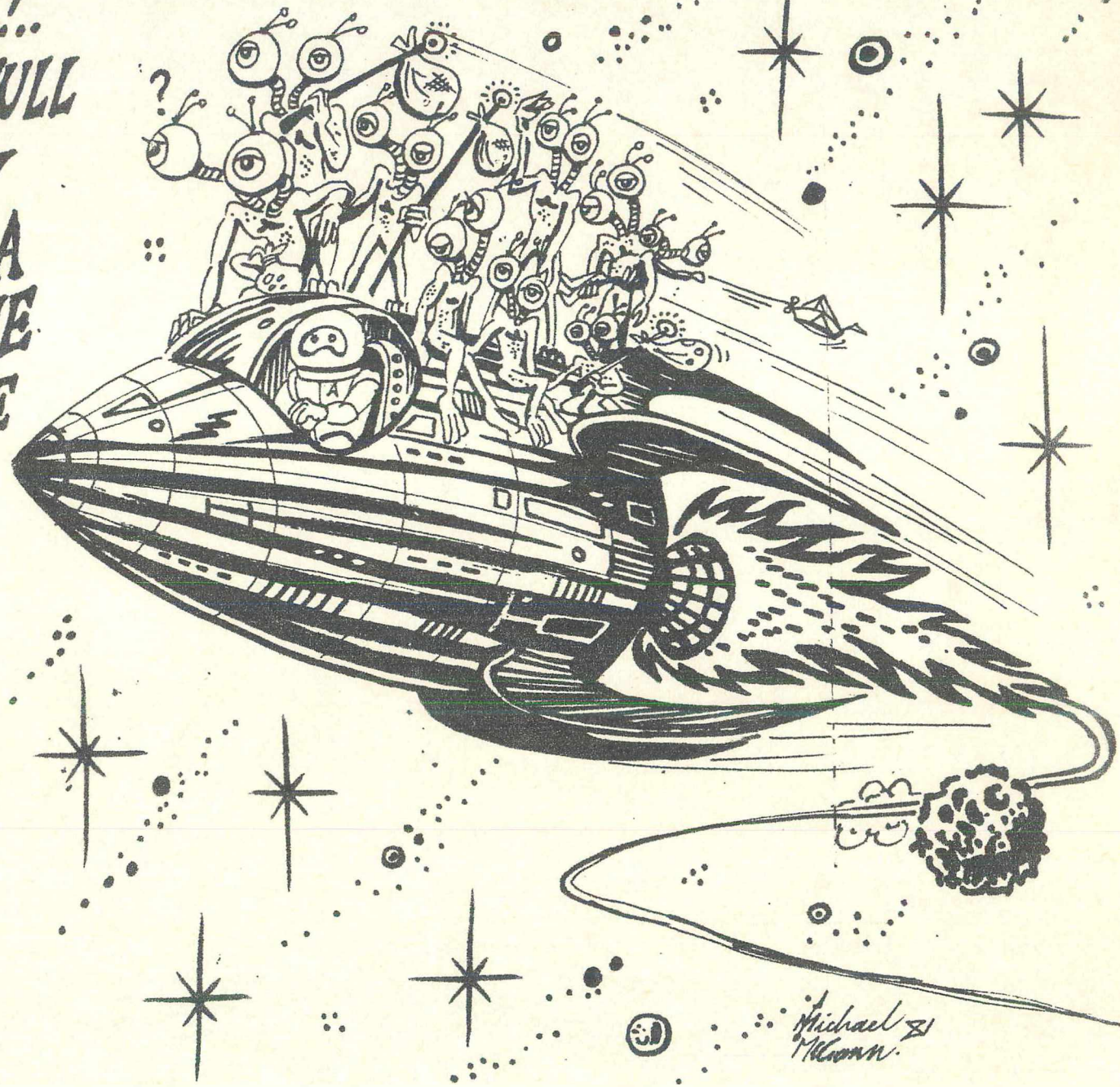
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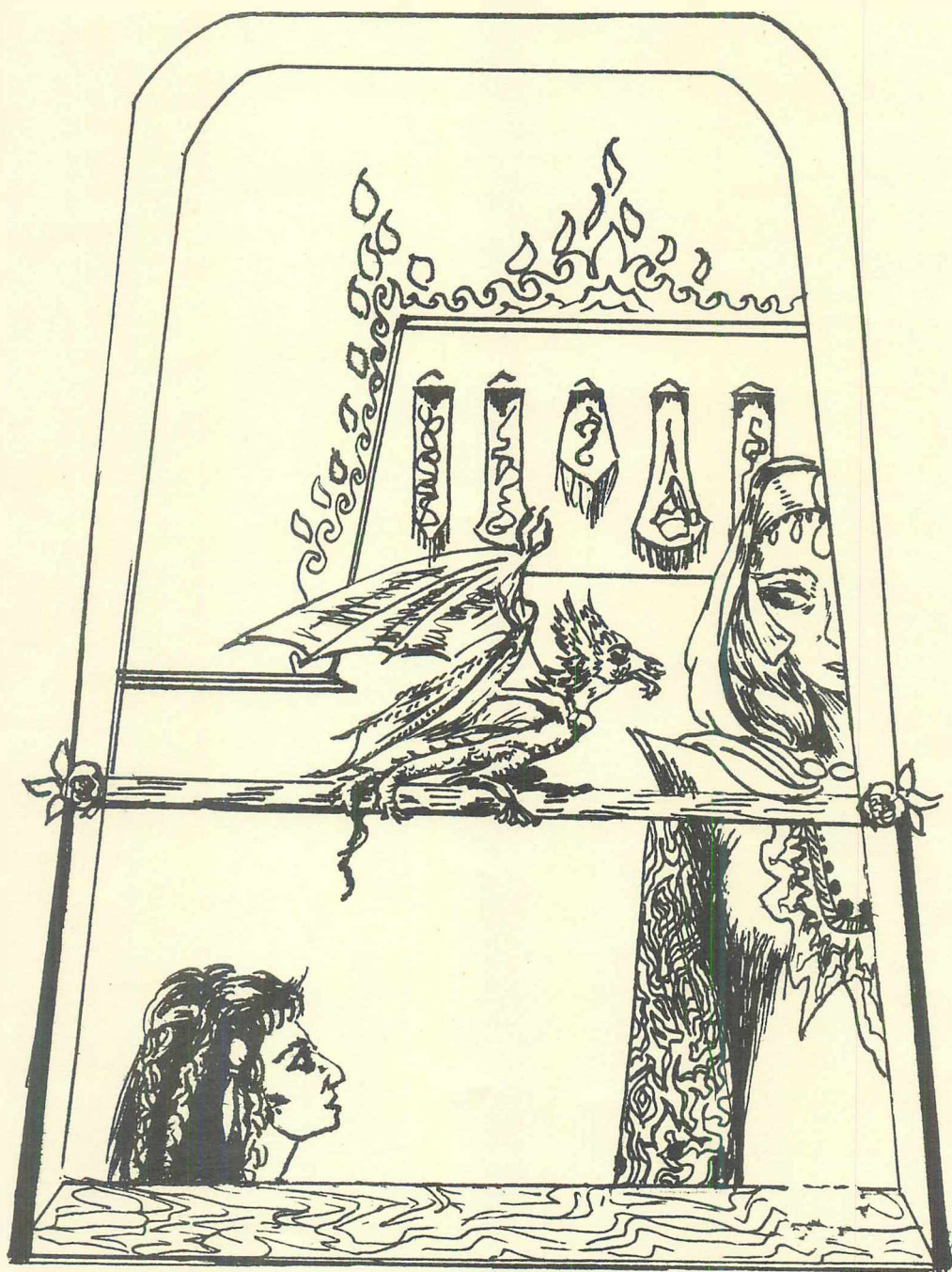


CENTAUR COURTSHIP



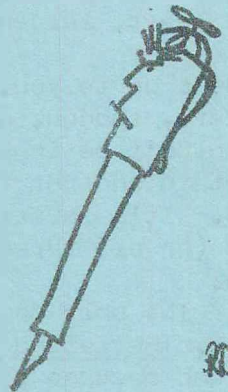


LYNX WOMAN BUSKER TALKING TO DORSA'LA'LOSSI ALIEN.





## The R. E. R. Dept.



R Mapson                      John Playford's story was boring. Sorry, but there it is.  
40 Second Ave.,              This was most certainly not one of his better efforts. The  
Kelmscott,                      climax was too sudden, taken too quickly, involved a deus ex  
W.A. 6111                      machina, and the last few lines were straight out of Mills &  
Boon (or that style of writing - not personally having read any  
Mills & Boon). The first section was unnecessary as the sabotage/terrorism is  
mentioned later in the story also. The plot shows promise - though I suspect  
all the stories about bof hippies versus The Establishment (which doesn't exist,  
at least not in the Institutions where the Finger is usually pointed) have been  
done to death. This one should be, anyway. Bring back the old style Playford.

Talking of establishmentarianism/antiestablishmentarianism/etc: the mini-  
argument going on in The Mentor about the worth of opinions held by Mr Kells is  
rather interesting. However, any suggestion that "alternative" views should be  
ignored (and preferably censored/banned/burned publically) is just as dangerous  
as accepting such views out of hand (when the only proof is a faith that, if the  
facts aren't right, at least they should be). If we stop research in this area  
we won't find out whether any of the "alternative" views are correct or not. Though  
perhaps one should also remember to read books such as Some Believe in Chariots  
(and how many fen have? how many non-fen?) and articles like SF and the Larger  
Lunacy by John Brunner (in Explorations of the Marvellous ed. by Peter Nicholls  
and now out of print). Mr Kells' fiction was much better in contrast to Mr  
Playford's (Though I must admit his poetry leaves much to be desired I prefer  
Poe in that area), shorter, with better style (and I probably also preferred it  
because of its associations with Absurdist fiction, I though I suspect Mr Kells!  
might disagree with this last).

The IPD is not new actually, and has even had songs  
written about it (by an obscure Tasmanian feminist folkgroup, whose name tempor-  
arily escapes me. Anyway, they have an album on Candle Records, and if you like  
that sort of thing it's quite fun, though I think the record may have been  
deleted by now).

Diane Fox's belief/comment that hyperactivity is caused by the  
many and varied additives in our food (and almost invariably unnecessary - the  
only reason we have artificial colouring is merely psychological, we don't want  
our artificially-grown-artificially-flavoured foods to look the wrong colour,  
as that would spoil the illusion) has a lot of support, though it is generally  
frowned upon by the Medical Establishment (there's that word again). Her conclus-  
ions that it must be treated like drugs is simply not thinking. The usual course  
advocated is to remove the cause of the hyperactivity. This is, nowever, not  
easy. Next time you buy something to eat, try and make it a product without

artificial colouring or flavouring -- you will find the choice extremely limited. It can be done though, and it will usually be found that the hyperactivity has been, at least, lessened by this course.

Drugs are dangerous. If you want to use them that's up to you. The only people who make money/profit from them are the dealers, though, and unfortunately the dealers are people without consciences (they wouldn't be in the business otherwise). The ultimate aim of the druggie is to obtain another fix, regardless of any other needs (eg food, housing, clothes). It's invariably a (short) downhill street to mental problems, crime or death (or all three). But, as I said, if that's what you want don't let me stop you.

The only complaint I have about your book reviews are that they're too short. The Island of Dr Death & Other Stories & Other Stories is a Master-piece. And because it's also SF it'll probably go unnoticed by the Public and Critics. Such is life and profit. Mr Wolf's book is the only book I've purchased this year specifically from the SF shelves at the local bookstore (though there have been others from other categories which are sf in all but name) and is very probably one of the best anthologies ever published by a single author, and certainly one of sf's Great Novels (but will it achieve recognition?). One thing not in its favour is the abysmally high price of \$7.50 for it -- what happened to sf books at 90¢? Was it just an adolescent dream that I only paid that much in the days of yore? Oh well, rush out to your nearest bookshop for this collection....

Those mentions of sf books released aren't meant to be reviews -- they are short rundowns of books giving what is basically my opinion as to whether the book is worth buying and what one can expect if a reader buys one -- hopefully it is of some benefit to readers of TM.

I can remember when books were 3/6, and then 35¢, before they really started to climb, back in 1966. -- Ron.]

Kerrie Hanlon, Brighton-Le-Sands, NSW 2216. There is a question I must ask -- with all the new people submitting drawings now -- and some rather nice illos too, I might add; why is it that an established artist like Mike McGann, whose work is well known to the point of needing no signature (around SF circles) can usually manage to get five or six illos consistently published, and yet a rather good illustrator like April Beare will sometimes have one only piece of work included? This question is no reflection on Mike's work, I realize he's been working hard for years, BUT you state that one of the reasons you make this zine is to give NEW artists and authors a go, and I feel the distribution would be a little more evenly placed with more NEW. If the reason is basically a matter of volume -- I still feel that publishing more than one piece of an artist's work is going to encourage them to the point of submitting a lot more work.

As you can see from this issue, Kerrie, there are more artists being published. It all depends what I get, if I like it and the number of pieces I receive. April Beare is very hard to contact and is extremely busy, so Susan says. I would love to publish more of her work, but the problems are as above. -- Ron.]

By the way -- I love Diane Fox's writing style. Some issues back I read a piece she wrote about herself and her 'affair' with sf over the years. Since then I have only read the odd letter. I would really like to read stories by Diane if any exist.



Jack Herman  
Box 272,  
Wentworth Bldg.,  
Uni. of Sydney,  
NSW 2006.

Due to your tongue being firmly in your cheek I had difficulty comprehending the fullness of your editorial message in TM 37. If, however, you are seriously lumping a whole range of drugs under one heading, you are on dangerous ground. The effect of some drugs, when taken in moderation, is not great and no proof has yet been given for the "domino theory" of drug taking - that one is in a lock-step progression to perdition once one takes the first, light, faltering step into drugs.

Leave it that now (apart from analgesics during migraine attacks) the only drugs I regularly take are alcohol and caffeine and the latter far more heavily (I don't regard sex as a drug any more than I do food or air or liquid necessary for life.)

As with a lot of things the end result depends on the person his/her self. Some people would prove out the domino theory - and the only way you would know if you were one of those affected would be to find out the hard way. Also, most things taken in over-abundance - including sex and food - have a deleterious effect on the organism, which is basically what I was talking about as the effect of drugs. I think most people would not mind drugs if the effect was to control the condition (medical) for which they were being taken - though there are those people who want to live as nature intended - with smallpox, cholera, tapeworm, rickets, etc. - and no side effects and with a totally controlled, selected use (ie, no 'high'). - Ron./



On the possible link between hyperactivity and food additives: this is a "post hoc ergo propter hoc" argument, ie that because hyperactivity has occurred after food additives, they are the cause. I would simply note that there have been several other developments in the rapid urbanization and "occidentalization" of society that could cause such behaviour - some environmental, some dietary and some social - changes in work/study habits, changes in leisure patterns, changes in the food/production cycle - and a simplistic solution like "food additives-hyperactivity" doesn't impress me as proven.

Andy  
Andruschak's letter raises an interesting point: my opinion is that material for genzines should be original. I can, however, see a case for an annual, Best FF (apa), which could be sold to raise money for the apa and thereby save the membership money.

Buck  
Coulson's letter needs a response - 1) Most cons in Aus do have hucksters (even at Adventon I recall 4 to 6 Huckster Tables). At recent cons, I recall, in the Huckster Room, McGann's teeshirt and bags, Andy Smith's silver work, the Varangian Guards' armour and metal decorations, Norstrillia Press, Melbourne in 85, Syncon 83, and, occasionally, faneds like Leigh Edmonds or myself. SPACE AGE and the SASTREK group were also at Adventon.

2) My experience is that English speakers are usually more witty and interesting than their US analogues - eg Brian Aldiss and Joseph Nicholas.

John J Alderson  
Havelock,  
Vic. 3465.

Ralph Silverton, the great literary critic has spoken. Those items by Forbin, Alderson and Kell, "should never have been printed". Hope springs eternal, he continued, "Hopefully they'll improve, though in this respect Alderson might be in need of a second brain." Personally I would prefer a new one: how one's careful criticism can fall with one nonsensical sentence! Alas poor Yorick! I am sorry I took you away from your comic, Silverton.

Mind you, I have to confess, now I am becoming a prey to the insidious accumulation of entropy, that I have seriously considered a body transplant, the better models including a new brain of course. A friend of mine tells me that she considered this new body business herself, but that it is attended by considerable danger - one's mind can apparently end up in limbo. However the author of The Third Eye managed it successfully. But, on consideration, I thought my spirit was faltering.

I find myself a little weary of the trotting forward of the Thera volcanic explosion theory to account for so much that is, well, inexplicable, in the history and mythology of the Middle East. Those who think such a simple thing will suffice, would be well advised to read Claude Schnaffner's study of the comparative archaeology of the Middle Near East. This shows that the entire area was subject to fire and earthquake and that the major ages (Bronze 1, 2 and 3) fell as a result, and that this happened over a period of a thousand years. Like Velikovsky, he reduced the period of the second Bronze Age to 53 years. Certainly Thera may have exploded - a symptom, not a cause of the troubles which seem to be world wide. Those who subscribe to the story that so many civilizations fell because of the explosion of one volcano are, indeed, wearing blinkers.

Rickard J Faulder  
c/- Yango Agric.  
Research Centre,  
Yanco,  
NSW 2703

I liked your nostalgic editorial. Ah, yes, it was so much simpler then. For all the so-called liberation of current fandom, I don't see people as being any happier now than they were then. Less, if anything, since fans now have a much larger assortment of goals to aspire to. Time was when it was enough to aspire to producing as good a fanzine as John Bandsund (remember the days when he used to produce such things?) or collect as many books as Ron Graham. Now fans have to aspire to drink as much as Eric Lindsay (the new one, resulting from a failed cloning experiment at some nameless American con), rub as many backs as Peter Toluzzz, be as controversial as Vera Lonergan or as entertaining as Marc Ortlieb (well, not all the steps have been backward)... 'Twas also interesting to see your summary of fannish drugs. Not sure if I'd entirely agree with you, but they do have elements of truth.

The other thing I liked was your comment that "sex and power... are ok if you are using them". In today's society, in order to justify the misuse of these by yourself, first you have to convince other people that they are inescapably important.

My reactions to John Playford's story were mixed. On the one hand I found his characters credible, realistic. Unfortunately, on the other hand, somehow I wasn't quite able to suspend my disbelief in the situation depicted. Not to worry, though - it was still a good read.

Peter Kells short-short seemed to be concerned with imagery for its own sake. I feel that it is not enough to describe the fantastic. Rather, it must operate within some logical framework, even if only its own internal logic. This it did not do.



Your anonymous American correspondent did have valid points to make about the casual way in which male gynecologists dismiss the side-effects of contraception on their female patients. (The use of white whales as animal test subjects was so obviously ridiculous that it rather killed the point with farce.) However, in dismissing contraception on the basis of safety, the author ignores one vital fact. Whatever the risks of contraception, they are still less than the risks of pregnancy and birth, risks to which men are not exposed. Actually, with extrauterine fertilisation now apparently an established procedure, there is no reason why both sexes should not now be sterilised - females before adolescence, males immediately after puberty, following a deposit in a sperm bank.

That was one of Mike McGann's best Spaced Out cartoons for a while.

With my specialised interest, I am probably in a different position to most faneds. Getting material for a journal of Science Fiction Biology is a different kettle of fish to securing material for a more general genzine. (Which is why I've only pubbed three issues to date - which is still better than these people who only bring out a fanzine when they are running for DUFF.) Judith Hanna (issue 1), Jean Weber (issue 2) and Marc Ortlieb (issue 3) all supplied material after I made my requirements generally known (the last with a fair bit of prompting). Peter Toluzzi's article was an apa reprint. George Turner and Julie Vaux both supplied material after solicitation, and Harry Andruschak supplied material after receipt of a copy, which I guess is sort of soliciting. For an upcoming issue I intend to collate a discussion that took place in an apa, and transcribe a convention panel. I'm tapping all the available outlets, but it's still hard to get material. Hmm, three women, three men, writing in three issues. I certainly seem to be an equal opportunity editor.

Like Buck Coulson, I do have strong doubts about the ability of closed-cycle economies to support what some people consider the "finer" aspects of civilisation - the arts and sciences. Sure, I can imagine an enlightened rural economy with the farmer composing ballads or working out mathematical conundrums as s/he guides the plough-horse, or whatever, but the sciences in particular would lack something by being deprived of the practical chance to prove the concepts, and people would tend to lose interest. (Music, also, would be the poorer for being deprived of the modern instrument-maker's craft, and the opportunity to assemble a large group of people into a well-practised orchestra.)

While it is perfectly true that we should treat the cause, not the effect, of any pathological condition, such as hyperactivity in children (and let it not be doubted that this is such a condition) at the same time, the use of medication to control the symptoms while searching for the cause is perfectly justified. (That was a typo of yours, wasn't it, Ron? Surely you meant "I'm sure there were 'hyperactive' children before artificial colourings were used"?) In no way can it be made to look like a mass mind-control technique. Would Peter Kells have us deny the epileptic the L-dopa s/he needs to control their condition? On the other hand, I would agree that the solution to the problems of humanity on earth is the acquisition of new attitudes like non-aquisitiveness and economic stasis - following, of course, a massive population reduction. However, I don't see why we should give up our big dreams, like exploring the universe. Dismantling Jupiter seems a bit extreme (not to say ambitious) but why not move high-technology into space.

Diane Southgate's paranoia is showing again (and no, I don't believe that this is a universal characteristic of our species). Now, universal application of mind-controlling drugs is a science-fiction staple, and heroin is certainly not a likely candidate. Sure,

a populace drugged to the eyeballs with heroin might be suitable assembly-line fodder, but the loss rate would be high in unusual or hazardous situations, and the professionals would not be terribly productive in such a condition.

One other thing, and this belongs in my comments on your editorial. Before ever there were "feminists to pollute the duplicators of fandom" Leigh Edmonds was publishing Giant Wombo, which had a decidedly feminist slant.

Yes, and years before that, Susan was publishing Girl's Own Fanzine as a reply to Leigh's Boy's Own Fanzine.  
- Ron. -

Peter Kells                      Once again that farmyard fantast, John Alderson, has amazed  
PO:Box 1670,                      me - not with his ideas mind you, but with his blissful and I  
Southport,                      I think, dishonest avoidance of any discussion of the difficult-  
Qld. 4215.                      ies that people will surely encounter in trying to implement his  
   schemes. His excesses in this direction are so gross that I now  
read his articles purely as humorous stories. Yet perhaps this Baron Munchhausen  
of the barnyard could regain some of his lost credibility if he wrote an article  
dealing with problems in self sufficiency - instead of glossing them over. Problems  
like pests. I can assure Mr Alderson that the industrious representatives of the  
genus Rattus can make short work of a mere 100 sq ft of vegetable garden! This  
occurs frequently in my locality. I do not totally dismiss Mr Alderson's claims,  
but I am suspicious of his unbridled optimism.

I read John Playford's Culture  
Conflict and would say, objectively speaking, that he is reasonably competent  
in his style, and seems to have developed it to a degree of polish. Personally  
though, I tend not to like this style, or his characters. They are annoyingly  
conventional, and predictable. In his letter, he claims to be promoting uplifting  
values, and humanity against machines. These are laudable principles, and do seem  
to be reflected in the story.

Yes Mr Coulson, so far technological killings do not  
equal the percentage of deaths per country produced by the black plague. (This, of  
course, assumes that the black plague was a natural phenomenon - but that is  
another story). One can possibly see some desperate banana republic obtaining  
cut-throat germ & chemical weapons - "the poor man's bomb". Such nations would  
probably use these devices indiscriminately. Who could say what the results would  
be? I think our entire technology is geared toward aggression. What end can there  
be for such a perverted technology - besides a nauseating paroxysm of savagery?

Buck Coulson lists a number of drugs, implying that they would be unobtainable but for present technology. Yet most artificial drugs are based on  
models occurring in nature. As for eyeglasses, they've been around for donkey's  
years, and are hardly a product of high technology.

I was interested, and gratified,  
to see Harry Warner's perceptive comments on my The Decadent Antiquarian. Harry  
is substantially correct - I did mean to impart a slightly tongue-in-cheek  
quality to the story, but also to protest the existence of divergent ideals of  
inspiration, and different concepts of 'quality'.

I liked TM 37's surrealistic  
cover drawing by Judith Hanna. It suggests to me some distorted creature from  
another dimension.



Diane Fox  
PO Box 129,  
Lakemba,  
NSW 2195.

I was impressed by John Playford's long short story Culture Conflict. Yes, it is a depressing set-up as he noted. (though I can envisage things even more depressing) and yes, the style while plain is adequate to the theme, and the values expressed decidedly humanistic. Tragic also in that the people who only wanted to live in freedom were being manipulated even more than the people in 'straight' mechanised computer-controlled society - or rather, being manipulated more ruthlessly and violently. Parallels are obvious - Mansor, SLA, etc. Big Brother showing up in a bad light too - a feeling that the slaughter of the 'hippies' was somehow intended from the beginning - the factory sabotage just provided a good excuse.



Captain Chandler's article was good as always - perhaps these could be collected? It would be a worthwhile idea. I'm looking forward to reading the Ned Kelly book when it comes out.

Peter Kell's The Transition - a strange little fable, somehow melancholy in tone despite the happy ending. Enjoyed it. The 'Male Contraceptive' article was nastily funny and the points it makes about IUD devices etc were most apt.

Mike McGann continues to provide enjoyable artwork in his Spaced Out series.

Re Buck Coulsen's comment on technology - I don't really like to disagree with his sensible comments but by mentioning the black death (bubonic plague) as a non-technology caused disaster, he picked a poor example. I'm sure there are plenty of diseases in germ war research laboratories that are now a good deal more efficient than the plague, reasonably effective though this disease was and is.

John Alderson's comments about food prices: I've often been struck by the amount of "TV dinners" uneconomic but quick-to-prepare flashy foods that are sold. And the incredible amount of junk food that parents of small children sometimes buy.

Sorry about using sexist sarcasm, Richard; admittedly women politicians show the same aggression and lust for power as male politicians, so it is not connected with basic physical equipment!

Enjoyed the book reviews - especially Island of Dr Death etc which in its full form is an irresistible title. It's a most enjoyable book too, and demands re-reading. The Donald Glut book sounds just what one would expect of the writer of the TESB novelization. I'll keep a look out for the interesting sounding Mission, and have recently bought the Ballard book. The Orphan is a superb fantasy; I've bought the second book in the series, The Captive, but haven't read it yet.

Marc Ortlieb  
PO Box 46,  
Marden,  
S.A. 5070

Sorry, but I really don't get the point of Ron's Roost in the April issue. You start talking fairly seriously, and then drop into non-serious. I don't think it works, especially not in so short a piece. The fact that you also attempt to compress twenty two years of fan history in there as well makes the result even more confusing. The gratuitous insults flung at feminists really didn't help me to feel any empathy with your editorial this time around either, but I guess that's just the sort of knee jerk reaction John Alderson would expect me to make to such a statement. So it goes.

It wasn't mean to be that much of an insult - it is just I don't think much of mundane politics in fandom. -  
Ron.

Captain Chandler's column is, as always, well worth reading. It's nice to see that the Post Office has it in for the professionals as well as for us fans. Somehow it makes equality a meaningful quality again. The Post Office shall diligently stuff up the affairs of all, regardless of race, colour, creed, or membership in the SFWA. I'd say that the typists who did Bert's manuscript were well overdue a visit to that nice Doctor Freud in Vienna.

A minor correction.

Standard Books is not a specialist science fiction bookstore. It's more a textbook retailer, which has, from what I've seen, a very limited selection of science fiction, though I did pick up some nice poetry books there, Paul Day's Black Hole is Adelaide's only sf bookshop, though there is a comics place in the city as well.

With regards to Andy's comments about female article writers, I don't see the problem. Jean Weber writes excellent stuff, as does Helen Swift, if she could be persuaded to write more often. Unfortunately, our most reliable female fan writer, Judith Hanna, has gone to England to live with that nice looking chap with the foul mouth. There are others though, Diane Fox, Sally Beasley, Elaine Cochrane, Leanne Frahm... As with male writers, it's merely a matter of asking, and specifying what one wants in the way of an article.

Aargh. I wish people would define their terms. When John Alderson talks of there being "civilisation" in Europe before there was "civilisation" in Egypt, what does he mean? I don't think that anyone will claim that Egypt was the first civilised place, but the evidence, unless there's something more recent that I've yet to encounter, used to point to the fact that Egypt and Sumer were the first places to make extensive use of writing, thus historical civilisation dates from them. (Historical being defined as documented).

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

I couldn't find much to comment in TM 36, except your one page write up of convention organizing. I notice one thing: you mention attending the convention as a guest receiving meals, or to attend and receive meals only. What about those who cannot eat hotel food?

Are there alternatives near by? Or places to prepare your own food? The reason I ask is that I am one of those who have problems attending cons, due to diet restrictions. There are at least three groups that will have problems with standard hotel fare.:

1. The Hypertensives. If you have high blood pressure, most doctors will put you on a diet of no salt (actually no sodium) and no or little fat. Most hotels add salt to the food at the drop of a shaker. In addition, to keep weight down, you must not eat too much.



2. The Diabetics. No sugar, and even more restricted as to size of portions. This last, in fact, is very much a problem. The standard diabetic exchange chart is very specific on this point.

3. Those with both diet restrictions. Me, for example.

So, could one of us attend this con in safety? Or would we have to pack everything we need to eat at the con and try to find some place to prepare it?

Well, that con (MEDTREK) is now over and everyone loved it. There were actually several fans with the above restrictions (Susan's mother for instance) and the Con Committee made sure that adequate meal provisions were made for them. They enjoyed the con, also. - Ron.

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Michael Hailstone                      I'm curious about this CRUX 4 you say you've received  
PO Box 193,                      to. Is it published in Ararat, Victoria? I had already  
Woden,                      heard about it from 2½ sources: firstly (halfth?) from Paul  
A.C.T. 2606.                      Collins, and much later from the National Library and Ron  
   in Galaxy Bookshop, both of whom gave the name CRUX. Well,  
I thought the name was original when I decided on it. Sigh.

   The editor is James  
Styles, of 324 Barkly St., Ararat, Vic. 3377. - Ron.

I'm well aware that even without winds there would still be tides, and there would be winds set up by the temperature differential between land and sea, and these are both taken into account in my story. I would have thought that Buck Coulson would know that both these would not be enough to stop the oceans from freezing over. Conditions would be quite calm in mid-ocean, the only movement being on coasts, but even this would not stop the sea from freezing. The North Sea coasts can freeze over during a cold snap, even with temperatures averaging only a few degrees below zero celsius, and even part of Macquarie Harbour on the west coast of Tasmania froze over during a frosty spell in 1951. This happened despite the tides, which are very high around the North Sea. By the way, seawater does not freeze "a lot lower than 32°F"; its freezing-point is 28°F, (-2°C).

I am quite bamboozled by John Alderson's scepticism about ice-ages. He concedes evidence for ice-sheets covering Europe in recent times, but not for ice-ages. What the hell is the difference?

---

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

   If I understand correctly the con arrangements described in Ron's Roost in the 36th Mentor, you've developed a hotel bill payment plan different from anything I remember reading about at United States cons. It sounds like a good method in many ways: no danger of hassles over the bill at checkout time, ability of the congoer to know if he can afford to buy this or that during the con and still have enough to get home on, and apparently a substantial reduction in the cost of a con weekend at an expensive hotel. I suppose the system would also create problems if adopted by United States con committees: it wouldn't suit the fans who have conscientious objections to eating in the hotel, and there might be complications for those who wanted to come a day early or stay a day late.

I liked the little story by Julia Vaux even before I read elsewhere in the issue that she likes classical music, doesn't smoke, and is a Christian, qualities which I thought had been bred out of the youthful generation in that particular combination. I would have been hopelessly prejudiced in her favor if I'd seen her "advertisement" before reading the story. As it is, I think these two pages signify ability to write well and left me wishing they had been amplified into a genuine story with a plot and everything, because the incident and stage setting offered here are tantalizing and stop much too soon.

In contrast to A. Bertram Chandler, I don't know much about anything, so I am not often horrified by discovery how ignorant an author is of the things he is writing about. One exception came recently when I read a mystery story which had a newspaper building as its setting. This was a strange situation, because the author had captured very well many small bits of atmosphere and had various allusions to newspaper publishing correct. But there were several howlers, like the writer's assumpt on that the lady who put out the household hints section had the same deadline as the front page and worked frantically to meet it.

But one thing that does annoy me in fiction is when a character behaves too stupidly for me to believe in the background and training which he is supposed to possess. This is what disgusted me with The Prisoner, a television series which everyone else in fandom seems to worship: the central character just stood there and inhaled when the gas started to come in his room to start off the adventures, instead of holding his breath and smashing a window to get air. Last week I read a novel about a cell of Russian agents implanted in the United States and left to live normal lives until needed for Soviet purposes. Someone decided to kill them all off. One was disposed of when his auto's gas pedal and brakes were tampered with while it was in a parking garage. He had a spectacular fiery carsh. This highly trained and ingenious Soviet agent would in real life have met the emergency by shifting into neutral or turning off the ignition or applying the parking brake. Another agent was killed while driving when someone drove ahead of him and flashed a mirror repeatedly in his eyes until he crashed the car. I've had this happen accidentally at high speeds and I've always survived by looking away from the nearby vehicle from which the sun was reflecting and slowing to put distance between it and me.

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Jean Weber                      The Mentor 37: a very nice mixture this time. Delightful  
13 Myall St.,                  editorial, designed to offend everyone, and thereby no one. Not  
O'Connor,                      a bad story from John Playford, though a bit heavy on the  
ACT 2601.                      messsge. I'd seen the Breakthrough in Male Contraception before,  
                                    though I'm not quite sure where. I think it was in one of those  
heavily feminist magazines like Ms.

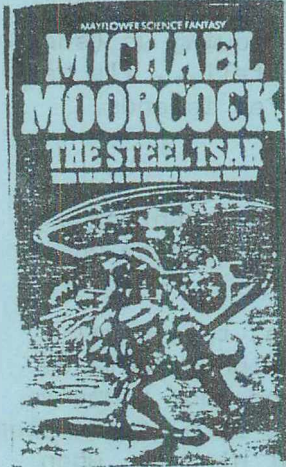
The ACT sf&f specialist Bookshop is 2001 Books,  
Belconnen Churches Centre, Belconnen, ACT. Please don't loose it again!

Is Bruce  
Weston for real? "Nobody likes to hear or read a good whinge." As his letter  
is nothing but a whinge, I will do him the benefit of the doubt and assume it's  
supposed to be humourous. He's wrong, of course: I, for example, thoroughly  
enjoy a well-written whinge such as one gets from Capt. Chandler.

By the way, my  
zine's title has only two words, not three. Weberwoman is all one word. It may look  
like two on the covers, because of the large middle W, but the headers give it  
as one word and that's correct. I will accept the middle W capital, but no spaces.



# S. F. BOOK RELEASES.



THE STEEL TSAR by Michael Moorcock. Mayflower science fantasy, published by, and distributed in Aust. by Granada Publishing Aust. P/L, 153 pp./a\$4.95. On sale now.

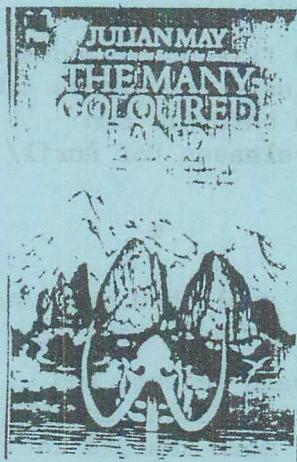
This is the third in the Oswald Bastable Trilogy (the 2nd, The Land Leviathan, was reviewed last issue) and continues the adventures of Bastable in the Fall of Singapore to another Cossack Revolution, with an outcome quite different to the Revolution of 1918. This novel, however, has signs of Moorcock's hack writing (and lack of editing). For instance on page 28 the author writes of the 'hydrogen' escaping from the gasbags, and on page 30 talks about the gasbags being ripped and the 'helium' lost. Tsk tsk.

If you forget the above though, the novel is a pleasant way of willing away an hour or so with Moorcock's wit and imagination.

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THE MANY COLOURED LAND - Julian May. A Pan book, dist in Aust. by William Collins P/L. 411 pp. A\$5.95. On sale now.

There are some reviewers (and some readers) who persist in saying that science fiction is past its Golden Age and that all that is being written (and published) now is the dross. This is one of the books that puts the lie to that opinion. Part One of the Saga of The Exiles, it tells the tale of how, early in the 21st Century, a French physicist discovers how to engineer a doorway into the past - a one-way doorway. Over the passing years hundreds of misfits escape the world of that century into the beginning of a more simple life in the Pliocene. However, not is all what it seems when they arrive to start another life.

This is possibly one of the best sf novels to be released this year, and if you love sf, I suggest that you make this novel one that you do not miss - if necessary ask for it as a birthday present, etc. But get it - you won't regret it. A Hugo Nomination.

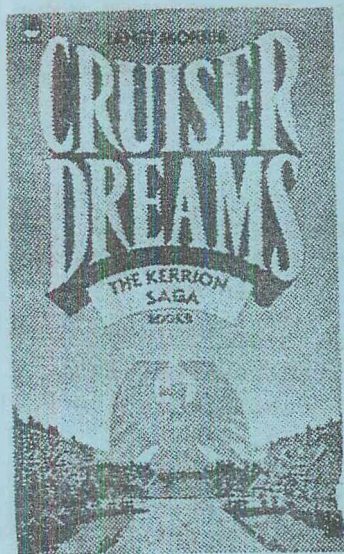
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CRUISER DREAMS by Janet Morris. Fontana paperback. dist. in Aust by William Collins P/L. 316 pp. A\$4.95. On sale now.

Since when have fellow mainstream novelists reviewed sf/fantasy novels? I wouldn't trust their opinions anyway. Cruiser Dreams is the second in the Kerrion Saga.



It has some good ideas but the author's style of writing leaves much to be desired; instead of a flowing along with the reader, s/he has to plough through it. I found that instead of falling into the rhythm of that style, I was all of the time finding myself bucking it.

The plot concerns a young primitive, Shebat, who is loved by an aristocratic consul, but who seems to think only of herself and her beloved Ship all through the story. In the end she seems to be growing up (she is only 18...) but the reader can never tell... I'd hate to have her ruling an Empire of even a few islands.

\* \* \*

CAPELLA'S GOLDEN EYES by Christopher Evans. Panther SF, published by Granada and dist. in Aust by Granada Publ. Aust. P/L. 220 pp. A\$5.95. On sale now.

Set on the ocean world of Gaia, this novel pursues the adventures of one of Gaia's inhabitants as he leaves the kibutz he was brought up on and commences work at the city which is central to the life of the planet. However, not is all well on the pastoral planet. When the colonists first landed their ship and set up their colony, they came on hard times and when the alien M'threnni landed and offered them goods they were taken up on it. When the aliens took human hosts as 'Voices' the leaders of the colonists kept silent.

The protagonist's childhood friend disappears and the girl they both grew up with dies - the events take a sinister turn and the hero is thrown onto his own resources. This is one of the better releases for April/May and is an enjoyable read.

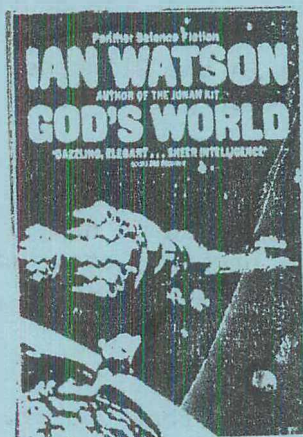
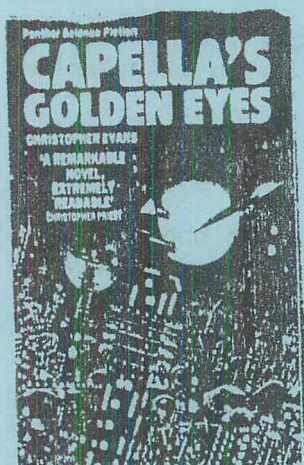
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GOD'S WORLD by Ian Watson. Panther SF; published by Granada - dist in Aust by same. 285 pp. A\$5.95. On sale now.

This is a curious blend of hard science and religion told in a science fiction form. Though God, and what one could call the 'fallen angel' both feature in it, is still hard sf. It tells the story of an expedition to find the origin of a series of projections, apparently originating from another star system. The star drive used is a gift, and is 'powered' by psi powers of some of the terran crew.

As mentioned above this is straight sf in a form. that is unusual so far in the genre, and the story is refreshing because of it. Recommended.

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# BRIAN ALDISS

## RE-RELEASES

THE MOMENT OF ECLIPSE	187 pp
SPACE, TIME AND NATHANIEL	190 pp
BAREFOOT IN THE HEAD	235 pp
THE DARK LIGHT YEARS	158 pp
STARSWARM	190 pp

Published by Granada, dist in Aust by Granada publishing Aust. P/L. All \$4.95. On sale now.

It looks as though Granada is reissuing most of Brian Aldiss' titles. These are a good bunch if you haven't read any of his works, and covers his short stories and two of his novels (Barefoot In The Head and The Dark Light Years - both about toilets?). As far as I am concerned Aldiss's writing has gone downhill as far as entertainment value is concerned since about 1969 - and The Dark Light Years and Space, Time and Nathaniel are the last of his best writings, along with some of his other short stories in Starswarm.

If you haven't read these three books, and you like good sf then they are a good buy. On the other hand if you are a reader that likes the type of speculative fiction that was all the rage in the '60's, then Barefoot In the Head and The Moment Of Eclipse would interest you. In this facit, Aldiss is on a par with Ballard at his most obtuse.

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THE ONE TREE by Stephen Donaldson - published by Fontana; dist in Aust. by William Collins P/L. 479 pp. A\$5.95. On Sale Now.

This is the second in the series of the Second Chronicles of Thomas Covenant the Unbeliever. I haven't read any of Donaldson's fantasy before, and since finishing this volume look forward to obtaining more in these series.

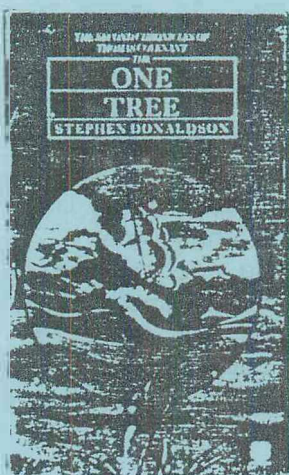
This volume tells of the further adventures as Covenant flees: the Land, accompanied by Linden Avery and others of that party. It is a very well written fantasy and the story keeps the reader engrossed until the last page. In fact, after reading it, the appeal of purchasing the rest (add earlier volumes) is quite strong. The characters are, er, heroic and the adventures well told.

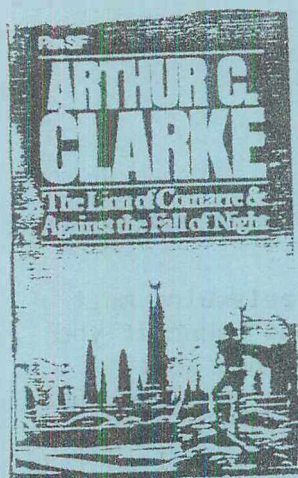
Well worth the money for fantasy readers.

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THE LION OF COMMARRE and AGAINST THE FALL OF NIGHT by Arthur C Clarke. Pan sf - dist in Aust by William Collins. 188 pp. A\$3.95. On sale now.

Previous to reading this collection of two of Clarke's early (1948/9) novels I had not read The Lion Of Commarre. Against the Fall of Night I had read several years ago (before I had read The City And The Stars)





and the tale of that one-thousand-year-old city is one of the images that never fails to evoke that sense of wonder in me. The Lion Of Comarre is thus a most welcome experience - written at much the same time, and evincing the same wonder - it is alone worth the price of the paperback. Both are set against a backdrop of an (almost) ageless city - but what a difference between the two, and the people they protect, and their basic purpose of being.

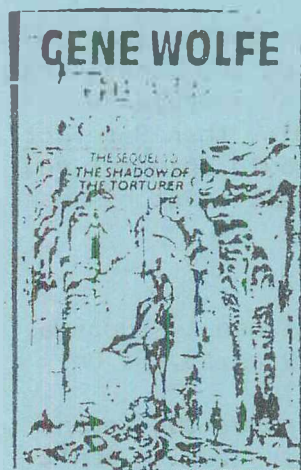
I think that an author could create a well-loved future history using the backgrounds of these two (three if one includes Diaspar) and if would indeed be a rich lode.

If you haven't read either of these stories - buy this volume.

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THE CLAW OF THE CONCILIATOR by Gene Wolfe. An Arrow paperback, dist in Aust. by Hodder & Stoughton. 301 pp. A\$5.95. On sale now.

This is another novel which has been nominated for this year's Hugo. It is volume 2 of The Book Of The New Sun, and true to form, I haven't read the first volume. It is a little harder to follow than The One Tree in this respect.

Several critics have given their opinions that Claw is sf, while The One Tree is fantasy. It seems to me that Claw could, shorn of some of its scientific trappings and replacing ETs with daemons, just as well be set in the Middle Ages. After all, the protagonist is a torturer. The story opens with Severian, the said torturer journeying along with Jonas, his friend and follows their adventures as Severian tries to return the Claw to its rightful owners. On the way he has many adventures and, since this is a trilogy the reader knows that all the threads may not be tied up at the end. They aren't, and the ending comes abruptly, like the end of a serialised novel. Of the two contenders reviewed here, I think The Many-Coloured Land is the more enjoyable read.

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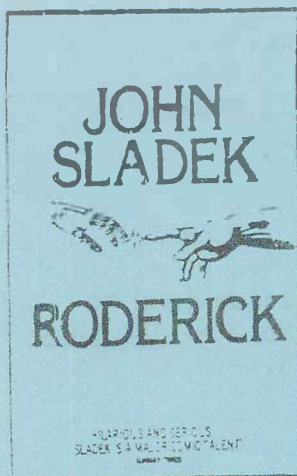


SPACE OPERA by Jack Vance. Coronet books, dist. in Aust by Hodder & Stoughton. 168 pp. A\$3.95. On sale now.

This novel is good light entertainment. Apart from the pun in the title it is a rousing adventure novel with satire lightly covered by the discord as Roger Wool and his wealthy aunt, and some of earth's pre-eminent musicians journeying around the galaxy playing for the natives and searching for the Rlaru. There is even a lovely girl for he hero to pine over and, in the end....

The price isn't too steep, either.





RODERICK by John Sladek. A Panther book, published by Granada, dist. in Aust. by Granada Publishing Aust.P/L. 448 pp. A\$7.50. On Sale now.

This is a more 'serious' sf novel than that reviewed above. It tells the tale of how a university team, hired by NASA to build a robot, because of bungling (fraud) at the top, lose the grant and attempt to carry on themselves. There is the usual young genius computer designer/programmer and the older people at the university. Who are mainly against them. Throw in a couple of killers from a Futures group and you have some scurrilous goings on.

Sladek is a careful and witty writer and this is particularly evident in this novel of misplaced passions (and people). A typical Sladek satire.

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A WIZARD IN BEDLAM by Christopher Stasheff. Mayflower science fantasy. Published by Granada & dist. in Aust. by Granada Publishing Aust. P/L. 224 pp. A\$4.95. On sale now.

If you liked The Warlock In Spite Of Himself you should like this effort. The planet Melange is back again, with its aristocracy add the down-trodden serf.. Dirk Dulaine, with Gar and Medelon, is attempting to foment a revolution. As usual he runs into certain problems....

This is another novel for that time when you may feel a little down in the dumps - and need a little brightening up. Get this book for a rainy day (along with Space Opera).

\* \* \*

THOMAS  
NELSON

THE GUNS OF AVALON by Roger Zelazny; Sphere - A\$4.95.  
THE DANCERS OF ARUN by Elizabeth Lynn; Hamlyn - A\$4.95.  
WILLIAM THE WIZARD by Barbara Cleveland-Peck; Beaver.-A\$2.95.  
MINDFLIGHT by Stephen Goldin; Hamlyn. A\$3.95.

All on sale now.

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GRANADA

SHIP OF SHADOWS by Fritz Leiber.

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WOOLWORTH'S  
REMAINDERS

Marion Zimmer Bradley: HUNTERS OF THE RED MOON.  
THE WORLD WRECKERS.  
THE PLANET SAVERS.  
THE DOOR THROUGH SPACE.  
THE SHATTERED CHAIN.  
JACK OF SWORDS.  
ZENYA.  
ANYWHEN.  
THE NIGHT SHAPES.  
VOR.

E.C. Tubb:

James Blish:

Michael Moorcock:  
Nigel Kneale:  
Marvel Comics:  
Kate Wilhelm:

ELRIC OF MELNIBONE.  
QUATERMASS.  
THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK.  
THE INFINITY BOX.

All the above are 3 for \$2.

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Received from Hodder & Stoughton and to be 'reviewed' next issue (and on sale now): CAGEWORLD No.1 - Search For The Sun! and CAGEWORLD No.2 - The Lost World Of Cronus by Colin Kapp. 172 pp and 170 pp each at A\$3.95.

EERRATUM: The illustration on page 7 is, of course, by Julie Vaux not Kerrie Hanlon. It seems the Roneo tried to rape the nude girl that Kerrie had sent. I suppose that it tried to tear her clothes off - and since she wasn't wearing any, the electro came apart at the seams. However:-







