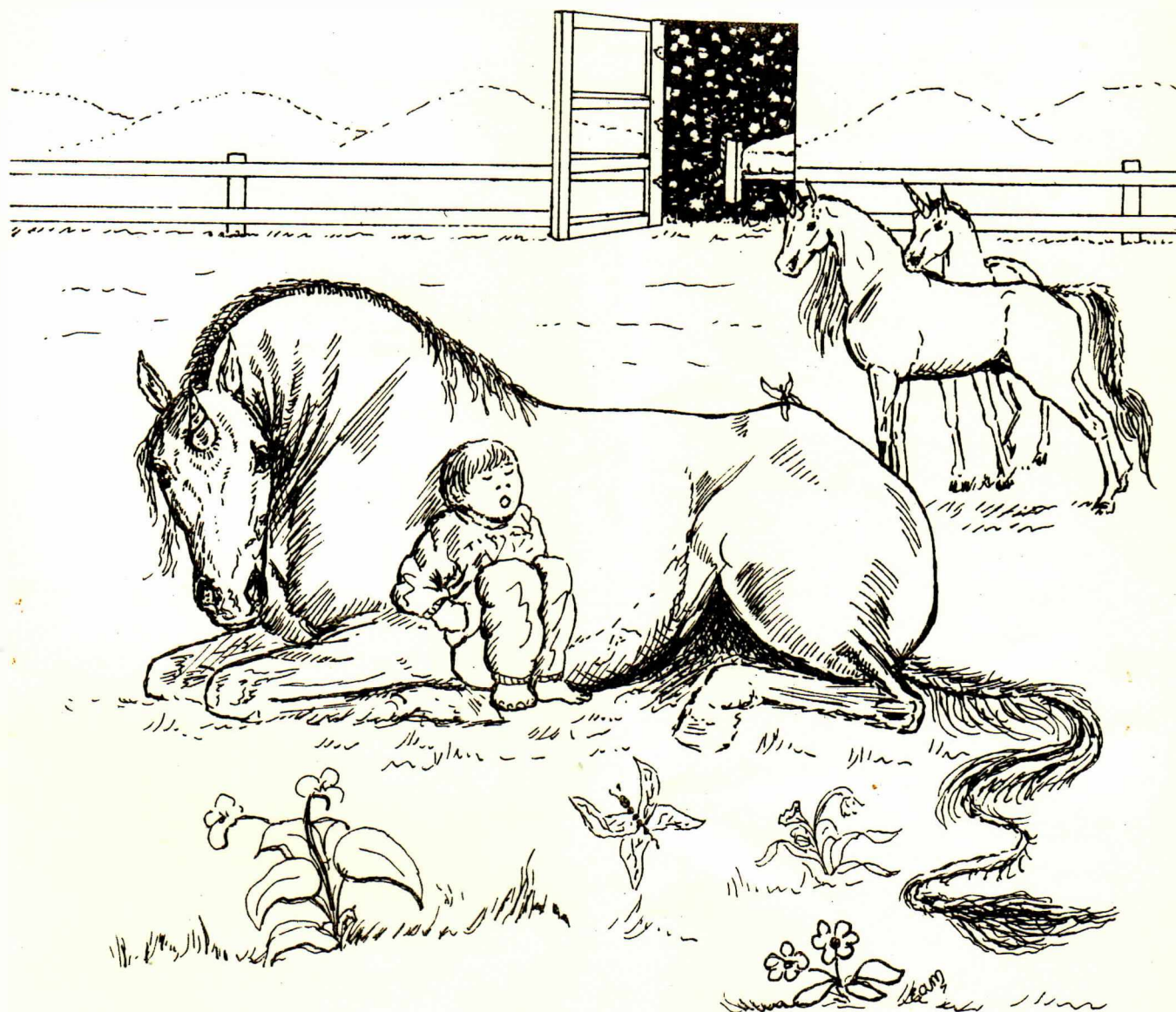


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RON'S

ROOST

Here it is the fifth of April, the last stencil (this one) is being typed and I can't think of a subject for my editorial. This time of the year in Australia winter is starting to show its breath. Over the Easter weekend we had some heavy rain (the first of the drought-breaking ones, we hope) and today there is a cold southerly blowing with forecast of snow. This is the first day of my two weeks leave for this year (my other two weeks is set for about October) and there is a lot for me to do around the house - mow the lawn, paint the woodwork, dig up the gardens (now a mass of weeds) and cover the mound so formed with plastic to kill those weeds, fix the TV aerial (the cockatoos keep on jumping up and down on the longer pieces and managed to break one off) and generally catch up on my review reading. I read going to work and coming home on the train from Sydney - a distance of 80 km one way with a time of $1\frac{1}{2}$ hours one way; with my two weeks off I'll be behind. It is hard to catch up. No sooner than I see the end of the pile than another couple of books come in. (I read the zines I get traded in my morning and afternoon tea breaks).

If you have read this editorial before reading the rest of the issue you may not have noticed that it is sercon. I would have liked a well written humorous piece to balance the other pieces, but one did not ensue. I don't want every issue to be as serious as this ish, but you can't have it all your own way in publishing.

I am also looking for good poetry - preferably that rhymes. Also, you can see that there is no fiction either. Same reason ... I am looking for well written articles with an sf flavour - no UFOs, please.

The recent past has been of event in the mundane world - the long running Liberal govt was kicked out and the man who was, up till a few years ago, the second most powerful in Australia (the President of the Australian Council of Trade Unions - the ACTU) is now the most powerful - the Prime Minister. His name, for those overseas fans - is Bob Hawke. The former Labor leader, Gough Whitlam, made the mistake of trying to change too many things too quickly after he was elected. Hawke is taking things more slowly. We shall see if he can keep his vaunted 'honesty'. - Ron.

GRIMESISH GRUMBLINGS -

TIMES AIN'T WHAT THEY WERE - BUT
WERE THEY EVER?

A BERTRAM CHANDLER

Today, February 14, is the anniversary of the introduction of decimal currency into Australia. Although I detest decimal weights and measures (although I can cope with them) I did approve the switch to dollars and cents. It is so much easier to convert a royalty cheque from the U.S.A. into \$A than into £.s.d. But I still maintain (but nobody ever listens to me) that the nautical mile, which means something, one minute of latitude, should have been made the standard, not the kilometre which, like the land mile, is one of those utterly meaningless arbitrary measurements. Celsius temperatures and millibaric atmospheric pressures I don't mind; during my years at sea, concerned with meteorology, I could switch from degrees Fahrenheit to degress Celsius, from inches to millibars, with ease.

The change to metrics is not the only Big Change that I have seen in my lifetime. There was one in the 1930s, when I was a very junior officer in the British Merchant Navy, which had all the old shellbacks frothing at the mouth, prophesying collisions, strandings and horrendous loss of life and property. After the Big Change there was no marked increase of marine casualties. Probably there was a decrease.

When I first went to sea, in 1928, the old (and utterly absurd) system of helm orders was still in force. Suppose that you were officer of the watch and wished to take avoiding action - another ship, an iceberg, a rock or whatever. Suppose you wanted to turn to starboard. You would give the order, "Hard a-port!" The man at the wheel would reply cheerfully, "Hard a-port, sir!" He would then turn the wheel to starboard. The ship's head would swing to starboard. But the tiller, actuating the rudder, would swing to port. This was a hangover from the days when ships were steered directly by tiller and not by wheel.

At last the long overdue change was made and we all survived it.

Like most people in my age group - I like to tell people, quite truthfully, that I've been under fire in both World Wars (all right, all right, in World War I I wasn't in uniform and had no means of shooting back at my disposal) -

I tend, now and again, foldly to recall the Good Old Days. A pound of prawns for 2/6 (25¢)... A Penguin paperback for 6d (5¢)... A hardcover book for 7/6 (75¢)... And so on, and so on.

But, in many ways, those were the Bad Old Days. The prudery, the God-bless-the-Squire-and-his-relations-and-keep-us-in-our-proper-stations attitude of the lower classes (in England, anyhow, if not in Australia). The banning of books for alleged obscenity, which persisted in Australia even after the Poms and the Yanks had a sudden rush of brains to the head in such matters. Do any of you remember when, in Australia, only medical students (why them, of all people?) were allowed to purchase James Joyce's Ulysses? Do you remember when Brendan Behan's Borstal Boy was nabbed in Australia and the then Prime Minister, Pig iron Bob (who was never one of my pin-up boys) said that he'd read it and that he didn't think much of it, so it could stay banned? I'd read it too (if it hadn't been banned I'd never have bothered to get a copy from England) and I didn't think much of it, but even I, in my most impossible moments, could never aspire to the mindless arrogance of the late Sir Robert Menzies.

Back to God-bless-the-Squire &c &c...

At the time of the Abdication, when Teddy VIII renounced the throne so that he could marry the woman he loved, I was having a spell of leave in England. The members of my then-family were, I suppose, either upper working class (I detest "working class" as a label; as a shipmaster I had to work for my living and as a writer I have to work for my living) or lower middle class. My maternal grandmother said, anent dear Wally, "But she's only a commoner." I said, "What the hell does it matter?" and got thrown out of the house. I'd say the same today if Randy Andy announced his intentions of marrying Koo, but I don't think that I'd get the same reaction from any in earshot.

Yes, times have changed - and, except for escalating prices, for the better. No longer are subscription copies of the American Playboy seized by Her Majesty's Customs. (At one time even Astounding, as it was then, was on the Australian Customs' black list.) No longer do writers, either in this country or overseas, either have to watch their language or see their dialogue ruined by some blue-pencil-wielding editor.

But, even now, editors can strive to maintain outdated standards of decency. A recent example was with my Kelly Country, which should be published, by Penguin, early this coming November. My narrator, an ancestral Grimes, is second mate of a tramp windjammer bound for Melbourne. He and the captain have words, during which the shipmaster calls Grimes a mother-fucker, as a result of which Grimes strikes his commanding officer, as a result of which Grimes jumps ship in Melbourne, makes his way inland, gets a job with VicRail and is among those present at the Siege of Glenrowan.

Penguin books' editor complained, among other things, about the "modern" bad language used in 1880. I replied that "mother fucker" was been a term of opprobrium ever since Oedipus, if not before. I said that the only reason why we have no record of the sort of bad language used in the 1880s is that no writer, either of fact or fiction, would have dared to put the wicked words down on paper, that no printer would have dared to publish them. I said, too, that I went to sea in 1928 and that my tender ears, in those long ago days, were often assailed by picturesque expressions that I, even today, would hesitate to use, either as a top-blowing shipmaster or as a writer. There was one in particular with a most ingenious blend of blasphemy and obscenity....

Even though I'm a broadminded agnostic I refrain from inflicting it upon you.

As a matter of fact seamen, today, are far less foul-mouthed than they were in 1928. Probably seamen in 1928 were less foul-mouthed than they were in 1880. Among my more amusing memories is a refusal of my crew to sail on a certain occasion a few years ago.

At the time I was master of a ship on the Port Huon-Sydney trade - pelletised paper pulp (referred to as rabbit droppings) from Port Huon to Sydney, back in ballast from Sydney to Port Huon. The discharging berth was in "the duck-pond", that part of Darling Harbour beyond the Pyrmont Bridge. The Pyrmont Bridge was not under the control of the Maritime Services Board but of the Department of Main Roads. Road traffic had precedence. During peak hours - morning, round about noon and later afternoon - the bridge would not be opened to permit the passage of ships. Therefore we, on the Port Huon trade, tried to adjust our arrivals and departures to suit the bridge opening times.

Well, I completed discharge about lunchtime. I arranged my sailing time - 1600 hours - and ordered tugs and linesmen. For some reason - which I still don't know - my crew were putting on a go-slow, taking their time (a most considerable time) battening hatches and stowing derricks. I knew that if I could not get through the bridge by 1700 hrs. I should have to wait until 1900 hrs., at that time of the year an after dark sailing.

I told the Chief Officer, "Try to hurry the boys up, Gordon."

He did. Among other things he called them a shower of bludgers.

The clewing up was completed nonetheless - but the crew refused to sail. Their allegation was that the wicked Chief Officer had sworn at them. By this time I hadn't a hope in hell of getting through the bridge before 1700 hrs. so amended my sailing time to 1900 hrs., informed all concerned, and sent all hands to their evening meal.

After we had fed I received the crew delegates, representing deck and engineroom ratings. They said that they would not sail unless the Chief Officer apologised for his use of bad language. I took this gentleman to one side and told him, "The word 'bludger' could just be construed as being an obscenity. It's original meaning is a man who lives on his wife's immoral earnings. I'm not ordering you to apologise. I'm asking you to apologise - and only for the use of that one word."

The apology was made and received. The delegates went down to a mass meeting in the crew's messroom and eventually returned. They had a fresh demand - for a written and signed statement and apology from the Chief Officer.

I said, "Come, come. This is too much. I was brought up never to sign anything."

One of the delegates said smarmily, "Yes, Captain. But you were brought up never to use bad language."

The other delegate was my "mud pilot", my harbour helmsman. More than once he has heard me blistering the paintwork around the bridge and wheelhouse. "What the fuck does that christless tug think he's doing?" "Tell the second mate... on an occasion when that officer, at the after end of the ship, was having trouble heaving alongside... "that he couldn't pull a soldier off his sister!" and so on and so on.

The "mud pilot", having heard me at my best/worst, collapsed in helpless laughter.

I seized the opportunity and said, "This bloody silly business has gone on too long. You've had your apology. Either you sail now or I'll put the fucking lot of you in the Log Book for disobedience to lawful commands."

(When a man is "logged" it means that he is fined, according to the scale, for whatever crime he has committed. The ultimate penalty is Instant Dismissal combined with a Bad Discharge.)

We sailed.

If I had been writing this sad but true story one hundred years ago there would have been a profusion of asterisks.

Recently I struck another example of changing social attitudes. The nudist club to which I have belonged for over twenty years recently underwent a change of ownership. During the final year or so before this change there was a drive for new memberships. The new owners are pleasant people, but just a little strait-laced, and are trying to weed out some of the new members whom they consider undesirable. One lady, with her family, was sent official notification that her membership had been cancelled.

It was one of those hot afternoons, with a shade temperature of 40°. The lady in question turned up, with all her family, to cool off in the swimming pool. The club manager ordered them off the premises. They refused to leave. He called the Police.

In the old days, not so very long ago, if any outsider, on any kind of business, came on to the club premises any members around at the time would put something on, even if only a beach towel. (I recall one occasion, a delivery of lolly water and such being made to the shop, when one poor girl was sort of trapped, away from her clothing and even her beach towel and, blushing all over, was trying to hide her tender body from the lecherous leers of the lolly-water-deliverers behind a most inadequate palm tree...)

Nobody bothered to put anything on when the Police came. We weren't embarrassed. The police officers weren't embarrassed, although they were most definitely uncomfortable. The ringleader of the trespassers insisted on being interviewed in full, blazing sunlight, ignoring the pitiful plea, "Can't we move it to the shade, madam?" And the junior constable was looking longingly at the pool, attracted even more by the clear, cool water than by the half dozen or so shapely naiads.

So times have changed - and mainly for the better.

I like to kid myself that I am the best judge of what books I read and what films I watch. Most pornography, either on the printed page or the screen, I find boring. But now nobody tells me that I mustn't read it or watch it. ((f anybody told me that I must read it or watch it - then I'd scream!)) I am not a believer in Progress-For-Its-Own-Sake - but such disbelievers are found, happily in increasing numbers, in all age groups. As a writer I enjoy the freedom to call a spade a spade - or, when the occasion demands it, a bloody shovel.

And I often wonder if the old Chinese curse - "May you live in interesting times!" - is really such a curse.

- A Bertram Chandler.

—ooOoo—

JOHN J. ALDERSON :

THE STRUCTURE OF SOCIETY

1. THE NON-DOMINATED SOCIETY.

There are two difficulties in the way of studying the non-dominated society. The first is that those obviously utopian societies are very rare, there being only one example of prominence which has developed anything like a modern state and which can exist in this modern world on its own terms. The second is that the very nature of the non-dominated society goes a long way to prevent it from being easily and neatly pigeon-holed. The reason for the latter is that in any society a decision must be made on many issues which have to be clear-cut, and as there are only the two sexes that decision must be either male or female. For example, the sex of their god.

It must be admitted though that the Aborigines, one of the main peoples we will be dealing with, settled this latter question very neatly. "...Biamee (God) had two wives; but his second wife, Birahnooloo, was not his wife for the purpose of bearing children. She was there only to make the woman's Law. God, being a man, could not do so."

There is a further difficulty in the eyes of some people. Because sexual non-dominance in a society stems from primal economic reasons, these very reasons for the society's existence must be preserved, and they are done so by rigid taboos, and these taboos are regarded by outsiders as extremely restrictive and repressive. Yet on the other hand these people regard themselves as particularly free, if not enlightened, and further these societies are usually regarded by outsiders as particularly free. It is not surprising then, that the Scots, the other people we will be dealing with, have set a high value on freedom. The Scottish War of Independence was the first war of independence, the Declaration of Arbroath with its memorable lines, "We fight not for glory, wealth, or honour, but for liberty alone which no true man will lay down but with his life", is the first declaration of national independence; and Barbour's The Brus is an epic which deals with liberty, and his paean on freedom,

"Ah! Freedom is a noble thing!
Great happiness does freedom bring.
All solace to a man it gives;
He lives at ease that freely lives." 2

is the beginn-

ing of all songs of freedom.

Whilst it may be possible for a society to exist where there are no economic taboos, in reality such a happy society does not exist. Everywhere, without such taboos, one sex begins to serve the other. Indeed, it was formerly thought that the dominated societies arose from the breaking of these taboos but this cannot

be wholly the story, indeed it appears to me that these taboos are superseded by others. It must be emphasised that taboos only exist, and can only exist for a specific reason; when that reason is removed the taboos become pointless and disappears. There exist a large number of societies where taboos have been changed or superseded by others. But the taboos which appear so irksome and repressive to outsiders are not so to the people of the society itself for they are regarded as the most natural things in the world.

The earliest, or most primitive societies, (and here I must express my dislike at the use of either of these terms as they suggest these societies are somehow inferior), are the hunting/food-gathering societies. The men hunt and the women harvest the naturally occurring food. (That even earlier societies may have existed where both men and women hunted together is suggested by very ancient rock-paintings. However, there are excellent reasons for not bringing small children on hunts for wild animals, and this alone suggests that there was an element in the tribe which either looked after the children at home or out food-gathering.. This does not effect the argument). As men are not always successful in hunting food they do have to rely on what the women bring home for their certain sustenance. The men breakfast on the remains of the food from the night before and often do not eat again until evening. That is, they do not eat of their game during the day but take it back to the camp where it is cooked and shared. This sharing of the game is according to rigidly applied rules, the man who actually does the killing apparently getting the worst cut... a custom which seems designed to cut down bragging as the braggard would be the worst fed.

It is evident from the myths of many peoples that the division of the game has been arrived at over a long period of differences. Thus Prometheus deceived Zeya on this matter with the result that men were deprived of fire as a punishment.⁴ Non-dominated societies are obviously capable of considerable growth in social justice.

To continue: the women on the other hand, when they arrive at their place of gathering, immediately light a fire and cook and eat what they have caught on their way there. They spend much of the day eating and gossiping. For even in the Gibson Desert, one of the harshest places on earth, a couple of hours are sufficient to gather the food requirements of the day.⁵ The result of this is seen in the physiology of the sexes. The men are tall, muscular and lean, the women short and plump..

But it is taboo for the women to hunt, and to make fire⁷ though they take fire-sticks with them. It is also taboo for men to fight with women.⁸ It is taboo for the men to gather shell-fish⁹ and usually for the women to fish, and the consequences of infringing a taboo can be quite drastic.¹⁰ But these taboos are not fixed and immutable. They vary from tribe to tribe and from people to people. Thus in the myth of the Djanggawul the women lose their magic bags because they broke a taboo and gathered shell-fish which was the prerogative of the men. The result was that¹¹ from then on the men did the magic and the women fed them instead of vice versa. One can see in this a very clear example of the division of labour which allows the non-dominated society to function.

But how far do taboos existing in other aspects of life directly result from this economic interdependence? Frankly we don't know, but the Christians were not the first to know that man does not live by bread alone. There is good reason to believe that interdependence and the rigid division of labour permeates their whole philosophy of life, as witness the necessity of Biamee needing Birahnooloc to make the women's Laws as mentioned above. Thus men have their religious ceremonies, but so do women. Even in quite sophisticated societies men and women

have different gods and quite different worship (Eg. the Roman men worshipped Jupiter and the women worshipped the Great Mother). But then again there are ceremonies in which both sexes participate. And in fact, although the initiation ceremonies are supposedly for men only, there are certain parts of the ceremonies in which the women play a decisive part. (The idea that women are excluded from the ceremonies entirely is quite wrong. The full cycle takes over 150 days during which the men do not leave their camp and so to fulfil their sexual needs certain women are detailed off for that purpose whilst any woman caught spying on the ceremonies is conscripted for that purpose. These women do not see all the ceremonies, but then, very few of ^{12, 13} the men do. Nor does the prohibition extend to women beyond child-bearing age.

Nor is it clear whether or not there are any real political taboos against women. Hunter/food-gatherers are usually democratic in as far as most questions are debated around the camp-fires, and it is not in the nature of women to be silent, and they voice their opinions loudly and freely. ¹⁴ As decisions are made by consensus and not by show of hands it may be considered that women have as much say as men. However, on special matters it may only be the elders who decide and their decision is a specialist one arrived at by more meditation than talk and is arrived at in private. ^{15, 16} Thus whilst most decisions relating to children are taken by the women without consultation with the men, there are matters where the elders take action. When a woman has had a sufficient number of children, (this is usually four), she is declared qorrewon (taboo) and her husband, or any other men getting her pregnant again is a dead man.

That women have their own political ideas and adhere to them is defiance of the men is certain. It is usual, when matters are settled with another tribe for some women to be taken along and exchanged (this is temporary, of course), to cement relations. However, if the women disapprove of their men's decision they put sand in their vulvas. One can only admire their fortitude in expressing their political dissent.

Amongst the Aborigines descent may be through either the male or female lines. ¹⁸ The man or woman on marriage does not really enter the other family, that is they always retain their own skin or totem. Incest is a matter of group significance. That is, they may not marry within their own totem or skin, and there is one into which they ought to marry and they should not marry into any of the others. This has very little regard for blood relationship. ^{19, 20} Totems are usually inherited, sometimes from one parent or the other, but properly (that is, in a right marriage) from both.

A considerable economic advance on the hunting/food-gathering societies is the fishing/crofting society. In this society the people have ceased to be nomadic inasmuch as they have permanent homes (though they may have several). The croft is an enlarged garden, large enough to grow cereals and run a few animals. This is mostly managed by the women. The men spend a lot of time fishing, usually in companies owning the boat in partnership. It is interesting that again the men are economically at hazard but they do provide the bulk of the income of the family. They may also do a little hunting. Both sexes may engage in bothying, that is, the young people take the livestock up onto the hills for the summer grazing. This also provides excellent opportunity for courtship and merry-making.

This form of society is at once highly democratic and essentially aristocratic. The latter is due to the clan system which is very strong. Clan is here defined as a body of people claiming common descent and bearing the same name (or an approved variety). The head of the clan is a chief and lesser heads are chieftains. Whilst the clans are people bearing a common name they are strongly

regional and the title of each chief or nobility is taken from the clan land.^{21,22} Chieftainship is open to anyone who has owned land for three generations (81 years) and those who have done so may acquire a title and armorial bearings.²³ The aristocracy is thus the recognition of the landed heads of the clan and is quite open and without class. Such societies know nothing of "commoners", they are all members of an aristocracy. It should be realised that such chiefs are legal elders and such an aristocracy is only a variant of the Aboriginal gerontocracy or rule of elders. Even the king is only "first amongst equals".

Marriage is with a different clan but the woman retains her own name and clan and the children are free to use the honours of both parents... eg to wear the kilt of the tartan of the father and the plaid of the tartan of the mother. However inheritance has crystallised so that the children automatically belong to the father's clan and take the father's surname. They were frequently brought up by an third party (fosterage). Incest is looked upon with considerable horror, and once extended not only through a wide range of blood but also of spiritual relationships.

Political leadership goes through the male line, but when wanting a direct male descendant a female may take the chieftainship²⁴ and, as when the chief is very old or very young, if the necessity arises, a "war-chief" is elected. But women with the ability have led the clan to battle and have often called the clan to arms. The chief must take the name of the clan if he does not bear it and the son of a female chief whose father bore another name would take the clan name on becoming chief though the rest of the family would (unless they elected to do otherwise) take the father's name.²⁵

The most modern type of this society is Scotland. This social fabric has been preserved and projected into a complex industrial society. The major modification has been in the aristocratic nature of the people. They have not ceased to be artisocratic, merely not to be landed so that the percentage of titled names has fallen drastically. In Prince Charles' time (1745) there were 10,000 landed families and 45,000 titled and today that number is greatly increased whilst the unofficial "lairds" are very numerous. (there are far more who for some reason have not graduated arms... it is expensive.) But the spirit lives on and at least 27% of the population claim as much royal blood as the queen, and the percentage is increasing.²⁶

To summarise; in a non-dominated society:

Their god may be of either sex.

They tend to monogamy.

On marriage neither party enters the other's family.

Inheritance may be through either line.

Marriage is easy and entails few considerations.

Incest is abhorred but has degrees of prohibition.

The Aborigines have only a vague idea of a god and the Scots have been Christian so long that there is little to be said on the matter, except that they have accepted the Hebrew idea of the "fatherhood" of God. Marriage in its basic simplicity is simply living together, but some basic social ceremonies are appreciated. Divorce is not so simple. The Scots allowed it only for adultery with the guilty parties getting fifteen years hard labour and not allowed to marry. Divorce seems unknown amongst the Aborigines, nor do they recognise adultery.^{27,28} However wife stealing carries the death penalty for both parties if they get caught.²⁹

22 It is difficult to speak with too much confidence about the non-
dominated society with only the nomadic Aborigine and the highly industrialised
Scot as our models. But they are apparently democratic from the lowest strata
up, essentially aristocratic in nature, and with a very high regard for the
individual. With a few much lauded exceptions these societies are very peaceful.
No non-dominated society has ever tried to conquer the world, or is likely to,
and herein may be something really worth studying.

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MAGNETIC PERPETUAL MOTION

BY MICHAEL HAILSTONE

Ha! I've just invented another perpetual motion machine.

All right, before you all sigh and flip over the pages, I'd like you to know that the idea is not originally mine, but Jonathan Swift's.

We're all familiar with Swift's Gulliver's Travels of course, most likely ever since childhood. As far as I'm concerned, this book deserves the label of science fiction just as much as the later classics of Mary Shelly, Jules Verne and H.G. Wells. I've been familiar with the book ever since primary school; simplified, it makes great reading for children, to whom the midgets of Lilliput and the giants of Brobdingnag especially appeal to the imagination. Trouble is though, that is probably all most folk know about the book, most likely quite ignorant of the later parts, such as the third, which tells of a voyage to Laputa, the flying island.

No doubt however the readership of this zine is familiar with the whole book, so I hope no readers are insulted if I jog their memory about Laputa, especially its astronomers, who know of the existence of two small bodies at least 150 years before they are discovered in Europe. Gulliver tells us: "They have likewise discovered the lesser Stars, or Satellites, which revolve about Mars; whereof the innermost is distant from the Center of the primary Planet exactly three of his Diameters, and the outermost five; the former revolves in the Space of ten Hours, and the latter in Twenty-one and an Half; so that the Squares of their periodical Times, are very near in the same Proportion with the Cubes of their Distance from the Center of Mars; which evidently shows them to be governed by the same Law of Gravitation, that influences the other heavenly Bodies."

The figures are not accurate; I once worked out Mars's mean therefrom as half the Earth's, whereas it is now known to be less than a ninth, and the satellites' periods are in fact 7 hours 39 minutes for Phobos and 30 hours 18 minutes for Deimos, while their distances are only 1.4 and 3.5 martian diameters respectively. But that's still a pretty good guess for a book published in 1727, just 150 years before the moons were actually discovered. And I can add here that Arthur C. Clarke likewise showed remarkable foreknowledge in his reference to "Pluto and its solitary moon" in his novel Rendezvous with Rama, first published in 1973, five years before that moon was discovered.

But let's get back to Laputa. Swift tells us how the island is held

up and driven over the kingdom which it rules:

"The flying or floating Island is exactly circular; its Diameter 7857 Yards, or about four Miles and an Half, and consequently contains ten Thousand Acres. It is three Hundred Yards thick. The Bottom, or under Surface, which appears to those who view it from below, is one even regular Plate of Adamant, shooting up to the Height of about two Hundred Yards...

"At the Center of the Island there is a Chasm about fifty Yards in Diameter, from whence the Astronomers descend into a large Dome, which is therefore called Flandona Gagnole, or the Astronomers' Cave; situated at the Depth of an Hundred Yards beneath the upper Surface of the Adamant. In this Cave are Twenty Lamps continually burning... The Place is stored with great Variety of Sextants... and other Astronomical Instruments. But the greatest Curiosity, upon which the Fate of the Island depends, is a Loadstone of a prodigious Size, in Shape resembling a Weaver's Shuttle. It is in Length six Yards, and in the thickest Part at least three Yards over. This Magnet is sustained by a very strong Axle of Adamant, passing through its Middle, upon which it plays, and is poised so exactly that the weakest Hand can turn it. It is hooped round with an hollow Cylinder of Adamant, four Foot deep, as many thick, and twelve Yards in Diameter, placed horizontally, and supported by Eight Adamantine Feet, each Six Yards high. In the Middle of the Concave Side there is a Groove Twelve inches deep, in which the Extremities of the Axle are lodged, and turned round as there is Occasion.

"This Stone cannot be moved from its Place by any Force, because the Hoop and its Feet are one continued Piece with that Body of Adamant which constitutes the Bottom of the Island.

"By Means of this Load-stone, the Island is made to rise and fall, and move from one Place to another. For, with respect to that Part of the Earth over which the Monarch presides, the Stone is endued at one of its Sides with an attractive Power, and at the other with a repulsive. Upon placing the Magnet erect with its attracting End towards the Earth, the Island descends; but when the repelling Extremity points downwards, the Island mounts directly upwards. When the Position of the Stone is oblique, the Motion of the Island is so too. For in this Magnet the Forces always act in Lines parallel to its Direction.

"By this oblique Motion the Island is conveyed to different Parts of the Monarch's Dominions. To explain the Manner of its Progress, let A B represent a Line drawn across the Dominions of Balnibarbi;...." Here follows a tedious geometrical explanation very hard to follow without a diagram, and besides, to my mind, quite needless. The way the island gets around the kingdom is adequately summed up by the last sentence in the paragraph: "And thus by changing the Situation of the Stone as often as there is Occasion, the Island is made to rise and fall by Turns in an oblique Direction; and by those alternate Risings and Fallings (the Obliquity being not considerable) is conveyed from one Part of the Dominions to the other.

"But it must be observed, that this Island cannot move beyond the Extent of the Dominions below; nor can it rise above the Height of four Miles. For which the Astronomers (who have written large Systems concerning the Stone) assign the following Reason: That the Magnetick Virtue does not extend beyond the Distance of four Miles, and that the Mineral which acts upon the Stone in the Bowels of the Earth, and in the Sea about six Leagues distant from the Shoar, is not diffused through the whole Globe, but terminated with the Limits of the King's dominions....

"When the Stone is but parallel to the Plane of the Horizon, the Island standeth still; for in that Case, the Extremities of it being at equal Distance from the Earth, act with equal Force, the one in drawing downwards, the other in pushing upwards, and consequently no Motion can ensue."

The next paragraph contains the abovequoted famous reference to the martian moons, then Swift goes on to tell us how the king may use his island to put down any uprisings on the mainland below. The last terrible resort is crushing a city to rubble, but this is a risky business: "And the King, when he is highest provoked, and most determined to press a City to Rubbish, orders the Island to descend with great Gentleness, out of a Pretence of Tenderness to his People, but indeed for fear of braking the Adamantine Bottom; in which Case it is the Opinion of all their Philosophers, that the Load-stone could no longer hold it up, and the whole Mass would fall to the Ground."

As it stands, Swift's Laputa is scientifically impossible. Although aware of the law of gravity, he strangely ignores it in his explanation of how the island is driven. With just the one magnet, how on earth could one regulate the rate of descent? (Even if the "Adamant" were something like Cavorite, impervious to gravity.) Yet he has basically a sound idea; with a few improvements his flying island seems at least theoretically possible. For a start, an island of the size he gives would weigh untold millions of tons, so it would take more than one lodestone, even one as hefty as he describes in as strong a magnetic field as one can imagine, furthermore, such a set would be very unstable, unless one took care to have the centre of magnetism above the centre of gravity; this is akin to stability in a ship, wherein the centre of buoyancy must lie above the centre of gravity. So, instead of Swift's single lodestone, we can have dozens of strong permanent bar magnets a little below the upper surface of the island, held in place by the strong adamantine frame, and a fair weight in the adamantine bottom, to keep stability, and a large open cavity between the magnets and the ballast to give a good moment, hence good stability. Besides the magnets needed just to support the island's weight, one could need also driving magnets, that could be mounted and swivelled as he describes, but by no means could the weakest hand rotate such magnets vertically, (nor could the strongest by far) for the forces involved would be enormous. (Remember we're dealing with a magnetic field holding up a mass in the millions of tons.) So very high gearing would be needed to turn such magnets, but that's just an engineering problem. With the driving magnets pointing the right way, the island could gad about the kingdom horizontally, without the need of alternate risings and fallings, once one had struck the right balance between the island's weight and the collective upward force of all the magnets.

Alas, since Swift's time the Earth has been thoroughly explored, and we now know there is no such land as Balnibarbi in the north Pacific, nor any region with a powerful vertical magnetic field. But we modern science fiction writers can easily dream up an alien planet orbiting Alpha Centauri or Tau Ceti or any other star you like, with either just that - an enormous magnet buried under some region, or otherwise a planetary magnetic field thousands of times stronger than Earth's, with the island flying over one of the magnetic poles. And here a most odd and interesting thought comes to mind. While it would probably take a lot of energy just to turn some of the magnets to make the island rise or fall, it could fly around and around horizontally for very little energy expenditure. In fact, one need only steer the island, either with a huge rudder, or by swivelling the driving magnets horizontally, which would be much easier than swivelling them vertically, to keep it within the bounds of the vertical magnetic field. Since the island would need to overcome air resistance to move about in an atmosphere,

it would be doing work. (On an airless planet it would steadily pick up speed, until it was moving so fast as to shoot out of the magnetic region and crash to the ground beyond.) If it's doing work, it must be getting energy from somewhere, but where?

One can get energy seemingly out of nowhere from gravity. For instance, scientists in the nineteenth century tried to explain that as the Sun's energy source, aware that ordinary chemical burning couldn't keep it going for more than a few thousand years, and knowing nothing of nuclear fusion. The Sun's diameter would need to shrink only a few kilometres a year to keep putting out heat at the present rate, though the Sun could not have been doing this for more than thirty million years. But you still don't get something for nothing: the Sun steadily shrinks. With Swift's Laputa, on the other hand, nothing changes; the island gads about the place for free.

A flying island is a rather ambitious engineering feat, and it is quite unlikely that we'll ever find a planet with a strong enough magnetic field to hold one up. But the same principle could be used in a far more modest and feasible machine. Take one massive permanent bar magnet, stand it on one end (or any way you like). Stick a vertical axle in the centre of the upper end; on the axle mount a disk, from which suspend a few small bar magnets mounted obliquely, so that all have the same pole at the lower end. Behold, there should be on each magnet a horizontal force component which turns the disk, which must do work to overcome air resistance and friction, hence can drive a pump, a record turntable, a helicopter rotor, or anything you like. Limited only by eventual wear and tear, your rotor will keep spinning forever, for free. Hence a perpetual motion machine which gets something for nothing.

Thus, with one blow all our environmental and energy problems are solved. No more dirty coal, no more ozone, carbon monoxide or carbon dioxide or greenhouse effect, no more nuclear waste, and no more need for dams to flood the Tasmanian wilderness. There will be peace on Earth and goodwill to all men and no more war and all that jazz. Too good to be true?

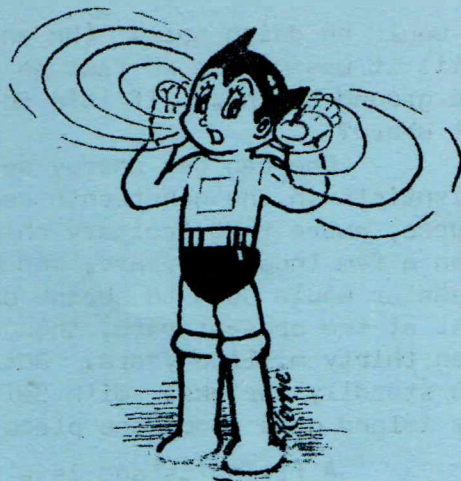
There must be something wrong with this, some snag that won't let it work. It violates the holy energy conservation law, which says that "there ain't such thing as a free lunch." Hence it can't work. But why?

If anybody is resourceful and practical enough to build such a device, or knows enough physics to tell me why it won't work, please come forth.

- Michael Hails one.

—oo0oo—

The R. E R. Dept.



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UK.

Mentor cover...nice, and far better than those doe eyed females which seem to haunt so many aussie fmz these days... yes, I note one in The Mentor.

Re your comments on the perfect fanzine. Whilst agreeing almost entirely with what you say, there are a couple of points of quibble... namely that offset is lightyears ahead of mimeo. It may be for typing, but for artwork, there's not much to choose when reproducing a pen and ink line drawing. Minor quibble there, because you're right for most offset work anyway. My real quibble is: "A few die hards who would rather use mimeo, and who will most likely die out in 8 or 10 years". Well, you could well be right in my case about the dying out. I'm 60 now (and rapidly approaching the age when I shall be too old to visit Australia even if I do win the pools) but as for being a mimeo die-hard... I'm afraid I've costed the process, and for local prices and a run of about 150 copies ERG would cost at least double what I pay now. I would gladly use offset if it could compete price wise with mimeo. Until then, I have to stay with mimeo. Admittedly, there is a further incentive to stay with mimeo - size. ERG is now 24 years old, and for all that time has been quarto sized mimeo. Imagine what a mess that would make to my back files if I changed size and format now.

Actually, Terry, I find the opposite. I find that offset gives better reproduction and clarity to thin-line artwork than mimeo, mainly because the paper does now allow the ink to diffuse as in mimeo. In fact I consider that my typing is as good as offset, except that there is always the problem of showthrough with headings and illos with mimeo. Offset typing is clearer than mimeo, but first class mimeo typing does take some beating ease wise, as Jean Weber has noted. - Ron.]

Chandler's Chuntering on food in the US was ok, but he obviously ate in higher class places than patronised by Val and I on our two trips over there (East coast in 1980, West coast in '82). Apart from the very occasional meal, we tended to fast food eateries, or standard eateries - Brighams, Sambo's, McDonalds and the like. However, we did have a steak dinner in the old Western town of Rawhide, an 'English' dinner in San Francisco, and a lovely fish meal in Monterey; apart from quick meals in Las Vegas, Grand Canyon, Yosemite, etc.

Like your policy of doing cover repros alongside the book reviews. It doesn't do anything for the review - but does a heap for the presentation. I hope you can keep this one operating. Also liked the nice hefty review

column. I agree with Jean Weber on Con programming. In my estimation the UK con programming has declined steadily in recent years into a standard format of panel.. talk.. obscure fill.. panel.. talk.. talk..panel. Before I get labelled a reactionary fuddy duddy, I hasten to mention just a few of the sort of item we used to have in the "good old days": the Liverpool Group tapes such as March of Slime; Delta Film contest for amateur films; free fan huckster tables ranged around both sides of a con hall for fen to bring and sell AND still see the programme. This Is Your Life presented by Eric Bentcliffe, the Knights Of St Fantasy ceremony; 20 Fannish Questions; Fan competitions, fan participation items, etc etc. And if further argument is needed - I dug out my old con programmes (which go back to 1950) and compared them with those of cons during the last ten years.

Raymond L Clancy
494 Midland Ave.,
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New York 10306,
U.S.A.

The Mentor 40 artwork would have impressed the New Stone Age artists of the European cave paintings. It is worthy of great praise.

Can John Alderson tell us whether anyone has made the experiments which might demonstrate his correctness? There is a high location near Tibet. A woman there owns a cow whose manure provides her with fuel. As the earth does not get it back, the mountain sheep have little pasture, and as they are few the wolves and snow leopards are fewer.

The letters you select are a tribute to your editorial ability. I pay far more attention to them than I do to the statements and speeches of some national and international figures. I try desperately to get something from the latter, but their words are so divorced from reality that I am not strong enough to keep my attention from wandering.

Prostitution in these parts is brutal, murderous exploitation. All the money received goes to their masters.

Julie Vaux
14 Zara St.,
Willoughby,
NSW 2068

I liked your strong editorial for October, and wonder what you may have thought of my published excerpts from letters in Q36's last issue. When does a reader start being a fan? Would be a good subject for an editorial.

Diane's short story was really good, a nice turn of the blade type of story. That last sentence excellent indeed. John's article on the cow as the best domestic animal - what about the faithful dachshund? High intelligence, tough little fighter, small size, easy to house train. An emotional support for the lonely colonist?

Oh, you can add a new Sydney shop to your list: remember that Steve now has a new shop in town - Comic Kingdom, on the corner of Liverpool and Elizabeth Streets, Sydney.

I hope that elf sketch brings some other EQ fans out of hiding. I can only think of four Sydney EQ fans. Are there any other Australian or N.Z. EQ fans? If there are they are invited to correspond with me.

I liked the front cover mermaid on the December issue, and loved the comparison of mimeo users to dinosaurs.

For the benefit of Richard Faulder and other biologists out there I'd like to state that as biology is one of the sciences

I read up on extensively and as an artist who knows anatomy - yes I am aware of the problem of spines. Let me assure you all that Altamirran spines are not constructed on the same principle as Terran vertebrae spines, due to higher gravity. Also that when in motion they and the other six-limbed creatures on Altamirra generally lean forwards so that the two torsos (in the case of the centaurs and the pixie-lope critters) form two interlocking aerofoils. The mammaries are slightly lower down than is the case with primate females, for when children are being fed, weight is shifted to the "arms" and the "middle" limbs (front legs), leaving the rear legs free for kicking any predators; although, as the fems with youngj generally travel in herds there is always a guard watching with spear or bow and arrow. Few animals or other sentients on Altamirra would attack an adult centaur or centaress any way. They are 4 foot at the hip, $6\frac{1}{2}$ when standing, and have massive hoof/pods under those fringed legs which often have metal inlays with lovely sharp edges. Say no more. (In designing my Altamirran centaures I have taken the fact they live on a higher gravity planet into account. The upper torso is mainly lungs and reproductive organs. Their usual running posture is one in which the upper torso is inclined at a 120° angle to the main torso. I like to think they are both biologically possible and aesthetically attractive).

What's this 'knock Richard Faulder' campaign doing in the letter section?



The point that he meant in criticising the anatomy of Kerrie's centaress was not an aesthetic one but merely a biological one. After all, he is a trained biologist and willing suspension of disbelief is going to be a lot easier if a creature is based on the laws of nature (which is why my cat people have those fringes and curls around the face. I figure that any creature with a mane is going to have the longest part of the mane at the back of the head.)

I quote Michael Hailstone: "And what's the point of this rave anyway". He certainly researched his figures and facts well, but the conclusions, deductions, speculations... where are they? Some opinions on why Mars and Venus are this way would have added interest to his article.

I liked Jason Cooper's story. Nice, interesting, good. Just a black pepper trace of melancholy for spice.

While John Alderson's article seems interesting, judging from the first installment, I got the feeling when I'd read it that I'm reading a simplified anthropological thesis, shortened and condensed for the benefit of those contentious creatures known as fans. Let us sit back and watch some people disagree with everything he says just because it is Johnr. writing.

Jean Weber
c/- CSIRO,
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Wentworth Bldg.,
Uni Sydney 2006.

Two omissions in your Australian fanzine list for 1982 spring immediately to mind: Peter Toluzzi's The Peter Principle 2 and Eric Lindsay's Gegenschien 42 (?I'm not sure of the number). I don't know how widely Peter distributed his in Australia, but I do know that most of Eric's went overseas, or through one of the Australian apas. Still, they contribute

to the domination of the fanzine scene by New South Wales/ACT!

/I did not receive
TPP 2, though, yes, No.1 came out in January, 1982. The last Geg I have down is No. 41, in 7/81.. though I seem to remember.... By the way, I count zines received in 1982 as being published then - sometimes it can be months before a zine is actually posted. - Ron./

Michael Hailstone's article, though good, didn't fulfill one of my criteria for a "good" fanzine article: to be comment-provoking. With the exception of his last two paragraphs! As I happen to agree with his statements, I have little to say. Michael will probably be surprised to read that I do agree, since this is a somewhat unusual occurrence.

John Alderson, on the other hand, can usually be relied upon to make some stirring comments. This time, however, he's not done so to the extent of his other recent writings, but then I note it's only the first installment of a longer article. His comments to Judith fall into the "yawn" category: I've heard it all before.

At first reading it seems as if Buck Coulson is suggesting that I'd be happier "if we had refrained from learning", but on the third reading I realised he meant I'd be "happier" if I'd never been born, or if I were no longer alive (a reference to my statement elsewhere that "we'd all be better off dead", I assume. I wonder how many other readers got a little lost in the transitions in the paragraph? It could be, of course, that he was referring to my frequently made statements that I avoid listening to the news, or avoid "reality" whenever possible (the latter statement just a trifle tongue-in-cheek, as any reader of my fanzine would know). I do, however, deliberately limit those areas of "knowledge" that I choose to expend my energy on. For example, the sporting world holds almost no interest for me, nor does music and most other "cultural" stuff. Scientific study, on the other hand, I am interested in, but I don't attempt to keep up to date in such mere than a very small subsample thereof. I'm also interested in sociology, psychology, appropriate technology, the space program, and a raft of other things, and support the pursuit of learning in almost any field. What I can't abide is some aspects of politics, including - but not limited to - the endless speculations over what might happen if such-and-such is or is not done. (There are a few limited exceptions.) I prefer to read in a weekly newsmagazine what did happen (and the occasional analysis and background article), but not all that crap about what might happen. Especially in areas about which I feel I can do nothing at all, whatever my opinion might be. Under the Australian system of parliamentary government, one doesn't even have the illusion of one's opinions having any impact on policies: one votes, in effect, for a party rather than a representative.

Gee, you review a lot of books! Do you actually read them all?

/Mostly. Though now I'm only a month behind at the time of writing this. By the end of this I may have caught up! - Ron./

Andy Andruschak
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CA 91011,
U.S.A.

Having received The Mentor 41 today, 5 Feb, I was very interested in your comments on The Perfect Fanzine. My own opinion is that you dismissed photo-copying - or Xerox, or even "zerrox" like you used - too fast. In fact, I am willing to predict that sometime within the next ten years, a home photo-copier will be made available that will be economically competitive with mimeo and offset. It will

be made in Japan, by the way.

One outstanding advantage of the photocopier is simplicity. No need for expensive plates, no fuss or muss. Slap down the sheet and copy. The obvious disadvantage is cost. But given the Japanese drive to produce articles of use in new areas not thought of, a home photo-copier is almost inevitable. A copier that is cheaper than offset, and easier than mimeo. It will sweep the market.

Ten years. I predict it will happen in less than ten years.

Michael Hailstone
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Woden,
ACT 2606.

John Alderson's arguments for a tipping Earth show up a lot of confusion on his part. Most ironically he quotes Wegener to support him, evidently unaware, for one thing, that the supposed pole-wandering took place on a much longer time scale than the Pleistocene glacial epochs. Whereas the latter happened over the last 100,000 years or so, ending about 12,000 years ago, the former took place over a period from 50 to 500 million years! Furthermore, Wegener was the original champion of continental drift, which has nothing to do with the Earth tipping about. Until fairly recently continental drift was unpalatable to many scientists such as Fred Hoyle, (who couldn't imagine "how a continent, some 35 kilometres thick, could contrive to move," in his 1957 book Frontiers of astronomy, wherein he suggested that future wars might be fought by building bigger and better pumps, to create vast inland seas or whatever to tip the Earth over so as to plunge one's foes into the Arctic or somewhere likewise unpleasant). And as for suggesting that "the tilting hinged on the South Pole", he must be joking. Just in case he's not, let me point out that any body freely spinning in space must spin about an axis through the centre of mass, so, if the South Pole lies in the centre of Antarctica, there can then be only one North Pole, that diametrically opposite. (Or is John now going to suggest that the Earth's centre of mass shifted to one side? Please spare us that!)

At the risk of sounding presumptuous, I feel that scientists like Menzel, who insist on the froward theory that greater heat from the Sun would bring ab out a colder climate on Earth, must live in Europe or North America and be quite unaware of what happened elsewhere during the ice-ages. Sure, six million square miles of extra ice in the northern hemisphere would significantly raise the Earth's albedo and thus cool it, but by how much? Enough to drop mean temperatures by 10°C even the the antipodes, as evicence shows at such sites as Lake George and the Snowy Mountains? (Even though icefields covered a total of only a few thousand square miles in Australia, and even then confined io the Snowy Mountains, and the highlands of New Guinea and Tasmania.) Then John seizes on theories of "the tilting of the poles" to support his argument, but that's not the same thing. What the scientists have said is that perturbations by the Moon and other planets cause the inclination of the Earth's axis to nod over thousands of years, so that sometimes the Earth is more upright than at present, (that is, tilted at less than the present 23½ degrees,) sometimes more tilted, but the poles over the last million years have been pretty well much where they are now. (You might have noticed that I mentioned much the same thing put forward for Mars in my article Of Earthly and Martian Physics.)

I'm supposed to understand John's scepticism about the mathematical possibility of ice ages, because he's puzzled over the lack of icefields in Siberia. There's no mystery about that; Siberia might be bloody cold, but it's also very dry, so that what little snow falls over the long winter, melts off during the short cool summer,

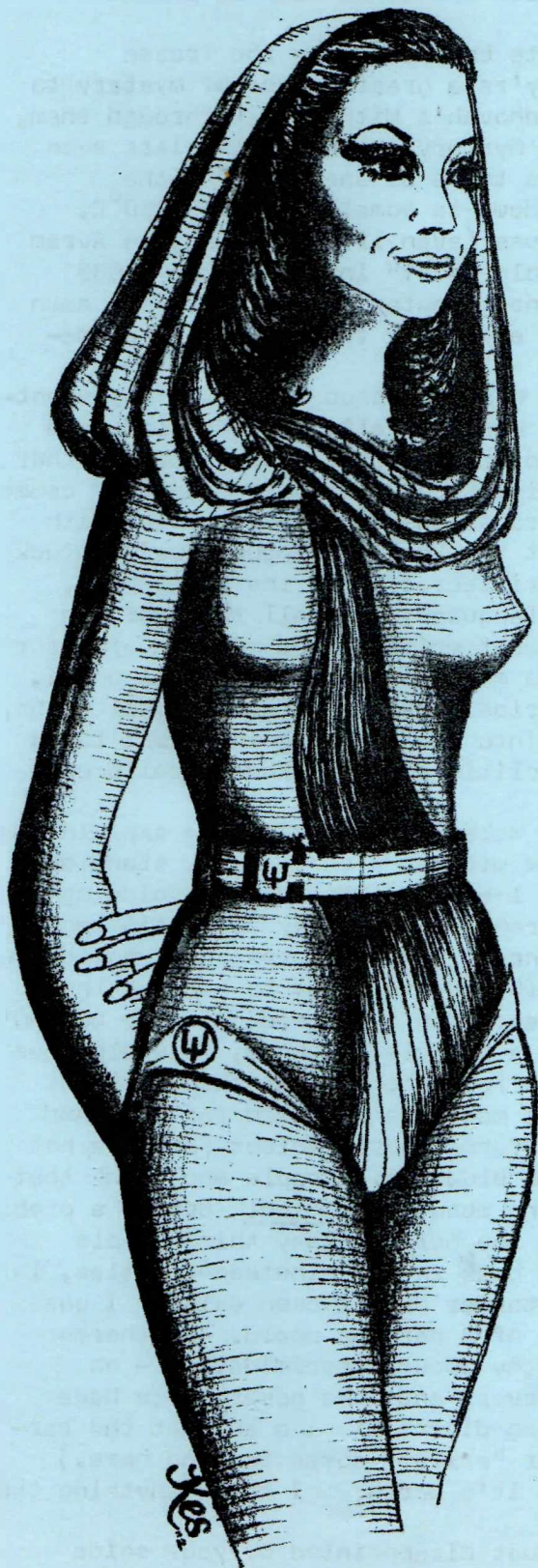
so that no ice can build up. North America and Europe, on the other hand, are both much wetter and snowier. And I'd like to know how tidal waves, however enormous, could suddenly snap freeze to become ice-sheets as much as a mile thick.

Scientists and cranks alike have been quite bewildered by the frozen mammoths, quite at a loss to explain them. They're a great source of mystery to end-of-the-world religious sects, such as the Jehovah's Witnesses, (through them, I must own, I first learnt of the Great Mammoth Mystery). Some scientists even went so far as to calculate, that for the beasts to be so snap-frozen, the temperature would need to dive impossibly low, down to something like -160°C . However the most plausible theory I've come across (even if unexciting) is Avram Davidson's rave "What gave all those mammoths cold feet?" in the January 1983 Amazing. He thinks that no catastrophe happened greater than what befell each individual mammoth; they simply fell down holes and died, trapped in the permafrost.

I'm afraid that Richard Faulder has quite misunderstood me about "unconventional usage". I wasn't talking about "naughty" words at all. As I feel I made my point quite adequately in my last letter, I'd rather not labour it any further and would rather just drop the subject, but I will throw in here a couple of comments. For one thing, I'm glad that John Alderson describes the English as a race with a foreign aristocracy, (Norman), it follows that the English language we're stuck with now is a legacy of that selfsame foreign aristocracy. On the other hand, Peter Kells disappoints me with his use of the language; for all the scorn he shows for machines, he sometimes talks (or at least writes) like one himself, for example, where he says that any story starring a machine is bound to pall on "...readers born post 1945." I wish I could describe that as unconventional usage, but unhappily, as much such ugliness has crept into the language in recent times under the merciless onslaught of journalists, politicians and others spellbound or brainwashed by technological thought.

So Jean Weber would like me to explain what I mean about not being allowed to live on a farm without a car. Okay, stand out of the way of the blast. No, there is no state law or council rule forbidding carless folk to live on farms. My remark was prompted by a very disappointing experience last year, when, faced with homelessness, I got interested in moving onto a farm out near the Mills Cross with certain folk who misled me to believe they were enlightened. That they were not became clear when it turned out they wouldn't have me because I have no car, although I do own a bicycle. I know, it would have been rather hard living there, eleven kilometers from the nearest shops without a car, but I bitterly resent others presuming to make the decision for me. And that is not a unique case. I've heard of other farms where carless folk are not allowed to live, for fear that they might become bludgers. People who think that way - well, quite apart from the evil of worrying about what might become a problem - clearly lack any historical perspective. How the hell do they think people managed before widespread affluence, like, say, back in the nineteen-twenties, let alone before this century, when the almighty motorcar didn't even exist? I guess they must be quite incapable of even conceiving of a carless world. Furthermore, we live now in a world that has become very touchy about discrimination - on grounds of race, sex, creed, class, age, or whatever, and some governments have passed laws against such, but now about outlawing discrimination against the carless? (I'm afraid no neat word like "racism" or "sexism" comes to mind here.) No, the bloody private car is more trouble than it's worth; I think anything that puts barriers between people is evil.

Ron, I'm most disappointed by your snide remarks about the Franklin (but then I do seem to go on making the mistake of over-



estimating others' awareness). You show a mentality on a level of the trendy bandwagon of the early seventies, when "pollution" was the magic word that turned everyone on. I've been labouring under the delusion that we'd all grown up a bit since then and could see that there is a lot more to "environmental impact" (for want of a better phrase) than mere "pollution". I mean, it's not just "conservationsists" who want the Franklin saved; it's also of interest to archaeologists, scientists and so on. No coal-fired station could destroy so much wilderness.

Actually, the business of the Franklin points up what is happening in our society - the worse aspects. It is a matter of the states versus central government and is basic to our idea of Federation. The Franklin is just a symptom, and if the state looses against the federal government, say if there is a state referendum and the vote is for the dam, and the Commonwealth steps in and forces them (one way or another) to stop it, then it is so much for the worst, no matter if what you say is true or not. - Ron./

Richard Faulder
C/- Dept Agric.
Yanco,
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Aha! You couldn't find Yanco, eh? Try at about the same longitude as Crux, and slightly south of The Cygnus Chronicler. Actually, I was a little disppointed with your review of the last fanancial year. Not so much because of the actual round-up of publications, which by and large was fair enough, but in the failure to attempt to extract and extrapolate any trends. Couple of things I did find curious, though. The Allan Bray publication which you referred to is his ANZAPazine. To my mind Western Australian fanzines do not have a "tradition of ultra-fannishness". Stephen Dedman's pulbication is a fairly standard sort of ganzine, which may only appear ultra-fannish because it draws on a fairly insular circle of writers. To my mind

one of the notable features of the last year has been the demise of the W.A. surreazines, with the Mapson publication apparently being the last to go. These weren't so much fannish, as resembling the fanzine issues of New Worlds. The other thing is your intimation that none of the faneds that you cites, other than Leigh Edmonds and yourself, were publishing before 1981. While some of the other faneds were using different titles before this time, the following were publishing (in other than apas) before 1981: Jean Weber, Neville Angove, Marc Ortlieb, Stephen Dedman, Seth Lockwood, Van Ikin and me.

[A year is a little short to find trends. If you want to look for them, see the stats in The Mentor 26, in which I go back to 1964 with total issues of all fanines published in Australia. I don't intend to do that sort of thing except about every seven or eight years - the next one being due about 1987/8. - Ron.]

Michael Hailstone only succeeded in showing that nobody's position on the subject of the greenhouse effect has any particular reliability.

D. Jason Cooper didn't really manage to reach me with his story. His presentation was too low-key. Although a bare, unemotional description of horrors can sometimes be very effective, that approach usually needs some time to build up the right mood, which this piece didn't have. If one had any sense of the charactor at all, it was of a person who was such a non-entity that the reader was unable to empathise with him.

John Alderson's statements on the structure of society by and large struck me as reasonable, although I am sure that someone raised in a different sociological school can, and will, tear them to shreds. However, his comments about vertical and horizontal divisions of society somehow didn't ring quite true. It seemed to me that any division of society recognised by a sociologist is basically generated for his convenience in analysing that society in some way, and that no such division is really more or less "natural" (in the taxonomic sense) than any other. If one takes the view that one system is more natural than any other, then I can quite easily see a person who takes this position could find himself drawing erroneous conclusions about the functioning of human society.

Part of the disagreement between Alderson and his critics seems to lie in their uncompromising use of terms. John states that "all myths are historical records...", which is a position that he should have stated clearly at the outset, and thereafter used the term "oral history", which would have included myths, legends, and so on. Although she does not actually say so, to my recollection, I would presume that Judith Hanna would believe that Myths, rather than reflecting actual historical events, are more in the nature of a reflection of some underlying factors in the human psyche, perhaps even the archetypes of Jung, being given expression through the imagination.

Steve Sneyd's poetry lacked even imagery this time around and Bert Chandler failed to touch a chord in me. Uhh, Mike, just because women aren't amazons doesn't mean they have to be shrinking violets.

John Alderson is right in saying that lactation in and of itself is not contraceptive. The important thing is the frequency of suckling. As the young animal grows and weans itself, or is weaned, the frequency of suckling gradually drops off, until it reaches that critical point where the contraceptive effect is no longer operative, and the mother begins to ovulate again. While it is certainly true that women are not continuously fertile, the time during which they are fertile is rarely as predictable as in the cases of most domestic animals, which exhibit a clear time of oestrus. The idea of restraint during the period

of a woman's fertility is very popular with the men who make up the heirarchy of the Roman Catholic Church - presumably because it is so unreliable.

The idea of the earth's axis of rotation changing strikes me as unlikely. However, rather than writing off the idea out of hand, I would point out that if it is going to do so, the 'hinge-point' if you will, will be at the centre of the planet, otherwise the globe is going to be flung all over space, rather in the manner of a spinning toy top which has run down and wobbles violently in all directions. The difficulty with determining the past position of the Earth's axis is the past from geological evidence is that we don't know the movements of the continents in sufficient detail to make unambiguous interpolations.

Sorry, Peter Kells. I've commented elsewhere as the method I prefer for population reduction, but obviously not in your sight. Legislative restriction on breeding to less than the number of children required for replacement and/or regular moratoria on any breeding (to allow for the input of new individuals into the population when the moratoria are not in force, to prevent the age-distribution within the society from becoming too skewed) should allow for a gradual, evolutionary retreat from world over-population.

Taking exception to my use of the term "bio-engineering" is merely being picky. I could have said "biophysics", but this term tends to be used at the level of the organ or below, whereas "bioengineering" tends to be used to refer to the interaction of organs. There were no Faulders, in the derogatory sense that you use the name, in 1790. If there had been, they would have pointed out that the morphology of the platypus is functionally integrated, so that the creature, whatever its ancestors, should be accepted. A platypus is certainly not "different for the sake of being different". Rather, it is different because those differences make it well-suited for the life it leads in the environment in which it lives.

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Your "Year in Review" was interesting if incomplete (my own A Year of debris and democracy was published in December of 1982), and shows that the fanscene is not dead, though probably badly in need of life support equipment. I liked the image of FW 7 & 8 being "released" rather than "published". Esoteric? You haven't seen anything yet...

I kept comparing 'The Message' to Dick's 'The Penultimate Truth' and 'The Mold of Yancy'. It wasn't a particularly favorable comparison either; the story makes a nice synopsis for the story that should have been written, where we were allowed to feel the characters emotions. In the present version we might as well have one of Dick's androids giving us the story in a droll recital of no meaning. Abattoir five... hmm, Kurt Vonnegut perhaps. Another unfavourable comparison.

While I was still using computers (I've progressed far beyond such quaint devices by now, of course) I wrote various programmes to write poetry (nothing new really, though some of the later programmes were quite complex) and I used to come up with the sort of stuff Sneyd writes: "scaloped as tournament", for instance. Not to denigrate his poetry though: there is a force at work through his green fuse (so to speak) which seems to get out of hand at times

Richard Faulder's arguments and definitions for literature are idiosyncratic. In his "democratic, non-elitist terms" classical literature is still, by (dictionary) definition, "of the highest class, of lasting interest or significance, a creation or work considered as definitive". Mills & Boon, and the ilk,

are simply of lasting interest to students studying popular literature, but they hardly satisfy any of the other criteria above.

As soon as we are born we are "launched into the unknown...the universe... a puzzle to be solved" for all of us. We all, therefore, have the appropriate background knowledge for understanding classical literature. Kafka, Conrad, de Saint-Exupery, Wolfe, Aldiss, Goethe, Chekhov, Sartre, Mann, Lorca, Milne, Housman, Wells, etc are a few of many examples of authors who explore human experience; in fact, all authors may be said to explore human experience to lesser or greater extent, even Camus and Hardy. What makes a novel a true classic will, however, always remain intangible) otherwise every author would be churning out "The Brothers Karamazov" every day) but what makes a novel a hackwork, or 'pop', or trash, or whatever term you give it, is easier to define (though even here mistakes have occasionally been made) as that which lacks a true empathic correspondence with the soul (or its equivalent in your set or world-values) and its godhood (or transcendental state in your set or world-values).

James Styles
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I've been curious about what Lone Harper is "high" on. Surely such a delicate being would suffer bruised lungs from smoking grass or the like. She definitely exhibits signs of the hard drug addict, being obviously undernourished and wandering around on her lonesome. I'm sure Julie Vaux would offer

other explanations.

Meanwhile Mike McGann's Space Maiden doesn't seem that threatened by the Space Nastie. She appears to have the potential to deal with the many tentacled bestie. I'm trying to avoid the Freudian aspects of Mike's work but can't resist pointing out the obvious - space rocket in background, leading crevice in ground, shiny blaster gun held in firm grip of spaceboy, and in the groping tentacles of the threatening alien. Likewise the Freudian connotations of Peter Lempert's illo on page 30. Or is the horned furry fella laughing at us on Peter's behalf?

It's a relief to get back to Kerrie Hanlon's straight forward no nonsense depictive episodes on pages 15 and 20 (though I can't stop myself mentioning that the scantily clad woman being pursued by the apeman is one of the dream sequences that psychiatrists feel comfortable in explaining). To me the outstanding features of the woman on page 20 are her breasts and her eyes, primarily because of the dilated or unusually large pupils. I'm wondering whether Kerrie was trying for an alien or foreign effect or simply drawing what came naturally? To finish my comments of The Mentor 42's artwork - Peter Lempert's back cover seems a little fishy.

The R & R Rept takes up much of this ish and I would like to comment on some of the comments therein.

There seems to be a nervous complexity at the way that many fans and related pseudo intellectuals discuss and consider what really is a basically simple item. Other uses aside, Mother Nature has designed women primarily for the task of bearing and raising children. Nature has also cleverly ensured that the male of the species is in cahoots with the female in successfully completing this function. Lately many people are trying to buck the system and the world is messing up (not that I'm suggesting anyone should be pessimistic concerning the situation. The people have done this before and will do it again, as history, mythology and John Alderson would demonstrate...). So we have the design model that eventually breaks down and dies (hopefully achieving its purpose before death, and thus reaching nirvana after death). That the design is faulty

cannot be judged unless we know the designer's specifications. Thus basically, if one believes in God's blueprint for Life, the Universe and Everything; one can believe in anything.

Which brings me back to the inherent wrongness of artificially bypassing or preventing the designers intents. Firstly, Jean Weber's letter. To argue that artificial contraception is justified on the basis that natural pregnancy is far more hazardous, "statistically" (these I'd like to see!), to a woman's health - holds little blood with me. People only live to die in any case.

Health only concerns the parameters, bordering our field of endeavour, or the limits to which our physical body will permit achievement and the successful accumulation of achieved aims and goals.

Condoms prevent natural function and can be considered morally wrong, as well as being icky little things to dispose of. Do we have the right to judge that the poor little sperm should not be allowed to reach their aims and achieve their purpose? Surely this is more disgusting than eating fish food (ie dolphin) or kicking niggers on the buttock. Unless one feels that killing is acceptable and should be encouraged to certain limits?

I can think of a better method for reducing the spread of venereal disease. Reproduce with one, natural partner. Unfortunately, our "advanced" education and intelligent residents don't encourage this attitude. People just aren't clever enough to choose the right life-long partner. So, in intellectual pretension they sit around wanking themselves (or whatever some sexes may get up to), or they leap from relationship to relationship learning much of doubtful import.

Ah, I can agree with

Richard Faulder! The squatting position may be making a sensible comeback in child bearing. Though- Ah, Richard, wrong again! I am not racist. White man's burden and paternalism do not effect my living or speaking fields. Any overhangs from The Raj only exist because of my Nordic blood which travelled to Oz via England and Wales. I do believe in leadership, courage, endeavour, ruthlessness and having fun. I see no genetic reasons as to why the lesser races can't be brought to a level equal to or above our own. (in this context I speak as Australian and include you as one, also). Mere survival encourages the spirit to become dominant over the body, or in sadder cases to requinuish the struggle. In the latter case, after the spirit weakens, the body dies.

My Life tolerates my fatalism. I cannot view with



aquanimity the prospect of the world's wild places being reduced to worn out agricultural land. Rather I hope in the advance of science and technology at a rate that surpasses the advance of population, and believe that many answers will be found (and new questions discovered). I think that history shows that population and technology have advanced at the same rate and I wouldn't be surprised that the reverse is also true. "The Big Dreams" and "New attitudes" would be all so much karma in the latter matter...

Concerning Peter Kell's comments on Richard Faulder, the active culling program is more honest. "Rechts, links, rechts, links..." Neither passive or active culling could be considered desirable to a truly knowledgeable person.

Diane Fox is realising that I do use words for effect, but I considered that the words "National Socialist" had a fortunate, usable connotation and not the reverse as she was suggesting. Sorry Diane!

Raymond Clancy
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The Mentor 41 is a good companion tonight as our blizzard (snowstorm with high winds and extreme cold) gets its teeth in. All our airports are closed. People are abandoning their automobiles all over the city. Before the iron ships and wooden men, this would not have seemed a great thing. The great dust storm which blanketed Melbourne was heralded here.

I was stunned to hear that Australia had already lost fifty-one percent of its arable land. One hopes that is not really true, but just another screech from the gloom-and-doom warlocks of the mass media.

[They could be referring to the fact that the current drought we are enduring is about 7 years long and is the worst in memory (and record). So far about 24 million sheep have died, and I don't know how many cattle. When the drought breaks, meat will be unobtainable for most people, as the farmers will keep remaining stock for breeding. - Ron.]

When the weather is fine around here, the ambulances and fire engines never stop advertising themselves; but now while Nature is snarling, the only outside sound is that of sleet beating against skylight or window panes.

Harry Warner, Jr
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If science fiction has begun to come true around Hagerstown again, you'll never receive this loc on the 41st Mentor. Optimists are calling today's weather a blizzard and the rest of us are thinking back about the prozine stories we read in which the end of the world began with a catastrophic change in the climate. Assuming, then, that some day I'll again be able to reach a mailbox and mail this loc, I'll take heart and tell you that I'd hate to see mimeo phased out entirely as a fanzine reproduction method. It has a special advantage for fans: the equipment is inexpensive and small enough for almost any fan to produce a fanzine on it on a limited budget and in limited living space. There isn't the temptation to produce an extremely large circulation fanzine, coupled with the inevitable danger that the editor will tire of the collating, addressing, and postage-purchasing tasks involved, as there is with offset reproduction. Selfishly, I might add that I'm probably only a year or two away from inability to read the offset fanzines which utilize a drastic reduction of type size, because my vision is gradually deteriorating. Mimeo reproduction guarantees type large enough to be legible to aging eyes, unless the stencil-

cutter is one of the few who possess a typewriter with microscopic characters like the one Ted White uses occasionally.

Actually, Harry, a second-hand offset costs about the same as a new mimeo with motor. The Roneo I use is a 250 - the portable one, with no motor. It enables one to get the best performance out of mimeo, I think. - Ron.

Bugs is an amusing story. But the pacing seems somehow awry: it begins as leisurely as if Don Fidge were writing a novel's opening chapter, then rushes through the events which constitute the real core of the story. Either some judicious cutting in the opening pages or more fleshed-out narrative toward the end might have improved the story.

My stomach is decomposing almost as rapidly as my vision, so I can't claim to feel strong empathy for Bertram Chandler's column this time. Just one of the meals he describes in it would knock me out of action for weeks. Besides, I never feel comfortable reading about fancy, expensive restaurants. It seems wrong for bills of fare to contain such enormous prices in a world where many people are having trouble affording the most economical sources of edibles or aren't getting enough to eat even at the lowest prices. Yes, I know all the money that is spent in the expensive restaurants wouldn't make a perceptible impact on easing the enormous world hunger problem. But I still don't feel comfortable with the situation.

I can't figure out if Raymond Clancy believes retardation and crippling of children is a problem largely imaginary in nature because of the lobbying and promotion of "the medical and nursing professions, the drug manufactures and their allies, organized crime", or if he believes the problem is so large because of the behavior of those groups. My own belief is that the problem results mostly from the behavior of ordinary people, the men and women who are parenting children after indulging in illegal drugs and tobacco to excess, along with prodigious consumption of alcoholic beverages. If too much drink can damage the brain cells of the drinkers, why can't it have the same effect on the fetus during the nine months a woman is carrying the unborn child and guzzling beer, wine and whiskey at every opportunity? There's evidence which seems to connect various illegal drugs with genetic damage.

It looks as if I'm gradually picking up some company when I stay away from cons. Harry Andruschak's inability to eat and drink many of the things consumed at those events isn't too distant from one of my reasons for absence, the fact that I just don't like being around people who are drinking or using drugs to excess. I also have the wave length difficulty Bruce Gillespie mentions: at your typical con, how many people am I apt to find who are in my age group, are interesting in the fannish rather than the pro aspect of the con, get sleepy and can't stay up all night at parties, and share others of my idiosyncracies?

I have finally found a contradiction in something by John J Alderson.. At the end of his loc he refers to an acquaintance who is a "good" violin maker and then admits that she has a vice.

The book reviews this time continue to illustrate the disturbing trend of professional science fiction: I didn't count, but roughly two out of three of the volumes you mentioned are sequels to something else or collections of previously published stories either unchanged or squashed together to create a novel or obviously modelled on some famous old book or derived from a movie or otherwise dependent. Are the publishers afraid of something entirely different or are the authors so lazy they prefer to look around and hunt up a model for inspiration?

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The Mentor 42 - a simple cover but nonetheless a clear sum-up of the fanzine publishing in Aust. Just as a matter of curiosity I decided to check up on some of the meanings of the stranger named titles, so I picked up my Concise Oxford Dictionary and was surprised (sometimes baffled) to find out their origina. For instance, the strangest title there was Xenophilia. Now, although this word does not appear in the dictionary as a whole, it is composed of two Greek words: Xeno, meaning foreign or strange, and Philia, meaning love - so Xenophilia is 'Love of the strange', which is a very odd title. Similarly Ornithopter is composed of Ornithos, meaning bird, and Pter, meaning wing - a birdwing!

Most of the other interesting titles turned out be be actual words; Pariah was a low caste in India, Thyme was an aromatic herb and Gobstopper was a hard sweet. The one that had me baffled was Nibwin, which I can't make any sense of. Finally, even though I already knew about what a Mentor was, I was surprised to find out that this word is derived from Men, meaning Think. Does this mean that your esteemed fanzine is for the more intellectual fans?

Michael Hailstone's article on Mars reminded me of the days when I used to read Scientific American (I now read Omni which is much simpler to understand), with figures and related jargon that goes over my head. One point of intetest in Michael's article was the mention of the Martian canals which he says could have been carved by running water. For those of us who believe Mars may have been inhabited by intelligent beings sometime in cosmic history, several people have speculated that the canals could have been dug out as an irrigation system by these Martians; though there is no scientific proof of this.

The Message by D.J. Cooper was another odd piece of fiction, which sort of reminded me of the one by Peter Lempert - The Empty City, though the first was a bit easier to read than the latter.

Diane Fox
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Michael Hailstone's Earthly and Martian Physics was fascinating and most useful. I plan to set a future novel on Mars. I don't know why, the idea just appeals. Mike's comments on the greenhouse effect were interesting - and I'll be more wary of feeling the emotion of despair in future. He's quite right, it is likely to encourage political apathy. Hope is, as the saying has it, a torture, but nothing seems to be achieved without misery and suffering.

D Jason Cooper's story might be a brief illustration of the dangers of being apathetic and easily lead. The rage will always be there, but if it isn't directed constructively it will probably emerge at random and destructively. The graffeti which inspired the short story is very sad and somehow criticises our whole society.

I'd agree with John Alderson's comments that the structure of a society will persist no matter what changes in religion, language, culture, economy etc. The changes may refine and polish it, removing many injustices, or the other hand (this is far more common) they may coarsen, and brutalize it, bringing out the worst aspects of the society's structure by removing its built-in safeguards. The history of Russia and China under the vast social mutations of communism seem to indicate that basic social structures remain the same - apparently there's recently been much outrage in China because the customs of infanticide and concubinage from the "bad old days" persist in some areas. And an article I read recently about sexual problems in

Russia indicates that Vera Lonergan's comments about pre-communist (White) Russian customs and prejudices seem to apply to a degree to present-day (Communist) Russia. Of course, good points of social structures tend to survive as well as the bad.

Captain Chandler's Grimesish Grumblings had, as always, some most quotable and interesting material. I laughed wryly over the somewhat hypocritical reaction of the literary agent. It would seem that Jack Abbott would not be out of favour for his crimes, but for the unforgiveable sin of embarrassing the literary establishment. While in jail he will doubtless write another book, and no matter how brilliant and marvellous it is, it will be mercilessly, savaged by all the best critics and only the most secure publishers would dare to take it. He will be very pleased to see not only a buxom nude girl accompanying his article (Kerrie Hanlon's illo) but a bonus on Mike McGann's Spaced Out facing page. Well, the space maiden isn't nude but her costume is sufficiently tight, suggestive and revealing for her to be considered partially nude, bringing up the naked body count to $1\frac{3}{4}$.

Raymond Clancy's comments on backyard dunnies reminds me of some of the remarks in my autobiography in an earlier issue of The Mentor, ie our rustic privy draped in honeysuckle, which was charming in the daytime, but a lovely place for acid-drooling monsters to lurk at night. Also, a story I heard of, a "sanitary man" who lifted the can out only to find a large black snake curled around it. Ah, what a spate of reminiscence has been loosened here - including memories of one female relative of prim and proper character who was using the toilet when the sanitary man arrived. He stood outside patiently and said, "take your time missus, take your time." However, consider the condition of a flush toilet in a city with no water supply (which can easily happen during an emergency!)

Peter Lempert's comment on my story underlines a point I hoped could be suggested by the number of gemstones mentioned. Liked Steve Sneyd's description of these fiendish magickal devices as "ultimate executive toys".

Re backrubs being erotic, our culture tends to condition us to perceive all physical contact as being somehow erotic. Relaxation in physical contact with another person usually occurs in an erotic context. Thus by simple association of ideas....

Hardship tends to make people filthy-temperd, at the beginning, and apathetic, towards the end. Some people can be made to have more sympathies with the suffering of others; but yet other people will have the reaction, if they have suffered and see another person suffer, of thinking: "Goody, he's getting kicked around, not me!" and feel inordinately cheerful.

Re Jack Herman's comments of history, I always thought that History is anything that happened in the past: to be further subdivided into "History of...." this, that or the next thing, in order to make it more comprehensible.. Thus history of Australia, or 19th Century history, or history of evolutionary theory, or history of English Literature, etc. The older meaning of the word "history" was "a story, usually but not necessarily true" (in other words, "history" might mean a work of fiction.)

John J Alderson
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I read Michael Hailstone's article with interest. I rather share his scepticism of the "greenhouse effect". Efforts as early as fifty years ago to determine the rotation period, if any, of Venus, ran into a snag. Using a radio-metric method to this end they found the day and night sides of Venus roughly the

same temperature, which suggested a very short day. However spectrographic data contradicted this. Venus gives off more heat than it receives and is thus a cooling body. This is confirmed by temperature readings of atmospheric temperature which suggest a temperature drop of 1°C in eight years. However, systematic data has not been collected as yet. Mars also seems to be radiating more heat than it receives and I believe I read somewhere that even the moon has a core warmer than the mean surface temperature; that is, it too radiates more heat than it receives.

I suspect that Raymond L Clancy is confusing "remittance men" with convicts. Many of these were scions of aristocracy but most would have been younger sons of the upper middle class, tangible "skeletons in the family cupboard".

With regards to birthing positions the most curious one I've come across is the Polynesian one where the mother to be is suspended from a rail or whatever and let hang. My information is unclear as to whether she hung there by her finger-



tips or was tied to a ceiling joist. However birthing is reputed to have come easy to them due to their normal way of sitting on their heels. To do this the feet are placed together and the knees bent and spread and the body lowered until the buttocks rest on the feet. To rise they reverse the process, rising in one graceful movement. It is about the best pre-natal exercise there is. I certainly support Faulder in his contention that the practice of birthing lying down is the result of pandering to the conventions of males is paranoid. Nor is it a modern practice. The phrase "brought to bed" to describe birth is about as old as

the English language. One might blame the practice on the midwives, naturally female. Male doctors were never allowed near a birthing women until modern times.

I think Jack Herman's pretensions of being an historian is exploded when he prefers his "trusty dictionary" to two historiologists in a definition of history. Jack is a self-exposed bullshit artist.

Now did I say, as Buck Coulson suggests, that documented history is mostly lies? Or can't he read? Documents and documented history are two different things. A document has no special sanctity. Before an historian can accept any source, document or folklore, it must be subjected to a very sceptical analysis by the "historical method". Naturally I have sometimes to accept some other scholar's analysis of a document but I am not bound to do so. For example I have been working for several years on Genesis, because I believe that those who have gone before me haven't done their homework thoroughly. Now, of

course Kells has a perfect right to believe in Atlantis, I merely criticised the basis of his conclusions. The fact that I believe myself that Atlantis almost certainly did exist is not going to allow me to accept bad evidence. And how do I know that Velikovsky wasn't right? It happens that Velikovsky's historical method is excellent, his provance of his material most searching, his logic most exacting. His attack on the structure of ancient history has been devastating. How do I know he wasn't right? I don't. Now if Buck or anyone else wants a stab at that question, I'll set a problem for you.

Petris, in his excavation of Gaza found some hair rings which he (being also experienced in Irish studies) identified as of Irish origin. Also, under conventional chronology those hair rings occur in Gaza at least five hundred years too early! Extensive efforts have been made to find another origin, but without success. I ran across that problem in Ireland before I had ever heard of Velikovsky, (I doubt if Velikovsky has ever heard of these hair rings by the way). Ok, go ahead and solve that little problem. I can dig up another hundred such problems.

What most of my readers cannot understand is that I am a sceptic. I am prepared to question everything and I mean everything and I am not prepared to remain in doubt. There are answers and they can be found. Most of you get all your beliefs and all your doubts second-third and fourth-hand and you can't understand that there are thinkers left in the world.

Peter Lempert
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The Message was like a beer left out of the fridge, all there in substance but very flat. My main gripe with this story is its inconsistency. To wit, we are told that "We're all dead... Me and everyone else on this planet are dead. We killed ourselves, though I'm breaking the law to tell you this." If the character is dead I don't think he would give a duff about breaking the law. If he is dead how can he use a machine? If he is dead and can use a machine then his wife is not really dead, and this negates his last three sentences. Since he is waffling this may have been a deliberate error, but this point may have been avoided if D J Cooper wrote, "Everyone else is dead but me." The postscriptum was more evocative of emotion than The Message.

The Captain may for informed that, yes, Mr Gardiner has been assigned to do a third James Bond novel. I would agree with the Captain's comments, though in some places there is enough to suggest that Gardiner may get it right the third time around.

Julie Vaux
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..... regarding the sociological articles: the trouble with articles dealing with the "soft" sciences is that intelligent discussion/criticism tends to degenerate far too quickly into one on those fannish arguments that resemble the Worm Quorosboros - a vicious circle, etc. Perhaps to vary the pace we need some articles on geophysics or the possibility of black holes and white holes in real time and not just mathematical models. Or what about mysteries of Pre-history??

There are many great mysteries of pre-history that lend themselves to fan discussion apart from the obvious ones of Atlantis and "do Greek myths/legends prove the existence of matriarchy?"

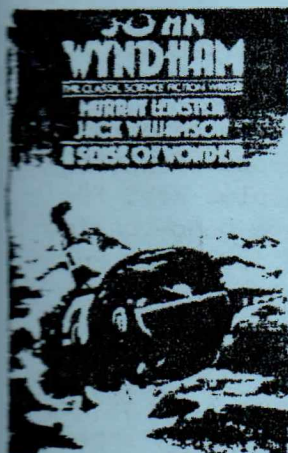
For details of some of these, readers may contact Julie at the above address. - Ron.

SHE LOVES ME, SHE LOVES
ME NOT?????♡♡♡



SPACED OUT...
IN LOVE!?

ON MY SELECTION - S.F. BOOK RELEASES



A SENSE OF WONDER, stories by John Wyndham, Murray Leinster & Jack Williamson. NEL, dist in Aust by Hodder & Stoughton. 175 pp, A\$3.95. On sale now.

This collection contains three stories from the early 1930s: Exiles On Asperus by John Wyndham, The Mole Pirate by Murray Leinster, and The Moon Era by Jack Williamson. Introduction by Sam Moskowitz. These are stories which had not seen print for 50 years and they still read well now. Wyndham's piece is about what the crew of a spaceship find when they are left on the asteroid Asperus - a surprisingly "modern" story; Leinster tells a straight adventure, with the stealing, by a slightly paranoid scientist, of a vehicle which slips through the spaces between atoms to go anywhere; and Williamson's concerns a journey through time and space to the moon and the strange civilization and creatures found there. An interesting collection.

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WORLD ENOUGH, AND TIME by James Kahn. Mayflower Science Fantasy, dist in Aust by Granada Publishing (Aust) P/L. 352 pp. A\$5.95. On sale now.

Billed as The New World Trilogy: Vol I, this is quite a thick volume. The masthead catalogues this as science fantasy. For the first hundred pages I thought it fantasy, pure and simple. Then the author went further into the background of it, and it fell into place. In a lot of the latest sf there are strong elements of fantasy... I am getting a bit sick of it.

This novel is set 121 years after the next ice age. Previous to that event, there had been a nuclear war, a clone war, and a race war (but not between Humans). The society then, is degenerate and mostly on it's last legs, with Vampires, Griffins, Ghouls and other nasty type creatures running/flying around carrying off the Humans. Why this is so, is one of the things the heroes' determine to find out, and stop.

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FIREFLOOD AND OTHER STORIES by Vonda McIntyre. Pan SF, dist in Aust by Pan Books (Aust) P/L. 256 pp. A\$4.95. On sale now.

This is a collection of McIntyre's stories which are a good introduction to her. They are: Fireflood; Of Mist, And Grass, And Sand; Spectre; Wings; The Mountains Of Sunset, The Mountains Of Dawn; The End's Beginning; Screwtop; Only At Night; Recourse, Inc; The Gentle Freaks; and Aztecs.

Some of the stories, such as The End's Beginning and Only At Night show their age - they are the type of stories

that were "relevant" at the time, but age. The others are mostly ageless - especially Fireflood and Of Mist, And Grass, And Sand. This is a good collection; not quite good enough to get a *Recommended*, but good, nevertheless. Worth buying.

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THE ILLUSTRATED BOOK OF SCIENCE FICTION LISTS by Mike Ashley. Virgin Books, dist in Aust by Thomas Nelson Aust. 190 pp. A\$9.95. On sale now.

Mike Ashley says, in this book, that he is a compulsive List freak. This volume has probably are the types of Lists about sf that you would wish to see. Some examples are: 10 Definitions of sf; the 20 best All-time Books, 5 Mind-bending Novels about ESP, and so on for 166 lists. It is broken up into four sections: What Is This Thing?; Expert Opinion; The Record Holders; and Oddities and Entities. Section A has 50 lists, B 44, C 34 and D 38.

One of the most important things about this type of book is that the mistakes be kept to a minimum. There are some mistakes - one is on page 140, where it says: "Lin Carter took in on herself..." and there are two really bad typos where entire paragraphs and parts of paragraphs are transposed or repeated (eg the entry for Stephen Southwold on p.156 and Romain Gary on page 157). Overall, an oddity. For bibliophiles.

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LENSMAN FROM RIGEL by David Kyle. Bantam Books, dist in Aust by Transworld Publishers (Aust) P/L. 212 pp. A\$3.50. On sale now.

If you have read The Dragon Lensman, then you probably know what to expect from this volume. In fact, it follows pretty much in the same vein and style of writing as 'Doc' Smith's account of Civilization.

Lensman From Rigel is set in the period when the Red Lensman is pregnant with the Children of The Lens, and the antagonists at that time are mainly the Spawn of Boskone - the remnants of that far-flung Empire destroyed by the Patrol. Some of the characters have events linking them to that other time, for instance, the son of Helmut is featured; a baddy as always. Good, simple sf adventure - if you're one of Docs fans you'll like this.

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DYING OF PARADISE by Stephen Couper. Sphere SF, dist in Aust by Thomas Nelson Aust. 183 pp. A\$5.95. On sale now.

The cover painting gives the mood of the novel quite well, unfortunately the ship portrayed should be under the dome. The action takes place in a city on a planet which has been stripped of its only riches - a narcotic flower which would grow only there. After hastily setting up a programmed society the company then went offplanet to further pursue its goal. The computer controlling the society - Central Control - pursued its own end (the elimination of the humans) and when the main





character (one cannot call him a 'hero') finds out the end result forecast for his fellow citizens and determines, reluctantly, to put a stop to it. He is pursued by the Elite Police, the Forces arm of the computer. The ending follows the mood of the book. I was surprised - but it was in tune. *Recommended*

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FRIDAY by Robert A Heinlein. New English Library H/C, dist in Aust by Hodder & Stoughton Aust. 380pp, A\$16.95. On sale now.

This is Heinlein's latest, and much has already been said about it. However, I read (and I know many other readers read) it for entertainment and sense-of-wonder, not so much for 'Literary worth'. How does this volume stand in this regard? I haven't read many of Heinlein's latest; this is the first I have read for many years.

Friday is a courier for an organisation which is much like The Assassination Bureau (Oliver Reeds film). Everything was going well for Friday until someone struck against the Organisation; from then on her life started to come to pieces: her 'family' disowned her, and her boss died. This left Friday virtually on her own. However, her background training as a courier stood her in good stead and

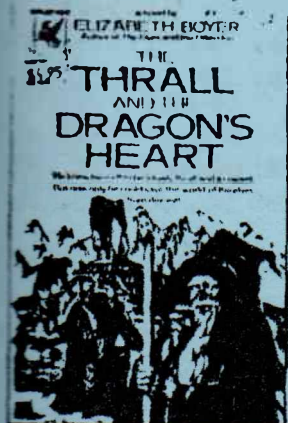
The background is drawn in well and there is just enough new things in the foreground to give a feel for the future. There is, as there was in most of his latest, a fair bit of talking, but it fits well into the flow and does not tend to slow the action. In fact it has the same feel as an earlier Heinlein - Podkane of Mars. Not a great book - but passable.

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THE THRALL AND THE DRAGON'S HEART by Elizabeth Boyer. Del Rey Fantasy, dist in Aust by Doubleday Aust P/L. 294 pp. A\$4.95 On sale now.



This volume is set in much the same world as The Sword & The Satchel, an earlier novel of Ms Boyer's. I picked up this volume when I had a lazy Sunday afternoon to pass and found it's mood ideally suited to said atmosphere.

It is a Quest story, and tells of the adventures of the thrall of the title and his companion (his master) as he is lead through the plot trying to win back from various villains the weapons of a once-great wizard. The author has quite a good grasp of keeping a reader's interest and I found this engrossing throughout. It you are a fantasy fan - get it.

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THE KALEVIDE by Lou Goble. Bantam books, dist in Aust by Trans-world Publishers (Aust) P/L. 397 pp. A\$4.95. On sale now.



This novel is supposed to be based on the national epic of Estonia, and is thus loosely based on it. It is the author's first novel. It starts off slowly, as it gives the background to the story and tells of the Kalevide's father, Kalev, who dies

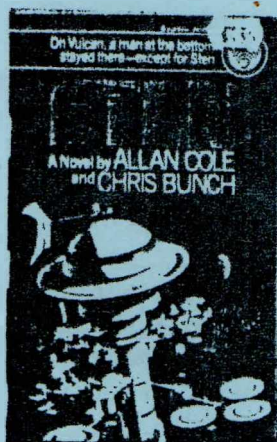
at a most inopportune moment, leaving his wife Linda pregnant with The Kalevide.

What should have been a quest turns out to be a very slow plot, with no sparkle or really gripping action to draw in the reader. In fact, I found the whole thing boring. The hero is called The Kalevide throughout, which doesn't help the reading any. If you like those old epics you might like this - otherwise, steer clear.

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STEN by Allan Cole and Chris Bunch. Del Rey SF, dist in Aust by Doubleday Aust P/L. 279 pp. A\$4.95. On sale now.

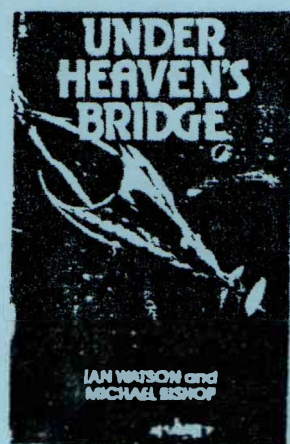
The blurb builds this novel up as if it is written like a 'tough guy' detective adventure. When I saw the dialogue it reinforced that view. However, the novel is much more than that. Set mainly on the artificial factory world of Vulcan, it follows the ventures of Sten, one of the lowly 'Mig' workers. All would have been still well with that company world, except that Sten's family were killed in an industrial accident. When Sten found out about the callousness of the ruling Executives, he escaped into the deserted corridors of a disused section of the world and vowed revenge.

The type of dialogue spoken by the masses didn't bother me, but the Emperor of the Galaxy, talking the same 'gutter' dialect and drinking beer, no, I don't think so. It spoiled the novel for me, somewhat. Still worth purchasing, though.

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UNDER HEAVEN'S BRIDGE by Ian Watson & Michael Bishop. Corgi, dist in Aust by Transworld Publishers (Aust) P/L. 160 pp. A\$2.95. On sale now.

This is another in the series Ian Watson has been creating which explore the impact of different Religions and gods on human life. The religions and gods are sf related, the treatment is strictly scientific and the handling is very good and in depth.

In this novel the aliens are apparently half metal and half flesh and appear, to some members of the expedition at least to be machines (or at the least, cyborgs). They are, the aliens say, in direct contact with the God Behind the Galaxies, and their message is that the Universe is programmed. The entities, the Kybers, are a unique creation. If you like "deep" sf, you'll probably like this.

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THE SCIENCE FICTION & FANTASY FILM HANDBOOK compiled by Alan Frank. A Batsford Book, dist in Aust by Oxford University Press. 194 pp. A\$19.95. On sale now.

If you are an sf or fantasy film buff and would like a concise book on the genre, you'll like this. Frank has compiled some 200 films, giving them as a list of technical credits, a brief synopsis of the plot and one or two contemporary reviews.

Science Fiction
and Fantasy Film
Handbook
Alan Frank



YESTERDAY'S MEN BY GEORGE TURNER



There are over 200 B&W stills, with about one still per movie. The book is set out into first, an alphabetical list of the films, then a section of the people involved (actors, producers, etc), then essays on 'themes' - eg "Alien Encounters", "Apocalypse and After", "Captain Nemo", etc.

It is quite a good collection and seems fairly accurate, though there are several bad typos, as is becoming usual these days, where a paragraph is repeated in another film and a line is left out (see the Star Wars entry).

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YESTERDAY'S MEN by George Turner. Faber H/C, dist in Aust by Penguin Books Aust. Ltd. 13 x 21 cm, 223 pp. A\$16.95. On sale now.

Yesterday's Men is the third in a set of novels about the future - after a nuclear war and other nasties happened on earth. The first novel was Beloved Son, then came Vaneglory, and now YM. I haven't read Beloved Son, but I have read Vaneglory. YM is a lot better than Vaneglory.

Most of the story takes place in a recreation of "Gone Time" in Niugina where a section of the past (1942-45) had been assembled as closely as the surviving records allowed. Into this set-up go Dunbar, one of the Children of Time (note all the references to Time) and two terrans who had spent some time in the satellite cities. The secret of immortality which was being kept hidden (or at least the existence of immortality) in the first two novels is the prime reason for most of the action in this one also. I found the novel itself much clearer - it could be read on its own, unlike Vaneglory which suffered from an open-ended beginning.

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VENUS ON THE HALF-SHELL by Kilgore Trout. Panther SF, dist in Aust by Granada Publishing Aust. P/L. 207 pp. A\$5.95. On sale now.

This is the sf satire, originally published in 1975 and long out of print. It could be called the original Hitchhikers p'back - it has all that that series has - including the ultimate computer and a destroyed/cleansed earth. The Space Wanderer is Simon Wagstaff, who, dressed in black levis, a shabby grey sweater and (later) an eye patch, with his faithful companions a dog, owl and female organic robot, roams the Galaxy looking for the answer to the Ultimate Question: Why are we created only to suffer and die? On the last page he finds the answer.

Trout is, reputedly, P J Farmer. If so this is one of his better books. It is humorous, well written and a good spoof.

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DEATHHUNTER by Ian Watson. Corgi books, dist in Aust by Trans-world Publishers (Aust) P/L. 173 pp. A\$3.50. On sale now.

Another vision into the afterlife; a bit more metaphysical than Under Heaven's Bridge, but with its own internal logic.



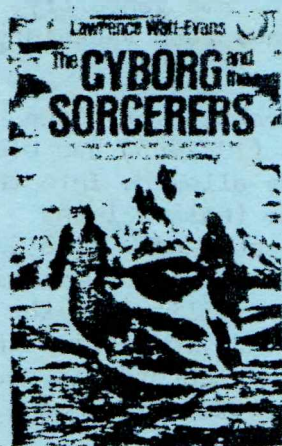
In a society where Death is, if not exactly welcomed, not feared, there are set up Houses of Death where people can go to have assistance in dying - those who consider themselves finished with life.. those with inoperable diseases. Todhunter is a Guide in the House of Death - it was he who settled in those who wished to pass on and guided them to the good death. He had been shifted because of some studies into the Afterlife, when a friend of his had died in the experiments. On his first day in his new community the local poet was murdered, and Todhunter found himself in charge of shepherding the murderer to his own death. Until he heard why the man had killed the poet - and he ended up building a cage for Death.

Watson has an interesting novel here. Again, if you like mind-stretching sf - you'll find this dazzling.

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THE CYBORG AND THE SORCERERS by Lawrence Watt-Evans. Del Rey Sf, dist in Aust by Doubleday Aust P L. 248 pp. A\$4.95. On sale now.

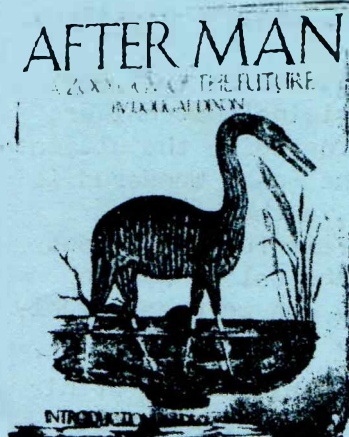
I'm sure that I've read something very close to this plot before - a spaceship controlled by a computer lands in a feudal world, an agent with super-equipped body is let loose with the mission of bringing about the downfall of the government/enemy - and magical powers exist on the planet. In fact, I think there were a few said novels. This one is quite well written and the plot follows the pattern of the others: the hero is captured, escapes, is captured again, etc.

It's fairly well told, though no great shakes, but is a pleasant read for those with a few spare hours or a train journey.

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AFTER MAN - A ZOOLOGY OF THE FUTURE by Dougal Dixon. A Granada Book, dist in Aust by Granada Publishing (Aust) P/L. 23½x27½ cm. 124 pp. A\$16.95. On sale now.

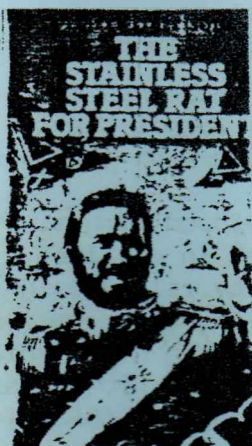
When I saw this in Granada's February releases I thought that it looked interesting. When I received the copy I slipped off the shrink-wrapped covering, opened it up, and fell instantly in love with it. The title tells what it is - a zoology of the earth some 50 million years in the future. Man has died out, much like the dinosaurs, and the animals which survived his downfall had further evolved to fill the ecological niches left by the fall and of those animals he had wiped out. There are 80 pages of full colour paintings and 48 pages of two-colour paintings of the best projections of future animals that I have seen. On facing pages are text explaining the animals, and a full page painting of it, done in the style of the Victorian collections. They follow the evolution of the species.

There is only one thing I can say to prospective readers - *Highly Recommended* and get it before it sells out.

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THE STAINLESS STEEL RAT FOR PRESIDENT by Harry Harrison. Sphere SF, dist in Aust by Thomas Nelson Aust. 184pp. A\$3.95. On sale now.

This is the fifth in the Stainless Steel Rat series, and shows Harrison at his best. diGriz is the Stainless Steel Rat, a sort of Galactic James Bond, to whom he has been compared.

This is pure entertainment - no Deep Thoughts here. From the moment diGriz is 'interviewed' by the local cops (led by Captain Kretin) to the last shots in the election campaign, the action is fast and furious. This series, and the Deathworld series, are about the only Harrison I find I like. If you know anyone in their early teens with a birthday soon, or light relief for yourself, this is a good purchase.

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COSMICOMICS by Italo Calvino. Abacus Paperback (Sphere), dist in Aust by Thomas Nelson Aust. 153pp. A\$6.95. On sale now.

This is a slim paperback of various episodes in the creation of the Universe told in a comic (humorous) mode, and is set with weird characters. There are twelve stories in total, and they follow a sort of progression from before the creation of the Universe into the present. One, for example, is about how someone climbed onto the moon as it hung near the horizon out to sea, and it was found to be covered in scales. Another is about how someone made the first sign and hung it from a nearby galaxy and how it was copied. The stories are allegories, of course, and quite well told. COSMICOMICS won the Ditmar back in the early '70's. I didn't know why it did then - and now that I've read it, I still don't know why.

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TIME OF THE FOURTH HORSEMAN by Chelsea Quinn Yarbro. Panther SF, dist in Aust by Granada Publishing Aust P/L. 236pp. A\$5.95. On sale now.

This novel is set fairly close to the present day - most diseases, such as cancer, are either eradicated or under control by vaccination. Suddenly cases of those diseases start cropping up in children, most of whom have been left by increasing unstable parents, and the exposure helped bring down their resistance. However, all had been inoculated in their early life. It became worse, and an epidemic started - small-pox, diphtheria and other supposedly controlled disease. What was going on? (The fourth Horseman is, of course, pestilence).

The writing is very tight and the plot believable. Time.. is almost impossible to put down - I found I was skimming paragraphs to find out what happened next.

Recommended

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GOD OF TAROT by Piers Anthony. Panther SF, dist in Aust by Granada Publishing Aust. P/L. 256pp. A\$5.95. On sale now.

This is actually a $\frac{1}{4}$ million word novel published in three parts, of which this is the first. Granada has done a service to readers by releasing them all at the one time - so there is no waiting.

Planet Tarot is a fairly newly developed planet. It has one claim to fame: Animations, which appear in distinct regions and can kill. The planet was settled by religious orders/cults. Brother Paul, of the Holy Order of Vision, was sent from earth as the best representative to find out, among other things the origin of the Animations, and the nature of the God of Tarot (the planet). It was called Tarot because a member of the original crew was looking at a Tarot deck when the first animation appeared. It was a figure from the deck. Many of the subsequent animations were based on the Tarot.

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VISION OF TAROT by Piers Anthony. Panther SF, dist in Aust by Granada Publishing Aust P/L. 272pp. A\$5.95. On sale now.

The second volume in the Tarot trilogy. The novel continues the investigations of Brother Paul as he finds more of the workings of the community of the planet Tarot and explores the phenomenon of animations more fully by participating in them. There is usually a central person who has some control of the animation - usually it is Paul - but sometimes it can get out of hand. Animation can kill, for instance if there is water in the animation and the person falls into water in the real world, that person can drown.

A continually interesting series/novel.

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FAITH OF TAROT by Piers Anthony. Panther SF, dist in Aust by Granada Publishing Aust P/L. 271pp. A\$5.95. On sale now.

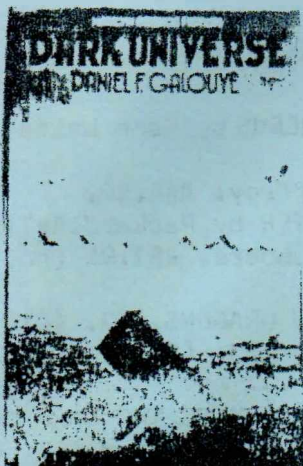
The concluding volume. In this book Brother Paul meets again his future daughter, Caroline, and eventually comes face to face with the God of Tarot (and possibly the Universe). To find that God Paul had to not only trace the history of Tarot on earth by using the animations, but to search out his own faith in Christ. The scenes in animation are whole images - I dare say this 250,000 word novel will be a Hugo contender. It isn't I will be surprised.

All the above three parts are *Recommended*.

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DARK UNIVERSE by Daniel F. Galouye. Hamlyn SF, dist in Aust by Thomas Nelson Aust. 191pp. A\$3.95. On sale now.

When I read this novel in hardcover in 1962 I thought it was one of the best, if not the best, post holocaust sf novel that I had read. On re-reading it twenty years later it has



not lost its sense of wonder

It is set in a strange world of underground caves, where humanity fights a losing battle with drying springs, giant bat-like creatures and other human-like monsters. Their god is Light, and the search goes on in one young man's mind for that lost paradise that Man was thrust out of generations before he was born. When he met the Forever Man he gained an inkling of the truth, but the reality was overwhelming.

Galouye never again reached the heights of this novel.

***Highly Recommended*.**

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GALACTIC EFFECTUATOR by Jack Vance. Coronet Books, dist in Aust by Hodder & Stoughton (Aust) P/1. 219pp. A\$4.95. On sale now.

Jack Vance writes, in this collection of novellas into novel form, of the pursuits of Miro Hetzei, a private detective of the future as he attempts to unravel the convoluted doings, and follow the twisted threads of his opponents. Vance's usual colourful alien landscapes and societies are also here. Seeing them and following the interaction of the characters and the settings is one of the anticiations of Vances writing.

There are two 'cases' in this novel - The Dogtown Tourist Agency and Freitzke's Turn. If you like sf detective work, or Vance, this is a collection of his better works (ie they aren't too steeped in local colour as some tend to be).

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RE-RELEASES: HODDER - THE NUMBER OF THE BEAST by Heinlein. A\$6.95.
RED MOON & BLACK MOUNTAIN by Joy Chant. A\$6.95.
THE BIRTHGRAVE by Tanith Lee. A\$3.95.
THE SNOWQUEEN by Joan D. Vinge. A\$6.95.
BEYOND THE BLUE EVENT HORIZON by Frederik Pohl. A\$6.95.
SIGHT OF PROTEUS by Charles Sheffield. A\$5.50.

All the above are currently in stock in bookshops.

MARCH RELEASES: TRANSWORLD - THE CRYSTAL SINGER by Anne McCaffrey. A\$4.95.
BEST OF BEAUMONT by Charles Beaumont. A\$3.50.
HONEYMOON IN HELL by Frederic Brown. A\$3.50.
RADIX by A.A. Attanasio. A\$5.95.

DONNING - MYTH DIRECTIONS by Robert Asprin. US\$5.95.
THE DRAGON OF THE ISHTAR GATE by Sprague de Camp. US\$5.95.
AURELIA by R.A. Lafferty. US\$5.95

HODDER - PROJECT POPE by Clifford D. Simak. A\$5.95
CAGEWORLD 4: STAR SEARCH by Colin Kapp. A\$3.95.
THE EXPERIMENT by Richard Setlowe. A\$4.95 (see TM 41)

PAN - THE NON BORN KING by Julian May. A\$5.95.

MARCH RELEASES (cont):

DOUBLEDAY - ROCKET JOCKEY by del Rey

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APRIL RELEASES:

HODDER - THE FIFTH HEAD OF CERBERUS by Gene Wolfe

TRANSWORLD - RESTOREE by Anne McCaffrey. A\$4.50.
GORGA, THE SPACE MONSTER by Packard. A\$7.95.
THE GREEN SLIME by Saunders. A\$7.95 (H/C).

DOUBLEDAY - REVENGE OF THE RAINBOW DRAGONS. A\$3. (D&D).
REVOLT OF THE DWARVES. A\$3. (D&D)

MAY RELEASES:

TRANSWORLD - THE WINDHOVER TAPES - FLEXING THE WARP by
Warren Woodward. A\$3.50.
THE UNICORN CREED by Eliz. Sc borough.
A\$3.95.

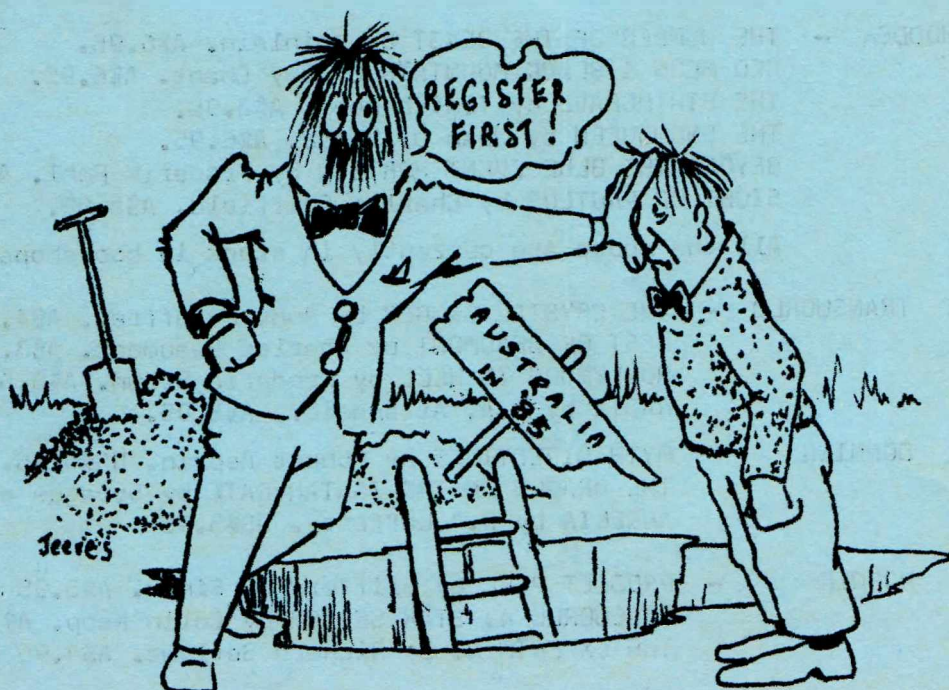
JUNE RELEASES:

TRANSWORLD - DANCE OF THE HAG by Stephen Leigh. A\$3.50.

*MARCH RELEASES:

NELSON - THE ICE BELT by Stephen Couper. A\$5.95.
THE NORTHERN GIRL by Eliz. Lynn. A\$4.95.

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Sakura Allison '83