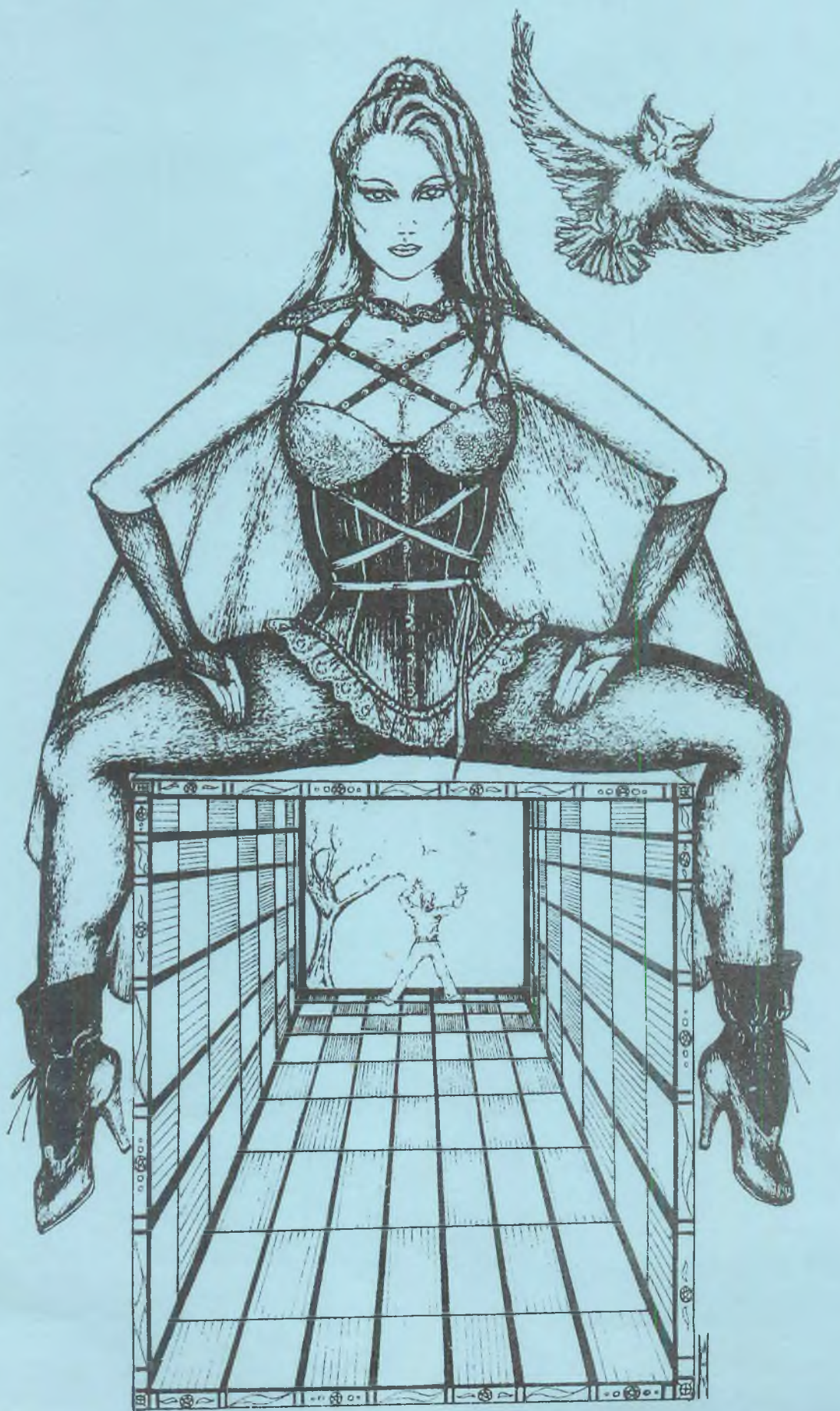


THE MENTOR 51

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THE MENTOR

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RON'S ROOST

KEEPING UP WITH THE JONESES

As I mentioned last issue, that issue had been produced on a computer - an Apple clone, with a double CPU and an IBM compatible keyboard. The cabinet the computer resides in is a copy of the new IBM PC and has two disc drives and an amber 12" monitor. I have it linked up with Brother HR 15 daisywheel printer, and have been using a ZARDAX word processor program. It works with all of the functions of the Apple and Brother, including one I have just figured out - the Centering. The footer and page numbering works well, also.

Don't think that just because you get a computer that you can pick up your mistakes easier - you have the same problem of finding your own mistakes that you have when you type it on a typewriter. Editing and correcting are a lot easier, as whole paragraphs can be moved around, and if you find that you have left a sentence or part of a sentence out, it is a cinch to insert the required words - the remaining words just move to the left as you type.

One of the things they don't tell you is the trouble you can expect to have linking up the various components of the system. It took a week or so to figure why ZARDAX wasn't working with the computer properly and about the same amount of time to get the printer properly linked up with the computer (one of the twenty wires in the connecting cable had broken). In addition the booklet that came with the printer neglected to say that the 5 volt line in the connecting cable was a line out from the printer and was used to power other devices, not, as we thought, a line in to the printer to power some of its circuits. When we blew one of the fuses in the printer we figured out something was wrong...

I don't really think that the computer generated text is all that much faster than the golf-ball or daisy-wheel typewriter, but the correction and the text editing makes up for it. Being able to multi-videoprint (using the screen to see how the **complete** fanzine will look, along with footers and page numbers, is particularly good. The printer has a cut-sheet attachment so that up to 250 sheets can be printed in one run. Which means the entire issue can be run off in one go. The carbon ribbon (for offset printing) seems to be shorter than that of the golf-ball Brother typewriter - it lasts about 30 A4 pages - but the results are excellent.

Anyway, after all those trials, it is working well. It is much easier each night to sit down and input in to the computer and transfer the resulting golden words to disc than it is to type it onto paper, and then to correct it, though whether it is easier in the long run - we'll see.

- Ron.

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PASSTIME

BY ALAN STEWART

Of course having a German half-uncle was an embarrassment, especially if he had to live with you. The twenty-first century wasn't as cosmopolitan as it pretended to be when it came down to being 'inset'. And Fritz, why did his name have to be Fritz? Uncle Frank would have done nicely, but Julie received the same reply everytime she mentioned the subject.

"So vot if I am in Australia. Fritz I was christened, Fritz I have been for forty-nine years - no more of this Frank nonsense."

The German she could live with, just, but an uncle whose hobby was time travel? How could you explain someone who rushes in up to the knees all mud crying: "Julie, Julie! Guess vot. I haf discovered a new plant! Just think. Vy don't I call it Julista Novela, eh? A whole new plant! Although I think it has been extinct for a couple of million years. Ah vell, back to the Cretaceous.", right in the middle of a terribly terribly important party?

Embarrassment just couldn't describe it. Although the phrase 'Dying of Embarrassment' came close on occasions, Julie decided 'mortified' was the perfect choice. Yes, one was **mortified** by Uncle Fritz.

Only her step-mother's legacy of a permanent inset niche prevented Julie's exclusion after such upsets. Uncle Fritz could be explained as a distant relative of her father, never never the truth: the hidden fact that adored Marlien Johnson had not been born in Oklahoma, did not attend the right schools or inherit her wealth. A many-times folded birth certificate for a Helga Scherler was the truth. A certificate carrying ties to a Fritz Scherler who arrived for the funeral to stand modestly in the background while the insetedest people carried on down the front. A Fritz Scherler who decided he liked Australia and the legacy from dear Helga, he always called her Helga, would be enough for him to live on if he cut corners and moved in with Julie.

In the interests of family secrecy and reputation Julie agreed. His time travel hobby and quiet ways kept him out of sight most of the time. Settling into a routine of only visiting his rooms occasionally Julie became somewhat content but never blissful. Mortification continued to strike in an erratic cycle.

Once the 'Traveller' arrived in a well stickered crate from Germany Uncle Fritz got down to business. Soon his lounge piled up with rock chunks, dead plants and dead pieces of plants, scraps of masonry or tile; in short a real bric-a-brac of the aeons. Eventually the maid was ordered to place a section at a time back into the Traveller with the dial set at Pre-Earth. Uncle Fritz grew used to these clean ups and took to placing things in rotation around the room. Anything he particularly desired was carefully moved into his bedroom, usually at the expense of the beloved item of a couple of months ago.

As the Traveller was a standard model he probably couldn't do much damage with it. According to regulation it was locked to transmit only himself or inanimate objects. In the interests of temporal stability only items of less than one hundred grams or half a litre in volume could be transmitted besides the traveller himself plus clothing. Any attempt to transmit a weapon resulted in instant travel to the nearest Correction Cetre regardless of the intended target. Given the nature of past ages this restriction deterred many would be travellers not quite prepared to face reality in forms such as a charging bear without the equaliser of a blaster.

Automatic registration and personal 'keying' via DNA analysis provided built-in safeguards. Children couldn't accidentally fall into it nor murderer's find a suitable dumping ground in the past. The Traveller refused to accept a target after the birth date of the traveller, so critical paradoxes were forestalled. Temporal inertia damped out most of the effects from meddling travellers within a few decades of the visit.

Uncle Fritz chafed a bit at this and made the usual traveller attempts to circumvent such devices. The odd bringing back of a fabulous diamond or gold ingot

invariable resulted in failure and a 'Illegal Transmission Attempted' being entered in his automatic log.

Julie watched his comings and goings with vague interest. Preferring the times when he didn't rush out to show her some irrelevancy from the past.

Producing the eye of a pterosaur from his pocket at the dinner table seemed perfectly okay to Uncle Fritz. Even though the attached remains of arteries attested it was quite harmless and dead, Julie couldn't see it in that light. A page drafted by Marat de Sade didn't impress her either, though he evidently regarded it as priceless treasure.

Slowly the trips came less often, Uncle Fritz seemed to be spending more time in his bedroom. Julie began to think that perhaps he had over-stayed the one week limit or succumbed to some prehistoric carnivore. One with large claws, fangs and barbs. But he always turned up again, usually to claim another box of book reels which had been delivered. Some were very technical and appeared to be equipment catalogues, while others dealt with gynaecology and modern surgical practices.

Enquiries during one of his brief outrushes reassured Julie that he hadn't taken up bio-engineering. Thoughts of some five-armed or three-mouthed horror escaping during one of her evenings had been giving her nightmares. She remembered the Allbrights. Their son had let loose a boa-beach-topus from his 'Junior Design and Grow Kit'. After several guests were released from hospital their complaints resulted in the Allbrights being branded outcasts for life. And for one hundred generations.

Thank goodness he's not going anything like that, she thought.

Soon the stream of arriving articles seemed to increase. As any traveller had to appear similar to the period they intended to visit, Uncle Fritz was always receiving various costumes and pieces. Odd-shaped packages and ones from remote suppliers caught her eye occasionally. One was an 'Imaging Fluoroscope - examine yourself in perfect detail. No cell needs to be missed. Catch those cancers while still in the nuclei! A must for would-be surgeons and health conscious people everywhere' according to the packing label.

Another was a 'Micro-scapel', which arrived the same day as a 'U-2-Can-Clone' kit including a growth box for the first two weeks and an implanter if live birth was required. Cloning had never really caught on, mainly because the result had no memories. A real life adult baby of yourself, or even your perfect dream companion, wasn't the greatest fun.

Various books on the twentieth century, maps, old newspapers, several suits and jackets all arrived to be carried bedroomwards by Uncle Fritz. He seemed happy enough, and out of the way for a while. Due to a series of transpacific parties, Julie only got around to checking up on him three weeks after the 'Clone Kit' arrived.

Unlocking his bedroom door she found a scattering of open cartons and used bits and pieces. The clone growth box had been used and discarded. The Implanter, Uncle Fritz and the Fluoroscope all seemed to be missing. Returning to the lounge she found a note attached to the Traveller.

Dear Julie,

Back in about a week. Have gone to see Mother.

Don't worry, it will be before I was born.

No paradoxes! Back soon,

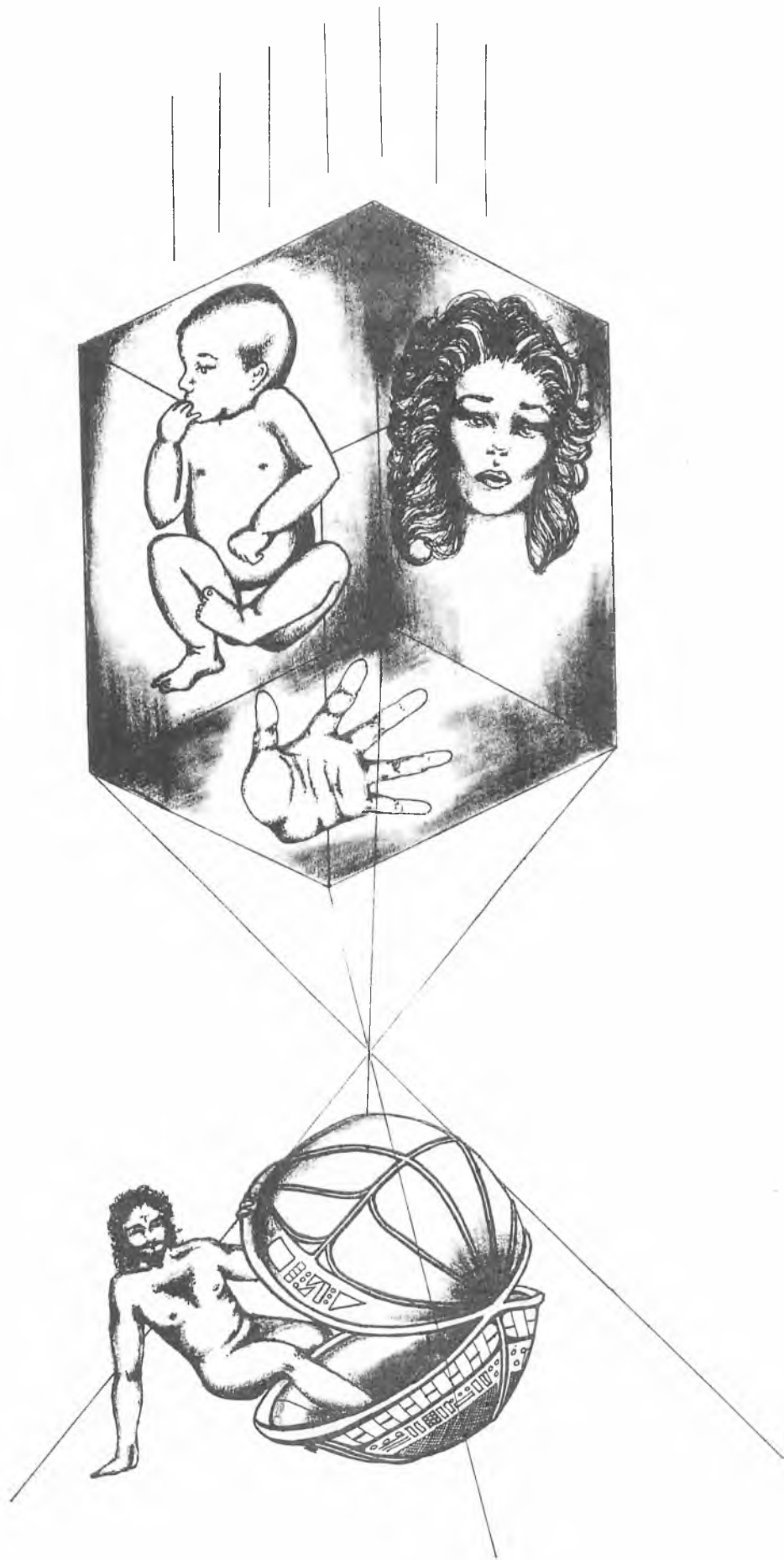
I hope,

Uncle Fritz, Uncle Fritz.

As she read, the room gave the swirl of a minor instemporality passing. Julie came out of the disorientation just as Uncle Fritz emerged from the Traveller. Still in his historical persona he even had 'Dr. Heinberg' pinned to his lapel and a stethoscope in one pocket.

From behind her Uncle Hans, Uncle Fritz's twin, called out a welcome. With that they wandered out to sink a few steins, leaving Julie wondering what the word for having two German half uncles was. Especially with their hobbies.

-- Alan Stewart.





Волгоградский областной комитет ВЛКСМ
Молодежный центр
Волгоградское отделение общества
любителей книги

ВЕТЕР ВРЕМЕНИ

Волгоградский клуб любителей фантастики

INTRODUCTION TO THE SOVIET SF MOVEMENT.

The literature has become a necessary part of everyday life. The main thing it does is to help the mind develop abstract qualities such as imagination. Practically speaking, we are doing it every moment we make a choice. But we come up in literature with something more - we come up with another way of thinking. In this sense SF not only shows commonplace events in a new light, it points out alternatives, predicts paradises or disasters. It is a whole branch of art where a leading role is played by scientific thought, which can be easily prepared. Because of this SF became a means in itself for creative work. This point is illustrated by numerous inventor's centres throughout the Union. Another thing is what we call the cultural drive - a thirst for new wide horizons. The clubs' members take an active part in everything from music to studying.

Soviet SF has a long tradition, but the most lasting impact has been by two writers of the 30s : A. Belayev and A. Tolstoy. They are godfathers of Soviet SF. There is even an SF award named after Tolstoy's novel AELITA. Then came World War II. This war and subsequent restoration have taken all the strength of the Soviet people. So SF clubs only began to appear in the 60s and 70s. This period is marked by the writers I. Kasantsev, I. Yefremov and Brs. Strugatsky. Their works laid out the perspectives for the Soviet SF of today. Throughout this period there were well known foreign authors available.

There are now more than 100 clubs. Different hobbies determine versatile club's activities. In principle SF clubs can unite all kinds of amateur art into one whole. The numerous club's links testify as to this effect. The club ought to be a source of daring experiment too. It has all the potential to do it.

Another trend is to work with school youth. Most clubs are accompanied by children's ones and there are youth sections everywhere. Educational programs are linked with an ancient saying - **To Teach Is To Learn**. With the new school reform it acquired a new spurt.

- Igor A. Toloconnicou.

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DON'T LET THEM DESTROY THE WORLD/GIVE PEACE A CHANCE

Under this slogan the competition for the best antimilitary SF story was launched at the end of 1983 by the efforts of the SF Club Tbilisi, CCGLCY, Georgia Writers' Union, Georgian Cosmonautics Section. The hosts invited Moscow writers G. Gurevitch, E. Voiskursky, D. Bilenkin, N. Bercova, a SF secretary of the USSR's Writer's Union, V. Babenco, and the chairman of the young writers seminar to form a judging panel. Nodar Dumbadze, a secretary of Ge. W.U. met the guests. At the meeting SF in Georgia was discussed. The most active members of Tbilisi clubs (Phaeton, Mercury and Helios) participated, as well as B. Zavgorodny (Volgograd).

The contest's results were determined during the period 1-5 April, 1984. The six best stories were chosen after two heats among more than 60 contestants.

The First Places: L. & E. Lukins (Volgograd, TIME'S WIND)
V. Shatilov (Rostov By Don, EARTH ATTRACTION)

The Second Places: I. Shevshenco (Gorlovka, CONTACT)
V. Tarasov (Kaliningrad, ALFANT)

The Third Places: A. Zlotnik (Kishinev)
V. Petrov (Tbilisi, PHAETON)

In addition to the above, there were special prizes for humour, originality, etc.

An amiable host prepared a large cultural programme for arriving guests. They were also shown the historical sights of Tbilisi and suburbs. On the last day a farewell dinner was given. At the present time, Phaeton and the Georgian Writers Union are preparing an anthology based on material from the competition.

- Boris Zavgorodny.

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R E V I E W S - Boris Zavgorodny.

A WATCHMAN TO MY BROTHER by Vladimir Mihailov, Liesma publishing house. 375pp.

Soviet readers know the author well. He published his first story, A SPECIAL NECESSITY, in EXPLORER magazine in 1962. Afterwards it was issued as a book at Riga in 1963. Other works then followed: SPUTNICK, A STEP FORWARD; BLACK CRANES; THE SOURCES; THE STREAM ON JAPET, etc.



The novel A WATCHMAN TO MY BROTHER, published in 1976 has met a warm reception. The book quickly became a bibliographical rarity. A general opinion is that novel was the best work of 1976. It remains the most popular book up to now. I wish to remark that I have been able to buy it only a short time ago and for an astronomical price at that. Why all this uproar?

A big part has been played by the writer's manner, his intonation throughout the novel, the characters and the theme. One is intrigued from the first page. Judge for yourselves: 'Dimly I recollect the day of my funeral, but the day of my death stands more sharply before my eyes. To be exact it wasn't a day; the day was over, a September day of seventy three. To define more precisely - the September of nineteen seventy three. To define once more for those who still do not understand, it took place in the twentieth century, so abysmally long ago...'

Our contemporary died but he died only to us. Mankind chose a way to the future which hasn't been seen by futurologists and has constructed a beautiful happy world. But soon a problem arises connected with travelling in FTL ships. It has become clear that mankind has lost some qualities needed for a successful flight. To solve this it was decided to enlist a crew from

the past by combing through time. (Something like THE TIME MERCENARIES by Philip E. High).

Here is a list of characters:-

The Navigator - George was one of 300 spartans defending Thermopylae. He's suffering from the thought that he's alive while all the others are dead.

The Captain - Uldemir is our contemporary.

The Computerman - the monk Nicodim treats the computer like a good spirit.

The First Pilot - they call him Knight, but his true name is Ritter von Eck. His constant expression is "As for us, knights..."

The Second Pilot - Peter came from so deep in time that the Egypt of the pharaohs had been for him a bright future.

The Engineer - Flexible Arm lived near the Great Lakes. Poker-faced, calm and a born engineer.

And the two Science Instructors Shuvalov and Averov, who live in this future.

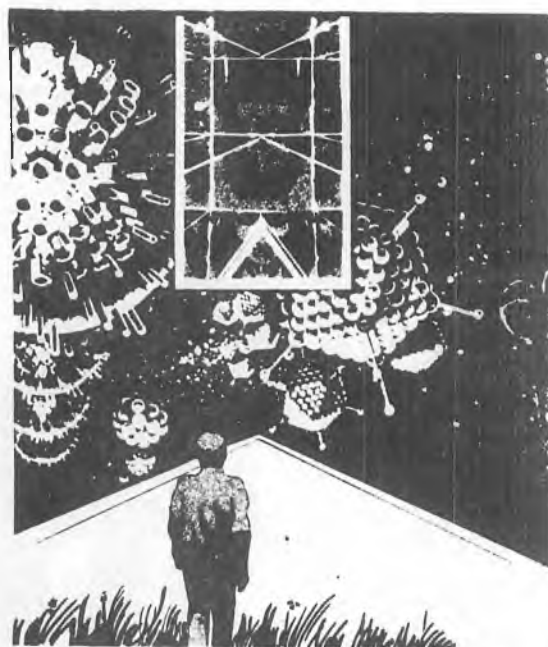
The expedition has the task of checking a date about some scientific matters and star probes. The expedition was successful but just before the end Shuvalov discovers that a star close to our sun is going nova. The spaceship returns to the star and it is decided to extinguish it straight away. However there is an inhabited planet. The operation is put off. They go down by shuttle and they find out that the inhabitants are descendants of earth colonists. The cosmonauts try to explain the coming end, but all in vain. "What can happen" they hear in answer. "We look at our sun in the mornings and evenings." Events multiply like an avalanche. The cosmonauts plan to seize power, to communicate with guerrillas. Shuvalov is imprisoned and the real situation becomes clear.

Some colonists use an old earth invention to keep the star from going nova. They pump excess energy into another space with united psi force. To concentrate towers are needed which Shuvalov is sent to build. This development outlines the end of the novel. The spaceship starts off and the novel is concluded with the Captain's words: "I'm not a watchman to my brother. But I am his defender/champion. I'm his and my son's and my love's too.."

The novel is over, but something is left unsaid. In 1983 a sequel appeared - COME THEN AND WE CONSIDER, published by Liesma, 351pp. The sequel did not justify the hopes of those who wanted repetition. The chief characters remain but this is all. The crew finished a new voyage to the stars and was on the way back when it was plunged suddenly into 'space opera' adventures.

The described earth is far in the future for us but it is always a child to a supercivilization. A few times in the novel a Farmer appears who grows planets and civilizations, and a Master who thinks about the development of all the Universe.

The crew finds itself between warring planets - the military groups created a chain of dangerous changes in space. If it isn't stopped straight away the destruction would spread into the universe. The main thought of the novel shows a technocratic civilization's senselessness with uncontrolled development and philosophic meditation.



Владимир Михайлов

ТОГДА ПРИДИТЕ,
И РАССУДИМ

ПРИКЛЮЧЕНИЯ
ФАНТАСТИКА
ПУТЕШЕСТВИЯ

QUALITY

BY PETER BRODIE

Lurgo's drove the floater straight in off the jam-packed street, knowing that one of his clones would be watching for his arrival and activating the garage door.

As he shut down the car, he stepped out of the basement elevator, carrying a mass of twisted, drying clay. Another sculptive failure. He wondered how his painting was coming along.

"Bad luck again, Lurg?"

"Yeah," he replied, shoving the mess into the disposal in the corner. "Almost had it this time. Just couldn't capture the urgency, though." He shook his head sadly and looked at himself in the car. "Coming?"

"In a minute."

"Don't be late for dinner this time. You know how you feel about the food going cold."

"Stop nagging. You sound like me."

"Okay." Lurgo's said, heading for the elevator, but shot back: "Just don't start complaining to me when you get angry at yourself for not appreciating a well-prepared meal."

"Phah," he replied. The elevator winked shut. His hand went to the small case on the car seat, containing the partnership contract he'd signed in secret with Marlo's from work. Both of her would be arriving in a couple of days. They'd agreed that living at his place would be cheaper all round since she had jobs, the other being the editor of a large circulation leisure magazine.

The only trouble was how to tell himself? I might get jealous. After all, didn't I cook and clean and keep the home comfy and interesting?

He felt he knew himself but doubt nagged at him. And what if he all wanted a partner? Marlo's and he couldn't afford to keep twelve people, even on their combined salaries. Well, if that was the case, he'd have to get another job, which was next to impossible. And wouldn't I kick up a fuss, anyway? Or.... no, he couldn't do away with any of him, he'd become used to himself over the years.

As he emerged from the car, flute music wafted down from above and he heard himself dictating some flowing prose. Perhaps he'd finally write the best-seller he'd been working at for so long now? Oh us.

Lurgo's punched for the elevator. As it sighed open he reflected on the complexity of modern living and hugged the case to himself for reassurance. I just bet I'm going to start in on myself, out of habit, he thought, as the door closed.

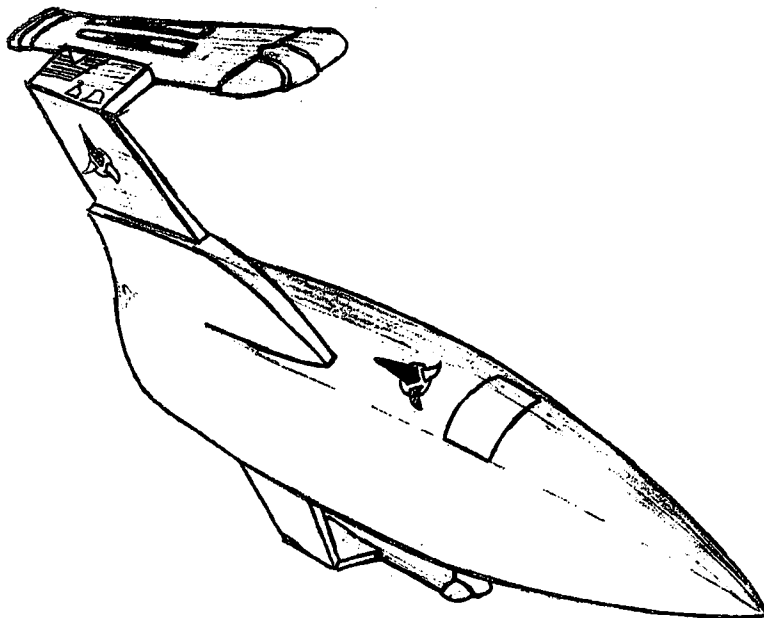
- Peter Brodie.

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THREE ASTRONAUTS

They sat in silence high within the ships,
Nor knew some greedy earthling made a slip,
So close, so close to their last breath,
The end of countdown, and a flaming death.
And seldom mentioned any name
Not of some man of evil fame.
Their names escape us, these the great.
They also suffered a bitter fate,
And also serve who only sit and wait.

- Raymond L. Clancy.



MY DEN

- DIANE FOX

THE PLAINS by Gerald Murnane. Norstrilian Press, Australian hardcover, (c) 1982. A\$9.95. Also published in paperback by Penguin (1984). A\$4.95.

This book is not a common or garden space opera - its strength is ideas, not action. The reader whose concept of SF is centred on Robert A. Heinlein or Arthur C. Clarke - or even Harlan Ellison - would be reluctant to call it SF at all. Of course alternate history is one of the staple devices of SF. The alternate Inner Australia of this book, rejecting the simplistic attitudes of Coastal Australia in favour of discovery of its own inner strengths and values, is something that could have been described as a standard alien culture. Murnane does indirectly and by subtle contrast use the Plains culture's values to comment on the silly cultural cringe by depicting a society which is too wrapped up in its own high opinion of itself.

**THE PLAINS
THE PLAINS
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THE PLAINS
THE PLAINS
THE PLAINS**

GERALD MURNANE

THE PLAINS is a multileveled book. There is so much talk of incredible subtleties of meaning that the reader is almost forced to read between the lines. The plot is simple. The narrator, a would-be director from Coastal Australia, travels the Plains in the hope of learning the true spirit of its people. He is joining a group of scholars and artists who are hoping to gain the patronage of rich and powerful landowners. Plains culture is like Renaissance Italy - vastly erudite nobles gain prestige from encouraging and supporting intellectuals. At last the narrator becomes a permanent house guest of a vastly prestigious and powerful man, regarded with awe even by his fellow aristocrats not only for his wealth but for his demigod-like confidence and aesthetic profundity and subtlety. (I suspect also that he is a good judge of character.)

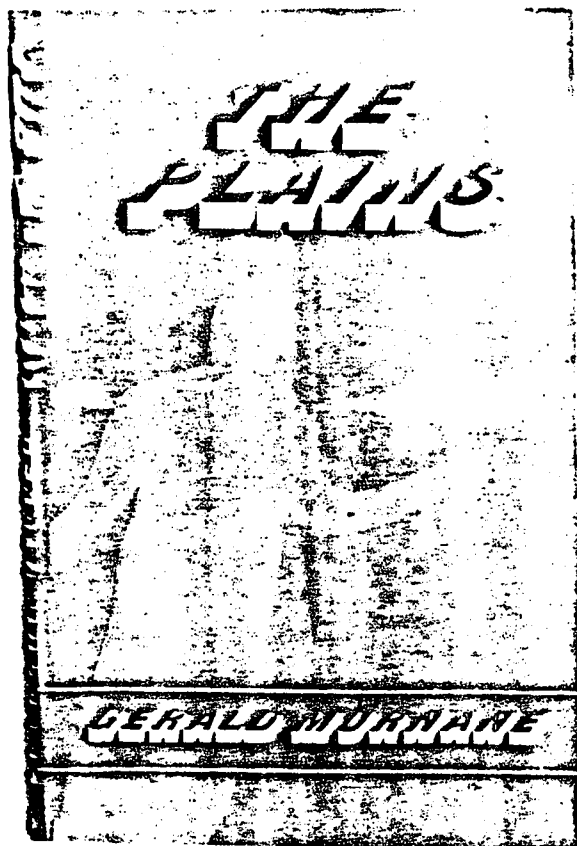
The narrator spends the rest of his life at the landowner's beautiful mansion, reading and writing in its well-stocked large library, taking photos of his host's family, friends and acquaintances. He never does get around to making the much-discussed film, but somehow

this does not seem in the least bit surprising. His host has a beautiful daughter and a bored, unhappy and obviously intelligent wife. The reader's conditioned expectations are not fulfilled - the narrator prefers contemplation to action (or even communication). In fact he gives the impression of being so sensitive as to consider not only action, but facts, crude and irrelevant. The pleasure of having made a film (let alone the tiresome practical details of the actual work itself) can never compare with the joys of endless speculation over the infinite nuances of his image of the planned film.

According to the narrator, the Plains people have a very similar philosophy. But it is obvious that he prefers speculation to observation, and I suspect he is probably completely wrong about them. His views seem to come from very rarified speculations and somewhat abstracted social histories, and he is again, very careful not to look too closely at the reality he wishes to evoke. Often THE PLAINS is reminiscent not only of Borges at his most ironic and paradoxical, but of Frederick Crews' THE POOH

PERPLEX - a parodying of aesthetic pretensions by carrying them to an extreme and applying them to the unlikeliest and often the most trivial subjects. The narrator actually comes across, in his refined and endlessly intellectual-without-contents way, as being rather amoral. Certainly he never comments on the structure of the society of his adopted culture, but takes it at face value, and seems utterly unaware that it might be commented on. He is the ideal pet intellectual, perfect for reinforcing the self-esteem of small but powerful cliques who may gain status by advocating some of his concepts, but quite unlikely to offend by mentioning embarrassing social injustices. (Nor will he seduce his host's womenfolk, or even embarrass by actually creating a work of art which could have flaws for other rival aesthetes to ridicule. That is what I mean about the rich being a good judge of character.)

I was fascinated by one of the two occasions when the Plainsmen were heard to speak with their own voices rather than through the abstractions and generalisations of the narrator. The rich landowners were in town to select intellectuals to which they might extend patronage, and were interviewing them one by one, at the same time carrying on a most abstruse, intelligent and multisubject conversation amongst themselves, and drinking endlessly with little sign of being overcome by alcohol. They come across as rather larger-than-life figures, but we also get a few hardcore facts about the culture - women are regarded either as ladies, to be secluded indoors and protected even from the sunlight, or as whores - who are usually suntanned all over like Coastal Australian women, or the Plains concept of Coastal women. It is obvious a highly sexist and socially rigid culture which permits mild eccentricity but probably frowns on any genuine attempt at change, or at breaking free from stereotype. There is also absolutely no mention of Aborigines, and in a book of this subtlety I don't think it is an oversight on the author's part - it seems in fact a very sinister comment on the history of the Plains culture.



Of course, most people would tend to take this book at face value and react in exactly the manner of the intellectual cliques the author describes with such paradoxical relish. In fact, this may be the correct impression, and my own view of the book as a very subtle and understated yet devastating satire may be simply another piece of self-deception. Certainly any number of differing reactions may be equally valid. Like Wilson and Shea's ILLUMINATUS Murnane's THE PLAINS (though on a smaller and gentler scale) is an intellectual stimulant. It can also be seen as a rather more complex literary version of a Rubik's cube (which is a compliment - books which are, or which inspire, good games are rare). Still another view is possible - that the book is simply a load of pretentiousness, like its main character's endless wankery about his film. Whatever it is - and it is probably all of these things and more - the book is worth reading - one of the most unusual Australian SFnal novels I have yet seen.

NOTE: After finishing my review of THE PLAINS, my suspicion that I might have fallen flat on my face without realizing it was justified. I have had the earlier hardcover version of the book for some years and have read it cover to cover. However, there

was a rather obvious physical fact about the book that I never noticed. When I removed the dustjacket for Ron to photocopy for THE MENTOR, I realized that there was not one, but two dustjackets, one inside the other. The outer jacket is severely plain and in tones of pale grey, suggesting the neutral tone of voice of the book. The inner jacket is somewhat more elaborate, has a somewhat abstracted outline of a human figure, and is bright blue. This is almost certainly deliberate - the packaging of the book is obviously intended to reflect its multilateral meanings. Actually I cannot help feeling that the inner cover should really have been much gaudier, in order to give a bit more contrast and point to this very subtle and witty joke at the expense of overly confident reviewers like myself.

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THE WILD ONES by A. Bertram Chandler. Paul Collins P/L. Australian Paperback. (c) 1984. A\$5.95. Cover by GASPP.

Across the bottom of the front cover of this book is printed 'A. Bertram Chandler's last complete novel'. It's a sad but interesting fact that nothing will cause as great a sudden increase in the sale of an author's books as his or her death (although the use of one or more of the author's books as basis for a film or TV series is quite effective). THE WILD ONES should therefore prove popular, but not for this reason alone. A far more solid reason for its probable popularity is Captain Chandler's competence as an author. A fine storyteller, though not a great writer he was an excellent, painstaking and thorough craftsman. His books can be relied upon to entertain intelligently, and their facts are well researched and fascinating in their own right (the fine alternate-history KELLY COUNTRY is a fine example of this detailed yet fast-paced work).



Chandler's prose is unpretentious, straightforward, yet very professional, so I was startled to see a few clumsy and even disjointed sentences here and there in THE WILD ONES - obviously the Captain simply didn't get the time to polish the prose and correct these mistakes before he died. The book is less good than it could be for this reason, but at least we have it, and this is something to be grateful for.

It is one of the Grimes novels, and full of rousing old-fashioned adventure, comedy, sex (zestfully described and realistic). Some of my favourite characters from earlier Grimes novels are in it (notably the Kangaroo-descended female martial artists Shirl and Darleen). There is a fascinating major new character, Seiko the Wild Robot, and another unforgettable character, the 'disaster prone' Calamity Cassie.

THE WILD ONES is a sequel to the recently-published book THE LAST AMAZON. John Grimes has returned (briefly) to Earth. He is now captain of the space merchant ship 'Sister Sue', and also working as a troubleshooter for the Terran Service. Soon he's given another task. A colony of extremely nasty, human supremacist and anti-technology religious fanatics are brutally slaughtering a race of alien seals for their pelts. The seals, known as Silkies, are apparently highly intelligent (like whales and dolphins) which would make killing them not only cruel but legally genocide. Grimes' old enemy Drongo Kane is involved (though he doesn't come into the story in person). Grimes must go to the planet and try to provoke an 'incident' which will give the Survey Service an excuse to move in and clean up.

The pace of the book is rather leisurely. A number of early chapters describe Grimes' visit to his parents at Alice Springs. Shirl and Darleen come with him,

wanting to see the land where their ancestors evolved. Plenty of Captain Chandler's interests and enthusiasms appear here later - airships, abundant and joyfully described meals, discussions of Australian history.

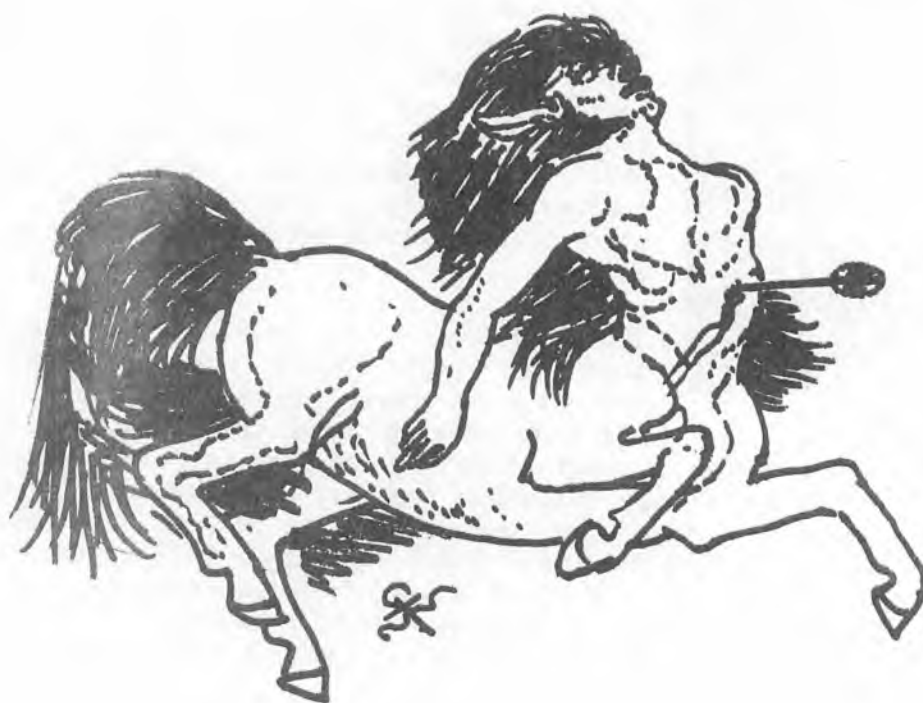
The title seems to refer to 'wild' robots, who have developed independent personalities and free will (or its equivalent), a little like the 'replicants' of BLADERUNNER. Seiko, the Japanese-manufactured transparent female robot, has very much a mind and will of her own, though fortunately she chooses to stick by the Asimov Laws of Robotics (apparently she **can** destroy a human life if it is necessary to do so in order to protect other human or sentient lives). However, THE WILD ONES could also refer to the non-technological Silkies, or even to the colonists, who have rejected civilization in favour of the most brutish kind of primitive barbarism.

There's a very old-fashioned decency and dignity about this book, blended with not only pragmatic shrewdness but with a somewhat nineteen-sixty-ish nature mysticism. There's also an appreciation that technology is an expression of human intelligence and hence ultimately part of nature (the villains are very hostile to 'godless technology' unless it is useful to kill something). THE WILD ONES is also a very feminist book, though women (being human individuals and hence imperfect) are shown with as many character flaws as men have. There's even a scene where a character manifests the power of the Goddess, and abundant and semi-mystical scenes of interspecies communication by music and emotional empathy.

A most satisfying and enjoyable book.

- Diane Fox.

-----\$\$\$\$\$-----



KNOWN SIMPLY AS SS4 3 3

such an exciting marvelous even slightly
kinky puzzle you are
sucking off gas from other more normal stars

you are one or maybe two neutron
stars of extreme density small for your
hard weight you swallow

pieces of your brethren
in spirals playfully perhaps gathering
them into a disc

in and around a centre which may be your
umbilical cord or even more
exotic link if you are

siamesely two or your core
navel or belly-door to
hidden fire if you are

only one united with yourself
forever as Narcissus in
reflection and then

having danced widdershins around
upon this golden threshing floor
deep enough in grain to bury

the king's cat to his full replacement
value the great mouser corpse now
held upright by the tail until

the complete pouring on
of payment harvest has been done
thereupon you as it were kneel

and swallow all that is there and then
overexcited spew it out again as if
chocolate from one breast strawberry

milkshake from the other in a geminical
twin nozzle fountaining wind two hundred
times the normal speed anything

anywhere ever has recorded except only
light so fast it leaves us blindly
startled wondering

and then wondering again at whom have
the twinsome jets material for love
or hate destruction or

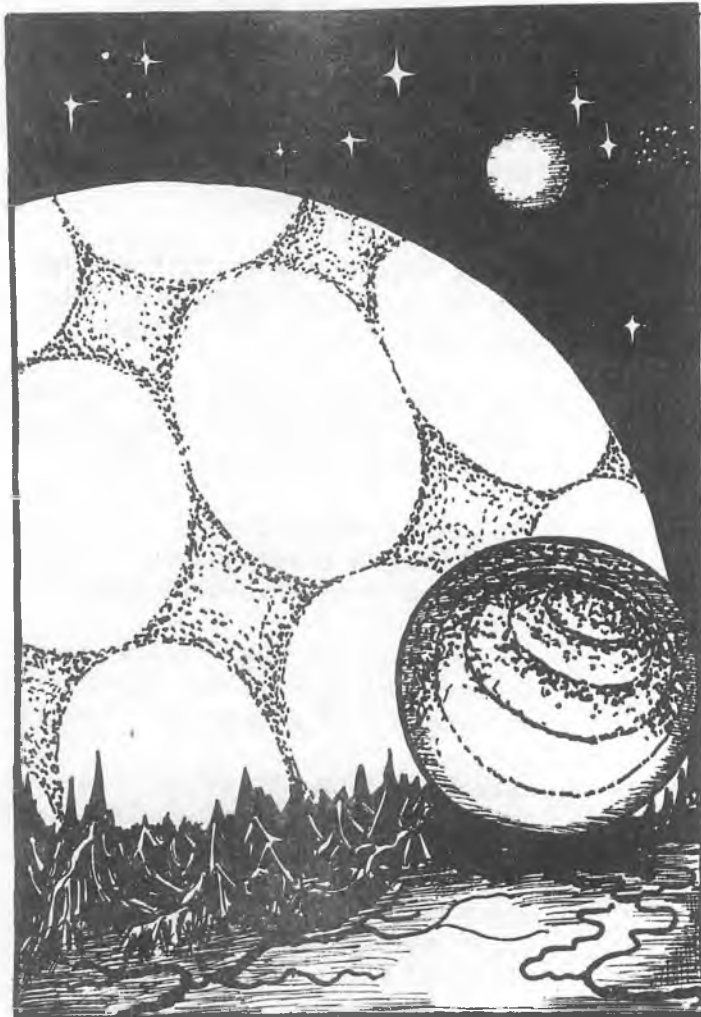
a new creation
really and truly been aimed
jealous then as a less-favoured child

mouths open for manna that will never come
at least now we admit the truth
no matter how we rig the figures

it is not us you squirt at with your juice
it is not us you aim love you love you not
to blow away like dandelion down

we are not after all the worshippers
you aim now to reward
with good and evil

- Steve Sneyd.



A. BERTRAM CHANDLER.

A P R O F I L E

A(rthur) Bertram Chandler was born in Aldershot, England on March 28th, 1912. In 1928, he began a long and varied sea career by joining the Sun Shipping Company as an Apprentice. During his long association with the sea and ships, Captain Chandler travelled widely and accumulated a great deal of experience, all of which proved valuable when he began writing science fiction.

Bertram Chandler has been a reader of science fiction since childhood, having started with material by Verne and Wells and such magazines as SCIENCE AND INVENTION and AMAZING STORIES. During World War II, he visited New York for the first time and met the editor of his then favourite magazine - John W. Campbell of ASTOUNDING. John suggested that Bert make the change from Faithful Reader to Regular Contributor. The next time he visited New York, he presented John with the story, THIS MEANS WAR (ASTOUNDING, May 1944).

A prolific short story writer for many years, Bert has contributed to just about every magazine in the field (and quite a few not). After the Great Crash, during which many sf magazines collapsed, he switched to full length novels. Bertram created a series character "in a moment of mental aberration", and that character just keeps going and going and going.

His novels and short stories have been widely translated - into Japanese, Russian, Polish, Hungarian, French, Spanish, Dutch, Italian and quite possibly one or two more.

He completed an If Of History novel, called "Kelly Country" in 1983.

He was a Senior Fellow of the Literary Board of Australia Council, 1980-81. Other awards include Ditmars in 1969, 1971, 1974 and 1976; The Invisible Little Man Award, 1975 and the Seiun-Sho (Japanese) 1975.

Bertram Chandler was a member of the Australian Society of Authors, P.E.N. Internation, Science Fiction Writers of America, Australian Science Fiction Foundation (as a patron) and the British Interplanetary Society (as a fellow).

Bibliography:

THE RIM OF SPACE	Avalon 1961, Ace 1962
BRING BACK YESTERDAY	Ace 1961
RENDEZVOUS ON A LOST WORLD	Ace 1961
THE HAMELIN PLAGUE	Monarch 1963
BEYOND THE GALACTIC RIM/THE SHIP FROM OUTSIDE	Ace Double 1963
THE COILS OF TIME/INTO THE ALTERNATIVE UNIVERSE	Ace Double 1963, 1972
GLORY PLANET	Avalon 1964
THE DEEP REACHES OF SPACE	Herbert Jenkins 1964,
Mayflower-Dell 1967	
EMPRESS OF OUTER SPACE/THE ALTERNATE MARTIANS	Ace Double 1965
SPACE MERCENARIES	Ace 1965
NEBULA ALERT	Ace 1967
CONTRABAND FROM OUTER SPACE	Ace 1967
THE ROAD TO THE RIM	Ace 1967

THE RIM GODS	Ace 1968
FALSE FATHERLAND (Aust. title)	Horwitz 1968
SPARTAN PLANET (US title)	Dell 1969
CATCH THE STAR WINDS	Lancer 1969
THE DARK DIMENSIONS/ALTERNATE ORBITS	Ace Double 1971
TO PRIME THE PUMP	Curtis 1971
THE SEA BEASTS	Curtis 1971
THE HARD WAY UP	Ace 1972
GATEWAY TO NEVER/THE INHERITORS	Ace Double 1972
THE BITTER PILL	Wren 1974
THE BIG BLACK MARK	Daw 1975
THE BROKEN CYCLE	Robert Hale 1975, Daw 1975
THE WAY BACK	Robert Hale 1976, Daw 1976
THE FAR TRAVELLER	Robert Hale 1977, Daw 1979
STAR COURIER	Robert Hale 1977, Daw 1979
TO KEEP THE SHIP	Robert Hale 1979, Daw 1979
MATILDA'S STEPCHILDREN	Robert Hale 1979, Void
(excerpts) 1979	
FRONTIER OF THE DARK	Berkley-Putnam 1982
THE ANARCH LORDS	Daw 1981
THE DEEP REACHES OF SPACE	No details
UP TO THE SKY IN SHIPS/IN AND OUT OF QUANDARY with Lee Hoffman. NESFA Press	
1982KELLY COUNTRY	Penguin 1983
STAR LOOT	Robert Hale 1981

Recent ReIssues:

THE ROAD TO THE RIM/THE HARD WAY UP	Ace Double 1978
THE INHERITORS/GATEWAY TO NEVER	Ace Double 1978
THE DARK DIMENSIONS/THE RIM GODS	Ace Double 1978
INTO THE ALTERNATE UNIVERSE/CONTRABAND FROM OUTER SPACE	Ace Double 1979
THE COMMODORE AT SEA (orig. ALTERNATE ORBITS)/SPARTAN PLANET	Ace Double 1979
THE RIM OF SPACE/THE SHIP FROM OUTSIDE	Ace Double 1979
THE RIM OF SPACE	Allison & Busby 1981, Sphere
1981	
WHERE THE DREAM DIES (orig. RENDEZVOUS ON A LOST WORLD)	Sphere Books 1981
BEYOND THE GALACTIC RIM	Sphere 1982, Allison & Busby
1982	
BRING BACK YESTERDAY	Allison & Busby 1981. Sphere
1982	

This list of novels and collections was correct as of 28/12/1981. Additions were sent by the National Library's Australian Bibliographic Network and Nikki White.

I N M E M O R Y O F A . B . C H A N D L E R

You set your sight so far outwards
 that your own light far raced forwards
 you've left us earth bound
 broken gravity's bond
 forever now you can said
 along the edge of night
 blazing a star bright trail
 burning nova ever bright.

- Julie Vaux.

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THE CLOUD SHIPS

BY GAIL NEVILLE

"... and now the latest news on the manned space vessel Ariel. A NASA spokesperson said today that no signal has been received from the ill-fated ship for over a month, since it was last heard from as it began its historic exploration beyond our solar system. The world's first manned flight into outer space is presumed lost. Our film shows the pilot, Commander Vance Strickman, boarding the craft on the morning of take-off..."

Vance opened his eyes. There was sweet perfume in the air, a feeling of languor and softness as if he were enveloped in a fragrant cloud that bathed and supported him. He felt no pain; he had all his limbs, and was relaxed and comfortable. He knew he must be the luckiest guy alive, because the last thing he remembered was the Bogie appearing from nowhere, a blinding flash of light, and the certain knowledge that he was about to die.

Perhaps he was dead. Perhaps this was the "next stage" that the Necrologists spoke about, in the evolution of that nebulous object they called the soul. Vance had never known or cared if he had one.

Perhaps - and this was more likely, and appealed to the romantic side of his nature - perhaps he had been captured by the Bogie and brought to an alien civilization to be examined. Perhaps they had put him here, in this place of softness and calm, because they feared he might be fragile, and die of fright, like a trapped rabbit, before they had a chance to find out anything about him. If they wanted to harm him he would surely be dead by now, and if he were dead, he wouldn't be feeling so good - unless, of course, the Necrologists were right.

But he was tired of endlessly speculating. He liked action. Sitting up, he discovered that he was actually enveloped in some kind of cloud, and through the mists he could see what was below.

The cloud was suspended above the surface of an immense planet. The flat, smooth fields that filled the horizon lay not far below, yet he was held as securely as if he were in a hammock. The fragrance was coming from drifts of flowers that covered the fields below, blooming as far as the eye could see. To wherever he looked, it was like a gigantic flower garden.

I want to get down there, he thought - I want to walk around.

No sooner had the thought formed in his head than the cloud gently lowered him to the surface and he was able to step off. The grass felt meltingly soft beneath his feet. Away from the shrouding cloud, he saw also that he was naked, which was slightly disconcerting. He wasn't adverse to being disrobed, but he liked to know who was doing it. Here he couldn't even be sure that his nurse - or whatever - had been human. Still, it might only be part of the Next Stage. He vaguely recalled the third law of Necrology, which was that entering the Next Stage naked symbolized your freedom from all the petty material troubles and desires that had plagued you in life. Vance thought it sounded very dull. But now he was here it didn't seem boring after all. In fact, it was very pleasant to walk amongst the flowers and feel the soft petals brushing against his legs. Of course, it might pall eventually, but he hoped by then to have discovered some advantages to being dead.

Could the dead feel hungry? He did - and thirsty. But though there was apparently no end to the flowers, he could see no signs of food or water. Longingly he thought of a peach tree, dripping with ripe, golden fruit, and a pool of clear water - and suddenly, there they were, the tree spreading its laden branches over his head, the pool sparkling at his feet. He knelt and splashed handfuls of the water into his mouth. It was sweet and cold, exactly like a mountain stream back home. The fruit tasted just the way it had in his boyhood, a natural, juicy taste

that peaches hadn't had for decades. He tossed the stone in the air, and laughed aloud. He was getting the hang of this place now. Whatever he wanted, he just had to think about it, and there it was.

Almost involuntarily, the next thought began to form in his mind. I want to see whoever is running this place. He dismissed all thoughts of the Next Stage. He was alive, he knew it, he felt it, and he wanted to know who or what had brought him here.

Something appeared on the horizon. At first he thought it was another cloud, and paid it no heed. He was looking for something alive, at ground level. But then a flash of light made him look harder - it was a long way away, but advancing toward him at tremendous speed. Its size astonished him - it was huge and not a cloud at all, but a ship of some description, a mighty ship as big as a cumulous cloud.

I want to come aboard!

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Garuda, what news of the Wanderer?

There is no change. The healing will be slow. But the One is fortunate we found it in time.

And what of the softshell it captured?

It is a most fascinating creature, Rama. I have been playing with it all morning. It is fully recovered now, and it has been a most interesting thought pattern. It has been making things for itself in the gardens, and now it is seeking communion with me. For an organic, it is a remarkable creature.

Be careful, Garuda. You know nothing of it.

It is harmless, Rama. And such a pretty thing. It is so tiny and delicate, and beautifully made. I think I will keep it.

Do not get too fond of it. Perhaps we shall be able to return it to where it came from.

I should miss it. It's an engaging little thing.

I must return to my duties. Take care, Garuda.

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"Who's in charge of this ship?" Vance demanded - if it was a ship. Whoever owned it had to be very alien indeed. He could recognise nothing that might be a normal control of any kind, and he couldn't tell whether he'd been transported to the flight deck or the bilges.

I am Garuda. There is no one in charge of me. I am a free being.

The booming voice seemed to resonate inside his head. A little less confidently, he cleared his throat.

"I want to speak to the Captain."

I am Garuda. Commune with me, little one.

"Where are you?"

I am here. I am communing with you.

Perhaps it was a talking computer, a particularly advanced model. Vance hunted around for the right way to address it.

"What is your function?"

There was a brief silence while Garuda considered this.

Why do you ask me that? Am I required to have a function? I... exist. I am. That is function enough, surely?

"Why do you exist?"

Because I am.

"Who made you?"

Little creature, who made you? The voice sounded vastly amused.

"How would I know?"

Then how do you expect me to tell you how, or why, I came to be. I am, I exist, my life is to sail the clouds above Dhara and tend the gardens of thought. What more needs to be said. One does not ask such questions.

"Something like you - a ship, a machine - doesn't just happen." Vance explained patiently. "Someone has to make your first. Someone has to be involved - people like me - well, not quite like me, exactly, but beings, with brains, hands maybe, some kind of intelligence. Huge intelligence, to make something like you. Then there has to be a crew, a shipmaster - someone or something to press the buttons and read the meters. All I want to know is - who are they?"

Something very like a laugh seemed to erupt around him.

What an entertaining little creature you are. What are you called?

"I am Commander Vance Strickman of the Earthship Ariel--"

And what is a Commander Vance Strickman?

"I told you. I am in command of the Earthship Ariel--"

I know nothing of these things. What is an earthship?

"It's a space vessel built by humans, People like me."

Humans. That interests me. What is Humans?

"Humans are people. People build, make things, create."

You are organic. Are Humans all organic?

"Of course we are."

Then how can you say you make anything? Organic forms are made, little one, they do not make. You cannot deceive me. You are the Wanderer's toy, are you not? It made you to pass the time on its journey.

"Who in hell is the Wanderer?"

The one who brought you here, little one. The one who came seeking us.

"You mean the Ariel? But it didn't make me! We made it - it's only a ship, a machine. It's not human. I am."

I know, little one. A sigh seemed to fill the air. There is something seriously wrong with your thought patterns. It was clever of Ariel to give you such a delicately precise intelligence, but an experiment is, after all, only an experiment. You need some modifications. Go make some more things in the gardens. I shall commune with Rama on this.

Vance once more found himself standing on the surface of the planet, gazing up helplessly as the ship sped away.

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Rama, what of the Wanderer? I have ascertained its name to be Ariel.

There are disturbing developments, my friend. It appears he has suffered hideous injuries and mutilations. He cannot commune with us, he has no mind left, and what has been wrought on him is too horrible to tell. Yet we must tell of it, and commune on it, because these wicked injuries have been inflicted on Ariel by such creatures as the one you harbour.

What do you mean? How could such creatures as these - mere organic forms - harm a cloud ship?

The Wanderer - Ariel - is not a cloud ship, not one of us. But from what we have found in what is left in that poor mind, we have ascertained that the creatures have a homeworld. They use machines, inorganic forms without an intelligence of their own, as slaves. Perhaps they thought Ariel was one such, and used him to travel between their worlds. They have mutilated his interiors better to serve their purpose - truly they are barbarians! But what would you expect from organic forms who have striven to become sentient beings? I find the whole concept utterly revolting.

My little creature - what will become of it?

It is dangerous, Garuda - be rid of it!

How? I cannot destroy its form. It is forbidden.

There must be a way. Soon we must all commune on these creatures - for whose thought has made them sentient? Who dreamed such a thing and sent it sailing on the seas of night?

Who indeed? Whose mind is capable of such inventions?

I know of one, Garuda. Attend to your creatures.

I may have to make a new thought.

I am beginning to fear, Garuda, that some of your thoughts will return to haunt you.

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On the surface of Dhara, Vance lay on the grass, watching real clouds drifting lazily overhead. He dreamed of home, of his parents, of the last time he had heard a human voice, and around him flowers rose and drifted and carried his dreams into the fields beyond. He had been privileged to be chosen for the greatest adventure of mankind. But he could not tell them what he had seen. Perhaps the aliens would give him his ship back. Perhaps he could still complete his journey, return, and tell them all about the cloud ships, the gardens of thought, the wonders of the universe that were going to be even more wonderful than anyone had imagined.

Above him, veiled in cloud, Garuda looked down and formed his new thought.

It is a pity, such a pity. I cannot simply leave it in the gardens, where it might be happy.

Vance felt the presence above him and leapt to his feet.

"There you are!" He shouted. "I've been waiting for you."

Little one, what do you want?

"I want to go back to my ship, now."

It shall be so.

The gardens seemed to warp around, turn in on themselves and fold up. Vance felt himself twist and bend in unnatural ways, and cried out in sheer terror as he was taken up from the surface of the planet into the hovering clouds that wrapped around him and gathered him in. His cries of terror wracked the atmosphere and then, suddenly, there was silence.

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He was again floating above the gardens of Dhara. They were spread out below in long, rippling waves of green, gold, blue, rose and white, wave after wave of lush lawn and fragrant flower blossoms. A sense of timeless peace suffused his thoughts as he watched the flowers growing, forming blooms and sending them out into the stillness of space like feathery ghosts. Thus did the gardens of thought carry knowledge to the farthest parts of the universe, knowledge believed to be beyond the ken of mere organic forms, created as they were out of this drifting star stuff.

I hope we shall not regret this. Rama said.

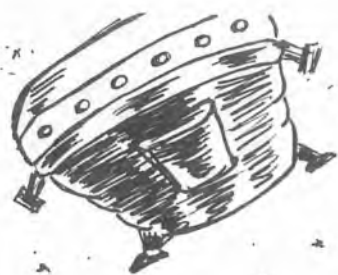
An experiment is an experiment. Garuda reminded him. We must not turn away from the chance of acquiring new thoughts.

But Vance/Ariel - an organic form who aspires to be a cloud ship - who knows what will come of it?

Who knows? A softshell enclosed within the true form - perhaps a new race?

Rama sighed, and the flowers of the garden trembled on their slender stalks. But peace was restored in moments, under the watchful gaze of the new gardener.

- Gail Neville.



"I am the KWISATZ HADERACH
that is enough."
~PAUL-MUAD-DIB.
HOUSE OF ATRIEDES.





Hither came Conan the Cimmerian,
 black haired, sullen eyed, sword in hand,
 a thief, a reaver, a slayer, with gigantic
 melancholies and gigantic mirth, to tread
 the jeweled thrones of the Earth under his
 feet. ~ The Nemidian Chronicles ~ Robert. E. Howard.



THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

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REMARKS

The R. & R. Dept.



HARRY WARNER, Jr., 423 Summit Ave., Hagerstown, Maryland 21740, USA.

I know too little about con finances and arrangements to make a sane proposal about the booking problems brought up in your editorial. But I do wonder if any con anywhere has ever experimented with buying out in advance an entire hotel or motel for the weekend, setting its membership rates high enough to pay the cost, then allowing members to pick their rooms where they please on a first come, first served basis until each room had one occupant or one group, then letting latecomers move in with occupants as they wished. The few fans who insist on privacy wouldn't be happy but those who like lots of company should be ecstatic.

I read Grimesish Grumblings with sadness this time, having recently heard about Bert Chander's death. If the sad news is true, this installment of his column has a macabre undertone, dealing as it does with the alleged end of the world around the time his world really did end.

The problems Michael Hailstone describes in the dullness and belligerence of the general public have been bothering me, too. I don't pretend to know how severe these problems may be and how much worse they've become during my lifetime or whether there is one primary cause for them or a combination of causes. But I suspect one factor that Michael doesn't mention: the vast increase in women's use of tobacco, alcoholic beverages and other drugs during recent decades. There is some evidence that such addiction has a bad effect on the children these women bear in their susceptibility to specific diseases or birth defects. But I wouldn't be surprised if research eventually finds a general overall dulling of the intellect and the conscience because of prenatal effects of such substances. I heard on the radio the other day a report that the Japanese are worried because one-third of the young children in that nation are unable to master properly the knack of using chopsticks. My favourite example of how people are degenerating in the United States is the increasing difficulty so many people, particularly the younger ones, have in parking automobiles. When I was young people seemed to have an innate skill at squeezing an auto into a tight place along a curb or pulling into the exact centre of an angle parking slot. Today, even though the average length of autos has decreased sharply, most drivers seem so unskilled that they will jockey back and forth a half-dozen times to try to park close to the curb in a space large enough to accommodate two autos, and at the local shopping centers, I doubt if more than one-fourth of the parked cars on any given day are fully within the parked spaces.

Peter Brodie's little story is a gem. It's a shame THE MENTOR goes mostly fans rather than to professionals. I'm sure a lot of authors would enjoy it and maybe even the more objective type of editors, too.

I'm no expert on the American Civil War but I think its turning point may have been the general policy of the North not to go out looking for big battles in the early years of the war. The South was bound to lose if the war continued long enough, unless the South could win enough major battles to create political havoc in the North. Some of the commanders of the North are still harshly criticized for reluctance to go into battle but I think they were smart, not to take any chances.

DIANE FOX, PO Box 1194, North Sydney 2060.

Interesting interview with Damien Broderick. I've read SORCERER'S WORLD which is a bit hard to find - not a great book but a fairly average competent sword and sorcery - and DREAMING DRAGONS which I liked very much indeed. I have JUDAS MANDALA but have not yet read same, also TRANSMITTERS which I haven't finished. (ditto for VALANCIES.) I did read ZEITGEIST MACHINE and liked many of the stories greatly. MAN RETURNED I have read, but don't have a copy at the moment (worse luck).

I'd agree with Damien's prediction about the direction of SF in the future - except that though this will probably be one of the most aesthetically important changes, there will probably be a multitude of other directions that SF will take as well. For example, there's already been an increased feedback between fiction and role-playing games. These are a fairly recent artform and one that could have some startling developments in the future. His comments about publishing overseas, though saddening, seem economically valid. Still, what is there to prevent the republishing of a good book? Such as David Lake's mentioned in the list of Australian authors? Does Damien Broderick dislike his work, or is there some sort of feud or rivalry involved? I hope not.

Peter Brodie's I GOT INFLUENCE was a nastily subtle little piece. Wearing someone down by sheer persistence - or was it some sort of slow-working mind control?

Another interesting if somewhat controversial article from John Alderson. His material is fascinating, and most useful - except when he gets carried away by his dislike of women. One example of this is in his discussion of the customs of the Manus Islanders. He mentions that the women have little political or economic power, but do have some spiritual power (they can contact ghosts, an ability usually regarded with awe amongst Melanesians and again usually a man's job!) This would obviously indicate that these people have lost their respect for the spirit world. John Alderson actually says that the spiritual messages the women mediums receive are of a very trivial kind. He then ignores the obvious and says that this indicates the stupidity of the women - rather than the spiritual malaise of the society, which is a reflection of its economic sufferings. These people have been deprived of their valuable land and hence their self-image has taken a battering (the men don't have the spirit to form clubs, and take out their unhappiness on the women). Of course these people would have turned against their religion! One of the basic signs of a society under stress is that religion becomes discarded by the higher ranking members of the group, and becomes "the opium of the people", a distraction and an escape for the lower-ranking members.

John Alderson is also airing his prejudices when he blames the downfall of a culture (from within) upon women bullying their way into men's clubs etc. Most cultures wrecked (from within) probably had the trouble caused by some group of already powerful men figuring out a way to increase their power at the expense of other men (and women - and children for that matter). Consider the Industrial Revolution. And so on. Alderson blames the woes of society on "frustrated old maids", for God's sake. What has caused the great growth of unemployment recently, a source of misery to people of all sexes? Nothing but GREED.

{But Diane, in a woman dominated society those with power - and thus those

THE MENTOR

'figuring out a way to increase their power' - would be women, not men. - Ron.]

Further comments from John re divisions of the human races. I'd always thought there were 4 main types: Caucasian, Negroid, Asian and Aborigines - still, as Caucasians come in very different varieties, from the blonde blue-eyed Nordic variety to the very dark Semetic Arab types, the concept of Aborigines as a darker skinned variant of the Caucasian type seems plausible enough.

MICHAEL HAILSTONE, PO Box 193, Woden, ACT 2602.

I was greatly saddened and shocked to learn of the death of Bert Chandler just two days ago from the front page of the latest AUSTRALIAN SF NEWS, which came at the same time as THE MENTOR 50. I had no idea when I wrote my LoC appearing therein at the beginning of July, that he was dead and had been so for nearly a month. That just goes to show how out of touch I am nowadays. Had I known, I would not have asked those questions of him, both those you have published and those you understandably did not. Sure, I knew he was getting on in years, but he seemed as vigorous as ever and it looked as though he would be around for decades to come. A great loss.

I think it is quite unethical to publish an interview without the interviewee's permission. I once published an interview of Jason Cooper with Don Chipp in CRUX 3, but I took the trouble to write to the senator for permission to publish it before going ahead with it.



Please tell Marc Ortlieb that I am not going overboard with any conspiracy theories in my latest article. The stuff about the secret dental society is no theory of mine; rather it is, as long as Geoffrey Smith is telling the truth, a historical fact. And sure, as I have myself said, just about anything can be linked with cancer. The most relevant point there is the result of experiment on the effect of fluoride on DNA, but I need say no more than that. Marc is quite free to check the sources named at the end of my article. Furthermore, I'd like to point out that, if I do end

up succumbing to ulcers or a heart attack, it won't be from worry or fear about fluoride, but rather anger at the principle of the thing. Of course it is the millions of apathetic Australians like Marc who allow such undemocratic and draconian abominations to be foisted upon us by halfwitted politicians and bureaucrats.

I appreciate James Style's fatherly advice on how to improve my health, even if I don't find it very helpful. A dietary change seems straightforward enough, but I won't ask him to enlarge on "a secure belief rooted in life or death which seem to be physical constants" for fear of unleashing another flood of the incomprehensible gobbledegook I've seen in some of his earlier letters.

ALEX STEWART, 11A Beverly Road, Colchester, Essex, CO3 3NG, England.

I came to GRIMESISH GRUMBLINGS just after I read the news of Chandler's death in ANSIBLE, and it felt really strange; I found it impossible to believe that such a vigorous and witty personality could be silenced by anything. Even now, as I type this, I can't help feeling this will be followed in the loccol by an indignant denunciation of some pratical joker. At the same time, it makes me uncomfortably aware of my own mortality - I'm making my own plans for the future, cons I mean to get to, just as he was, and all of a sudden I've realised there's a small, but finite, chance I'll never get to mine either. All it takes is one worn tyre, a moment's inattention at the kerbside, a lungful of someone else's cancer-stick...

We've all met nutters like that, I'm sure and I always feel sorry for them. I mean, it can't be a lot of fun to be so inadequate, so out of touch with the rest of the world, so obviously irritating to everyone else, can it? The sad thing is, it's fatal to show them any sympathy; if you do, they stick like band-aid. I wonder what he did when the world didn't end on schedule? I suppose it's too much to hope for that a germ of healthy scepticism was planted in whatever passes for his mind?

Michael Hailstone's piece was positively horrifying. I can remember the outcry there was over here when the idea of fluoridation was introduced; environmentalists, civil liberties groups, medical authorities, the world and his granny opposed it. Net result: no fluoride in, so far as I'm aware, virtually the whole of the UK. If it's any consolation though, Australia will probably be the textbook case of the widespread damage done to urban populations by water additives for centureis to come. Glory of a kind, I suppose.

ADRIENNE LOSIN, Mildura Tech., Mildura, Vic 3500.

What a cover! Kerrie's creature reminded me of the movie ALTERED STATES and several gruesome SF stories re cannabalism on sleeper ships. I'm glad there aren't any dark alleys nearby that I have to walk through, as I leaf TM on my way home from work.

I notice some grumblings against John Alderson. I think John's quite a Devil's advocate. Another letter of controversy is Marc Ortlieb's - so fluoridation's making no "individual" wealthy? Upon looking into any legality, vested interests always appear. There is a major chemical supplier. There's a difference between naivety and ignorance. Not wishing to damn with faint praise, but this TM's fiction doesn't fit in as well as that in earlier issues. Maybe my mood at present, no criticism of Peter Brodie intended. I'll have another go at reading it later, as of late my fiction list has included Bradbury, Campbell (Marion), Aldiss, Blish, Woodhouse and Upfield.

It is with profound regret that I acknowledge Bert Chandler's demise. I'm really upset that our last lengthy conversation was at the Worldcon in Chicago a couple of years ago. He gave so freely of his humour and knowledge. His writings are full of naturally flowing anecdotes which make me feel as though I was there too. He was a figure, almost larger-than-life, from an age that's more real, where one's profession was an 'art' (his word), hence one's experiences more vivid. His passing is a shock. My condolences to his family, friends and readers. I'm also sorry that he didn't live to see Aussiecon 2.

BRUCE GILLESPIE, GPO Box 5195AA, Melbourne, Vic 3001.

Congratulations on twenty years, and all that; particularly contratulations on being able to start the whole circus again after letting it go for a few years. That's more than I've been able to do so far, but I keep hoping. I

have a small magazine on stencil which I will send to SFC people as soon as possible; an actual revival of SF COMMENTARY seems a little too breathtaking a possibility at the moment.

I showed the last MENTOR to Damien because he seemed a little abrupt, even for him. And, sure enough, he hadn't seen the article, and was amazed to have such things attributed to his mouth. So an apology from him to me is hardly needed, although an apology from D. Jason Cooper to several people would be in order.

The tenor of Damien's original (attributed) piece did raise interesting thoughts in my mind... Given that there is a division between 'creative' writers and 'critical' writers, why is it that I would much rather read Australia's good sf reviewers and critics than any of our 'creative' sf writers? Why do people like George Turner lend a vividness and succinctness to their critical work that emerges only seldom in their science fiction? I ask this about myself: I find little to like in my own published fiction, but can think of my review/critical articles which I can, at least, read again without wincing. Oldtime fans like you and me can remember Lee Harding's perceptive and entertaining reviews for ASFR. Yes, Lee has done some nice fiction since then, but almost nothing with the zest, the pleasure of using words, which I found in those reviews. There is something about writing sf in this country which is a bit like taking up one's old rugged cross; one doesn't want to be a martyr, but eventually we're called to do Good Deeds and try to achieve Big Things. And that's because the critical act, the fine review, is always looked down upon in sf circles, even when it is fine indeed. A pity, because this kind of attitude makes it difficult to publish critical books in this country. People just don't buy them, even - I have a horrible feeling, although I'd like to see this book published - the THE BEST OF GEORGE TURNER: REVIEWS AND CRITICAL ARTICLES.

GAIL NEVILLE, 34 Second St., Warragamba, NSW 2752.

I am very sorry to hear that Bertram Chandler is dead. It's a shame there will be no more GRUMBLINGS. I must confess, I had read very little of his work in the past, and I enjoyed his GRIMESISH GRUMBLINGS more than the small amount of fiction I have read. He will be missed.

I would like to correct Richard Faulder's impression that I used Carl Sagan to give my story 'scientific validity'. I heard it several years ago on a TV documentary about UFOs. I am not a scientist, as you must be aware, nor do I try to give the impression of being one. I am interested in ideas, and how they work on a personal, human level... and just because one writer has, in your opinion, the 'right' approach to a subject, does that mean others cannot use alternative approaches? I'm sure you can't mean that, unless you want all creative thinking to grind to a complete halt.

Thank you, Harry Warner Jnr, for more encouragement, and for picking up points that are worthy of attention.

Steve Sneyd: the question of whether or not Cannibalism is a racist myth is more fully discussed in William Aren's book, THE MAN-EATING MYTH. He bases his conclusions on the lack of hard evidence for the practice. It is well documented, however, that early white anthropologists and explorers were products of their bigotted society, and were ready to attribute any behaviour they considered disgusting to the obviously sub-human savages they encountered. I am surprised that the chap you heard on the radio finds instances of survival/cannibalism to be of little interest. Since these are the only attested cases, and since they invariably involved us so-called civilised white folks, I find that very interesting. Watching TRAVELLERS IN TIME the other night, I was very struck by the total lack of humanitarian interest or sympathy for the Amazon indians evinced by Dr. Hamilton-Rice. They were no more than ugly specimens to him, and I doubt that he ever gave them any consideration as fellow human beings.

{I thought that some of the explorers of the Pacific, Cook for example, came across instances of cannibalism. And his, and his fellow officer's, accounts are considered scientifically accurate. - Ron.)

ERIC LINDSAY, PO Box 42, Lyneham, ACT 2602.

Thanks for THE MENTOR 50, and congratulations on reaching your 20th anniversary. I bet you didn't think you would be owning an offset, and printing using a computer when you started THE MENTOR.

While I'm delighted to see Australian fiction reviewed, I am even more delighted to see that Diane is sufficiently honest about the quality of most of it to ensure that I have no qualms about not bothering to buy the various first novels and Mad Max ripoffs mentioned.

Since almost all the world's land area, and almost all its population, and certainly all the most powerful countries are in the northern hemisphere, there is little wonder that most alternate histories come from there, whatever Roger Waddington may think about it. However, like Roger I also see a computer in every home, at least as a communication device. There is a fascinating book called THE NETWORK NATION (you can find a copy in the Springwood library) which gives some small idea of the social effects of the computer conferencing, and of the potentials of network authorship, where writing is done interactively with all the other participants via computer terminals. Indeed, given just a little more work, and lower telecommunications costs, that option would be open to an awful lot of us fanzine editors.

That judges tend to give heavier sentences to crimes against property than to crimes against the person is perhaps not as surprising as Harry Warner seems to believe. After all, most judges are persons of property; I suspect they can empathise better about the loss of property than about being beaten up or whatever. Perhaps we should select judges not only from those qualified in law, but also by finding whether they have been victim of a robbery with violence, or a mugging. Might straighten up some of their sentences.

I wouldn't for a moment disagree with Julie Vaux's contention that the tarot cards are deliberately designed, and would be happy to accept that they were standardised by a meeting of faiths, if there were evidence of that (I simply don't know if it is likely or not), however being deliberately designed does not mean they are not just as nonsensical as is astrology (current or otherwise). Certainly people can use them for purposes as diverse as meditation, fortune telling, or whatever, but the results aren't likely to correspond with reality.

STEVE SNEYD, 4 Nowell Place, Almondbury, Huddersfield, West Yorkshire HD58PB, U.K.

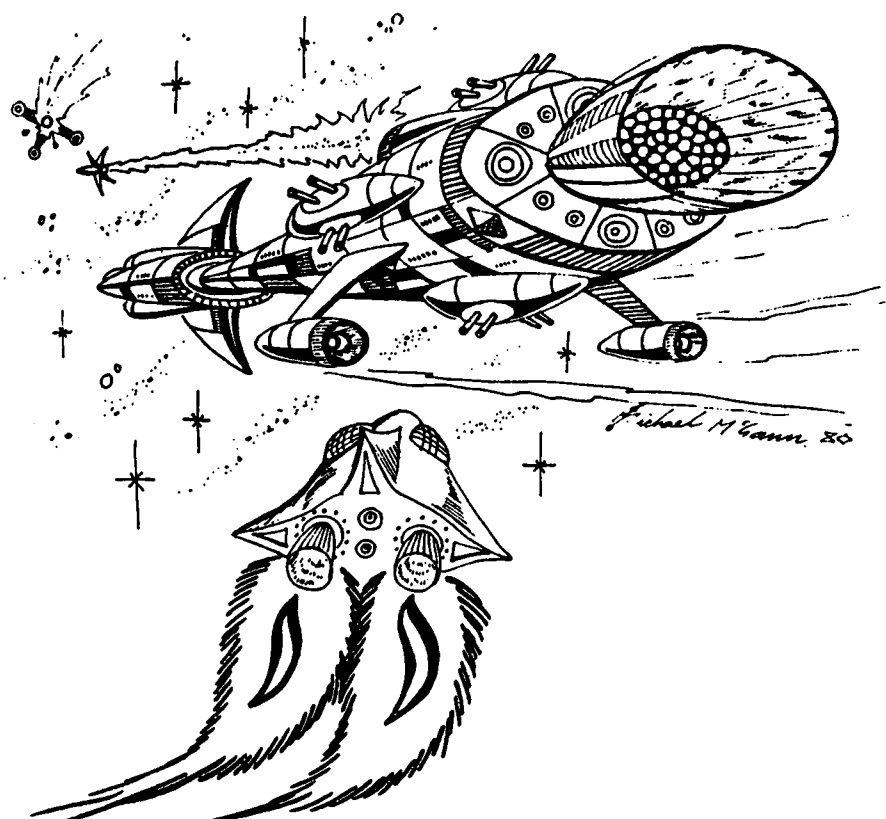
My thanks to those of your readers who said kind things about my ballad (and drew my attention to the errors). Yes, it is a futurised derivation from the DEMON LOVER group of ballads. My personal favourite of the many versions is BANKS OF ITALY and that probably influenced mine most, but in the course of writing it I consulted all those I could find. Couldn't lay my hands on the Luxemburg version of the tale, which is probably the most down-to-earth of all - the demon lover poses as a swineherd and then as the exiled rightful heir to the local castle, and drowns the girl not in the sea but in the local river! Re the question of the use of "high/low" language in the ballads, (Warner's letter - yes I did do it deliberately, trying to keep to the spirit of the original ballads) a lot of possible causes could be suggested. One would be that in the Borders the Northern variants of English spoken were much less influenced by French/Latin than the "standard" English of distant London, and hence contained less of the kinds of Latinate words that tend to be

regarded as poetical as a variant of the general rule that where there are two words from the same thing between the Romantic origin and Germanic origin word the Romance is assigned lighter status/greater gentility, another consequence of who won at Hastings.

The absence of schoolteachers to tell ballad writers which words were or weren't poetic and to lay down such rules, could be another factor. In the mid 16th C, outside of Newcastle and Hexham, there were only three teachers in the whole huge county of Northumberland. Certain 'non-poetic' terms are brought into ballads simply by the fact that they try to report events and describe people accurately within their story-telling limit.

ROGER WADDINGTON, 4 Commercial St., Norton, Malton, North Yorkshire YO179ES, U.K.

Heard some news that I didn't want to be true, first from Diane Fox, and then confirmed by a mention in *ANSIBLE*; and that's the death of A. Bertram Chandler. From the date given, it must have been while this issue of *TM* was in transit, and so his contribution will also be his epilogue... A very great loss. Diane was kind enough to send me a copy of *KELLY COUNTRY* (I'm actually a rhetorical presence in her *LoCs*); and while the Penguin edition may be flawed, it's undoubtedly a masterpiece. Though while I'd like him to be remembered for this tour de force, I suspect he'll rather be remembered for the many books of the Grimes sage; but that he gave so much pleasure with them to so



Appreciated the interview with Damien Broderick, as the last I'd heard of him had been with *THE END OF THE SEA* in the long-ago days of *NEW WRITINGS IN SF*; and it's brought to mind just why Australian SF seems to be in short supply; it's the difference between then and now. "Then", I'd say "was the period of the Carnell years, when he was editing *NEW WORLDS*, *SCIENCE FANTASY* and *SF ADVENTURES*, and having so many pages to fill, Australian writers seemed as much in evidence as British ones, when Wynne Whitford and David Rome were featured alongside

Kennith Blumer and E.C. Tubb, and their numerous pseudonyms. Even in the early Moorcock days (and not forgetting *VISION OF TOMORROW*) Australian authors were a very visible presence. But now, both British and Australian sf fields have come more within the orbit of American sf, aiming their product to maximise the impact there (if that isn't mixing metaphors). Not that I'm criticising any for doing that; I'm hoping to take the same route myself. It just seems that as Commonwealth ties diminished, so did the presence of Australian sf; we had a physical Empire, but America's taking its place with a more spiritual kingdom; and sf can only follow that fact.

Must admit I'm not as singleminded as Mike Hailstone, so can't match him fact for fact about fluoride. (Dependent on the local library for any research I want to do, while lacking in cash, I've found lots of little bits of info, but never enough about one sole topic.) What I suspect about fluoride in the water, whether harmful or no, is that it just might be a dress rehearsal for adding other substances in the water we drink by well-meaning (or otherwise) governments; that in testing the public reaction to fluoride, they're just seeing how far the public will go in protest. One of the scare stories during the days of flower power was dumping LSD in the local water supply so that whole towns would get high (though where was the drop-out millionaire who could afford the necessary amount?); but what if our elected authorities are thinking along the same lines? It wouldn't need the batteries of TV screens (and thousands of eavesdroppers; and who would watch the watchers?) envisaged in 1984; just a regular dosage of calm-inducing drugs into the water system, and metering to check on anybody who was consuming under the average... That might be a truer vision. But then I'd rather write such stories than believe in them, like Bert Chandler's 'friend'.

Well, having had several Supporting Memberships in Cons with the sole intention of getting the Programme Book, rather than actually going, I haven't been witness to the snafus that can arise; but I'd say that the situation of deposits is about the best you can hope for in this imperfect world. You could have a cut-off date when sending out forms, beyond which any fen will have to make their own arrangements elsewhere, if they're still intending to come; though such is fannish optimism, you'll probably still have them coming in on the Day, in the hope that someone else will have cancelled. Though is a \$10 deposit high enough to deter?

JULIE VAUX, 14 Zara Rd., Willoughby, NSW 2068.

Why Alderson just can't say patriarchal is beyond me - after all most patriarchal or male dominated societies (or allegedly so - no society is perfect, or perfectly matches its stereotype) refer to themselves as 'patria-' or fatherlands - a characteristic Alderson left off his list. His guideline is not precise enough either. He has limited it to monotheistic patriarchal cultures and there are and were pagan religions which have a dominant male god - consider the dominance of the various incarnations of Vishnu in Indian and Southeast Asian cultures - Krishna, Rama, etc.

I would like to present my own definitions of a patriarchal society or culture, asking the reader to remember that no society is actually the same as its or others ideals and preconceptions of it.

PATRIARCHAL CULTURES

The leading god will be male.

Women on marriage commonly take the male's name

Heritage of land and holdings is patrilineal - females are the last to inherit.

Betrothal and mating ceremonies involve a transfer or giving of gifts and property and herds.

Incest is limited by strict kinship rules.

Marriages tend to be polygynous.

Cultures tend to be feudal or merchantile with casts and class laws.

Let's pick up the mistakes in Alderson's version.

Their god will be male.

Alderson forgets most monotheistic cultures evolve from polytheistic

THE MENTOR

ones. Even when there is only 'one god' there is a hierarchy or belief in lesser 'spirits'.

A man's heirs will be his sons.

Wrong - there are three main modes of inheritance:

1. The eldest son inherits all.
2. All sons and sometimes daughters divide the property.
3. Where there is no male heir or no child at all, a regent is adopted into the family when there is no male relative, often losing his original name and clan.

Polygamous marriages.

You should say polygynous, John, since most patriarchal cultures have one man married to one or several women. Polyandrous marriages (two women, often sisters, married to one or more men, usually brothers) seem to be a survival of matriarchal customs - such as those of the Nazi or Nazhi people of Western China I mentioned in an earlier letter, (they practice group marriages with the children remaining in their mothers house).

It seems to me that Alderson has limited his models to Semitic and IndoEuropean societies. Unfortunately he goes on to make generalisations and applies them to nomadic societies at large. He refers to the patrimony of cattle and herds owned by the male members of tribes but what of nomadic cultures in which women tribe members inherit cattle and herds?? Such as the peoples of the vast Eurasian steppes.

Also John, Moses, although the younger brother, was not the family heir. His elder Aaron was. The cases you mention of younger sons inheriting - well, Jacob and Esau were twins and had equal inheritance and in most of the cases the younger sons inherited because the elder sons had been killed or had broken some law or taboo or had gotten property by marrying into other families with female heirs. David married Saul's daughter, hence gained rank. Solomon's older brothers had carried out civil war against their father, etc., etc.

Lastly, by way of comparison, you could and should have looked at pagan Semitic societies and compared them to the Children of Israel.

D. JASON COOPER, 31 Commercial Rd., Shenton Park, W.A. 6008.

I read Damian Broderick's letter, in which he accused me of having butchered, doctored, or engineered the content of an interview he gave me. He says I pestered him for the interview. I did ring four times. The first three times he was busy and each time I was asked to ring back. I was never told he did not want me to interview him. I offered to provide a transcript of the interview, which is standard practice, and that he could change any statement of fact I got wrong. He declined this offer.

I did omit one question to which he objected. I don't believe readers want to read such dialogue. I did not ask him the name of various sf authors. I asked for a top ten, a ranking. And, far from disparaging Bruce Gillespie, I brought him up because I was surprised he was not mentioned.

The stated topic was not 'creative writing' but 'Australian sf'. That was what the editor of WEEKEND NEWS wanted to see. It was explained beforehand that I was doing this on spec, and had doubts that it would be accepted. I also said I would, if it were rejected, seek other markets. I never presented myself as a journalist or anything else other than a person who, on the grounds of two accepted articles, was given the go-ahead for a try at a third.

I affirm in public that what I posted you was an accurate rendition of the substance of that interview, the only exceptions from word to word transcribing were omitting on a question and objection to it, where I double clicked a statement, putting titles by authors 'names' and miscellaneous 'ums', 'ahs', etc.

RICHARD FAULDER, PO Box 136, Yanco, NSW 2703.

By allowing Bert Chandler to speak for himself, I rather think that you have given him a more meaningful farewell than the other obituaries which have appeared.

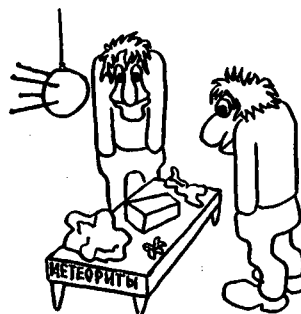
Peter Brodie's story was a rather nice change rung on a theme not all that often repeated. It does rather make the point that the place for fiction is in a longer form than fanzines can adequately give scope for, since the fragment we have obviously begs to be completed.

John Alderson even has the ability to make silly statements in his LoCs. (I know that he will make them in his articles, which is why I only glance at them just to check whether he's maintaining his record. How anyone can say that domination is not equatable to power. Without power, there cannot be domination. Just because the exercise of power is covert does not mean that it is any less real. For instance, in our society there is a popular misconception, fostered by groups because it helps to smooth their own route to overt power, that because men exercise the limited power women permit them in an overt way, while women exercise their greater (I say greater, because they exercise their power to ensure that they survive longer than men, which is surely the aim of any exercise of power) covertly, that men dominate this society. Nor can Alderson cite the fact that our God is masculine as an argument, since most people in this society worship money and the material comfort it brings, and dollars are sexless - they even need human help to reproduce.

I'm not sure that there "is general agreement by both sexes that a world without men would be a good thing", but increasingly people seem to be buying the feminist argument that women are inherently nicer than men. Of course, women persuaded western society to think this years ago, but now they have tried to think in this vague sketch with some pseudo-sociological arguments. To do this, of course, they have to ignore the actions of the likes of Margaret Thatcher, Indira Gandhi and the American woman who was successfully prosecuted by one of her male subordinates for sexual harassment. All of these prove that, given the opportunity, women are at least as likely to abuse any power that may come into their hands as men are. Some feminists, in fact, seem to be objecting not to the fact that one sex is exploiting the other, but that there is a lack of equal opportunity for exploitation, as they see it.

We Also Heard From Raymond C. Clancy.

And now for something completely different:





REVIEWS



MUTE by Piers Anthony. New English Library. Dist in Aust by Hodder & Stoughton. 441pp. A\$6.95. On sale now.

This is another of Anthony's quickly written novels - and it shows. The story this time is about a mutant called Knot and his attempt to hide from the galaxy watching computer called CCC which governs the human worlds. However there are more and more attempts to take it over or destroy it. The computer has psi powered humans helping it to find the culprits and it finds all but three of the futures shown by its precogs show its own demise.

The computer uses as its agent a beautiful woman whose past has been wiped by the computer to enable her to control Knot more successfully. They strike out together in attempt to save the computer and thus the human worlds from centuries of dark ages.

THE QUEEN OF THE LEGION by Jack Williamson. Sphere sf, dist in Aust by William Collins. 278pp. A\$5.95. On sale now.

This series started in the 1930s and is still going. Jil Gyrel was brought up in the worlds around the edge of the Hawkeshead Nebula. Her father was lost in the depths of the Nebula when she was a child and when her father's companion came back, both she and her mother were glad to see him. Something had changed in him, however and though he ended up marrying her mother the rotten-bog stink of the man always put the girl off.

She went away on her own, determined to join the Legion of Space somehow, even though the pilot's sense for the navigation between the stars was supposed to be sex-linked to the male. It was when she returned to claim the inheritance left her by her grandfather that the troubles started that were to lead her to be the saviour of the Legion and humanity.

QUEEN OF SORCERY by David Eddings. Corgi sf, dist in Aust by Transworld Publishers. 327pp. A\$4.95. On sale now.

PAWN OF PROPHECY is the first volume in this series, and was reviewed in an earlier issue. QUEEN OF SORCERY is Book Two of the Belgariad, which is in six parts and if as well written as the first two, portends to be a very good series. The cover of QoS is beautifully executed and actually illustrates a scene from the novel. I hope the others in the series use the same artist.

The tale continues with the sorcerer, Belgareth, his daughter Polgara and Garion, his many-times-removed grandson who, with thief companions, are caught up in their quest for the stolen Orb, which thieves are attempting to get to the sleeping god Torajk. If the evil ones can get the orb to the god it will enable him to rule the world. Various events befall the group, and Garion finds more about his quest and himself as the novel progresses. *Recommended*.

THE WAR OF POWERS by Robert Vardeman & Victor Milan. New English Library, dist in Aust by Hodder & Stoughton. 457pp. A\$6.95. On sale now.

This volume was first published by Playboy Paperbacks - the obligatory sex scenes are still therein. If they are taken out what you have is quite a good adventure story.

The tale tells of how Fost Longstrider, in what started out to be a routine delivery job turned sour when he found that the wizard to whom he was to deliver a sealed jar turned out dead. This left him in quite a dilemma; his employee was quite strict as to what his couriers did with his deliveries and when the jar was stolen by a blonde bandit after Fost fell asleep after a bit of strenuous exercise he felt he had to retrieve it. Thus it began.

Routine S&S.

THE WINDHOVER TAPES - Planet of Flowers by Warren Norwood. Bantam pb, dist in Aust by Transworld Publishers. 214pp. A\$3.95. On sale now.

This is the concluding volume of THE WINDHOVER TAPES, which series include AN IMAGE OF VOICES, FIZE OF THE GABRIEL RATCHETS, & FLEXING THE WARP. Norwood has a way of writing that has his own mark and takes a little getting used to.

The locale this time is the planet Brisbidine, whose native inhabitants are sentient flowers which phenomenon Gerard Manley is there with his wife CrRina to investigate. Other events take over when imortal observers, one of whom seems to be violating the Compact of non-interference, plans his demise. At the same time the sister of his first wife and his son by her arrive at the planet and the agents of the imortal proceed to engage her to kill him.

THE BOOK OF THE RIVER by Ian Watson. Gollancz h/c, dist in Aust by Hutchinson Group. 208pp. A\$20.95. On sale now.

Ian Watson has a reputation for writing some very good sf, and this book is no exception. It starts off much as a fantasy, with the setting of an immense river valley with two human populations seperated by a river that would be crossable except for a strange black "current" which flows down the centre and which drives people mad if they try to cross it. In fact if males sail on the River they can only do it once, otherwise they go mad and destroy themselves.

The story follows the adventures of a young woman who has chosen the River as a way of life and sails up and down it, trading and making it her livelihood. All goes well until her brother manages, with the aid of a diving suit, to cross the River to the male dominated side. Then both societies come into open conflict. Quite a good story.

THE RETURN OF NATHAN BRAZIL by Jack L. Chalker. Penguin SF, dist in Aust by Penguin Aust Ltd. 289pp. A\$5.95. On sale now.

This is the fourth in the Well World saga. The time is seven hundred years after the action in QUEST FOR THE WELL OF SOULS. The Community of Worlds is facing an alien invasion from another galaxy. The scientists of the Com unlock the weapons locker and use the super weapons thus discovered. However it is not enough. They delve into ancient files and discover the powers that they had thought destroyed when Obie had been obliterated hundreds of years before. The weapons thus developed destroyed the aliens, but opened an enoromous rip in space-time which threatened to obliterate the Universe.

They reasoned that only Nathan Brazil could help them and set out to find him; however he did not wish to be found for some reason and they discovered they had set themselves an almost impossible task.

WARLOCK 1 - The Fighting Fantasy Magazine. Penguin, dist in Aust by Penguin Aust Ltd. Quarterly. 52pp. Illus. A4. A\$2.95. On sale now.

This is something slightly different. Apparently back when there was a magazine called **Fighting Fantasy**. This issue gives a background to the start of fantasy gaming magazines and also a map of the Kingdom which helps when you are using the games in this magazine. There is information about new monsters and how to map - ie giving mapping techniques. Rules are given and a story called **THE WARLOCK OF FIRETOP MOUNTAIN** is included.

The rest of the issue is "background" and gives whispers and rumours that the player hears before he/she begins their adventure. I suppose if you are into game playing this magazine looks good. To wind up the issue there is a competition to make up your own game.

PAVANE by Keith Roberts. Gollancz H/C, dist in Aust by Hutchinson Group. 279pp. A\$21.95. On sale now.

This is one of the SF classics that came out of the 60s and one of the best SF novels to come out of the UK in the last twenty years. It is set in an England where history changed with the assassination of Elizabeth the first in 1588 and Philip II became King of England when the Armada invaded. One of the side effects was the cutting off of the Reformation and the slowing down of the flood of inventions that the missing Industrial Revolution spawned.

There were some inventions - steam road vehicles (but no railway as such). Long distance communications is by semaphore, transmitted through a series of towers stretching over the island. The novellas, originally published in Carnell's magazines, have been linked together to make up this "Alternate History

Recommended.

DAMIANO'S LUTE by R.A. MacAvoy. Bantam Pb, dist in Aust by Transworld Publishers. 254pp. A\$3.95. On sale now.

This is the sequel to *Damiano* and follows the life of said Damiano after he had forsaken his magical heritage to live as an ordinary man. Accompanied by the Archangel Raphael, he journeys across Medieval Europe trying to find peace of mind.

The instrument he uses reminds me somewhat of other instruments that certain other US writers of fantasy use - one of which uses silver strings, the other has a silver air to it. I did not think much of MacAvoy's *Tea with the Black Dragon*, but the atmosphere of these two historicals makes up somewhat for setting.

CENTAUR ISLE by Piers Anthony. Orbit pb, dist in Aust by Hodder & Stoughton. 294pp. A\$7.95. On sale now.

Anthony really gets all he can out of the various locales he investigates with these fantasy and sf novels. Xanth is the world this fantasy is set in. Dor is, in this volume, the aspiring king of Xanth. King Trent had gone on a trade mission to Mundania where he is unheard from for three weeks. Since he was only supposed to be gone for one week people are anxious and Dor decides to enter Mundania to search for him.

Together with his usual assortment of a golen, a centaur, a young ogre and the Queen, Irene, he sets out to sort out the mystery. This isn't a bad series - fantasy buffs will find it good reading.

CASTLE ROOGNA by Piers Anthony. Orbit pb, dist in Aust by Hodder & Stoughton. 329pp. A\$7.95. On sale now.

Ghosts seem to creep up everywhere, even in Xanth. Millie is one who is getting on a bit - she has been dead for some 800 years. Because of an excess of magic she had been revived and was a beautiful woman again. Unfortunately she fell for a zombie. She had one chance to restore him to life, an elixir which Dor decided to try to obtain for her.

Unfortunately Dor had to go into the past to try to obtain it, and while there, in the body of a barbarian, he met the younger Millie. That was when things started to get complicated...

VALENTINE PONTIFEX by Robert Silverberg. Gollancz SF h/c dist in Aust by Hutchinson Group. 347pp. \$23.95. On sale now.

This is the sequel to LORD VALENTINE'S CASTLE and MAJIPOOR CHRONICLES, the earlier volumes detailing the downfall and rise again of Lord Valentine and his efforts to regain his throne. It starts off with another threat from the Metamorphs, the natives of the planet Majipoor, who after ten thousand years break out again and attempt to throw the aliens off their world.

The ancient Pontifex, Tyeveas, is still being kept alive in a life-support machine, though he is senile and wants to die. Valentine departs on his processional and this is the time the Metamorphs pick to strike all over the planet, using both biological weapons and riot to spread terror amongst humans and others. I originally found the series to be dull and hard to get into; however with this novel Silverbob rounds out the trilogy nicely.

Recommended.

BATTLE CIRCLE by Piers Anthony. Corgi trade pb, dist in Aust by Transworld Publishers. 537pp. A\$6.95. On sale now.

I read the first novel of this trilogy of novels as a serial in IF, I think it was. It looks as though the artist who did the cover illo for this book must have seen the cover of that issue. It illustrates the "battle circle", or trial by combat that the American society that arose after the Blast was built on.

The first novel traces the exploits of SOS The Rope as he sets up the Empire that unites all the nomad tribes. The second novel is VAR the Stick, which details the fight of the Empire against the remaining manufacturing complex buried beneath a mountain of debris. The third novel follows the ruin of the Empire and the attempts to rebuild the complex.

An easy read.

MAGICIAN'S GAMBIT by David Eddings. Corgi pb, dist in Aust by Transworld Publishers. 305pp. A\$4.95. Century h/c dist in Aust by Doubleday Aust. A\$19.95. On sale now.

I gave the first two books in this series - PAWN OF PROPHECY and QUEEN OF SORCERY - a *Recommended*, so I was looking forward to seeing the rest of the series. This is the third in the Belgariad, and continues the quest of the Orb by the sorcerers Belgarath, his daughter Polgara, his grandson Belgarion and their companions.

In this volume they journey farther into dark lands in their quest for the stolen Orb and to further fulfil the Prophecy the Gods laid on them at the beginning of Time on earth. One of the people standing in their way, however, was the evil magician Ctuchik, the one who currently had the Orb in his possession.

Recommended - first rate fantasy.

AROUND THE WORLD IN 80 DAYS by Jules Verne. Bantam Classic pb, dist in Aust by Transworld Publishers. 163pp. A\$3.95. On sale now.

Written in 1872, this is Verne's most famous story. His others include **FIVE WEEKS IN A BALLOON**, **JOURNEY TO THE CENTRE OF THE EARTH**, **FROM THE EARTH TO THE MOON**, **20,000 LEAGUES UNDER THE SEA**, **MICHAEL STROGOFF** and others.

This is the first time that I have read this novel. Although it is not strictly sf, as the time it was written I daresay that it was looked upon as a sort of fantasy high adventure story. Anyway, it reads almost like a travelogue - I read somewhere that Verne sat down with the timetables of the US trains and wrote the story using them. And it shows. A curiosity.

THE ROBERT SHECKLEY OMNIBUS by Robert Sheckley. Penguin Pb, dist in Aust by Penguin Aust Ltd. 392pp. A\$7/95. On sale now.

One of the sf writers who has not written much in the last decade or so is Robert Sheckley. This collection contains some of his best novellas and short stories. The lead story is **IMMORTALITY INC.**, and others are: **SPECIALIST**, **BAD MEDICINE**, **PILGRIMAGE TO EARTH**, **ASK A FOOLISH QUESTION**, **A TICKET TO TRANAI**, **THE BATTLE**, **HANDS OFF**, **THE PRIZE OF PERIL**, **HUNTING PROBLEM**, **GHOST V**, **SOMETHING FOR NOTHING**, and the classic **THE STORE OF THE WORLDS**.

If you have not read any of Sheckley's stories before then I suggest you purchase this collection. If you have read some, then this is a good opportunity to obtain most of his best stories in one volume. Good reading.

THE MISTS OF AVALON by Marion Bradley. Sphere pb, dist in Aust by Sphere books. 1009pp. A\$8.95. On sale now.

The Arthurian Legend will never be the same for me after reading this incredibly painted word picture of those times, when the Old World with its gods and goddesses were being overshadowed by the Christians and their gentle and sometimes not-so-gentle way of life and beliefs. It is over many generations and told from the point of view of the Priestess of the Old Beliefs, Morgana - the Lady of Avalon. This book challenges you to rethink the possible times as they were and how, perhaps, they could still be. Marion Zimmer Bradley is a word-smith and her pictures are haunting, believable as are her characters and story line that whilst carrying close to the traditional legend places a new slant on it. The tale is one of compromise between the old gods & goddesses and the new God of the Christians... and personally, I didn't know who to barrack for in the end.

The idea that the old beliefs and way of life were never bannished from England but were sublimated is perhaps the most interesting of all the concepts put forward in this novel: That, and the fact that the Priestesses of Avalon and the Merlin of England (wizard/priest of the old religion) actually manipulated the peerage and therefore history to achieve this acceptance/ sublimation.

An excellent read with some thought-provoking ways of viewing history as we know it. However you need a whole weekend of uninterrupted reading to do it justice. It isn't the type of novel you can read and put down and expect to just put up again. Most definitely *Recommended* - Susan Clarke.

INDIANA JONES AND THE TEMPLE OF DOOM. Novelisation by James Kahn, adapted from the screenplay by William Huyck & Gloria Katz, based on a story by George Lucas. Sphere pb, dist in Aust by Sphere books. Illus. 216pp. A\$4.95. On sale now.

Firstly, let me state emphatically that the word that most clearly described the movie for me is contrived. I felt my sense of credibility abused and battered with the crammed action/spfx and humour that was deliberate to break the tension. It did not flow like **RAIDERS** but felt like a tsunami descending on you. The book is also fast paced but it, at least, has all the elements of a good action novel. Unable to be blinded by the graphic horror scenes and spectacular special

effects, we see the characters, the way they think, feel and develop and it feels right. Indiana Jones is still Indiana Jones and full of ego and adventure, not a piped up second Christ as seen in the movie. Some of the scenes were played down or omitted from the book or implied which would have been a lot better visually, especially when we know Harrison Ford can act and doesn't need to hide behind his costars (especially the Cute Kid who was a pint-sized Buddha in the book - a great character with the emphasis on character) or the spfx.

Of course, your imagination and credulity is sometimes stretched! The scene where they leap out of a crashing plane with nought but an inflatable life raft which inflates beneath them and they slide down a mountain, over a cliff, through rapids to a safe harbour of a gentle river, or when Indy stops a runaway coal trolley with his foot! Enough said?

Still, the book is how it should have been and certainly fun to read but too short. Nice ending line: "They did eventually make it to America. But that is another story." Shades of "Fame and Glory" to come (a quote on Indiana Jones' philosophy)! -Susan Clarke.

SUPERGIRL by Norma Fox Mazer. Sphere pb, dist in Aust by Sphere books. pp. A\$4.95. On sale now.

This is the story of the female teenage cousin of Kal-El, or Superman as he is known to his worshipping hordes, told from her perspective and as such is interesting. Personally I prefer the comics but as an adventure, it works. Kara is pursuing (through more luck than good planning) the omegahedron, the power source of the city of Argo, a city of refugees from the now-dead Krypton which, without the omegahedron will fade into Inner Space where it is now. It finds its way through Outer Space, to Earth where she eventually recovers it. Despite new found friends, and romance, she is as sickeningly noble as her cousin and Argo is saved. Nicely told for Old Time Supergirl Fans (like me). - Susan Clarke.

QUEST OF THE DAWNSTAR by Gordon McBaen. Flare SF. dist in Aust by Transworld. pp A\$2.95. On sale now.

Although described as a young adults book, I think a minimum age of 15 to 16 should be a guide to some of the imagery, history and science created and described by McBaen which takes a mature mind to visualise and accept.

Obviously a sequel to "The Path of Exoterra", it resumes a history of characters already established and so often not filled in this volume. It is a story of pre-ordained action and the rescue of a suspended ancient Atlantean by their offshoots that fled Earth (cradle of all human kind - prolific creatures!) whilst fighting off a branch of human kind that have evolved a clone-based culture to a beehive civilisation (the Sryrians). First we must accept that our prehistory-caveman era was, in fact, the Dark Ages after the Great Civilisations had left Earth and their ancestors returned about 5,000 BC (the time line at the front of the book is invaluable) only to flee again. One interesting civilisation to leave was the Nileans with their Pharoah who used matter transmission to go to their new home of Ibiza. We meet them and their sacred psychic cats too. The main character is Prince Orion - a psychic with well-developed although erratic powers.

Lots of action, fast-paced and strictly fantasy-science fiction BUT enjoyable as light entertainment. - Susan Clarke.

THE DRAGON IN THE SEA by Frank Herbert. Gollancz h/c, dist in Aust by Hutchinson Group. 206pp. A\$17.95. On sale now.

This is the novel that established Frank Herbert's reputation as a novel writer. Serialised in ASTOUNDING in the 1955/6 it has been reprinted many times. It

won the International Fantasy Award.

Set in the 21st Century during a nuclear war between the East and West, it describes an attempt by a US nuclear submarine to penetrate to an undersea oil field, fill its underwater barge that it was towing and bring it back to the oil starved US. Twenty other attempts by other submarines had failed. In this mission a psychologist goes along to keep an eye on the crew for mental aberrations. First class sf thriller.

LIES, INC. by Philip K. Dick. Gollancz h/c, dist in Aust by Hutchinson Group. 198pp. A\$17.95. On sale now.

This is another of Dick's Lost in the Head novels, along with **THE THREE STIGMATA...**, **THE MARTIAN TIME SLIP** and others. The world depicted is crowded to the hilt with humans. An earth-like planet has been discovered at about the same time as a matter transmitter. A one-way matter transmitter. Germany and Germans feature again, with the Secretary of the UN and the head of one of the more powerful world organisations being a German. New Whole Germany is alive and prosperous. For some reason, the hero is a Jew, can't see why... a little blatant.

This work was cut when it was published in **AMAZING** in the 60s. When one reads through the long convoluted pages when the author is describing the sequences of unreality, you can see why it was cut.

THE LUNATICS OF TERRA by John Sladek. Gollancz h/c, dist in Aust by Hutchinson Group. 192pp. A\$17.95. On sale now.

This is an anthology of Sladek's humorous pieces and included science fiction, speculative fiction and mainstream fiction. The stories are: **THE LAST OF THE WHALEBURGERS**, **GREAT MYSTERIES EXPLAINED!**, **RED NOISE**, **GUESTING**, **ABSENT FRIENDS**, **AFTER FLAUBERT**, **THE BRASS MONKEY**, **WHITE HAT**, **THE ISLAND OF DR CIRCE**, **ANSWERS**, **BREAKFAST WITH THE MURGATROYDE**, **THE NEXT DWARF**, **AN EXPLANATION FOR THE DISAPPEARANCE OF THE MOON**, **HOW TO MAKE MAJOR SCIENTIFIC DISCOVERIES AT HOME IN YOUR SPARE TIME**, **THE KINDLY ONES**, **FABLES**, **URSA MINOR**, and **CALLING ALL GUMDROPS!**

Some of these stories are from the Moorcock **NEW WORLD** era, but the majority are more readable. I liked particularly **THE ISLAND OF DR CIRCE**, **THE LAST OF THE WHALEBURGERS** and **WHITE HAT**. Some of his obvious pet peeves are visible, for instance in the number of stories where computers (mostly PCs) are the villains.

THE DUNE ENCYCLOPEDIA compiled by Dr. Willis E. McNelly. Corgi pb, printed and dist in Aust by Transworld Publishers. 526pp. A\$12.95. On sale now.

This is a labour of love. The volume starts off with a chronology of some important events in human history, beginning with the early civilizations of Terra (19000-16500 Before Guild, through the golden age of invention (14500-14200) and on up to 15525 with the finding of the Rakis Hoard. The alphabetic contents commence with 'abomination' and ends with 'zensunni, history'.

Scattered throughout are illustrations of the text. If you are a Dune fan, or if you have the various Dune books then you will find this volume a fitting companion to those of fiction written by Frank Herbert. *Recommended*

ORION SHALL RISE by Poul Anderson. Sphere SF, dist in Aust by William Collins. 468pp. A\$6.95. On sale now.

This is quite a thick book and is another after-the-nuclear-deluge tale. However, since the author is Poul Anderson the tale is well told and the background societies are well worked out. It is set in the world of the Maurai, to whom has fallen the task of policing the world and attempting to keep the peace. It is some years after the Power War when the industrial capacity of the Northwest Union was

again destroyed. Underground groups have banded together and have secretly, over the previous twenty years, built a base in the wilderness and have a complex hidden under a mountain.

Some of their personnel are sent scavenging the world for fissionables and manage to find enough for their purposes. The various governments and power groups have a scent of this and attempt to forestall another nuclear catastrophe. I found some of the details of the North American Lodges a bit long winded, but I suppose those readers from that continent would find them more interesting.

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