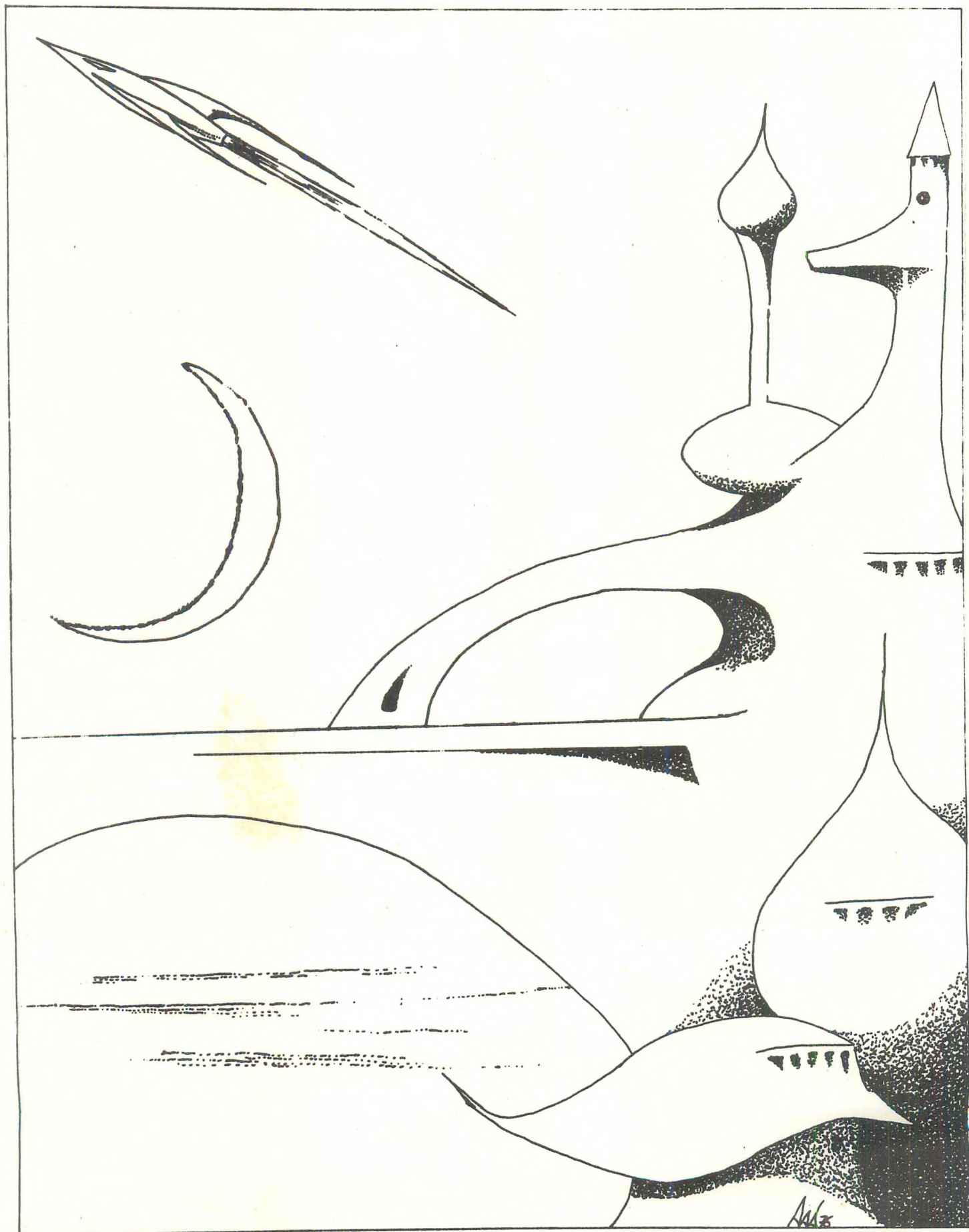
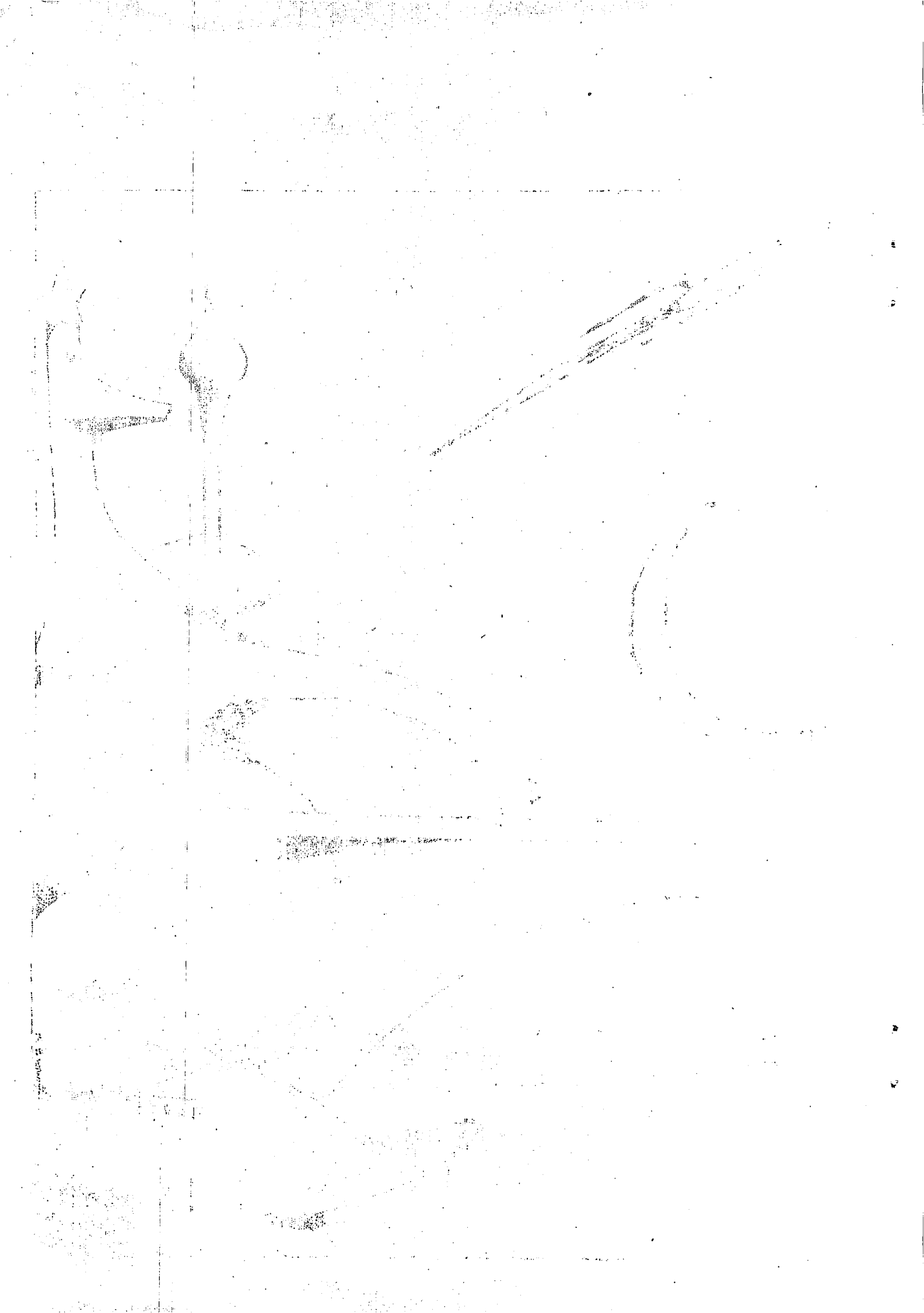


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THE MENTOR

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RON'S ROOST

There definitely seems to be a drop in the number of Australian fanzines I have been receiving lately. And it does not look at though the reason is they are not being traded; other fanzines who have zine reviews mention receiving much the same zines. This drop has been mentioned in passing in those other zines, but the editors don't seem to have thought of one reason for the lack. There is a hope that the WorldCon in Melbourne later this year will yield either new fans who will plunge into pubbing zines, or the established fans will 'get the bug' again and start pubbing more regularly.

I know that after the '75 WorldCon there was an upsurge of zines, but these tapered off and many of those fans disappeared into Apas. As to the latter hope - I have my doubts. The '75 WorldCon had all of Australian fandom behind it - from what I have heard, the '85 con does not. Thus I don't think that this con will generate the amount of enthusiasm after it that the first one did.

Probably because of Marc Ortlieb's efforts with TIGGER, there seems to be a lot of discussion/arguments about the current WorldCon in print. Back in 1975 about the only active fandom (other than sf fandom) was comics fandom. (Tolkien fandom was, and no doubt still is, much smaller than comics fandom - witness the large comics con to be held in the Sydney Opera House next year). For this con there is the breakaway (which is how I regard it) media fandom. Media fandom runs from the pure sf through to the ordinary fan clubs for the movie stars that mundanes always had, but I am talking about sf media - ie STAR TREK, BLAKES 7, DR WHO, V etc. The friction appears to be between these media sf fans and some of the sf fans running the WorldCon. And there is friction, as can be seen by the rumours, some of which are dealt with by Marc Ortlieb in TIGGER, sometimes obliquely, but nearly all the time calmly - all the more power to Marc.

In February Category B postage rates went up, making the cost of posting an overseas zine the size of THE MENTOR somewhere around 80c. On the first of April the price of paper went up about 50c a ream, as did the cost of most other things used to run off the zine, such as plates. With this issue I am dropping those I haven't heard from in six months, and bringing in a rule for trades: apazines will not be included as trades unless they are over 10 pages per issue. I am sick of sending a 50 page zine out in trade for a couple of pages every couple of months. So if you want to continue to receive THE MENTOR - the next best thing is a LoC or contribution. (THE MENTOR is still not available for subscription).

- Ron

TRAVELMOTHER

BY PETER BRODIE

Paul took one last photo of the crystal bed, switched off the eco recorder. There was very little ambience this late in the day. The last golden rays were already dancing off the jagged rocks and even the snicker of snake birds could be heard no more. He might as well get back into Mother.

On his walk back up the slight, pebbly slope, the rounded wedge shape of a mother flitted overhead, making for the tourist encampment five kilometres west. The registry markings made it to be the Mother that had been seemingly dogging Paul's itinerary this past week. As he pressed the entrance pad, Paul wondered who else shared his interest in crystal formation and eco study. He'd never seen the other.

As Paul snuggled into the formcouch Mother came to life with her usual bits of floss.

"Have a nice look round?" The voice was softly feminine. Neither bland nor interesting.

Paul had never heard the voice of any other Mother but his own. Sometime after he'd bought Mother three years ago, he'd wondered if they were all the same. Somehow, at the time of sale, it hadn't seemed important. By now, it wasn't.

"Oh, it was interesting, but pretty much what I've seen the past couple of days. I might head out to Agre. Publicity says they have some great atmospherics."

"That might be best, Paul. It doesn't do to have too much of the same thing." Mother, as usual, was in accord with him. It had irked him at first, but now it made communication easier.

"Yeah. Anyway, I want to see as much as I can in the time left. Let's go."

Paul relaxed against the gentle acceleration as Mother hummed off and over to the encampment.

He sucked a little juice on the way and had Mother play back some of his recordings of the day. He'd edit later. He told Mother to swing down between a shade tree and two other Mothers. One was painted in garish colours: reds, greens, purples. It was sealed. The other was the one that had been following his itinerary. It was pastel, so many pale shades blending that it was hard to define any real pattern. The hatch was open.

Paul unsealed and stepped out. Mother called from inside. "Shall I start preparing dinner?"

"Mmm?, oh, okay."

"What would you like?"

"Surprise me?"

"Oh goody." Mother always liked to be in control of random factors, thought Paul. And why not? Her decisions were as good as his. A nagging thought had once again crossed his mind but just as quickly passed. He was at the hatch of the pastel Mother.

He took a cautious look inside. No one. The decor was what really interested Paul. How other people fitted out the basic Mother always intrigued him, though he'd never subscribed to any of the Travelmother magazines that had sprung up the past twenty years or so.

Of course, no Mother voice intruded on his gazing. Though they kept a watchful eye on their owner's property they were programmed to converse only with their owner. It enhanced the bond or some such thing. He remembered that from the sales spiel.

A female seemed to inhabit this one. Flowers, prints, the colours and the scent. Strange that one whose interests coincided with his should be a woman.

"Interesting?" Paul turned at the sound of the soft voice at his back.

She was about his chin height, soft brown hair to her shoulders, blue eyes just this side of sad. She was wearing a blue formfit. A recorder slung over one shoulder.

"Oh, er, just looking. I, er, like your taste," he flicked a thumb at the entrance.

She smiled. "Thank you. It took me a while to get everything right."

"I know what you mean. I'm still fiddling with mine."

She held out her hand. "My name's Melissa."

Paul took it. Soft, warm. "Er, mine's Paul." His smile felt crooked and the breeze had gotten warmer. "Um, do you do much travelling?"

"Quite a bit. I live alone, you see, and I find Basic gives me enough to have fun on, as long as I don't splurge."

"I agree. Travel does seem to take care of... restless energies." This last was very soft and she had dropped her gaze slightly. Paul was feeling strange.

"It, er, seems we have some interests in common."

"Oh?", she looked up, her lashes flicked ever so lightly.

"Um, yes. You seem to be around whenever I stop for a 'cord or view."

She smiled lightly. "Small world, isn't it?" She seemed to be waiting for something.

"Yes, well," he glanced over to his Mother, "she should have dinner ready for me by now. I'll, er, see you around."

"Yup, okay. Bye for now," and she walked past him into her Mother. The hatch whisked shut.

Her tone at the end had seemed disappointed, brisk. Paul felt the urge to knock and invite her over for a meal. Instead, he went back to his Mother and sealed the hatch.

Paul was thoughtful during dinner. Even Mother's casual chatter didn't interest him. Only when he started going through his day's recordings did he start to feel relaxed. About nine, he stopped for a coffee break, glancing out the window at the pastel Mother, sealed as tightly as his.

He suddenly thought of his apartment, the collections of views and crystals and such dotting the neo-classical decor. Perhaps he should get his apartment's Homefriend to help him redecorate. Funny, Friend. All his friends. There was a sour feeling in his stomach. He went over to the med-cabinet, asked for a soothing tab.

As he swallowed it with a gulp of coffee, Mother came on. "Everything all right? You seem a little anxious."

"No, no, everything's fine. Just a slight headache." He glanced out the window again then sat down, closed his eyes, turned on his latest edit. The echoing call of a Tarantal bird flowed through the cabin while the pill started to take effect. Paul soon drifted off to sleep and an unsteady dream.

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Paul was up early next morning. The first thing he did was to glance out the window. The pastel Mother was gone. Paul stared at the depression it had made in the grass for a long time, till Mother became anxious.

"Paul. Paul, dear, are you ill?"

Something inside him was shrinking into oblivion and he didn't like the feeling, but he didn't stop it, either.

"No, I'm fine," he whispered. "Maybe I'm getting tired of my vacation." Paul turned away from the window, to a breakfast he wouldn't taste.

- Peter Brodie.

-----oooOooo-----



JOHN J. ALDERSON:

THE STRUCTURE OF SOCIETY

THE MALE DOMINATED SOCIETY

(a) The Law Of Manu

Note: Throughout this chapter I have used the more familiar Brahman instead of the more correct Brahmana (male) and Brahmani (female), and Aryan instead of the possibly more correct Arya.)

In vedic mythology, Manu is the hero eponymos of the human race, and of divine origin. Several origins of his divine origin are extant, the simplest being that he was offspring of the self-existent Brahman. Being founder of mankind, Manu is naturally considered as the founder of social and moral order, as a ruler of men, and as a Rishi to whom sacred texts were revealed, as the inventor of sacrificial rites, and the author of legal maxims.¹ However Hearn only regarded Manu as the founder of the Aryans. "The Eponym of our race was Manu - the Menu of the Hindus, the Minuas of Orchemenos, the Manes of the Phrygians, the Minos son of Zeus of Crete, the Mannus son of Tuisko, whom, in the time of Taxitus, the German Sagas described as their founder."²

Indian scholars derived the name "Manu" from man 'to know (the meaning of the Veda)'. (The verb "to know" is found in some of our own words, eg. mandarin.) The Vedas are a collection of ancient hymns which form the basis of Hindu theology. These date from the 2nd and 3rd Bronze Age when the Aryans were invading India^{3,4} and were reputed to have been written over a period of 800 years. The Indians impute to them a higher antiquity. Manu is quoted in writings apparently as early as 500 B.C., so he too can be reasonably assigned to the Third Bronze Age, that is approximately before 750 B.C. However the principles of his statutes seem to have been common throughout the Aryan world, but on the other hand the "Aryans had no word for law. They had no word for king. There is no trace amongst them of any organised priesthood, or any system of public worship."⁵ It seems that Manu codified a legal system, but if law is defined as an enforceable code of conduct then this legal system is primitive, in many cases being a collection of maxims. Like all law it was designed to stabilize the status quo. Thus Apastamba in his APHORISMS ON THE SACRED LAW OF THE HINDUS, says:

"1. Now, therefore, we will declare the acts productive of merit which form part of the customs of daily life, as they have been settled by the agreement (of those who know the law).

"2. The authority (for these duties) is the agreement of those who know the law,

"3. And (the authorities for the latter are) the Vedas alone.

"4. (There are) four castes - Brahmanas, Kshatriyas, Vaisyas and Sudas.

"5. Among these, each preceding (caste) is superior by birth to the one following.

"6. (For all these), excepting Sudras and those who have committed bad actions, (are ordained) the initiation, the study of the Veda, and the kindling of the sacred fire: and (their) works are productive of rewards (in this world and the next).

"7. To serve the other (three) castes (is ordained) for the Sudra.

"8. The higher the caste (which he serves) the greater is the merit."⁶

The law appears therefore to date from the time the Aryans subdued the native races (Sudras) of India and the latter were now in the happy position of gaining merit by serving the Twice-born.

The Laws of Manu as we have them have an ancient introduction which constitutes the first chapter, and which sets out the origin of the law, the summary of the contents together with an interesting version of creation.

"1. The great Sages approached Manu, who was seated with a collected mind, and, having duly worshipped him, spoke as follows:

"2. 'Deign, divine one, to declare to us precisely and in due order the sacred law of the (four chief) castes (varna) and of the intermediate ones.

"3. 'For thou, O Lord, alone knowest the purport, (i.e.) the rites, and the knowledge of the soul, (taught) in this whole ordinance of the Self-existent (Svayambhu), which is unknowable and unfathomable.'"⁷

Before proceeding: according to Hutton "though the Brahman belongs to one of the four original varna or 'colours' into which Rigvedic society was divided, a varna is very far from being the same thing as a caste, the Hindu word for which is jati or jat."⁸

The second point: the mention of the Self-existent as the ultimate Deity or Creator or One True God is rather significant. The same idea occurs again in one of the Vedic hymns, "To the Unknown God"...

"1. In the beginning there arose the Golden Child (Hiranya-garbha); as soon as born, he alone was lord of all that is. He stabilised the earth and this heaven :- Who is the God to whom we shall offer sacrifice?"⁹

Certainly the Brahmins were later to personify the word ka (who) which gives the title to this hymn, to identify it with Brahman, and Pragapati, to give him a genealogy and a wife, but originally the Self-existent or Unknown God had none of this, was vaguely male as is our own notion of God for grammatical reasons but was/is above such mundane things as sex. The lesser gods sprang up afterwards. In the Brihadaranyaka-Upanishad the sage Yagnavalkya is questioned as to how many gods there are. He replied that there were 3306. Repeatedly questioned he eventually said that there was but one and that all the rest were "only various powers of them."¹⁰ However in Manu's time the real worship was offered to little more than the Manes, the household gods who were the forebears of the family. "The offering of cakes and water is the sacrament of the Manes."¹¹ The birth of a son freed a man of his debt to the Manes.¹²

According to Manu a man was born again as his son¹³ and thus a man is the reincarnation of his fathers. It was further written, "(The duty of) connubial intercourse (follows from) the passage of a Brahmana, (Let us dwell together until a son is born)"¹⁴ Further sons were regarded as the product of lust. Primogeniture was the stern rule and younger sons were in a most subject position in the household, often apparently not marrying until their elder brother had a son. Indeed in so little regard were younger sons held that the children of a second wife (if married on borrowed money) belonged to the lender.¹⁵

The important point in having a son was to have someone to perform the funeral rites of the parents, this ritual being performed by the heir. In the event of a number of sons and/or daughters the case was simple as primogeniture was

absolute. If no son was forthcoming from the first wife a man might, after fourteen years, take a second¹⁶, but other courses were more common. If there was a daughter the father could make her his "appointed daughter" (that is, his heir). "He who has no son may make his daughter in the following manner an appointed daughter (putrika, saying to her husband), 'The male child born of her, shall perform my funeral rites'".¹⁷ But this interfered with the husband's own heir and was not popular. In the event of the girl dying without a son her husband could without hesitation take the estate (thus assuming the responsibility for the funeral rites of the father-in-law).¹⁸ There could well have been another objection to making a daughter an "appointed daughter" because if a son was to be born to the man afterwards the estate had to be shared between the two of them, the woman not losing the right bestowed on her but yet not having been given any rights of primogeniture.¹⁹

However: "59. On failure of issue (by her husband) a woman who has been authorised, may obtain, (in the) proper (manner prescribed), the desired offspring by (cohabitation with) a brother-in-law or (with some other) Sapinda (of her husband)".²⁰ A Sapinda is a relation within six degrees. Finally, there was the tanist heir. A son could be adopted, or bought, and such a son left all previous family rights and became wholly and entirely a son of the adopting family. The use of a surrogate father stems from an interesting idea, that a man and a woman on marriage become totally one²¹ and therefore a child by a surrogate father was equally their child. Similarly an illegitimate child becomes the child of the man who marries the girl.²² The heirs are summed up in verse IX 159, as "The legitimate sons of the body, the son begotten on a wife, the son adopted, the son made, the son secretly born, and the son cast off, (are) the six heirs and kinsmen."²³ The heirs of a woman however are her children.

"194. What (was given) before the (nuptial) fire, what (was given) on the bridal possession, what was given in token of love, and what was received from her brother, mother, or father, that is called the six-fold property of a woman.

"195. (Such property), as well as a gift subsequent and what was given (to her) by her affectionate husband, shall go to her offspring, (even) if she dies in the lifetime of her husband."²⁴ This idea is present too for men, as sons, not brothers or fathers are the heirs.²⁵ The estate on the death of the father was either divided between all the sons or the eldest took it and looked after the sons, that is, they all lived together. In the event of the estate being divided it was apportioned according to the seniority of the sons, the eldest having the larger share, the youngest the smallest, the rest an equal share. It was considered to be of greater merit for the family to separate.²⁶

A wife, according to Manu, was received from the gods, he does not wed her but, as explained above, becomes one with her. A wife was necessary to a householder, as both man and wife was required to perform the domestic religious ceremonies.²⁷ The sacred fire was kindled at the wedding which apparently sanctified the union and made it inviolate, not only on earth but in the hereafter. Marriage was thus eternal. A widow remained her husband's wife, and indeed if there were no children his relations could authorise her to have a child on the late husband's behalf by one of his relatives, though such a child was unnecessary for her attaining heaven after death.²⁸ The practice of widows burning themselves on their husband's funeral pyres was roundly condemned by Medhatitthi in his commentary of Manu.²⁹ nor is there any indication of the practice in Valmiki's Ramayana.

Marriage could not be repudiated; there was no divorce.³⁰ Even repudiating the wife or selling her did not break the marriage tie. Adultery certainly broke the tie as in the next life the woman is reborn as a jackel³¹, though elsewhere the punishment is said to be to dwell in hell. In the Institutes of Vishnu the punishment or penance was the same for man and woman, to spend a year according to the rule of Mahavrata, clad in a garment of bark and living in a forest.³² She was certainly allowed penance, after which she was restored to her

position.³³ But with men it was often punishment by death, by castration³⁴ or by being roasted to death, or being branded on the forehead and banished. Adultery between castes was much more serious and some horrific fates awaited the guilty man; but the position of the woman is ambiguous, the moral being that she should have been better guarded.

According to Manu a woman was to be kept in "subjection". "148. In childhood a female must be subject to her father, in youth to her husband, when her lord is dead to her sons; a woman must never be independent."³⁴ Whether or not this would be so translated today is a moot point and, as the subject is important, we will go into it further. Manu again: "2. Day and night women must be kept in dependence by the males (of) their (families) and, if they attach themselves to sensual enjoyments, they must be kept under one's control." Then follows a verse almost the same as above, then, "5. Women must be particularly guarded against evil inclinations, however trifling (they may appear); for, if they are not guarded, they will bring sorrow on two families." Now follows the interesting idea that a man, when his wife conceived, is born again by her, which gives the purity of the offspring considerable importance. However: "10. No man can completely guard women by force; but they can be guarded by the employment of the (following) expedients:

"11. Let the husband employ his (wife) in the collection and expenditure of his wealth, in keeping (everything) clean, in (the fulfilment of) religious duties, in the preparation of his food, and in looking after the household utensils.

"12. Women, confined in the house under trustworthy and obedient servants, are not (well) guarded; but those who of their own accord keep guard over themselves, are well guarded."³⁵

All this must be considered in the light of the society of the time. For example, in THE RAMAYANA Rama calls his brother Lakshmana "My boy" (who is only a day or so younger), whilst Lakshmana calls Rama "Arya" (Lord). For killing a Kshatriya (2nd caste) the compensation was 1000 cows and a bull, for a Vaisya (3rd caste) 100 cows and a bull, for a Sudra (4th caste) 10 cows and a bull. The compensation for a woman was the same as a man of her caste. One must note that despite the vast difference in blood "price" the woman was equal to a man of her caste. Killing a Brahman was the most heinous of offences and beyond compensation. So was killing a Brahmani.³⁶ On the other hand, the subjection of a student to his teacher was the most common object, and it appears that all men were expected to be a student and learn the Vedas (except for the Sudra who could have his ear filled with molten lead for listening to the Veda). The minimum time taken to learn one Veda was twelve years, and forty eight for the four of them.

Protection of women had its obligations. "4. Reprehensible is the father who gives not (his daughter in marriage) at the proper time; reprehensible is the husband who approaches not (his wife in the due season), and reprehensible is the son who does not protect his mother after her husband has died."³⁷ Indeed if a woman of age was not given in marriage she was permitted to take matters into her own hand.³⁸ But before she did this she had to wait three years (after her first menstruation). She was not to take her ornaments etc. given to her (as that would be theft) but on the other hand, her husband was relieved of paying the nuptial fee. Unmarried girls (whose father had died) had to have a dowry given by their brothers.³⁹

Marriage was forbidden within six degrees on the male side and four degrees on the woman's side.⁴⁰ Incest was regarded as a mortal sin and carried the same punishment as violating a Guru's bed, to be branded on the forehead with the mark of a female part using a hot iron and exile.⁴¹

There were eight different types of marriages, four being blameless and four blameable.⁴² Not all were available for the whole four castes. The first six were lawful for a Brahman, but there is difference of opinion about the lawfulness of

these rites for some castes. It is best to comment on each rite as we deal with it.

The Brahma rite: The gift of a daughter, after decking her with costly ornaments and honouring her with presents of jewels, to a man learned in the Veda, and of good conduct whom the father himself invites.

Daiva rite: The gift of a daughter decked with ornaments, to a priest who duly officiates at the sacrifice during the marriage.

Arsha rite: The giving of a daughter according to the rule, after receiving from the bridegroom in fulfilment of the sacred law, a cow and a bull, or two pairs.

Pragapatya rite: A gift of a daughter by her father after he has addressed the couple with the text, 'May both of you perform your duties', and has shown honour to the bridegroom.

Asura rite: The bridegroom receives the maiden after giving as much wealth as he can afford to the kinsmen and to the bride herself according to his own will. The objection to this rite was that it is the purchase of the girl, and though obviously practised was roundly and continually condemned. Some experts considered it right enough for the Vaisya and Sudra castes.

Gandharva rite: The voluntary union of a maiden and her lover. Objected to on account that it springs from desire and has sex as its object. It was permitted, particularly in conjunction with the Rakshasa rite (presumably when the girl was willing) for the Kshatriya.

Rakshasa rite: The forcible abduction of a maiden from her home while she cries out and weeps, after her kinsmen have been slain or wounded and their houses broken open. This was permissible only to the warrior caste the Kshatriya.

Pisakas rite: The seduction of a girl whilst asleep, intoxicated, or disordered in intellect. Regarded as the most base and sinful rite and never to be used. It was later omitted.

The type of marriage rite used was supposed to affect the nature of the offspring, blameable marriages producing blameable sons.

The sale of women was objected to. "No father who knows (the law) must take even the smallest gratuity for his daughter; for a man who through avarice takes a gratuity, is a seller of his offspring."⁴³ However the practice persisted and still occurs in India. Even a Sudra ought not to take a nuptial fee.⁴⁴

Certainly a dowry was usually given in the Brahma and Daiva rites, in the first costly ornaments and presents of jewels, in the second just a decking with ornaments. In the Gandharva rite, the girl was not to take her ornaments nor was the bridegroom liable for the nuptial fee. It is also stated that when an officiating priest or teacher neglects his religion he becomes an outcast, a fate passed on to his sons, "but not the females. For a female enters (the family of) a stranger. He may marry such a female without a dowry."⁴⁵ The dowry was probably equalled by the nuptial fee.

Under the Law of Manu, interest was allowed but its workings was simple and restricted.⁴⁶ However the practice was frowned upon.

"116. Learning, mechanical arts, work for wages, service, rearing cattle, traffic, agriculture, contentment (with little), alms, and receiving interest on money, are the ten modes of subsistence (permitted to all men in times of distress).

"117. Neither a Brahmana, nor a Kshatriya must lend (money at) interest; but at his pleasure (either of them) may, in times of distress (when he requires money) for sacred purposes, lend to a very sinful man at a small interest."⁴⁷

We have thus, as with the Aryans, a rigidly stratified society with usually definite and clearly defined ideas of right and wrong. That those ideals are not ours is immaterial. They have seen the ultimate nature of God whose nature was beyond sex but with whom they were not on intimate terms and who later became overclouded by an ever increasing number of attributes of both sexes, whilst the household worship has tended to become ever grosser in form, though probably not in nature. On marriage, a man and woman become one for all time, here and hereafter, whilst the man was born again in his son. As this could only happen once, sex was restrained, but, a man was expected to keep his wife happy. Although both surrogate motherhood and fatherhood was permitted it was apparently not common and marriages tended to be monogamous. Female virtue was highly regarded and the sanctity of a Sudra woman was the same as a Brahmani. Even when obtained by force (Rahshasa rite) or stealth (Pisakas rite) the woman was given the protection of marriage. And although the highly stratified society allowed a vast difference in blood price between the castes the woman was equal to the man of her caste. Adultery was regarded as a mortal sin and the man usually heavily punished, in many cases with death, but the woman was apparently allowed to do penance and be restored to her former position. Incest ranged through six degrees and was punished in the case of a male by branding with a hot iron. A dowry and a nuptial fee were both paid and it is apparent from casual references that women were not permitted to be sold, but they were and still are.

A man's heirs were either his eldest son, in which case the eldest son was to care for his brothers, or the estate was divided between the family according to a formula which gave each younger son slightly less. In cases where there was no son, a daughter could be heir. A woman's heirs were her children. As marriage arrangements were made very early the property of one so betrothed went to the betrothal partner. Inheritance did not revert to the parents or their kinsfolk.

The caste system was occupation based and there was really no merchantile class, so whilst they had a coinage from very early times, the idea of making money earn more money by way of interest was very limited and forbidden to the two upper castes except in times of distress, in which case they could look around for a "very sinful man" and lend to him at a small interest, despite, we suppose, the risk!

Despite having a warrior caste the Aryans were a peaceful people and have made no effort to conquer the world. Indeed, whilst providing libraries of theology, politics and economics are almost unknown sciences to them; their political history is very confused, apparently from lack of interest. These ascetics have survived a long time.

(The late Fuhrer badly stained the "Aryan" name, but they would have repudiated his "ideals" and he would have despised their true ideals. They were noble and gentle).

NOTES:

SBE stands for Sacred Books of the East edited by F. Max Muller and reprinted in facsimile by Motilal Banarsidass of Delhi. The number after the SBE indicates the number in the series.

1. Buhler, G. THE LAWS OF MANU, Delhi 1982 p.lvii & lviii, SBE 25.
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- John J. Alderson.

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THE NIGHT SKY

C. JOHN FIDGE

It was the most beautiful sight he, or anyone else, had ever seen. Enormous translucent clouds of white gas covered the night sky from horizon to horizon, the blackness of space only peeking through in a few isolated spots. He lay on his back and continued to gaze with endless fascination at the overhead display. However his observations were suddenly interrupted by the girl.

He glanced down between his feet and saw her rolling toward him through the grass like a child, making little mewling sounds. She had been doing this for hours, just rolling back and forth whimpering. But at least it was better than when they first arrived and she ran around in circles screaming for hours on end, he thought.

I must be more tolerant; she can't help it and after all it is my responsibility to look after her, he mused and turned his attention back to the glowing sky. Even here in the perpetual night, it lit the entire landscape with a wonderful twilight-like softness.

Of course looking after the girl was exceptionally simple. She never wandered too far away and there was nowhere that she could get out of his sight. The terrain was completely flat and featureless as far as the eye could see. Thousands of miles of smooth soft soil with a uniform cover of sparse, inch-high grass.

In a way he was glad for the featureless landscape since it did not distract his study of the sky. In fact the only break in the unvarying landscape was himself and the girl.

He continued to lay on his back: it gave him the opportunity to examine the overhead display in minute detail. Although they only appeared about as distant as terrestrial water-vapour clouds, he knew that these "clouds" must in reality be huge nebulae at immense distances in the sector of space surrounding the planet. To the eye they were immobile - it would take months or even years of naked eye observation to detect any movement at these distances.

Nevertheless, their delicacy had kept him fascinated for days (or was it weeks?) and would continue to do so for some time, he felt. Although lacking colour, each cloud exhibited a different shade of grey, and where they overlapped the difference in texture was marvellous to behold. Delicate filaments branched out from the edge of each cloud in all directions, offering endless fascination for the eye. Indistinct blobs of light within the clouds marked the birthplace of new stars.

The girl was now kneeling at his feet, staring at him mutely. Her large brown eyes contained a wild quality that suddenly reminded him of the purpose of this unique world.

It contained the most unvarying natural environment in the known galaxy. This side of the planet always faced away from its sun, the surface was perfectly flat, temperature constant, the sky uniformly black with few visible stars, changes in weather non-existent. Although often disputed, it was claimed that this environment often had a profound therapeutic effect on the incurably insane, in a manner akin to shock treatment.

These unfortunates were left, either singly or in small groups, on the surface for an indefinite period to effect their own cure. Hallucinations were widely reported even among the mentally stable explorers who discovered the planet. The exact cause was unknown (although sensory-deprivation was usually quoted) and the effectiveness of this "treatment" difficult to ascertain.

To be here the poor girl must be seriously ill, he thought. Still it was simple to look after her in this place: there was virtually nothing she could do to harm herself.

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"There're moving," she suddenly said in a voice of wonder. It was the first time he had heard her speak. Perhaps it was a good sign?

"Can't you see them?" she cried pointing upwards, now sounding a little panicky.

He glanced up to the point she was staring at but, as he expected, the nebulae remained motionless. Maybe she wasn't talking about the clouds? Strange, but with a little effort you could almost imagine that these stellar objects were drifting through the sky, but he knew that he was just imagining it.

"They're whirling around, faster and faster", she concluded hysterically, slumping down again to resume her gentle whining. He continued his examination of the glowing sky. The delicate lacework of interstellar gas remained stationary.

FINALLY the thought struck him. It was well known that the night sky here was completely featureless so where did this celestial display suddenly come from? And if only the mentally deranged are ever left on this planet what was he doing here?

Overhead the inky blackness of space dominated the firmament above the surface of the planet.

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He recovered - she however did not even exist.

- C. John Fidge.



A M A G N I F I C E N T P E R F O R M A N C E

waving in one tentacle
an Innocence Jug

in the other an Autumn
Storage Jar

these are my trophies surely
you'll agree well

worth all the danger diving in
poisonous

atmosphere plunging
through slag mountains

fused over and under
old cities wearing

my irreplaceable
cutter limb

to the raw bone and all the time
dangerous as a poem in so hostile

a ruined environment weakening
my alertness to any

and every hazard waves of emotion
from the lost world they sang

those beings in between being
world-breakers in between being

beauty makers still it resonates in
their absence that song conjuring

them unchanged above the warted blistered
landmass itching the exczema

of self scratching it raw i swear i
saw them just same as in

the culture-packs issued to museum
planet visitors black on white white on blue

salmon on pale silk task force of their life force
clear multifoliate as clouds just keep on

sailing shining through
inside these objects i hold them entire now

crying see me skincloak wrinkling
as if in acid with thought of parting

forever from what is gone forever gentlemen
i swear by my pores-pain truly these are
true brew of planet Hellnheaven how much am I bid.

ЧЕРЕЗ ДРУЖБУ К ЗВЁЗДАМ

THE GREAT CIRCLE and FANTASTIKA '83 AWARDS

USSR SF FAN CLUBS

- RESULTS OF THE VOTING - .

This year saw 23 SF fan clubs participating in the voting. These include:

Stalker SF fan club	in Sevastopol	Insoma	in Volgoda
Argo	in Nikolaev	Niichavo	in Petrozavolsk
Prometheus	in Ufa	Proteus	in Odessa
Parallax	in Cherkassy	Altair	in Nefteyugansk
Fantast	in Kurgan	Zodiac	in Baku
Wings of God Ra	at Rybakovsky State Farm	Dorado	in Vilnius
The Flying Dutchman	in Maloyaroslovets	Star Torch	in Aktyubinsk
Orion	in Tuapse	Labyrinth	in Astrakham
Wind of Time	in Volgograd	Alkor	in Omsk
Ariel	in Krasnokamsk	Helias	In Tbilisi
Radiant	in Sverdlovsk	Gravity	in Rostov-on-Don

As indicated by the results of the vote, the number of Sf fan clubs participating increased by one as compared with 1981, but decreased by nine as compared with 1982. Among the non-participants are the major clubs of the country, such as the 'Gongury' Sf fan club in Abakan, 'Rifey' in Perm, 'Tsiolkovski' in Minsk, and SF fan clubs in Moscow, Leningrad, Khabarovsk, Novosiborsk, Vladivostok and many, many other clubs.

We are sorry to say that in the light of all these developments the '83 voting is the last one, and there is not going to be any voting for 1984. Such a situation will probably continue until a meeting where the majority of fans are represented takes place; then and there the matter of participation in the voting will undoubtedly be raised.

Now - back to the voting. Fifty-five titles and names figured on the ballot-papers in all the five divisions. Unfortunately, the divisions got mixed up. There was no sound arguments in favour of the productions presented for consideration as well as no data pertaining to the publications of this or that novel or story. Many clubs failed to meet the deadline as usual and some votes got in barely in time to be recorded.

In the first division (novel/tale) the winner was the novel by V.Michailov entitled THEN COME AND WE'LL TALK IT OUT which polled ten votes. Among

the other contenders in this division was S. Pavlov's novel THE SOFT MIRRORS and Y. Samsonov's novel THE GLASS SHIP which were recognised as worthy of special mention.

In the second division (short tale/long story) the winner was the tale by the young Moscow author, Edward Devorkyan, who is a philologist, entitled THE RULES OF THE GAME: NO HOLDS BARRED, which also polled ten votes. The runner-up, which lost by only one vote, was the tale by V. Pirozhnikov IN THE PASTURES OF HEAVEN, which had been published in KNOWLEDGE IS POWER magazine in the beginning of 1983. (V. Pirozhnikov is a journalist living in Perm and takes an active part in the working of the 'Rifey' SF fan club in the capacity of a member of the club board). Among the other productions in this division the following have been recognised as worthy off mention: THE MEDICINE FOR LUS by the young Moscow SF writers V. Genkin and A. Katsuro; THE WASTELAND OF LIFE by D. Bilenkin; THE DOVECOTE ON THE YELLOW MEADOW by Slerdlovsk writer Vladislav Krapivivn (this being an excellent specimen of Soviet fantasy and continues the series by the same author that began with THE CHILDREN OF THE BLUE FLAMINGO that received the 'Aelita' and 'Great Circle' Awards) and WAKE UP IN FAMAGUSTA by E. Parnov.

In the Third Division (short story) the winner was Boris Shtern, who lives in Odessa. The story, THIS IN THE MAN ... was published in CHEMISTRY AND LIFE magazine. In making out the case for this story, one of the SF fan clubs stressed "the peculiar 'shternine' style, the original treatment of Asimov's Laws, and the sense of humour."

Losing by one vote were the stories by Leningrad writer V. Rybakov BALLON D'ESSAI and Alan Kubatiev (Novosibirsk) THERE WHERE ONLY LUMINARIES MOVE. Among other works that have been noted for their merits are: THE AWAKENING by the Lukins, a young talented married couple in Volgograd; THE TREE by V. Kovalenko in Minsk; the stories KEEP YOU BREATH and THE TISHKA SYNDROME by S. Drugol (Sverdlovsk); the stories by S. Logivov, K. Blokhin, Kyr Bulychev, M. Shalamov, I. Koblova, A. Bushkov and others.

In the CONTRIBUTION TO SF division, the uncontestable laureate was the young critic Vl. Gakov, for his book FOUR JOURNEYS IN THE TIME MACHINE, which polled twelve votes. In this division the other contestants included M Pukhov in his personage of the editorial board of the TECHNOLOGY FOR YOUTH magazine, the Moscow critic V. Revich, the Karelian author Y. Linnik, the oldest SF author in the USSR G. Gurevich for his books TALKS ON SCIENCE FICTION, the cosmonaut Georgy Grechko for his propagation of Sf and participation in the TV programme THIS FANTASTIC WORLD, the Sverdlovsk fan and bibliographer I. Kalymbadja, the young SF writer V. Babenko, who is in charge of the Moscow Seminar of the young SF writers, V.I. Bugrov and others.

In the CONTRIBUTION TO THE ADVANCEMENT OF THE SF FAN CLUB MOVEMENT division nine decisive votes had been cast for the Volgograd fan B. Zavgorodny.

As a postscript for those interested in the way the voting proceeded, this is the way it was done: on a large sheet of paper a diagram was drawn where on the vertical axis the clubs were designated, and along the horizontal axis the names of the contenders were shown. In the squares formed by the intersecting lines the symbols of the divisions - circle, triangle, etc - had been drawn in. After this the results were summed up.

Volgograd, 31st December, 1984.

V. Kolesov,
Bor. Bagalyakz,
B. Zavgorodny,
and others.

HONOURS LISTING FOR SOVIET S F WRITERS

Prepared by Boris Zavgorodny

THE LITERARY GAZETTE, the organ of the Board of the Writer's Union of the USSR, published, on the 21st of November 1984, 'The Degree of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR' on the decorating of the writers with the orders of the USSR for services rendered in the development of Soviet Literature and on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the Writer's Union. This Decree has been signed by the President of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet, comrade K.U. Chernenko and by the Secretary of the Presidium, comrade T. Menteshviu.

It was a pleasure to see among those decorated the surnames of the writers who have taken their creative talent to SF. The highest award was to Daniel Granin, who was decorated with the Order of Lenin, whose story THE PLACE FOR THE MONUMENT, won the admiration of his readers.

The Order of the Labour Red Banner was given to the poetess Rimma Kazakova, who wrote several interesting Sf stories, and to Vladislav Krapivin, the Sverdlovsk writer, the laureate of the Leninist Komsomol Award, the laureate of the Aelita-'83 Sf Award and who also received the USSR Fan Prize THE GREAT CIRCLE for his story THE CHILDREN OF THE BLUE FLAMINGO.

The Order of the Friendship of Peoples was been given to Chingiz Aitmatov, the author of the SF novel THE DAY THAT LASTED MORE THAN A CENTURY (WIND-SWEPT JERK-WATER STATION), and to the Leningrad poet, Vadim Shefner, whose last novel, THE DEBTOR'S HOVEL, was recognised as the best novel for 1982 by fans.

The Order of the Token of Honour was handed down to E. Voiskunsky, who has written many SF books in co-authorship with I. Lunodiyarov (E. Voiskunsky has been, for the last few years, one of those responsible for the Moscow Seminar of young Sf authors. Unfortunately he has decided to give up SF and his last novel, KRONSTADT, is devoted to the naval theme, which is close to the heart of the author, who is a former seaman.)

Eremai Parnov, a remarkable Sf writer known as a constant representative of the Soviet Union at EuroCons and World Cons, was also awarded the Order of Token of Honour. His last Sf story, WAKE UP IN FAMAGUSTA, opens another page in the list of works devoted to the mysterious country of Shambala.

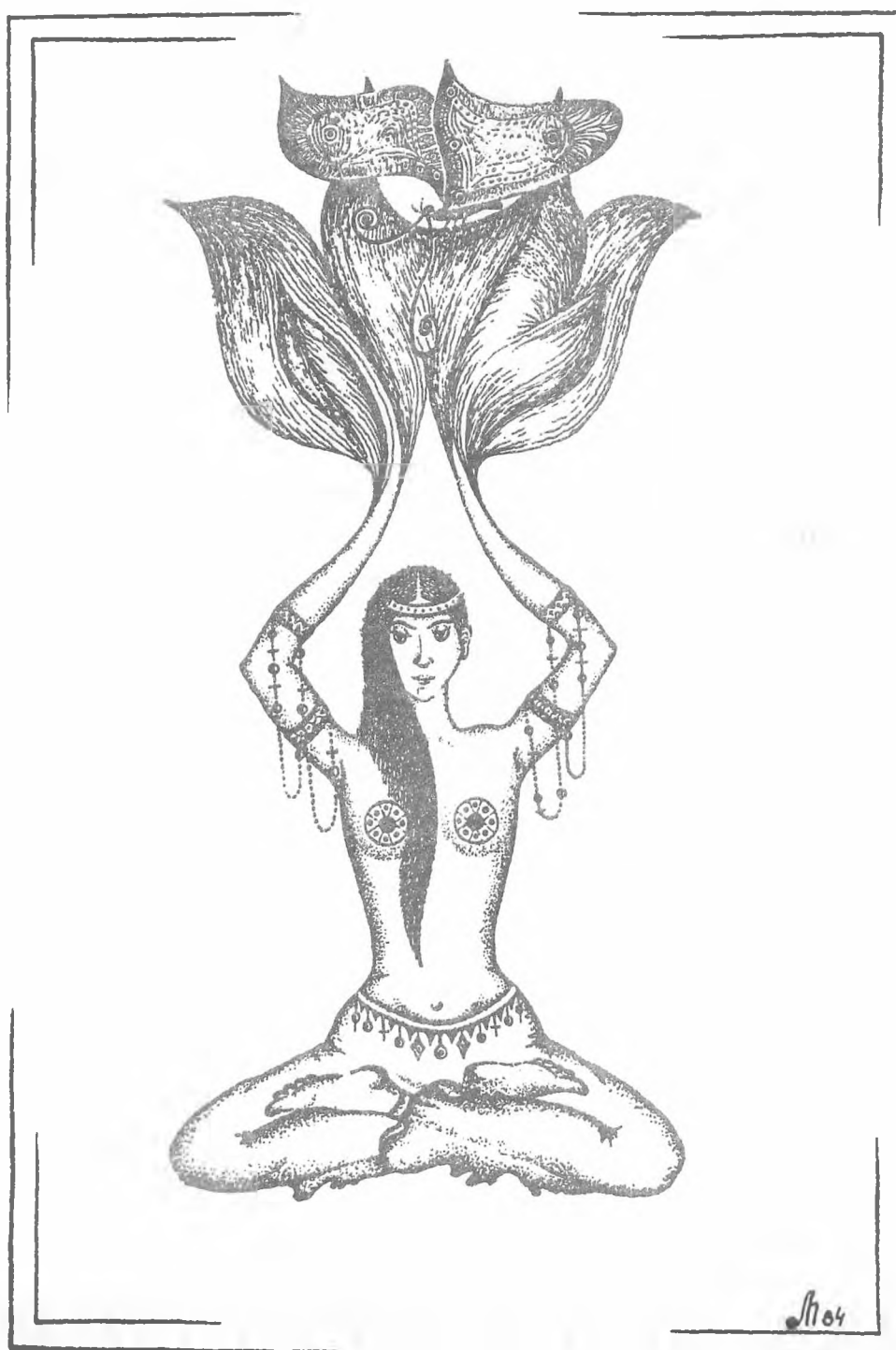
Among those decorated are other authors whose creative work has some connection with SF: Veniamin Kaverin, Valetin Kataev, Anatoly Kim, Vladimir Orlov, and others.

The same issue of the newspaper also features a long interesting article by V. Kichin titled SCIENCE FICTION: FORECAST dealing with problems facing the Soviet SF cinema. He points out that the Sf cinema in the USSR remains up till now a genre that is in the course of development and is not out of its teething troubles. Much has to be done before it can reach real heights and utilize the potential peculiar to it.

The article notes some of the mistakes in the latest SF movies such as

THE MOON RAINBOW, THE UNIQUE MAN, THE TESTAMENT OF PROFESSOR DOWEL and THE SECRET OF HER YOUTHFULNESS, and expresses concern that the books by the Strugatskys cannot break onto the screen, while the Gorky studio has completed the shooting of THE SEVEN ELEMENTS, which is based on the novel by V. Shcherbakov, the weakest and most incomprehensible work of the last few years. The article concludes with suggestions on the way out of the present situation, namely the conduction of international Sf cinema festivals, the establishment of a centralised agency and technical facilities for the shooting of Sf movies.

- Boris Zavgorodny.



GRIMESISH GRUMBERLINGS,



A COLUMN BY A. BERTRAM CHANDLER.

IF THIS IS TOKYO IT MUST BE FRIDAY.

Some time ago I was invited to be one of the overseas guests at DAICON IV, this year's Japanese National SF Convention, to be held in Osaka. I decided that it was high time that I showed the flag again in Japan and began to make arrangements. As I did six years ago, I booked on a Sachi Oriental conducted tour, transport and hotel accommodation only, no meals, on the understanding that I should be staying an extra night in Hiroshima, making my own way from there to Osaka and from Osaka to Takamatsu, where I should be rejoining the tour. This meant that I should be missing Beppu (where I lost my trousers in rather embarrassing circumstances in 1977), a well-known and very interesting spa resort, but this was unavoidable.

On the evening of Thursday, August 11, Susan ran me to the airport. As she had some other engagement that night, she took me to Mascot rather earlier than required, but this, as it turned out, was advantageous. Checking in at the JAL counter I found that, despite my stated preference in such matters, I was booked in the non-smoking area. I was able to get this changed.

I settled down with Heinlein's FRIDAY - a book that I highly recommend - and, when I wasn't reading, kept my eyes skinned for other intending passengers carrying tell-tale red Sachi Tour bags. I thought, as one usually does on such occasions, "What have I let myself in for? What a boring bunch of hicks!" (As usual first impressions were wrong. During the tour, after my cover had been blown, quite a number of science fiction addicts came out of the woodwork. One young lady, who omitted to bring reading matter for the trip, devoured FRIDAY as avidly as I had done.)

The start of the tour was the usual hurry-up-and-wait routing. The tour guide, a charming young lady with very good - apart from the usual Japanese confusion between 'l' and 'r' - English made herself known to her flock. Finally we boarded the jumbo. Eventually the thing took off. Drinks were served, then dinner. The meals aboard JAL airliners are of quite high standard, especially when compared to those served by certain other airlines in Tourist Class.

There was a Japanese film which I didn't bother to try and watch, trying instead, without much success, to get some sleep. At last we touched down at Narita, Tokyo's airport, early on Friday morning. I had written, before departure, to my friends in Tokyo, saying that I did not expect anybody to come all the way out to Narita to meet me, suggesting that they make contact with me at the hotel later in the day. Meanwhile, all of the incoming passengers were feeling the heat. At last, having cleared Immigration and Customs, we boarded the bus that was to take us into the city. It was a two hour drive, along the inevitably crowded road. Arriving at the hotel, I found a message from my translator saying that he, with others, would be calling for me about 1100 hours. I learned too, as did the others, that our rooms would not be available until noon. I was not the only one craving a shower and a change into non-sweaty light clothing.

But this was not to be for quite some time. At 1030 Mr. Noda appeared and presented me with the day's very full programme. First of all, there was to be a Chinese banquet lunch. Then there was to be a special showing, just for my benefit, of a new Japanese feature-length animation which had been perpetrated by one of my Tokyo friends. Then there was to be a conducted tour of the Sony factory. Then there was to be a combination book-launching and welcome party at which my publisher and most of the Japanese SF writers would be present, and also Frederick Pohl and Dr. Elizabeth Ann Hull (Fred and Betty were breaking their journey in Japan after a tour of Mainland China, on their way back to the U.S.A.). Then there was to be a visit to some famous Tokyo night club.

Other friends and/or Faithful Readers arrived. We had a few drinks - I confined myself to green tea - and then it was time to leave for the Chinese restaurant. The meal - course after course after course - was most enjoyable, as was the company. But I am not used to eating heavily in the middle of a hot day and,

too, was becoming more and more aware of my sweaty, unshaven condition. But, it was intimidated, I must, repeat and underscore, must attend the special showing of CRASHER JOE. So we all went by train to some suburb to the studio where this was being shewn.

CRASHER JOE is one of those notorious Japanese comic books animated and set in the future. Sitting on either side of me were my interpreters, one male and one female, who were supposed to be explaining the action to me. The soundtrack was very noisy but, even so, I tended to doze off, aroused only by the occasional burst of exceptionally heavy gunfire or by a planet-wrecking explosion. My two interpreters were doing as I was doing. (Later I learned that all Mr. Takegawa's friends had failed to be impressed by his magnum opus and that he had hoped that I would envince some enthusiasm for the masterpiece.)

After the film showing, I put my foot down firmly. I said that the visit to the Sony factory would have to be cancelled and that before I kept any other engagement I must have the too-long deferred shower, shave, etc. So I was taken back to the hotel and allowed to make myself presentable.

The party was a good one. When the Japanese put on an European style buffet they make everything look so very attractive. After the over-heavy Chinese lunch I did not intend to do any more eating that day, but weakened. Autographing pen in one hand and chopsticks in the other, I took my stance within easy reach of the heaped platter of smoked salmon and the heaped platter of marinated baby octopi and, between signing things, contrived to fill what crannies remained after that Chinese lunch. The book launching was TO RULE THE REFUGEES (THE ANARCH LORDS), number 13 in the Rayakawa Rim Worlds series.

At some stage in the proceedings, I learned that the night club visit was no longer on, as this establishment was heavily booked out. Mr. Tetsu Yano, a prominent SF writer and translator, volunteered to take me on a tour of Tokyo's red light district. A fan, with low taste similiar to those of Mr. Yano and myself, accompanied us.

The first show to which we went was a very clean one. The props were a large air mattress and a basin of suds. The actors were a naked young lady and a naked young man (a volunteer from the audience). The NYM disposed himself prone on the air mattress. The NYL thoroughly soaped the back of the NYM. Then she thoroughly soaped her front. Then she lay down on top of the NYM, front to back. Presumably she eventually turned him over, achieving consummating in an explosion of lather. But we left before this happened.

The next call was at a topless, almost bottomless, bar. The waitresses - quite shapely wenches - were attired in shoes and skimpy aprons fore and aft. Now and again one of the customers would go upstairs, briefly, with one of the waitresses. What transpired between them, I do not know.

Finally we went to see the "Peepshow".

Imagine a small, brightly-lit room, with every wall a mirror, a two-way mirror. Imagine cubicles surrounding this room, each one provided with a stool, a packet of disposable tissues and a plastic wastepaper bin. Imagine a young lady in this room who slowly strips, making the rounds of the -to her - unseen audience. Imagine this young lady, now completely naked, draping a length of gauze about her loins and then masturbating digitally. (The gauze, of course, being to hide the fact that the masturbation was simulated, not actual.)

When I next met Betty - at the DAICON in Osaka - she asked, "Where did you and Yano-san go after the party in Tokyo?"

"Just for a walk," I said.

But she persisted and finally I told her the full story, saying that the "Peepshow" management had the interests of their clients at heart, providing a box of tissues in case they should be suffering from heavy colds.

"Don't be silly," she told me. "Those were for use if your spectacles got fogged up!"

I still have to tell her about the "Music Hall" to which I was dragged, kicking and screaming in Kyoto.

- A Bertram Chandler.

TRIAL BY TELEVISION

BY GAIL NEVILLE

In the far corner of a sparse and comfortless bedsitting room a video receiver flickers into life. A loud single tone, monotonous and piercing, erupts from the remote control lying carelessly on the floor nearby.

It is some time before the tone rises above the noise of three children playing on the floor. Their mother is ladling beans into cracked plates and curses softly.

"I knew there wouldn't be time to eat," she says to her husband. "It gets earlier every night."

"Ignore it." He suggests.

"Oh yes, and have to pay another fine? We haven't the money for it, and I suppose you want to spend six months in jail instead?"

"Make a nice change," he murmurs, as a screaming fight erupts between two of the children.

"And how would we manage?"

"So answer it, then."

"Two people registered here, Jace, two people answer, right? I'm not taking all the responsibility for everything."

"Right, right - bloody right." He gets up reluctantly and forges a passage between the warring children to the TV. His hand fumbles among the debris on the floor for the remote and presses one of the sensor panels. Each sensor is coded to the user. At the bottom of the panel are two large flat buttons, unmarked but colour-coded red and green. At her touch, the tone monotone signal pauses to register her response, then begins again. His wife presses another sensor, and a precise voice issues from the television.

"Hello Jason, Hello Yutta. Please sit down. The trial will begin in one moment."

They squat on the floor, the remote between them. The test pattern on the video screen fades and a smoothly handsome face appears.

"Good evening, jury members. Welcome to tonight's trial. This is Hector Paul, your presenter for tonight. The trial is due to begin in a few minutes, and in the meantime I'll introduce you to tonight's panel." The camera pans slowly down the desk to close up on a portly male sipping nervously at a glass of water. "We have the noted criminologist Dr. Humphrey Stone with us tonight. Dr Stone has kindly agreed to step in at the last moment as a replacement for criminal psychologist Dr. Marion Hartley, who was brutally murdered at her home earlier tonight. We hope to bring you her assailant's trial on this channel as soon as possible. This is Dr. Stone's first appearance on a video trial panel, but I am ssure his expertise in the field of criminology will be of great benefit to us here tonight... and on my right..." The camera quickly glides away from Stone, past Hector Paul, and snuggles up to a face of luxuriant beauty. "one of our most popular panellists on Video Trial, the lovely Adorna Lee, star of the high rating cop show 'Street Angels'.

Welcome to our panel, Dr. Stone, Ms. Lee - we will be coming back to you later when we have heard the evidence and the interviews. So now it's over to Rebecca Caswell to give you all the details on tonight's trial - and it promises to be an exciting evening, folks."

Yutta massages her tired feet, and smiles as the toddler climbs on her lap and snuggles in. The older children, having been separated by a roar from their father, finish dishing up the beans and solicitously bring full plates to their trapped parents. As the family settles down there is a good feeling between them, a secure feeling. The windows are barred, the door locked and bolted, and nothing can get in. Outside, in the corridors, in the streets, a violent crime is being committed every five minutes, according to the latest statistics.

"Please inform me of your continued presence," demands the voice on the television. Jace and Yutta enter their codes.

"Rebecca Caswell here. This -" her wholesome, freckled face is replaced by mug shot of a bleak-eyed, unshaven male, caucasian, late twenties, approximately 175 centimetres in height, 80 kilos in weight. His face has been expertly made-up to highlight the cruel, haggard lines on his face, and the livid scratch marks on his cheeks. " - this is the face of a man accused of a terrifyingly violent crime. Henry Vincent Todd, unemployed, in debit of social security payments due to repeated jury dodging, of no fixed address, was arrested and charged three hours ago with the brutal rape and murder of this girl - " A montage of still follows, with quick snatches of home-made video, of a pretty young girl, dark, Madonna-like. "Noele Gabrielle Galchak, part time model and actress, of 26/A, Sinclair Road, Bellemore Park - "

"That's just down the road," Yutta says, and shivers.

"Noele Galchak's mutilated body was found this morning in her bed sitting room. She had been sexually assaulted, and her throat had been cut with a kitchen knife, among various other injuries. In a moment we will bring you full particulars on the condition of the body, a video of the autopsy, and a pre-recorded interview with the Coroner. But right now it's time for a commercial break."

The toddler is asleep in Yutta's arms, and one of the older children is nodding over his plate of beans. Yutta tries to get comfortable on the floor, gently sliding the toddler down beside her. The eldest child watches the TV, chewing passively, as a troupe of naked dancing girls extol the virtues of washing powder.

The commercial break ends, and Rebecca Caswell reappears, dressed in a white coat unbuttoned to the navel, bra-less, and fetchingly posed by a large mortuary slab. The body on the slab is draped in a white sheet, and a man with dry, papery hands plucks the sheet away.

"Rebecca Caswell here again, jury members, with Dr. Arthur Jubb, City Coroner. This is the mutilated body of Noele Galchak, as it was brought into the morgue just a few moments ago. We are filming the actual autopsy here, folks, on this pathetic young woman. Dr. Jubb, what is your first impression of the condition of the body?"

The white naked form of the murdered girl shines under the harsh glare of the arc lamps. Dr Jubb points to the physical evidence - the gaping slash in the throat, the teeth marks on the small, flattened breasts, the many contusions about the head and shoulders. He carefully examines the mutilated genital area, and discusses the injuries in a dry, precise voice.

Gradually, as Dr. Jubb completes his examination, a picture of the dead girl's life builds up. She was a drug addict, recently aborted. There are shreds of skin and blood under her fingernails, indicating she fought for her life.

(Here the camera quickly cuts to a close-up of the accused, and his scratched cheeks.)

"In a moment we will be crossing to Bellemore Park CIB, where our court

reporter Jill Whitman is waiting to bring you an on-the-spot live interview with the arresting officer on the case, Detective Superintendent James Delaney. This is your video trial crime investigator Rebecca Caswell signing off for now and wishing you all a good night."

Rebecca's wholesome freckles are replaced by a blonde teenage girl demonstrating tampons.

Outside, in the year 1998, a thick black cloud has rolled in from the ocean and settled over the harbour. It is past curfew hour, the streets look deserted, but occasionally something moves in the shadows and a siren howls like a dog baying at the moon. The cops say, almost seriously, that the only criminals abroad at this hour are those deprived souls who can't find enough violence to keep them occupied in their own homes. Even in daylight, few venture outside their apartments, and stores are sealed tight against looting and theft. Armoured delivery vans take telephone orders to homes and apartments. Few go out to work. Welfare payments are made to those who faithfully discharge their jury duties in front of their TV sets. But in a society where work and wages are limited to a privileged few, the welfare bill is appallingly high, and regularly pared by denying payments to the escalating number of jury dodgers. Those who are penalised turn to crime to survive. The crime rate soars daily. With such a huge percentage of the population engaged in criminal activities, the courts are choked with cases waiting to be tried. Video Trials are now being broadcast around the clock on cable TV and everyone not in custody is expected to do at least fifty hours a week jury duty.

The trial of Henry Vincent Todd continues. The interview with Delaney is followed by interviews with family and friends of the deceased. No one speaks for the accused. His criminal record is scrolled onto the screen. Hector Paul again introduces the panel and invites the jury to talkback discussion of the evidence. The panel question Henry Todd. Adorna Lee is particularly interested in his personal life. She extracts details of his failed relationships, marriages, divorces, custody battles, suicide attempts. Stone delves into the childhood of the accused, which sounds much like anyone elses to the jury. Parents divorced, mother died in coma after being beaten by lover, sexually abused by guardians, early career in street crime.

Jace is considering the purchase of a 'Blue Box'. This is a black market device that can be attached to a remote to simulate jury attendance. It can be programmed to fool the remote's intelligence into thinking the jury is present, even to ask simple questions during talkback. He looks at Yutta's clear profile and sighs. She is intent on the unfolding drama of Henry Todd's life.

The accused protests his innocence to the panel, the jury, to Hector Paul. Humphrey Stone sips nervously at his glass of iced water. Adorna Lee checks her hairstyle in a monitor.

The camera explodes into a montage of images - the white body of Noele Galchak, the haggard face of her weeping mother, the grim determined expression of the arresting officer, the shrunken form of Henry Todd, the beautiful face of Adorna Lee, licking her lips to make them glossy for the camera.

Hector Paul adopts a tone of awed solemnity.

"Now we come to the most important moment of the presentation of any video trial - you, the jury at home, must decide, on the evidence seen and heard here, whether or not Henry Vincent Todd did in fact murder Noele Gabrielle Galchak. If you pronounce him guilty, by pressing the red button on your remote control unit, he will be taken from this studio to a place of execution, where he will be administered a fatal dose of narcotic. If you pronounce him innocent, by pressing the green button, he will be released immediately, free once more to attempt to find a place within our society. Either way, I hope you enjoyed tonight's presentation, and don't forget to tune in the same time tomorrow when we bring you the baffling Harbour Torse case. It's taken some months to unravel this one and bring it to TV, so it should make compulsive viewing, whether you are on jury duty or not. This is

Hector Paul, for Video Trial, taking my leave and awaiting your final, fateful decision."

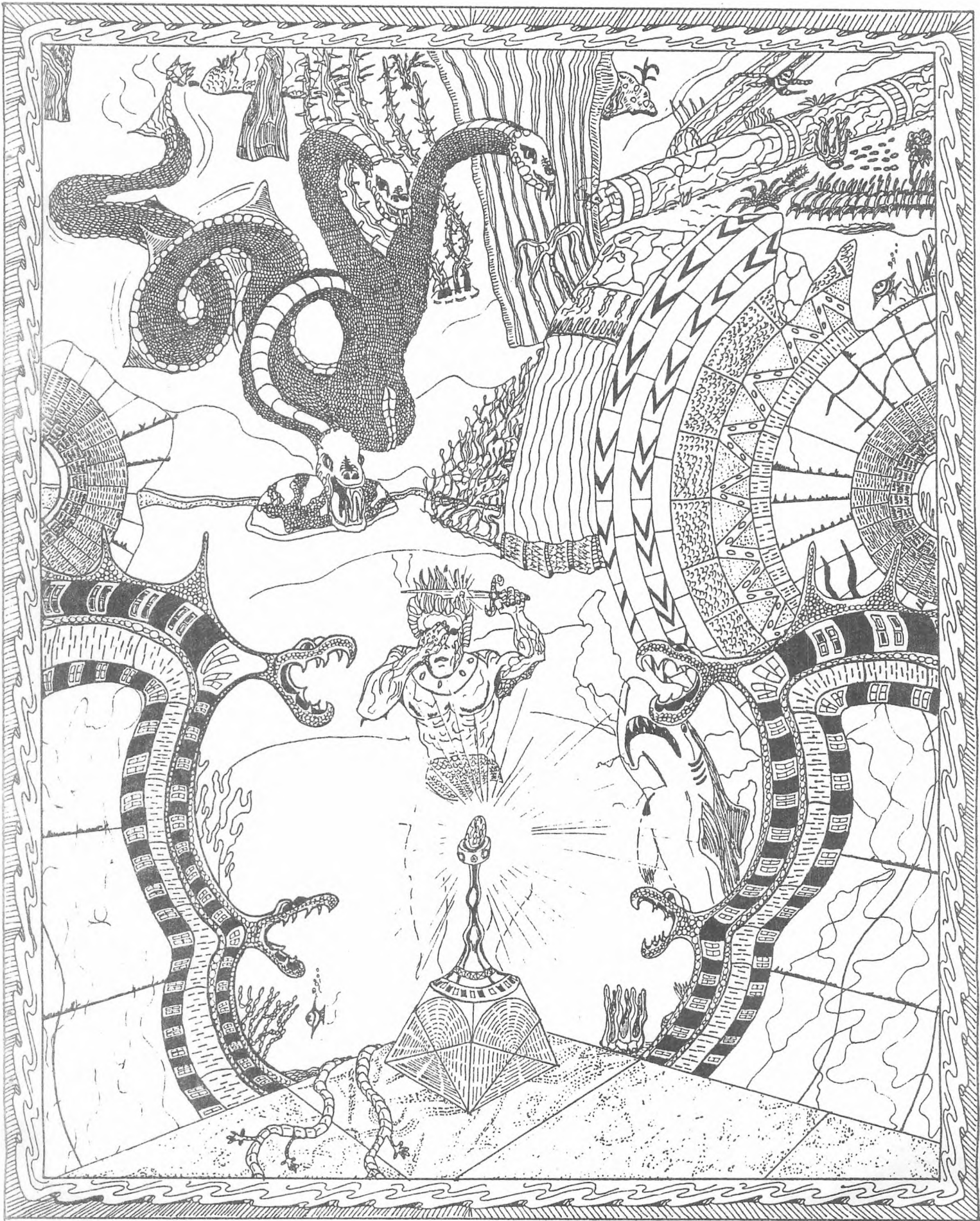
The sleeping child at the table slips from the chair and lands with a thump on the floor. He starts crying and wakes the toddler, who screams in protest. Yutta hastily scrambles up to rescue the fallen child, pressing a button on the remote as she goes. Jace reaches for the toddler, and, balancing her on one arm, picks up the remote and presses a button. Like Yutta, he doesn't know which one he has chosen. He doesn't really want to know. He drops the remote onto the floor, and carries the softly crying baby into the bedroom.

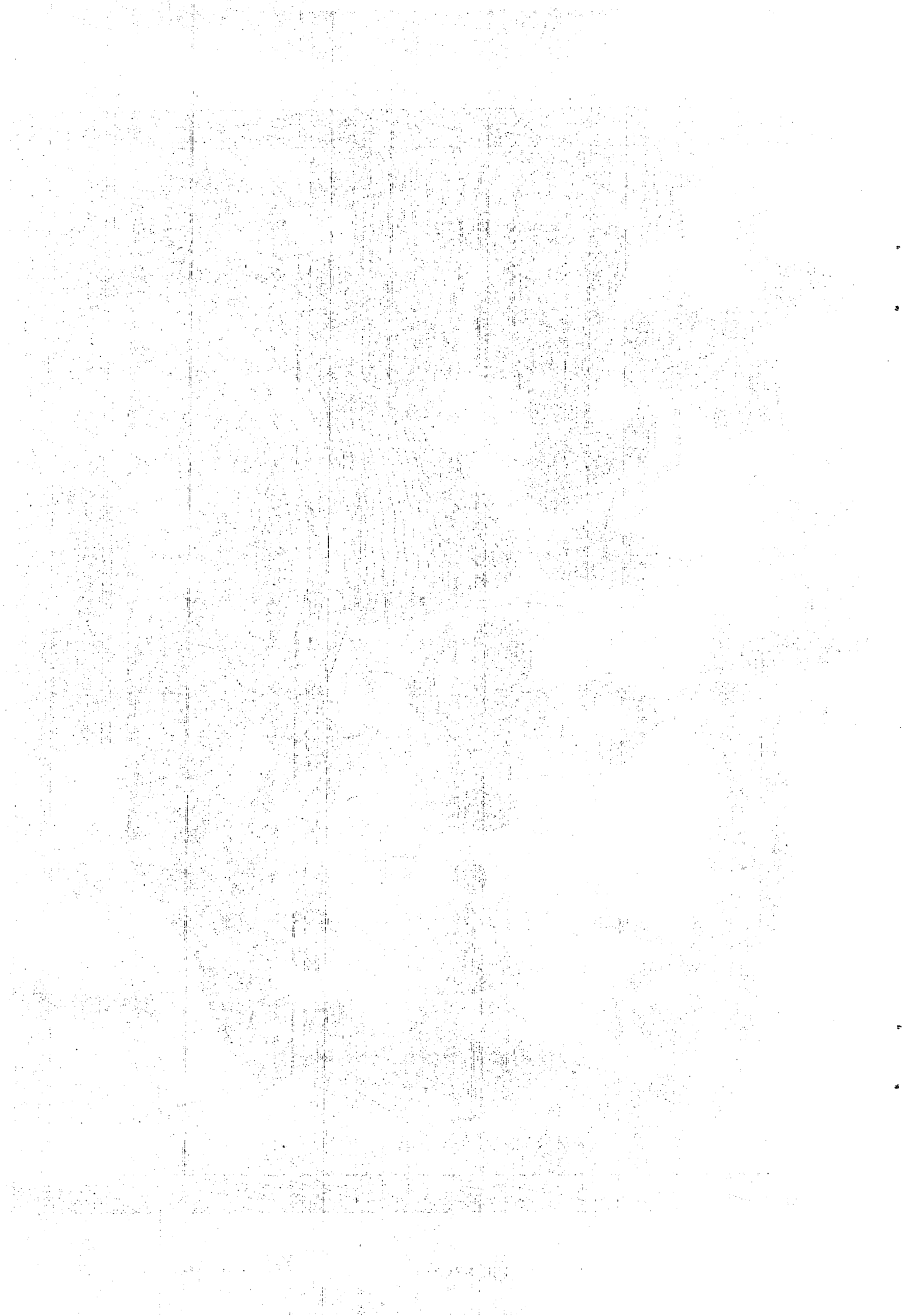
The verdict is recorded.

The screen goes blank.

- Gail Neville.





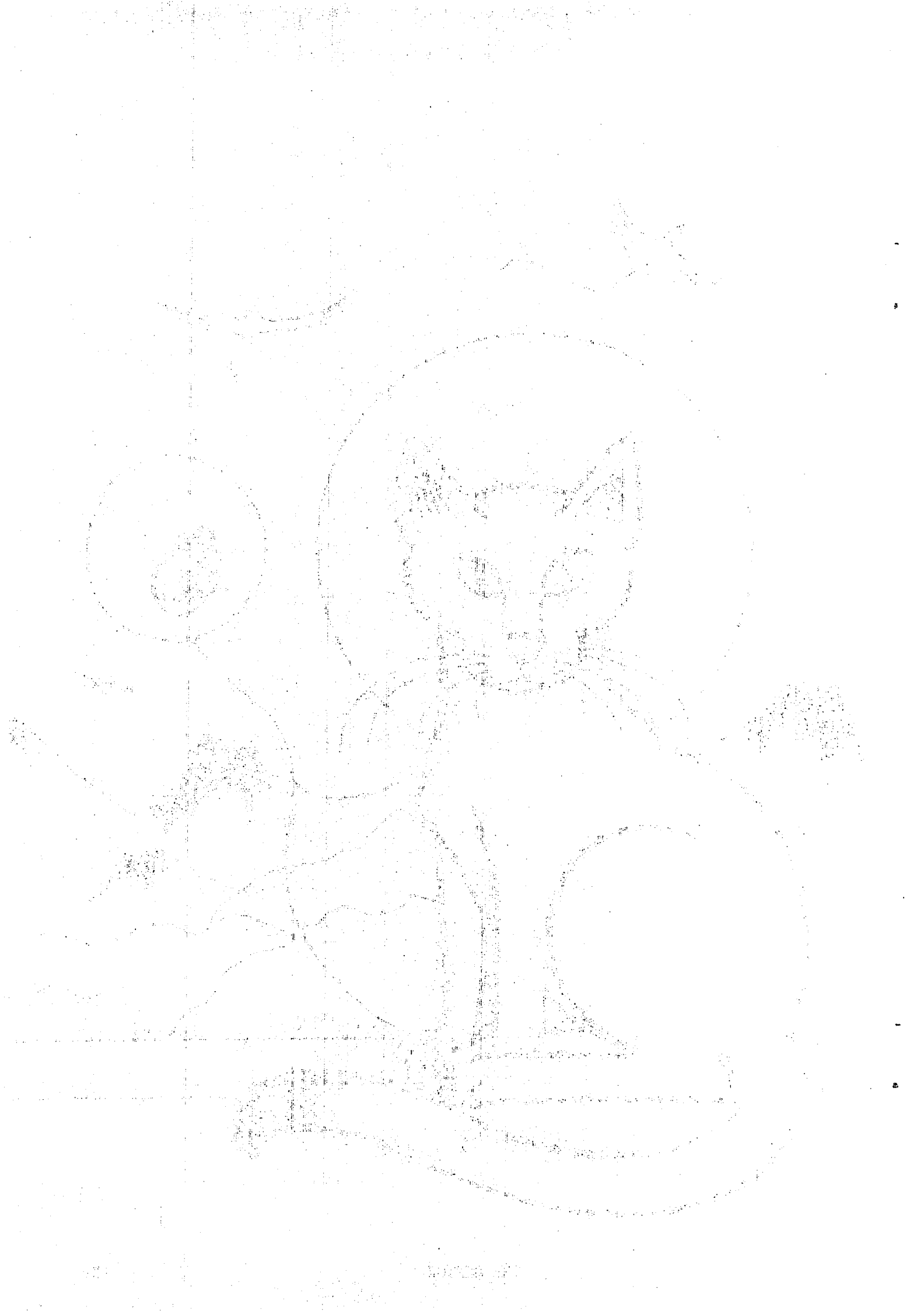


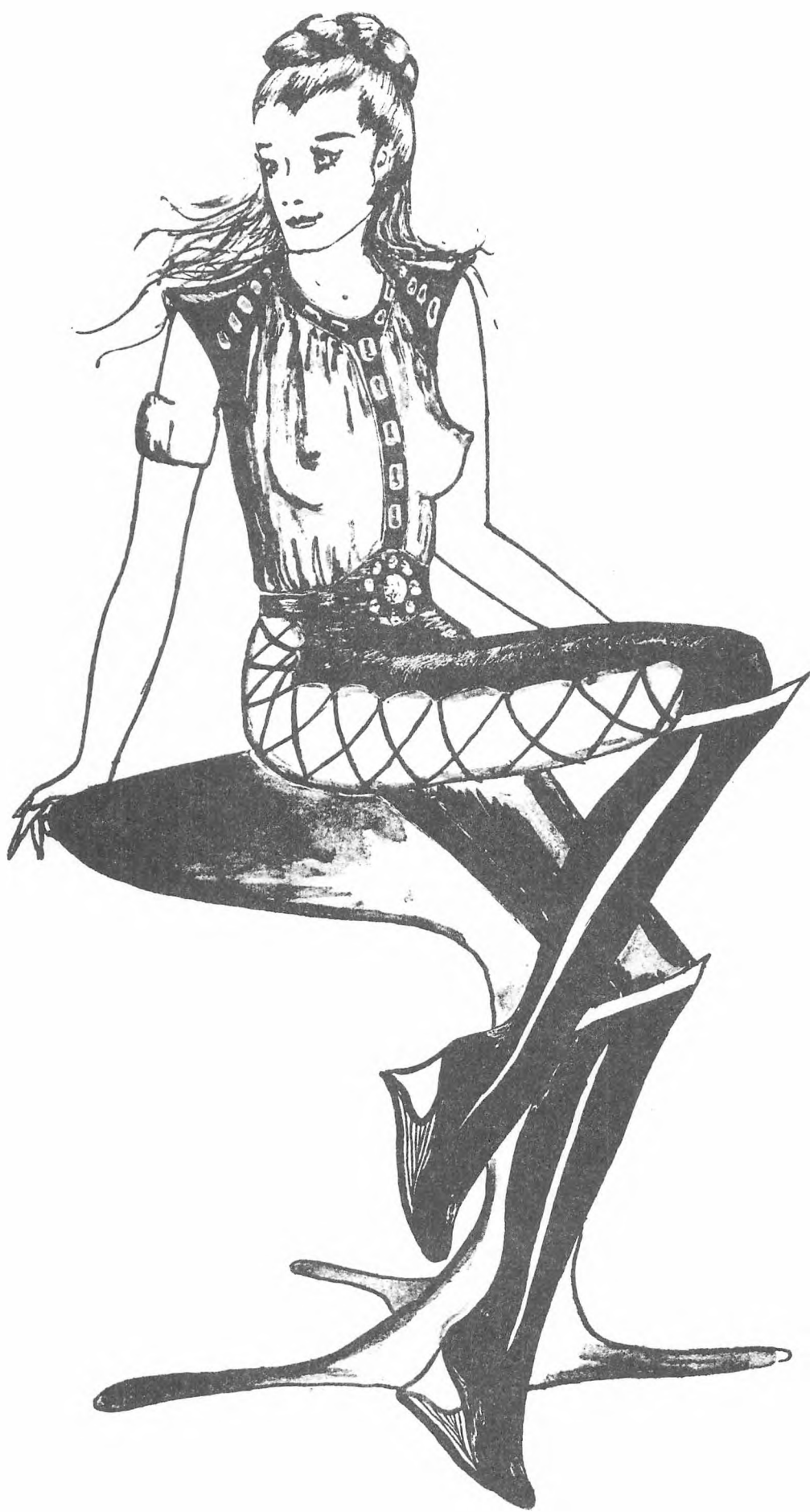


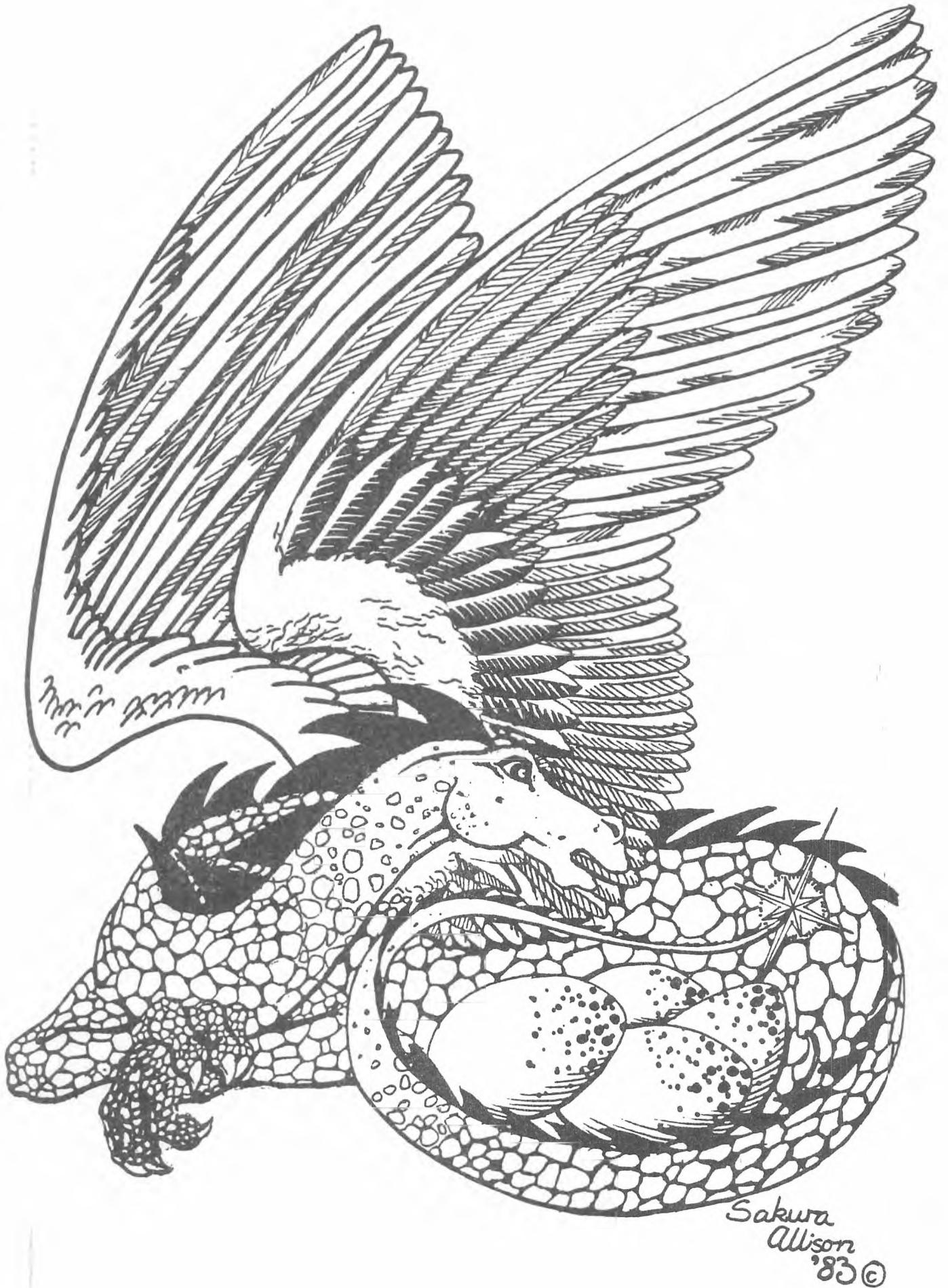




LANA'83







The R. E R. Dept.



STEVE SNEYD, 4 Nowell Place, Almodbury, Huddersfield, W. Yorkshire, HD5 8PB, UK:

BUCK was a terrific idea/setting - trouble was, to me, it was too much a scene-setting chapter one. A teaser/hook for a novel, rather than a self-contained story.

I enjoyed the Damien Broderick loc, not because he's been particularly selective about separating serious from trivial complaints re how he's been reported (wait till he gets interviewed by one of our tabloids like the SCREWS OF THE WORLD - he really will spill some blood), but because he comes across, rightly or wrongly, in his loc (Letter of Complaint) as a naturally humorous person trying hard to sound deadly serious, and that tension makes for readability even in such an unlikely context.

Doubt about fluoride compulsorily added to water may or may not be crank, but when, for example, our govt. is on the verge of bringing in legislation which will prevent people taking legal action against addition of fluoride (with all the possibilities such legislation offers as a Trojan horse for future legislation to stop people suing against health damage from asbestos, radiation, lead, whatever other deadlies they told us were harmless turn up next - as if it wasn't already the hardest country, probably, in the West for any ordinary punter to sue for damages against the GAG (Great And Good). Even someone like myself who has no strong feelings either way about fluoride begins to wonder what is really going on.

Still not puzzled out where Uncle Hans came from, only theory I can come up with is he was an identical twin who died before birth that Fritzzi steals to accompany him back to his present, but if so how come he's adult? A very entertaining tale, though, and as I said in my Loc the idea of using the past via time m/c as a storage unit supreme for accumulating kipple is a masterstroke. THE CLOUD SHIPS I enjoyed in a low-key sort of way, beautifully and elegantly written but (a) I guessed the end pretty early on and (b) for some reason I find stories where people have only to think of fruit trees and they appear irritating, though it's hard to think of a rational reason. Some blind puritan hangover against getting something for nothing, I suppose. I feel as though there should be some sort of effort put in, like the guy having to draw the tree he wants to scale in plan and elevation first or whatever!

The picture portfolio I can't really say turned me on, either (sorry, seem to be in scroogish mood), though I did like the way the Worm had been given the aspect of a headclothed desert tribesman itself, very effective shorthand for the affinity between the warriors of Arrakis and the creatures.

QUALITY I enjoyed more for the possibilities it suggests than the story itself. Imagine the menace of a family christmas where all the guests are cloned, no peace for the wicked, eh.

As usual some striking art, cogent eroto-surreal cover, backcover which I like particularly for its reminder of Sillitoes's NIHILON, with its space programme aimed at achieving the first extra-atmosphere human copulation, p.5 which, due to hasty reading of your credits, I thought was "Pandora's Box": still feel it fits the title better than the one that really is titled PB. Think my favourite vote has got to go to McGann's page 33, tho, lovely visual metaphor, the big ship's sunflower-like exhaust and the little ship's insect-wing tailflare, immediate effect of "pollination imminent"!

JOY HIBBERT, 11 Rutland St., Hanley, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire, ST1 5JG, UK:

While I respect your policy of not being dictated to about what you print, please will you correct the typo on p.37 of ish 50 which completely alters the sense of what I was saying. Starting on line 5 where it says "We don't promise". What it should say is "We don't promise to print it, but we do promise to look at it carefully" etc. The rest is right.

John Alderson: The Romans deprived the countries of organisers of rebellion. Ever heard of Boudica? Necrophilia is far more normal than virgin births, conceptions due to falls of rain, swans and various other methods of conception found in mythology. As for politics, it is common for those whose politics are average to say everyone else's opinions are based on politics. My opinions are based on ridiculous remarks in John's articles. As for knowing how low people can sink I can only answer: I don't know, I haven't read all of John's series.

Ah, at last John has started taking rubbish on a subject most people know something about. We could do with knowing, for example, where he gets the idea that the household gods stolen by Rachel included Adam's head, and where he gets the idea Moses worshipped a serpent god. I thought it obvious that Isaac succeeded Abraham because of who his mother was. How can you breed a race if you're prepared to let an Egyptian mother the next generation? There's quite a bit of inbreeding for a few generations among the early Jews. In almost every case mentioned where the younger son succeeded, there is evidence that this is not normal: Isaac had the right mother, Jacob cheated, Eleazars brothers had died. If it were normal for the youngest son to succeed, there would not be justifications for it every time. As for THE BOOK OF RUTH, doesn't John recognise propaganda when he sees it? Yes, it's a lovely story, romantic and everything, written to show that the grandmother of David was a Moabite.

A man rapes a woman, she is forced to live with him for the rest of her life, and it's a grim fate for the man? I hope this idea of Aldersons will convince anyone who was still in doubt of the depth of his womanhating. If women were truly respected in that society, the man would be killed, or at least forced to pay the woman's dowry and thereafter leave her alone. I can't find the Moses Maimonides reference, but is John sure that this only refers to foreign women? Mutual consent of the marrying parties was required by law, but who would refuse to marry when the eventual result would be starvation or dependance on relatives? Tamar and Amnon fell in love? A few representative phrases from the story (2 Sam 13:11-16): "do not force me... being stronger than her he forced her, and lay with her... Then Amnon hated her exceedingly.. and.. said Arise, be gone. Then he called his servant.. and said Put now this woman out from me, and bolt the door after her". The woman in Proverbs is free when she is considered only in relation to how much money she gives her husband? If children are given by the Lord, why respect women, who are thus reduced to the status of vessels? The Hebrews have given us two of the world's greatest religions? Religious wars, racism, sexism, attempted genocide, deicide, noble?

Richard: there is a difference between going through the rituals of religion, which is what the PM wants, and spirituality which is what a lot of feminists (both types) want. It is inaccurate to say the PM wants to discourage materialism. In what way is that statement sexist?

"Fellow Travellers" in the context of feminism is a semantic nullity, because there is no group which is forbidden to be feminists as long as they dislike

restrictive sex roles. It is plain stupid to suggest that certain books daren't be published for fear of feminists: look at all the porn thats published daily, for example. Is Michael trying to be Alderson when he grows up? Yes, this stupid statement about a world without men being a good thing proves it. Perhaps Michael is another of these people who believe that men are inherently sexist bastards and therefore any attempt to get rid of sexism also involves getting rid of men. Personally, I believe men can be improved, but then I try to surround myself with decent men, so I have less to complain about than most women.

Interesting that you don't mention that THE PRINCE IN WAITING is a juvenile novel. Neither is it a recent novel, as you imply; it's been around for ages.

{I don't call a novel with that degree of sophistication a juvenile novel. Most of the novels I review are either on first release in Australia or it has been some years since their last release - or it is the first time I have read it. - Ron.}

Cover of 51: Dave says it's symbolic. I want to know if that's where the colloquialism "box" comes from.

How it is that you never print a bad piece of fiction? Particularly liked Gail Nevilles this time.

Interesting point about women going into men's clubs re Diane's letter. If, as you say, in a woman dominated society women cause the downfall of society by getting into men's clubs, can we destroy the patriarchy by getting some men to join the WI?

Re cannibalism: what confused a few anthropologists at one time, I think, was the way each tribe would deny that they committed cannibalism but would accuse the next tribe up/down the river of doing it.

Eric Lindsay: a joke from the Punch diary - "The practice of astrology took a major step towards achieving credibility today when, as predicted, everyone born under the sign of Scorpio was run over by an egg lorry".

Tut tut Julie, you can't expect Alderson to use a word like 'patriarchal', which feminists use to imply that not all men are perfect. Be reasonable, girl! (Sorry). Of course, if one wants to argue that women are inherently nicer than men, than a few exceptions can be seen as just breaking averages, in the same way as tall women can be seen as just breaking averages to the rule than men are taller than women. No, it's upbringing that makes men, generally, nasty, and women, generally, wet, and nothing can really be done about it while people like Richard Faulder believe what the media say about feminism instead of whinging about people who are trying to do anything about it.

GEORGE "LAN" LASKOWSKI, 55 Valley Way, Bloomfield Hills, Mi 48013, USA:

The use of computers in formatting zine output is on the increase. I am now using one not only for my fanzine but also for the apazines I write. With the particular word-processing programming I have (Textra), there isn't a spelling checker, so I do have to continue to proofread. But it's a lot easier to make corrections. The only problem I've encountered is losing half the material for my Norton issue while I was trying to save another file. That was a nice, end-of-the-year surprise. It will take me about a week of work (among everything else I am doing) to re-enter the articles and stuff. But I am being more careful about keeping back-up programs now.

{There is a facility on the programme I use (ZARDAX) to lock the files, thus making it impossible (ha) to wipe them by accident. - Ron.}

The covers for the 20th anniversary issue and #51 were interesting, to say the least. Gruesome for the former, suggestive for the latter, are good descriptions. The offset printing is nice. Given good plates, the results are much better than mimeo. Xeroxing can be good, but there are a lot of things that have to be 'right' with the machine for a consistent quality in the results.

The interior art is lovely, especially that of THE MENTOR 51. I enjoyed seeing Kerrie Hanlon's work on page 23, the illustration for Alan Stewart's

PASSTIME, and the back cover. I don't think that the subtler shadings of those pieces would have come out in mimeo.

Esther Mace's montage for DUNE reminds me of the movie of the same name which I have recently seen. I would give it a qualified 'Good' rating. There are many flaws, many things which should not have been dwelt upon (Harkonaan's depravity to the exclusion of his competency in actually running his businesses and House), some things which could have used more explanation (that of the Krys knife, that Jessica was the Baron's daughter, more about Duncan Idaho, to mention some), and the ending was more-or-less stupid. It was inconsistent with what had been presented in the rest of the plot that it would rain, and Alia's inane utterings were uncalled for.



On the other hand, Peter Hyams' production of Clarke's 2010 was magnificent. I was very pleased with the production and his scripting for the movie. Hyams left out some things from the novel that should have been left out (the incident with the Chinese ship, and the "Dear John" letter), and added some material which should have been there. Clarke has never been strong on characterization, but Hyams did an excellent job in filling that void. The science aspects were very well-handed. I'd say that 2010 will get the Hugo for best dramatic presentation this year. It will at least make the final ballot, along with DUNE, GHOSTBUSTERS, and probably GREMLINS and INDIANA JONES AND THE TEMPLE OF DOOM.

However (staying on the topic of movies), I think the best film I've seen in 1984 was AMADEUS. It's a magnificent biography of Mozart. It has made me appreciate the man and his accomplishments more than I have before. (But I still like Haydn more than Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart.)

ROGER WADDINGTON, 4 Commercial St., Norton, Malton, Nth. Yorkshire, YO17 9ES, UK:

Appreciated the feature on Russian sf, straight from the horse's mouth, as it were. It shows a side we rarely see, past the confrontation of superpowers, the labels

conveniently given by the newspapers and TV. I've read somewhere (will probably find the exact quotation just after I've posted this) that left alone by the politicians, a countryman living by the Humber, say, could well understand the hopes, dreams and life led by a Russian whose back door was washed by the Volga. As it is, we're too ready to accept what they tell us - depending on which end of the political spectrum; either unscrupulous, trouble-makers or our glorious allies - without looking behind those labels, those ideas.

Could be I've been listening to those politicians far too long, though, for I can't really bring myself to believe some of the statements expressed therein. Can it really be that sf is 'a means in itself for creative work', that 'this point is illustrated by numerous inventors' centres throughout the Union'? I have my suspicions that some will be reading sf as we do over here, for pleasure and entertainment rather than learning and instruction, backsliders and recidivists though they may be. Human nature being what it is, I can't believe that there aren't any little Russian boys reading sf surreptitiously with a torch under the bedclothes, lost in the wonder of strange planets, rather than in the march of progress, or would that be classed as prejudicial to the State?

With enough fiction in this issue for a popularity poll - or as ANALOG

always had it, the Analytical Laboratory - my vote, and the extra 3c a word, is going to Alan Stewart for his PASSTIME, for the lighter touch he brings to it. It's a major achievement to write good and serious sf (which is why I'd put Gail Neville's THE CLOUD SHIPS in second place), but it's a gift to be able to write light sf, and there are too few practioners of this particular form of the art at the moment. In fact, taking the back-of-the-book reviews and news as a guide - and leaving out the numerous Anthony, Eddings and Alan Dean Fosters as unfair weightings - there only seems to be Sladek and Sheckley among the current crop; and as you say, Sheckley hasn't written much recently. What about a campaign to make the F of Sf, Fun & Frivolity?

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

Last night on the teev was the last of a short series by Richard Dimpleby IN SEARCH OF THE AMERICAN DREAM. Aside from making America seem like an even less desirable place than it already does, it was mentioned in passing that Madison Avenue has apparently convinced those members of the Americn public with the capacity to pay for, or at least to get themselves into debt to pay for, such things that their children will be intellectually blighted if they do not buy a home computer, which is as vital as a colour TV and motor car. It occurred to me later that more Australians would have the things if they didn't cost so much here, once we get import duty, sales tax and so on added to their price. Really, a computer by itself is pretty useless. Even if you plug it into your TV, and save on the cost of a monitor (and if you have a touch-screen computer you can't even make that saving, although some would have us believe that mice are the way to go), to make the thing worthwhile a disk drive and a decent printer, not dot-matrix rubbish, are really needed.

{To clear up some misconceptions - there is no import duty on computers and accessories from places like Taiwan. You would probably pay about \$10 duty on the monitor, though. A 64K computer (including keyboard) costs about US\$250. A yellow monitor about US\$100 and a disk drive US\$120. Plus air-freight. There is also about 20% Sales Tax on top of that. Which means that we can probably get them cheaper than fans in the USA. A daisy-wheel printer costs about the same as a daisy-wheel typer (\$400-500) and the cut-sheet feeder - which I use - about \$450. Contrary to rumours, the Brother feeder does not jam if used properly. - Ron.)

Allan Stewart's story was going along quite nicely, until the last paragraph. Sometimes an author can get away with leaving some questions unanswered, but not this time. The author had specifically excluded the possibility of clones having memories, so why is uncle Hans just like Uncle Fritz? The implication is that Uncle Fritz has made himself an identical twin, to be born at the same time as himself, but if that were the case, why should Julie suddenly start wondering what the word for having two uncles is?

Peter Brodie's effort is one of those times that a short-short really does work. It very much depends on the reader having a knowledge of SF idioms, so that the writer can get on with building up the atmosphere, but I guess that's forgivable. The style is nicely economical of words.

Gail Neville's story would have had most impact if it had ended at the bottom of page 21. Going beyond that in order to attain some semblance of a 'happy' ending not only destroyed the atmosphere of irony which had been building up quite nicely, but failed to explain how the cloud ships achieved the fusion between man and machine. A pity, because the structuring of the prose had been such as to make the prose flow along quite nicely.

Esther Mace's still suits came closer to the impression I had from reading the book than did the version in the film, where one would tend to lose large amounts of water from the exposed face. Oh, and Esther, repeat after me "i before e, except after l, c and g". This applies to "thief".

Racial groups are defined on the basis of skeletal structure, as well as on the basis of external characteristics such as skin colour, body hair and epicanthic skin folds. I can't remember the exact character degrees which set

Australoids off from Caucasoids, but they include things like the filling of the skull, the degree of brow ridge development, and some blood-group characters, among others. In any event, there are at least four racial groups, since the Bushmen/Hottentots of southern Africa do not seem to fit easily into any of the other groupings.

While it is easy to say that judges award harsher sentences to crimes against property than those against the person it seems to me that there are two problems with this statement. Firstly, I would like to see a comprehensive compilation of statistics for each of the two classes of crime, and with the two classes carefully defined. Rape is obviously a crime against the person, while break-and-enter is obviously a crime against property, but what do you class a case where someone is mugged while they are having their wallet stolen? The intention is a crime against property, but the execution also includes a crime against the person. Fraud is an equally ambiguous case. Secondly, in talking about harsher sentences it is rather assumed that one sort of crime against the person can be equated with a sort of crime against property, and if the punishment for the latter is harsher than for the former, then one makes the general comment. However, I would question whether this equating can be so easily carried out, if at all. Eric Lindsay's call for judges to be chosen from amongst people who have experienced the crime they are judging has its problems, also. It seems to be that the result could well be harsher sentences than the crime warrants. By and large, it seems to me, using the penal system to enforce social compliance simply by inflicting physical and/or mental discomfort has historically proven to be ineffective.

HARRY WARNER JR., 423 Summit Ave., Hagerstown, Maryland 21740, USA:

The material about science fiction and fandom in Russia is quite interesting. I know enough Russian (the written kind, not the audible type) to be able to puzzle out fairly well the fragments of that language scattered around these pages. One odd thing about this general topic is the fondness of the USSR for nicknaming institutions and government bodies in precisely the same way that fans like to turn long phrases into shorter ones. The old Comintern, for instance, was a term invented in the same way that we contrived fanac. You don't suppose a Russia agent in the United States before World War Two had some contact with fandom and suggested to Moscow that these crazy American kids had chanced upon a good way to create distinctive abbreviations, do you?

The fiction in this issue is fairly good, mostly handicapped by being too short for its potential. PASSTIME would be a better story if we were given a look in detail at the events summarized in it, complete with conversation and slowly building suspense. QUALITY comes closer to meeting the demands of a short-short story. But it gave me a mixed up feeling when I read it for the first time: I couldn't comprehend the circumstances which the writer had thought out for himself before he sat down to write the story, and this necessitated a second reading to get its full effect. THE CLOUD SHIPS doesn't leave me with the same feeling of excessive compactness the other two stories did. But even here, I think a more complex story, the inclusion of several episodes to improve the sense of climax at the end, would be advisable. But it has a nice idea, one that is rather new to me (and that's not surprising, I suppose, when I think about how little current science fiction I've been reading; maybe this as an overworked theme that I just haven't run across).

The information about Bert Chandler is helpful for overview purposes. Eventually, I hope, someone will publish a complete listing of all his fiction, not just the titles of the books published.

Your reviews and the list of other books recently published provide the answer to a minor mystery that had been bothering me: why Piers Anthony has stopped writing locs to fanzines. Even if some of these books are reissues of older ones, he seems to be turning out a novel every Thursday or thereabouts, so I suppose he just doesn't have time for fandom nowadays. It's amazing to find Jack Williamson writing another Legion book. I wonder if he now holds the record for resuming a series of

novels after the longest time gap between novels in the series? I'm pretty sure the last Legion novel was published before the Asimov Foundation trilogy which Asimov recently added to. I reread all the old Legion fiction some months ago and found it held up remarkable well to the pleasant memories I had of the stories as they originally appeared in ASTOUNDING.

It's hard to believe AROUND THE WORLD IN 80 DAYS could be fitted into a 163-page book. Either the type is miniscule or it's been severely cut. Anyway, Jules Verne if he could come back to life might find the most fantastic thing about today's world the fact that there's still enough demand for his hopelessly outdated books to keep them in print more than century later.

Both covers are quite good from the artistic standpoint. My only reservation involves the way the young lady is sitting on the front cover: she looks terribly uncomfortable even if she is atop a thin air cushion rather than the sharp edges of Pandora's box, as my bleary old eyes seem to tell me.

MIKE O'BRIEN, 158 Liverpool St., Hobart, Tas 7000:

THE MENTOR 52 arrived this morning and I must say I'm pleasantly surprised by your "new look". The old TM was a friendly little zine but you seem to have gone ahead in leaps and bounds. I don't seem to remember seeing TM 51 though; you probably sent it to me and I mislaid it in the mad end-of-the-year scuffle. You wouldn't have a spare copy of it, would you? Come to think of it, if I sent you a couple of dollars in stamps could I get copies of your new multi-media zine and maybe the Trek zine? I'm afraid the number of zines I'm seeing is getting less and less.

{I do have several copies of TM 51, though none of 50. As to the media zines Sue and I publish, yes, I think you could get a sample issue of each that way. - Ron.}

The articles on Soviet fandom were of interest. It's difficult to know across the barriers of differing languages and cultures whether Russian fans are actually fans as we know them, but it's encouraging to hear about them. It would be impolite to speculate about some of the things I would most like to know about fandom in the USSR.

Peter Brodie's two short-shorts weren't bad although I don't know about the idea of printing them back to back like that.

The article about the Arab world by John Alderson made for interesting reading, since like many Australians all I know about Arabs is what I've seen in films like LAWRENCE OF ARABIA. I was a little startled though to see one footnote calmly refer the reader to p.270 of Velikovsky's WORLDS IN COLLISION.

As usual, there's some good reading in your thick letter and review sections. Diane Fox's piece on Wynne Whiteford's latest book makes it sound much more inviting than the review in AUST BOOK REVIEW some time back; must watch out for a copy.

Alan Stewart's letter makes me ponder on the strange fate of the original anthologies. I remember just a few years ago everyone in fandom was saying that the Sf magazines were on their last legs because of the massive competition from the horde of original anthologies that were on the market. Now all the anthologies seem to have disappeared; some blame Roger Elwood for flooding the marketplace but one would have expected a couple of the others to have survived. Meanwhile, ANALOG, F&SF and AMAZING keep plodding gamely on, having outlived another generation of doomsayers.

I liked Julie Vaux's poem paying tribute to Bert Chandler and Roger Waddington made me nod my head in agreement when he compared Bert with Murray Leinster. I was a great admirer of both writers and collected all their books, though I know that both of them would have had a good laugh about the question of whether they were Great Artists. I read them because I liked them; in the case of Leinster I never met him personally, but like Bert there was something of himself that came through in his stories that makes me think I would have enjoyed meeting him too.

Oh, the Tasmanian Sf Association continues to meet at my place every two weeks. We produce a rather small fanzine, argue about science fiction and watch the occasional movie. Last month we screened ANDROID and STARSHIP (aks THE CREATURE WASN'T NICE). The former is a really enjoyable piece of film-making that everybody applauded; the latter isn't.

Did you see the mid-December Spoof issue of ANALOG? Some amusing hoax pieces including a Larry Jannifer send-up of Heinlein. Also a rather nice novelette HINDSIGHT by E.G. Iverson about a 1984 Sf writer who travels back in time to 1953 and makes a reputation for herself as (naturally) a science fiction author. John W. Campbell, thinly disguised, is one of the heroes of the story.

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

Your USSR Sf and fan articles in THE MENTOR 52 were fascinating. Brings back memories of getting some of the 1950 and '60s SF from Russia in English translation. I recall reading ANDROMEDA, and some collections of stories, while I was at school.

Their fan clubs certainly sound far more organised than the anarchistical bunch here and in the USA. Indeed, perhaps the very scarcity of fanzines makes it easier to organise and retain a strong club presence. Look at Sydney, with no organised club any longer, despite the population, but many social groups, and lots of fanzine publishing via apas. Most impressive is the amount of bibliographical activity there; who here, apart from the energetic Graham Stone, does that sort of thing?

Turning to the letters, I was glad to see Marc Ortlieb doing some mild debunking of the idea of historical fact. History is a matter of selecting what seems relevant from a mass of unorganised past traces of events. The events were indeed fact, but not our interpretation of them.

I found myself very sympathetic towards Boris Zavgorodny and his attempts to find the sort of job that I would also love to find.

I wonder if Diane Fox has encountered the A.E. van Vogt novel that includes 'scientific' cannibalism? It was done ceremoniously, and considered a great honour. Of course, like many of van Vogt's recent novels, it was a real turkey of a novel, however his usual 'write 800 word scenes and tell a whole story in each' method of writing kept the book moving along.

BUCK COULSON, 2677W-500N, Hartford City, IN 47348, USA:

Not much for me in the major part of MENTOR 51; I'm not interested in amateur fiction, the introduction to Russian stf was mildly interesting but not highly informative, and I try to not read other people's book reviews. So. My only contact with much Russian stf is the old Macmillan line of Russian stf 'classics', mostly introduced by Theodore Sturgeon, and I rapidly decided that with few exceptions, I didn't like any Russian sf except that written by the Strugatskys. I dislike being forcibly uplifted, by literature or my neighbors, or any other way.

Which leaves letters. Offhand, I wouldn't say the general public is any more dull or belligerent than it always was, but then I don't witness the actions of the city public that closely. If there's a difference, I put it down to overcrowding. Studies with rats have shown that overcrowding leads to violence and aberrant behaviour, and I doubt that the average city dweller is any improvement over a rat. So as population increases, so does irrational violence. As far as Harry's example of automobile parking, however, I suspect it's not lack of skill but lack of practice. Flat-to-the-curb parking is becoming rare in this country. Shopping malls are a success because of their parking areas - which are all for parallel parking. Parking lots and parking garages park the same way, as well as street parking in many midwestern and western towns and cities. Only in the east are streets so narrow that flat-to-the-curb parking is required normally, and we've all heard the jokes about having to inherit parking spaces in New York, and so on.

So the younger drivers don't get a chance to do it often enough to become proficient.

I think the feminists are right in objecting to a lack of equal opportunity for one sex to exploit the other, but if the opportunity was there, so would be the exploitation. So? Of course, at present, women are 'nicer' than men, but that's only because they have to be; they don't have the social/political/physical power to be nasty, or at least a majority don't. (Of the women who do have the power to allow them to be unpleasant, a good many of them are; approximately as many as men in similar situations.) We're all people, after all.

I certainly don't agree that a world without men would be a good thing. A world without people might be... but I'm dubious about that, too. A world without bigots might be nice, but improbable. (Or as Tom Lehrer remarked on bigotry, "I hate people like that...")

Oh well. Some of my best friends are feminists.. and my son did marry one. So did I...

MICHAEL HAILSTONE, PO Box 193, Woden, ACT 2606:

The articles on Soviet sf fandom give an interesting insight into life in the Soviet Union, giving it a more human face than I'd given it credit. It's good to see that one can travel freely and try a lot of different jobs, but 'slinging hash at hashhouses'? Are there any openings for that field in Australia? And what is this hash anyway? Hashish? (Maybe it's legal in the Soviet Union, but I wouldn't have thought so.)

{I think Boris uses the old meaning - that of food. - Ron.}

I wish Marc Ortlieb wouldn't put words into my mouth. I never said that any link between fluoride and cancer was proved. And why does he keep harping on cancer? I mistrust it's because he's really quite worried about it. If so, then I'm very sorry, because I only mentioned it in passing, and the last thing I wanted to do was start another cancer scare. It was a mistake to mention it at all, I can see. On taking another look at Geoffrey Smith's article, I see that both Marc and I have missed the essential point: not any link with cancer, but the fact that Dean Burk, a top-ranking scientist, was vilified, simply because he dared to come forth with findings against that holy cow, fluoride.

And no, I don't think there's any particular conspiracy among scientists, but there is a conspiracy to push fluoridation with a ruthless denigration of anyone who speaks out against it.

How's this for a real panaroid conspiracy theory? Last October I submitted THE LEADEN AGE to a new local newspaper, the LIMESTONE REVIEW. Against my expectations it was most eagerly accepted by its editor, who told me it would appear in the following issue. (The newspaper came out fortnightly.) At the time everything looked fine. Just eight days later, I kid you not, on the day this issue was to come out, I went down there, to find a few people clearing out the office. They told me that they had no more money. Just like that. What had happened, you see, was that certain unbelievably stupid numbskulls had blown the paper's funds and ended up with it owing some \$20,000. Seeing it had started out only four months earlier with a \$150,000 grant, I find it very hard to believe that anyone could be so totally stupid, to blow so much money in so short a time. And don't you find it pretty odd that the paper was doing fine, until I came along with my article on fluoride? Whereupon it was suddenly closed down.

I could point out an interesting possible link between my own breakdown in health and fluoridation, but I'll spare you that, lest some idiot write in with smartarse comments on my supposed hypochondria.

Back to Soviet fandom and psi, I've seen that trick performed at least once - in Tasmania years ago. I must own that I don't really know how it's done. But, when the same folk tried it on a really big man about seven foot tall with a build to match, he proved too heavy for "psi" forces or whatever.

Sorry, I forgot to mention one other important thing about fluoride, something the Ortliebs and Andruschaks out there would do well to chew on: Fluoride,

like lead, is a cumulative poison. It will build up in the body if taken in concentrations close to that used in fluoridation. I'd like to take the opportunity to thank Steve Sneyd for sending me the stuff about lead. I'm rather surprised that Europe, otherwise so progressive, is so backward in bringing in lead-free petrol. Several years ago the Wran government announced that lead-free petrol would become available in New South Wales in 1984. Now we're told that as from 1st January 1986 all new cars must run on lead-free petrol, and furthermore they will be fitted with a kind of afterburner in the exhaust system, so they will spew nothing worse than harmless carbon dioxide and water vapour into the air. I wonder how long this will take to make any difference, as new cars replace old ones.

Diane Fox seems to be suffering from that less publicised plague of the times: short memory. Let me tell her a tale. Once upon a time, now almost forgotten, a certain generation of young people, namely her own, did accept the challenge she names and sought to change the society that so robbed them of challenges. And what happened? They gave up. Why? One could and sometimes does argue till the cows come home about that. I feel myself, largely because the powers that be, in their cunning way, twisted their naive youthful ideals into something that worked the maintain the status quo, that is, turned it into trendy garbage. But many would disagree with that. No, they seize upon the threat of nuclear war as an excuse. And that's all it is, as far as I'm concerned, just a bloody excuse. Well, in all fairness, Diane herself sees another more plausible reason. See CRUX 6 for that, when it comes out.

I quite fail to see how Richard Faulder could be interpreted as criticising John Alderson for being pro-feminist. But I think that the reason why women tend to live longer than men could be, not because their constitution is stronger, but rather because, believe it or not, they suffer less stress than men. After all, it is, or has been, the men who have (had) to go out to work in demanding jobs where the natural fight-or-flight reaction to stress is denied. (I think this point is made in GROWING UP ABSURD.) Women also give each other more mutual support and love. Nowadays, thanks to the consumer "society", they suffer from suburban neurosis because of the greater social isolation (Canberra is notorious for this). That is probably largely why they need to join the workforce more than formerly, which means becoming more a part of organised society and therefore suffering more stress. If this trend continues, it will be interesting to see the outcome in life expectancy and so on.

I don't believe that "Israel" means "Rachel's man". If so, it would have come down to us as something like "Israhel" or "Israchel". I did once learn what it meant, but of course my memory has been doing its usual sievelike work. But I think the "isra" part is a verb, and the name means something to do with God, as do all names ending in -el. (My own name means "who is like God", in case you're wondering.) Oh, it probably means "he wrestled with God", (although the Bible says he wrestled with an angel, not God himself).

Of the books reviewed in this issue about three struck me as worth reading; this is well above the average. But getting hold of said books is quite another matter, especially as bookshops here in Canberra seem to be giving up on sf. Smith's stopped having a science fiction section a good while ago, and now the Capital bookshop has given up altogether, since moving from Civic to the new building at Woden.

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

It was interesting to hear from the Soviet fans and I would like to hear more about fandoms in non english speaking countries. Fandom and fannish news tends to be dominated by the USA and we forget there are very active sf groups in other countries like Japan, Canada, UK, Germany, Scandinavia (the occasional drifting in from Limbo of Ragnar Fyri's fanzines), etc.

Alderson, dear, if you must use terms like "uterine line" and metaphors like tv reminding people of "a vulva on insignificant legs" then you must also expect to have your articles regarded suspiciously by femmefans; indeed, by many sensible fans.



Male-dominated societies are scarce?? That's a joke?? Isn't it, John?

The only society I can think of where women don't take the male partner's family name would be Icelandic society. During the feudal period in Europe people who belonged to groups that had or inherited compound names had names, that in the first generation reflected both the mother's and father's ancestors if they were aristocrats, but as for the rest of society, in Europe at least, to the best of my knowledge, and before the Tudors, if women had a legal marriage then they were listed by their husband's name on documents or their father's name if de facto, or their place of origin. My error was, not having the time and space, not going into more details of naming practices. Since most European societies since about 1500BC have been patrilineal and or patriarchal, then the male's name has precedence even in compound names of aristocrats.

The Crown does NOT own ALL the land. While the king or principal ruler is usually the principal land owner there are always other major land owners who owe their fealty to the Crown. Their fee, NOT their land. Generally I believe that the more land the Crown owned the more stable the monarchy, since they would draw on more troops and finances, using their own estates. Who remembers the Civil Wars in England? The weakness of medieval French monarchy?

I never said a Tanist heir alienates the property. How can they when they are adopted into the clan?

I agree with Diane that there would probably be less violence in an all female society, since they would probably release most aggressive instincts defending the society from

wild animals or barbarians, ie the armed priestesses of Artemis were huntresses and we never hear of any of the women warriors of Greek legend fighting one another.

{That is all well and good for the past, Julie, but what we were talking about is the present, or rather the 20th Century. - Ron.}

RICHARD FAULDER (Address as previously):

Yes, well, I suppose that's one way to do renovations around the house without letting your fanac suffer - take leave from work. It's nice to see that Sue is looking well (and are you supposed to be Captain Kremmen?).

Igor Toloconnicov's overview of the current state of Soviet SF was

interesting, inasmuch as a few years ago I was given some collections of Soviet SF to review for ENIGMA. While the stories had originally been published in the 1960s, translation and republishing had taken about ten years. At the time I rather had an impression of earthboundness, to coin a word, of perceiving a world from an everyday perspective, rather like the limited views one associates with the New Wave movements of the West, and with none of the soaring vistas one tends to associate with Western SF. In the last five years I started to read the Strugatsky's *ROADSIDE PICNIC*, and found little to contradict my earlier assessment. From Igor's description, I rather get the feeling that Soviet SF still tends to partake of this character.

The two articles dealing with Soviet fandom are interesting in that they sketch a group of readers of Sf developing towards a fandom in the Western mode. In spite of the difficulties of communicating (although, on the other hand, we would be pleased to get sympathetic coverage in the newspapers) they have started to hold their first conventions, even if they do use a prize-giving as an excuse for a convention, rather than a convention being an excuse for a prize-giving, as is the case with us. (I did notice an apparent contradiction, in that Boris Zavgorodny mentions the existence of a fanzine, even if of limited duration, while the collective personality writing the other article states that fanzines are not possible, all publishing power being vested in the State. However, I suspect that this contradiction is more apparent than real, and that the Sengilei club probably found that the bureaucracy was more flexible than some others gave it credit for. Still, it does hold out the hope that we might some day be exchanging fanzines with Russian fans.) Boris himself looks like a very personable young bloke, but I don't like our chances of his being allowed out as part of a cultural exchange programme.

Now Peter Brodie's is what I call a first-contact story which rather throws our human pretensions into perspective. I wonder what Carl Sagan's reaction to the story would be? Even though the prose style is fairly amateurish, the concept and plotting are very nice. His prose style in the second story was better, but somehow his handling of the ideas wasn't as deft. Somehow I suspect that, given that there were two climactic points (although in a one-page story that sounds a bit grand) what was really needed was a longer work to build up to the first climax (the revelation of the "conquering" humans as museum specimens), then a period for the reader to get used to this concept, followed by what should really be the major climax (the revelation of the next conquerers). Because the two climaxes were so close together, there was no real sense that the second climax was the major one.

To draw the conclusion that fluoride causes cancer by affecting DNA is probably reasonable, since the consensus seems to be emerging that cancer results from the activation (or perhaps the de-inactivation) of what have been called oncogenes. As Marc Ortlieb says, lots of things affect DNA. The problem would be unequivocally separating the influence of fluoride as a carcinogen from all the other substances in the environment. (As a personal reaction, I tend to object to fluoride in the water supply, since it is poisonous in other ways besides as a carcinogen, and unequivocally so for most other species but our own. It's almost enough to constitute evidence for the existence of a ghod, albeit a rather whimsical one. How else to explain that the dominant intelligent species on the planet is almost the only one which requires a poison to mature the teeth of its young, thereby prompting some groups to poison the whole tribe because it couldn't rely on the parents within the tribe to take steps (fluoride tablets) to protect the teeth of their own children? Not to mention the fact that practically no manufacturers are prepared to produce a toothpaste which does not contain fluoride, either because they do not realise that only children actually need the stuff, or because they don't think that their adult victims customers could grasp the distinction.)

Boris Zavgorodny's letter provides fascinating proof that it is possible for fannish-type people to exist in the Soviet Union. For my part, and I suspect it would be a largely-held view in the West, there is a tendency to see Soviet society as rigidly structured, with people being firmly guided into an occupation in which they remain until retirement.

One of Diane Fox's comments on cannibalism reminded me of a snippet of entomological information I picked up the other day. I've known for some time that

if you crowd some otherwise herbivorous caterpillars together they will eat each other. However, it has now been suggested that only certain strains of these species actually do so, and that it could have certain advantages. Aside from reducing the overall pressure for food, one way of getting necessary plant-derived nutrients when these are in short supply is to eat those individuals which have already ingested them from the plant. If you eat someone, protein and a full tummy aren't the only things you get from them.

However, the getting of wisdom by munching on somebody's grey matter isn't really on. If I understand the flatworm's digestive system correctly, most of its digestion takes place intracellularly - the cells lining the gut engulf lumps of food and break them down inside the cell before allowing the products of digestion into the rest of the tissues. Such a system allows more of the chemical mediators of memory (still generally held to be RNA, I believe) to reach the nervous system intact. By contrast, the human digestive system concentrates on extracellular digestion - digestive juices pour into the gut - some of it quite crude: hydrolysis by concentrated hydrochloric acid, for instance. In such a system the chances of something as complicated as a length of RNA surviving intact are poor.

Re-reading my LoC of last issue, I don't quite see how Diane thought that I was accusing John Alderson of being pro-feminist. I used the general ignorance of dominance structures within our society to point out the falsity of his denial of the connection between dominance and power. The example was chosen simply because I am most familiar with our society. While Diane is certainly correct in pointing out that women's longevity is partly biologically-based, there is also evidence that men tend to find the occupations our society expects them to fill more stressful than women find the jobs society expects them to fill. An argument for occupational role-reversal. (It would be equally true to say that there tends to be more widows than widowers because women are more likely to encourage - that's a poor word, but the best I can think of at the moment - and accept offers of marriage from men older than themselves.)

Roger Waddington's characterisation of our society as "increasingly drug-based" doesn't ring true to me. Western society has been drug-based for centuries. Only the types of drugs socially acceptable have changed. Earlier this century the opiates (and also, I believe, cocaine) were legal. A decade or so ago society seemed to have increasing tension building up in it between those who legally enforced the social prejudices of society at large and those for whom drug use was a vehicle for the ancient phenomenon of youthful rebellion. However, society seems to be increasingly recognising the inevitable, moving towards a defacto decriminalisation.

JOHN J. ALDERSON, Havelock, Vic 3465:

I must confess to spelling Kaahah incorrectly. The terminal "h" is often omitted, but wrongly - the word is feminine in gender. I was unaware of this until I came across the fact in Burton. As a principle I leave off the terminal "h" in words like veranda, as they are misleading in pronunciation of native words like galah and belah, where the emphasis is on the terminal syllable and is sounded with a drawn-out expression of breath and not as a male "a". Sorry about all that.

Diane Fox touched on an interesting aspect of cannibalism, that intelligence can be eaten. But at least this is the theory of Oscar Kiss Maerth THE BEGINNING WAS THE END. His theory is that men came suddenly into being through cannibalistic apes absorbing intelligence by eating the brains of their fellows. So far I would suggest that the book has too much theory and too little fact.

The quotation Sue Bursztynski asks about is DEUT. 25:5. The idea is older than Moses. The rape of Judah by Tamar in GEN 38 stems from the fact Tamar was not given the boy when he grew up. In RUTH Boaz had first to allow a kinsman the choice of marrying Ruth (despite the fact they were not dwelling together). In the time of our Lord the problem was put to Jesus of seven brethren marrying the one woman one after the other and none of them having children... whose wife was she in the Hereafter?

The idea of "Israel" meaning "Rachel's man" (not husband, which I think is a later word) comes from Graves' *THE WHITE CODESS*.

Read Toloconnilou with interest. Russian anthropology is not well known here, being treated, I suspect as is their history, as propaganda. I know their archaeology is respected. I am acquainted, though, with Hungarian work, and this is quite valuable. None of this, however, has been relevant to my work. I have gone back to facts recorded either by the people concerned or their neighbours, without reference to theories. I am writing original research, not a Ph.D thesis.

DIANE FOX, PO Box 1194, North Sydney 2060:

Igor Toloconnicou's article was interesting. I haven't read much Russian Sf yet, but I've noticed quite a few interesting-looking books have been translated and are on sale here. Some of the books he mentions are available. I have a collection of Alexander Grin's short stories and intend to read it later. It looks like a very enjoyable book, so I'm looking forward to this. I think I'll be able to get hold of *AELITA* and some of the others mentioned as well. I already have some books by the Strugatsky brothers.

Boris Bagalyakz's article also interested me, likewise Boris Zavgorodny's article and the photos of the fans and the awards.

Interesting article from John Alderson again. Some of this material I was already familiar with; some was new to me. I think I first read it in a Frank Herbert book that Arabic cultures were at least partially matriarchal.

I liked Mike McGann's alien greeblies as an illustration to my review of *STRANGE TERRITORY*. Most appropriate.. However, why is the sword-wielding Orc put alongside John Alderson's letter?

{It was meant to illustrate the Arab world as usually envisaged. - Ron.}

Roger Waddington's comments on the likelihood of an alternate, drug-taking future were interesting. I'd say it is neither a communist plot (apparently there are some druggies in the communist countries, though it is rarer because of less opportunity); nor is it a gateway to paradise. In vino veritas, and likewise for drugs, which will only bring out what is already in people. If they lack imagination they will still lack imagination when stoned, and will be just as relaxed or authoritarian (of course, they may be less able to rationalize then). I hardly think society will change for the better or worse, though there will be a vast increase in deaths on the road before a foolproof means of detecting drugged drivers is found. On the credit side, I've heard that pot cures glaucoma. If this is true, many people will be spared blindness and/or painful operations. Sensible use of some drugs may aid people who suffer from nervous-tension induced problems such as frigidity, impotence, stammering and so forth. Strong drugs, such as LSD and heroin might be administered to the incurably ill or dying (in fact, this has already been done, with helpful effects I've heard).

The legalisation of pot would certainly be a nasty kick in the arse for organised crime as it would deprive them of a goodly slice of their income. No more grass castles if anyone who wants to smoke the stuff can grow it in a backyard or flowerpot. (And the homegrown stuff would not be spiked with, say, heroin, to hook the unwary). I would think that after drugs are legalized and the 10-day's wonder is over, the main reaction would be, "Whatever was all that fuss about?" I suspect the "fuss" was principally the work of people who wished to earn money by praising or denouncing drugs, or who were making money out of selling it illegally, or punishing those who sold it illegally - all rather like the Big Endions and little Endians in Swift's *GULLIVER'S TRAVELS*. Being for and against things is a growth industry. Quite a few doctors in Queen Victorian's time made their reputations - and fortunes - by writing books proving that masturbation sent people blind, mad and so forth.

Enjoyed Boris Zavgorodny's second LOC, the autobiographical details were very vivid and nostalgia-inducing. I used to make aliens and monsters out of plasticine, and used to act out epic adventures with these and with little plastic figurines of cowboys, indians, spacemen, soldiers, dinosaurs and other kinds of

animals, and so forth. My favourite scenario consisted of a war between two forts and the various adventures the people and animals had. The forts were actually long narrow wooden blocks laid out to form rooms in a kind of blue-print like set-up, more maps of forts than like models. I must have been a frustrated Dungeons and Dragons player! To make things even more D&D like, one of the main characters was a tiny figure of Santa Claus who I divested of his Christmassy role and re-named Dwarf Goodney. He was rather like one of Tolkien's Dwarves. Another favourite character, or rather group of characters, were the four bear brothers, probably based on Winnie the Pooh, a favourite book of mine earlier. These were tiny, formerly white but now greyish, rubber teddy bears, and were known for their endless pranks and mischief. However, they more than once rescued Star King from the enemy fort. Star King was the leader (more or less) of the good guys, a metallic green spaceman named after a character in a radio serial. The baddies were always trying to capture him, hang him, or blow him up. He was rescued in the nick of time very often. At least once someone rode up on a horse and cut through the rope by which he was being hung (I must have gotten this from a western).

Boris's adventure with the irate hoods was a mixture of the frightening and the downright dare devillish - it makes me think of Indy Jones or Han Solo! Having such things happen in real life has its unnerving aspect.

Lana Brown's portfolio was attractive - a slightly different, simpler, more professional style than much fanzine illustration.

Enjoyed the review column - the review of ROSE FOR ARMAGEDDON makes me want to read the book fairly soon. I have recently read PRACTICE EFFECT and enjoyed it. Sorry that my review of THE PLAINS was a little off-putting - actually I enjoyed the book. I'm reading NEUROMANCER at the moment, and may recommend it for a Hugo. It is certainly the best-written book of this particular kind I have so far read.

IGOR TOLOCONNICOU, C/- Poste Restante, Volgograd, USSR:

Thanks for improving my style in TM 52... however there are some bugs: the second paragraph from above (sp/a) about Grin - it is not 'uncritical': a wonderful, unical (sole) writer/amazing. P.5. first pfa, the fifth line - "mainstream" - the Mad Scientist (MS); p.5, second pfa, the sixth line - "wrote in": As Belayev wrote about.

{Sorry about the 'uncritical', but I couldn't find 'unical' in the dictionary I use. - Ron.}

You also shortened an example about the girl who suicided. I did not put across my thought, evidently. The idea of moral education (as in STAGERS etc.) is good, but executed in proper time. If one goes ahead too fast one loses a link with reality. This young girl had a sincere soul. But was too weak, unexperienced in our big world (do you remember what M. Clifton advocated) and thus a final.

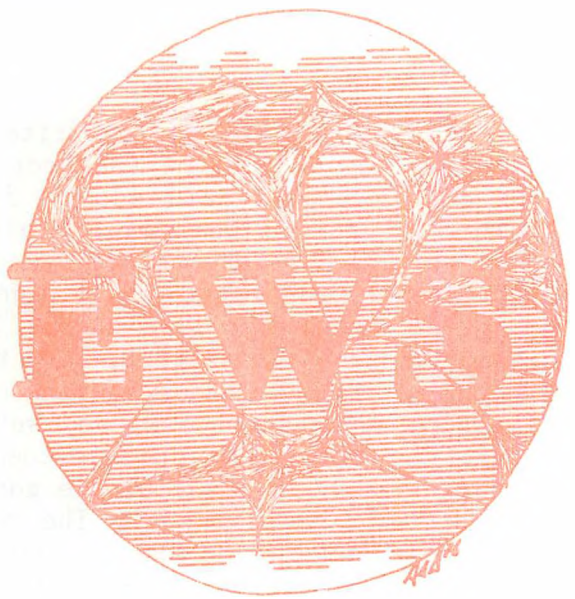
Curious, but I'm also becoming engrossed in the DORSAI series and Dickson, beginning with THE GENETIC GENERAL (I have it now).

We Also Heard From: Raymond C. Clancy.

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REVIEWS



TIME OF JOINT by Philip K. Dick. Penguin pb, dist in Aust by Penguin Aust Ltd. 187pp. A\$5.95. On sale now.

This is one of Dick's older sf novels, with a 1959 copyright date. It concerns the work of Ragel Gumm, who has found an outlet for his talents in entering a certain newspaper contest each day. He has been doing this for some years and the income from it enables him to bring in a little more money per month than his brother-in-law, with whom he lives, along with his sister. Things go on much the same for years, and then his nephew finds some old magazines and telephone books in a vacant block that had contained some houses.

The questioning of reality that became a hallmark of Dick's work is again the background of this novel. Living in the world of 1959, Gumm and the people he lives with start to wonder about the (now) increasingly peculiar happenings they begin to observe. Gumm put as much time into doing his contest as other people put into their everyday work and even he began to wonder if this contest was right for a grown man to spend his life work at. Considering some of Dick's later novels this is one which is quite coherent and a satisfying read.

TWILIGHT WORLD by Poul Anderson. Sphere pb, dist in Aust by William Collins. 180pp. A\$5.95. On sale now.

Though the copyright date on this novel is 1981, it looks to be straight out of the 1950s. Set some years after a nuclear war which had devastated the Earth and the biosphere has been poisoned by the pervasive radiation, it follows the setting up of a US government and the attempted colonisation of Mars.

The political situation has not improved, however, and a government which had been set up in Siberia is hell bent on guiding the world along the lines they think correct. Of course this is exactly what the US government is hell bent on doing, also. The first US spaceship reaches the red planet and are peacefully setting up their base to gain possession of the planet when the Russians turn up and try to take over, with predictable results, since the mutant genius who dominated the President and his merry men is heading the US expedition.

THE CONGLOMEROID COCKTAIL PARTY by Robert Silverberg. Gollancz h/c, dist in Aust by the Hutchinson Group. 284pp. A\$21.95. On sale now.

If you are a Silverberg fan you may have missed some of these stories. They have been reprinted from such publications as PLAYBOY, OMNI, AMAZING, PENTHOUSE and SPECULATIONS.

The stories date from 1980 and are: THE FAR SIDE OF THE BELL-SHAPED CURVE; WAITING FOR THE EARTHQUAKE; THE PALACE AT MIDNIGHT; OUR LADY OF THE SAUROPODS; AT THE CONGLOMEROID COCKTAIL PARTY; GIANNI; NEEDLE IN A TIMESTACK; THE POPE OF THE CHIMPS; THE MAN WHO FLOATED IN TIME; HOW THEY PASS THE TIME IN PELPEI; NOT OUR BROTHER; A THOUSAND PACES ALONG THE VIA DOLOROSA; THE TROUBLE WITH SEMPOANGA; THE REGULARS; THE CHANGLING and JENNIFER'S LOVER. I think the best in the bunch are the various time travel stories, and the haunting WAITING FOR THE EARTHQUAKE.

Worth the price for the Silverberg completist.

BLUESONG by Sydney J. Van Scyoc. Penguin pb, dist in Aust by Penguin Books Aust Ltd. 261pp. A\$4.95. On sale now.

This is the sequel to DARKCHILD, which was reviewed last issue. BLUESONG continues the story of the Rauth Images, in this instance it follows the children of the union of the original Images with the natives of the world they were stranded on as they try to come to grips with their mixed heritage. Born on an alien world whose inhabitants have mutated to survive, they find that they have inherited some of that genetic heritage, but do not know if it is enough to survive.

Keva was taken from her father when, after leaving her in the care of a riverwoman, he returned later and could not find them. The riverwoman kept her to replace a child she had lost; Danior was the only male offspring of a Barohna, the fire-wielding priestess-like leader of the mountain people, and he found himself forced apart from his people by the widening gap of his uniqueness.

The societies Van Scyoc has set up on this almost desert world are well worked out and the action is, as far as it can go, thoughtful. This looks like it could turn into a very interesting series.

TALES FROM THE VULGAR UNICORN edited by Robert Asprin. Penguin pb, dist in Aust by Penguin Books Aust Ltd. 223pp. A\$5.95. On sale now.

Years ago when the sf magazines where in their prime they used to run 'round robin' stories where one author started a story and others continued it in the next issue. Some were run as serials, some as individual stories. Robert Asprin has taken that idea and has made two anthologies so far with it. This is the second volume (naturally enough I haven't read the first volume...)

The stories making up this volume are autonomous, but use the background of the thieves city of Sanctuary as the locale. Some of the writers use much the same characters, but mostly they are different. The contents are: SPIDERS OF THE PURPLE MAGE - Philip Jose Farmer, GODDESS - David Drake, THE FRUIT OF ENLIBAR - Lynn Abbey, THE DREAM OF THE SORCERESS - A.E. van Vogt, VASHANKA'S MINION - Janet Morris, SHADOW'S PAWN - Andrew Offutt and TO GUARD THE GUARDIANS - Robert Asprin. The volume concludes with an 'essay' THE LIGHTER SIDE OF SANCTUARY.

Many of the above stories are spoofs on fantasy and other sacred cows of the genre and are quite humorous. This is not a heavy read and is a good volume to immerse yourself in a long train journey or the like.

WAITING FOR THE END OF THE WORLD by Lee Harding. Puffin pb, dist in Aust by Penguin Books Aust Ltd. 206pp. A\$4.50. On sale now.

Physically this is a slim book - because the paper used is thin high quality. The cover shows a white-haired man standing with a long-bow grasped in his left hand. In the background are shadows of ancient helmeted bowmen and tall trees limbed against an orange sky. The significance of that scene becomes clear when the

novel is read. On the back cover is a quote the type of which does not usually grace such a book: 'All the ingredients for a magnificently exciting story.' - Omega.

Well, not only does it have the ingredients, it delivers the goods. Puffin books are 'juveniles' as far as classification goes - this is another novel like THE PRINCE IN WAITING Trilogy that is really broad spectrum. It is set in the hills on the outskirts of an Australian city of the future (one supposes Melbourne, given the hills surrounding it and the Great Divide to the north) to which arrives a boy suffering withdrawal symptoms of the drugs the authorities dose the citizens through the water they drink...

Said authorities know of the fugitives and during the time covered by the novel there are several raids, during one of which one of the characters is taken off to the city to face a fate the others can only guess at.

Recommended.

THE HAREM OF AMAN AKBAR by Elizabeth Scarborough. Bantam pb, dist in Aust by Transworld Publishers. 265pp. A\$3.95. On sale now.

This is another fantasy novel from the author of BRONWYN'S BANE. It is told in the same whimsical style, and concerns the trials and tribulations of a lord of far-off Kharristan as he instructs his captive djinn to bring him certain women for his wives. Unfortunately (or fortunately, whichever way you look at it) the women he chooses are modern women in that they know what they want and set out to get it. In this case, Aman, the lord concerned, manages to loose the djinn and get himself turned into an ass in the bargain.

The group have a series of colourful adventures which no ordinary female from that era could go through and came through sane. However his earstwhile wives do and manage to bring him through also. During these trials they all change for the better, especially Aman, who starts off a fairly easy-go-lucky young man who uses magic to get away from drugery, to someone who all the women reckon as being their equal and partner.

It has some good laughs - if you are a fantasy fan you'll like it.

MORETA DRAGONLADY OF PERN by Anne McCaffrey. Corgi pb, dist in Aust by Transworld Publishers. 407pp. A\$5.95. On sale now.

It has been some time since I have read a DragonRider book, so came to this with a refreshed mind. The story itself is set some 1400 Turns after the first ship landed on Pern and is located on the north landmass. It is towards the end of the Pass and there is a Gathering at Ruatha Hold to celebrate with races and dancing. At one of the races an animal collapses; nothing much more is made of it at the time. Then it is found that a plague is spreading from an animal found drifting on a log from apparently the south continent which passes from animals to humans.

As with the other novels set in Pern, this one concerns itself with the nobility, and only mentions the drudges in passing. It is essentially a feudal society, with the highborn fighting and looking after the masses while they live boring and repetitious lives and give their services free to enable the flyers to guard the passes of Pern.

I had a bit of trouble with the names this time around also - why can't they have good Terran names. All the Perns novels start to blur into each other after a while. However, this is another for those followers of the dragons. Those readers, at least, will like it.

MIDWAY BETWEEN by Warren Norwood. Bantam pb, dist in Aust by Transworld Publishers. 235pp. A\$3.95. On sale now.

I suppose that STAR WARS could be blamed for this series also. MIDWAY BETWEEN is the first volume in The Double-Spiral War, and gives the background for the Galaxy-wide conflict that the human systems of the United Central Systems and the Sondak Confederacy (why those names - US against Confederacy??) are about to become engaged upon. The first few pages give several starmaps and a resume and then it is into the novel itself.

The action is fast and the plot well thought out. Though there are aliens in the story, they are mainly peripheral. The main characters are humans. These humans are scattered through both the US and the Confederacy. In fact they are so alike in so many ways and the governments are alike that several times I became confused as to who was working for who and which government was the underdog. Was it the US or Confederacy? Actually into the story they are called UCS and Sondak, so it isn't too bad.

Good SF Adventure.

STAR-WORLD by Harry Harrison. Bantam pb, dist in Aust by Transworld Publishers. 198pp. A\$3.95. On sale now.

Reading this novel I came across a tract that I have read before. I am not sure where - but I have read it, possibly in an extract somewhere. This is the concluding volume in the TO THE STARS trilogy and tells how the revolution was brought to Earth from the colonies. The hero manages to escape an aborted attempt to land a team on earth and spends some time in a negro ghetto (the section I have read elsewhere) and finally makes it to Israel where the resistance is centred.

The villain of the piece is his nasty brother, who it turns out is the secret wheeler-and-dealer of the whole tryanny, being the head of the Secret Police. It seems that he, though a sadistic killer, has the good of mankind at heart, and was just using his sadistic impulses to convince people in the government that he was really evil.

The characterisation isn't bad, and as usual the plot hastens. A bit better than typical Harrison, though I will have to reread the Deathworld novels someday and see if they are as good as I remember.

QUARKS The Stuff Of Matter by Harald Fritzsch. Pelican pb, dist in Aust by Penguin Books Aust Ltd. 232pp. with indices. A\$12.95. On sale now.

I did not know what I was letting myself into when I asked for this book for review. Harald Fritzsch is an elementary-particle physicist and is Professor of Theoretical Physics at the University of Munich and Research Professor of Physics at the Max-Planck Institute for Physics in Munich, so he knows what he is talking about when he gives a lucid description of the current (1982) state-of-the-art, along with an introduction of the basic background.

There is some hard and deep reading in this volume - it covers the ground since the beginning of this century and especially from the 1950s. The main subject are Quarks and he goes into the various types and elements, from colour, charm, and isospin along with side issues into gluons, bosons and leptons, etc. A quote from near the end of the book will suffice to give the reader some idea of the information contained therein: "Something very odd happens in electrodynamics once the uncertainty in energy is more than twice the mass of the electron...: there a pair of particles consisting of one electron and one positron can be produced. This particle pair is produced out of the vacuum, and, unless something drastic happens, it will disappear just as quickly." (p.119).

Recommended.

SIDNEY'S COMET by Brian Herbert. W.H.Allen h/c, dist in Aust by the Hutchinson Group. 266pp. A\$21.95. On sale now.

This is the first novel by Brian Herbert, son of Frank Herbert. It is not a serious novel - and everyone knows that good humorous sf is harder to write than space opera. It is a strange novel. There is quite a bit of poking fun at some of the conventions of sf (there is even, in one scene, a large sign displayed: THANK ROSENBLOOM FOR FULL EMPLOYMENT).

The storyline is fairly simple - for years the garbage of the solar system had been sent winging its way into deep space, and ended up in the middle of a party of discorporate beings, who though discorporate were quite annoyed that the humans were sending all this crap into their party. So they decided to teach the humans a lesson. So they sent all the garbage back in the form of a comet. Which the humans, when they sent their hydrogen warheads against it, found was steerable. Their computers found (with some help from the aliens) that only one man was suitable for the job: Sidney Malloy, who was, needless to say, not really the hero type...

THE SONGBIRDS OF PAIN by Garry Kilworth. Gollancz h/c, dist in Aust by the Hutchinson Group. 187pp. A\$21.95. On sale now.

The subtitle for this collection of short stories is Stories From The Inscape. Needless to say, the stories are called science fiction by Kilworth, although there are those that would call them speculative fiction.

Included are THE DISSEMBLERS, THE ROSE BUSH, BLIND WINDOWS, LORD OF THE DANCE, LET'S GO TO GOLGOTHA!, SUMI DREAMS OF A PAPER FROG, SCARLET FEVER, THE MAN WHO COLLECTED BRIDGES, THE INVISIBLE FOE, ALMOST HEAVEN, GOD'S COLD LIPS, OUBLIETTE and the title story THE SONGBIRDS OF PAIN. The most widely read story from those listed about would be, of course, LET'S GO TO GOLGOTHA!, concerning turning the Crucifiction into a tourist attraction, which has been anthologised many times. The second most anthologised story is probably THE MAN WHO COLLECTED BRIDGES. I found each story engrossing and, indeed, the whole book absorbing.

All of these stories are the type that F&SF would print in its heyday - they are good. *Recommended*.

THE BOOK OF THE STARS by Ian Watson. Gollancz h/c, dist in Aust by The Hutchinson Group. 208pp. A\$21.95. On sale now.

Another sequel, this time to THE BOOK OF THE RIVER, which was reviewed last issue. Watson continues to follow the adventures of Yaleen, a girl brought up alongside a river down the middle of which stretched a 'black worm' which no-one could cross. She tamed the worm for a short time and at the beginning of this book was writing her autobiography. Shortly after she sets out on the river again and dies on it. Going along with the plans of the worm her soul is transported to earth, where she is reborn in an infant's body. This is not the usual religious rebirth, though, as the whole thing is overseen by what appears to be a computer with God-like powers.

When she has caused enough trouble on earth she is transported, with others of her group, to a penal colony on the moon. When she arrives there she finds that all is not that simple, however, and there is an underlying reason for the moonbase and the ships they are building. Because there is a third volume on the way, this novel does not end pm a note of finality - the heroine knows that the Godmind (the earth computer) has plans for her (and indeed the whole human race, which it intends to expend in its search for the ultimate reality), but it is still a satisfying read.

JITTERBUG PERFUME by Tom Robbins. Bantam h/c, dist in Aust by Transworld Publishers. 342pp. A\$18.95. On sale now.

This is a mainstream fantasy novel that has a foot in both worlds - it is on the NEW YORK TIMES bestseller list and is of the type that the ordinary fantasy fan will find enjoyable.

The early action takes place in ancient Bohemia, when the forces of Christianity are ousting the old gods, one of whom is Pan. The goat-footed god is not as strong as he used to be and this is the reason, I think, that one of the main characters in the novel manages to come away unharmed. In fact, it might be considered that Pan had something to do with the virtual immortality that Alobar, and his companion, Kudra, enjoy for about 800 years of life. The way that they achieve this immortality has something to do with breathing exercises, having a healthy sex life, and living enjoyably. They both have an interest in beets - and that connection follows them through most of the book.

What the connection is with beets, perfume and the jitterbug is something that the reader will have to find out for him/herself. I enjoyed the read.

CONAN THE INVINCIBLE by Robert Jordan. Sphere pb, dist in Aust by William Collins. 184pp. A\$4.95. On sale now.

The Conan series of novels is extended with this volume. The cover gracing this edition is quite well done - the figure of Conan depicted is of no over-muscled hero; rather he is well built, not over endowed as some artists will have him.

In this adventure Conan is but nineteen and is a resident of Shadizar, where he is pursuing the trade of thief. He is quite good at it, though he finds the money he makes vanishes through his fingers into those of inn-keepers and good-time girls. Hearing of his abilities as a thief a certain sorcerer hires him to obtain for him some pendants and a golden casket which reside in the king's palace. Conan manages to broach the palace but is unable to obtain the jewels. Before he can try again they are taken by others and he finds himself in pursuit. Meeting up with a beautiful red-headed bandit he joins up with her band in an attempt to obtain the pendants from their present holder, another sorcerer.

There seems to be more sex than I remember from the earlier Conan novels. Luckily it is not too obtrusive, but is distracting from the blood and gore.

GNOMES, text by Wil Huygen, illustrated by Rien Poortvliet. Peacock Press/Bantam pb, dist in Aust by Transworld Publishers. 208pp. 210x305mm. A\$14.95

If you have ever wondered about why some people have garden gnomes in their garden, and would like to know why they really do, then you will find this book gives the answer. (Of course it does put down people who have garden gnomes in their garden, but you can't have everything.)

This is a complete history of gnomes, and gives their physiology, psychology, dress, the different types of gnomes and many other things, including the types of injuries they suffer, their growing up stages, and the things that makes up their lives, such as glass blowing, helping animals in distress etc. It gives diagrams of their houses and, all in all, covers their way of life quite deeply (or as far as humans have been able to find out about them). It does dispell some myths, and adds much to the general knowledge of these gentle forest creatures.

The volume is in full colour and is profusely illustrated with beautiful sketches and illustrations of the text. *Recommended* for dyed-in-the-wool fantasy fans.

FAERIES, described and illustrated by Brian Froud and Alan Lee. Peacock Press/Bantam pb, dist in Aust by Transworld Publishers. 190pp. 210x305mm. A\$14.95

This could be a companion volume to GNOMES, even though GNOMES was translated from the German and this volume is of USA origin. The artwork is, again, first class and in full colour. The styles are mixed, with some Victorian and some of that style Wood has penned. Many of the illustrations are sketches, though the earlier plates are of that pastel watercolour that Victoriana is known for.

Again the book travels with the different types of inhabitants of Faerie - gives information on where there be faeries - including those of the New World (otherwise there would be less sales, no doubt). The longer part of the book describes the Denizens of Faerie - the leprechauns, cluricauns, fir darrig, goblins, kobolds, wichtlein, coblynau, dwarfs, pixies, will o' the wisp, bogie, phooka, puck, trows, unseelie court, fachan, hags, bogles, jack-in-irons, jimmy square foot, redcap, bean-nighe, gwyllion, leanan-sidhe, kelpie, nuckelavee, water leaper, water faeries, shellycoat, urisk, glaistig, peg powler, asrai, selkies, mermaids, merrows, brownies, fenoderee, killmoulis and others. Also covered are flora.

Diane Fox would love this book.

THE YEARS OF THE CITY by Frederik Pohl. Gallancz h/c, dist in Aust by the Hutchinson Group. 334pp. A\$23.95. On sale June.

This book is done somewhat in the style of THE SPACE MERCHANTS, without the satire. It is a chronicle of New York in the next century from now. There are five parts not including the Introduction. They are headed WHEN NEW YORK HIT THE FAN, THE GREENING OF BED-STUY, THE BLISTER, SECOND-HAND SKY and GWENDANDA AND THE SUPREMES.

The scene set in the present day introduces the main characters and then concentrates on one, who is trying to keep both his daughter and his job as first in his mind. One of the projects he is working on is a Universal Town Meeting, using the TV and Radio live links so that the ordinary people can talk over and make the decisions that were being made by their 'representatives' on councils and other bodies. That part ends with the eventual setting up of the UTM. The other parts flow into the future and eventually the last part is some hundred years in the future when the only link with the past are the revived people frozen for eventual unthawing and having their medical problems fixed with modern techniques. By this time the UTM has grown so it is involving the whole North American continent.

Pohl is a good craftsman, and in this book it shows. Well thought out speculative fiction.

CHAMPIONS OF OF THE SIDHE by Kenneth C. Flint. Bantam pb, dist in Aust by Transworld Publishing. 277pp. A\$3.95. On sale now.

This is the middle volume of a trilogy - the first volume, RIDERS OF THE SIDHE, was reviewed last issue, the concluding volume, MASTER OF THE SIDHE, will be out later this year - and it tells of how the evil Bres attempts to recapture the island of Eire from the young Lugh. Balor dwells in a tower of glass that rises from an island. His henchman is a Druid, Mathgen who, along with Sital Salmhor, attempt to force their will on Eire. They have the forces of technology with them - Balor appears to be a robot of some sophistication.

There is plenty of adventure (the blurb says "Enough derring-do for at least one Lucas film", and that is about the level of the story) and it helps if you are one of those ethnic people who are descended from Celts. Lugh is a defender of the poor (and most of his people are poor). It is not 'high' fantasy, but if that is not available, this does not require any deep thinking.

For anglophiles.

THE SILVER SUN by Nancy Springer. Corgi pb, dist in Aust by Transworld Publishers. 292pp. A\$4.95. On sale now.

Another second in a fantasy trilogy, this time **THE BOOK OF THE ISLE** trilogy, the first volume being **THE WHITE HART**. (The strange thing is, the cover illustrating the first volume is different to that illustrated on the inside jacket of this volume...).

This is a long novel - though only 292 pages the print is small and a lot is in those pages. The setting is Isle, once a paradise but the invaders had despoiled the land and enslaved the people. The (young) hero came to this land and he picked up a companion who at the time he rescued him, was about to be killed by one of the invaders. The hero, Hal, bestrode a grey horse and, unknown to the peasants, was the son of the king who had the people under his thumb.

The prophecy of The White Hart was that the heir of Bevan would return to Elwestrand - this is part of their quest to stop the sins of the father. Run-of-the-mill fantasy.

QUEEN OF THE LIGHTNING by Kathleen Herbert. Corgi pb, dist in Aust by Transworld Publishers. 255pp. A\$6.95. On sale now.

Herbert is the winner of the historical novel prize in memory of Georgette Heyer and has a first class degree from Oxford in English. She has travelled in Northern England and Southern Scotland researching for her books.

QUEEN OF THE LIGHTNING tells of the last great Celtic queen Riemmelth. Not only was she dark and beautiful - she was the last of King Arthur's royal line. Before her father died he decided to marry Riemmelth to one of the hated English to endeavour to obtain peace in the land. Unfortunately for Riemmelth, she was in love with someone else, but her royal duties must be seen to come before her personal life - so she went to live with one of her hereditary racial enemies.

The writing style is flowing and the setting (7th Century Cumbria) is well researched - as can be seen by the list of characters, maps and charts in the forepages.

For those interested in the early life in Britain (or Cumbria).

CHAPTER HOUSE DUNE by Frank Herbert. Gollancz h/c, dist in Aust by the Hutchinson Group. 374pp. A\$16.95. On sale now.

This is the sequel to **HERETICS OF DUNE**. It carries on with Odrade as Mother Superior of the Bene Gesserit attempting to save some remnant of her Sisterhood from the ravings of the Honoured Matres. Duncan Idaho is given the task of reviving the memories of Teg from a clone grown from cell scrapings. Sheeana still has the ability to control sandworms, one of which the Bene Gesserit has managed to save from the destruction of Dune.

It commences with visible vying for power in the upper echelons of the Honoured Matres, and then gives an example of the power struggle in the Bene Gesserit structure; this is to demonstrate the differences between the two organisations of women. The novel is often tedious in places - Herbert may be going the way of Heinlein - short of action but long on conversation.

The ending obviously leaves an opening for a sequel, in which I hope is a little less introspection and a little more visible action. I must admit I found **CHAPTER HOUSE** nearing the point of becoming boring enough to want to skip pages - not a good sign.

CUGEL'S SAGA by Jack Vance. Granada pb, dist in Aust by William Collins. 367pp. A\$5.95. On sale now.

This novel seems to have been pieced together from a series of short stories - in the chapters adjoining each adventure of Cugel there is a slight dislocation in the story line.

The scene is set in earth's far future (this is in the "Dying Earth" series) where the inhabitants of the planet could very well be from some fantastic fantasy. There are all sorts of weird characters and distorted creatures, but with Vance's sure touch even the names of these do not seem to outrageous or artificial. Cugel is once again the butt of a joke by the magician Iucounu who transports him to a desolate beach some distance from his homeland. In his journey back, Cugel has many adventures and does not always come out ahead, though he sometimes has fun doing it, as when he (apparently) deflowered fifteen virgins while he was obstentiously guarding them. When he eventually makes it back he finds an ingenious way of revenging himself on Iucounu.

Reading Vance is an acquired taste - try it, it will grow on you.

THE EIGHTY-MINUTE HOUR by Brian Aldiss. Granada pb, dist in Aust by William Collins. 288pp. A\$5.95. On sale now.

The sub-title of this novel is "A Space Opera", but let the reader beware if he or she thinks they will be buying a straightforward sf adventure. The copyright date is 1974, which was when Aldiss was still in his New Wave faze.

World War III was over and some of the consequences of the immense nuclear explosions in space and on the earth were about to make themselves felt by faults and displacements in Time. One of the first artifacts to go was a spy-bell, a probe of the Dissident Nations, whose job it was to spy on the amalgamated political block of the USA and USSR, which, as usual, sought World Domination. There are about six threads winding through the plot - that of Choggles, the daughter of the man whose scientific advances enabled those in power to control the sex drives of the rest of humanity through the implantation of an electrode; that of the (seemingly) fantasy trio who fought monsters as they adventured through a sometimes alien landscape; and that of Mike Surinat, who with his wife, dies at least once in the course of the book.

Not for those fond of straightforward writing.

CRASH! by J.G. Ballard. Triad/Granada pb, dist in Aust by William Collins. 171pp. A\$6.95. On sale now.

One of Ballard's more well-known works from 1973, this comes from the same period as the Aldiss reviewed above. The novel explores the landscape of the automobile through the violent meeting of the driver of the mechanical marvel and the marvel itself as illustrated by the title, CRASH! (This edition is actually titled CRASH, but the true title, as mentioned in Ballard's foreword, is CRASH!).

The protagonist is called Ballard. He tells of his meeting with Vaughan, and his falling for that man's warped (in the sense of different from the normal) view of the world, especially the impact of the car on the modern world. The protagonist falls further into Vaughan's spell, so much so that near the end of the novel he drives Vaughan's car through a carwash whilst Vaughan makes violent love to his wife on the back seat. In the end Vaughan is killed in a car accident (as he knew he would) and Ballard is left contemplating his own future abd coming accident.

In the introduction Ballard would like to believe CRASH! "is the first pornographic novel based on technology" - so the reader knows what he or she is getting in to.

NULL-A THREE by A.E. Van Vogt. Sphere pb, dist in Aust by William Collins . 215pp. A\$5.95. On sale now.

As can be seen from the title, this is the long awaited third novel in the Null-A series. It has been some time since I read **PAWNS OF NULL-A**, and I never did get around to reading **THE WORLD OF NULL-A**. Van Vogt has made an introduction to this third novel by taking the introduction to the other two novels and the part introductions (from the magazine serials) and made an introduction which reads somewhat like that to **TRIPLANETARY**.

The novel starts with Gilbert Gosseyn finding himself in what seems to be a coffin-like box. It appears that he had survived the transit from the Milky Way galaxy to another, but one of the tubes feeding and keeping his body fit had broken loose some time before and some unspecified change had taken place in his double brain. This change manifests itself in some strange happenings.

I think that Van Vogt, by illustrating how General Semantics works, has created in Gosseyn, intentionally or not, one of the best examples of an alien that I have read. His awkward writing style helps to set this image. If you like 1940s sf you'll like **NULL-A THREE**.

STARTREK 7, 8, 9, 10 adapted by James Blish, **DEVIL WORLD** by Gordon Eklund, **WORLD WITHOUT END** by Joe Haldeman, **THE STARLESS WORLD** by Gordon Eklund, **TREK TO MADWORLD** by Stephen Goldin, **VULCAN** by Kathleen Sky. Published by Corgi (UK) and Bantam Books (USA), dist in Aust by Transworld Publishers. 150-160pp. A\$3.95. On sale now.

Only a few years ago, a lot of us were horrified to hear that there would not be copies of the Blish books readily available any more. Those who could afford to raided the bookstores to get the books that were missing from their collections. You see, most of us had assumed that they were always going to be in reprint.

Now Corgi and Bantam have begun to reissue the entire series of Blish books and most of the Trek books (notably missing so far have been the Marshak and Culbreath books) starting with **SPOCK MUST DIE!** by James Blish (the second original Trek novel published... the first being **MISSION TO HORATIUS** written by Mack Reynolds, Whitman books, 1968). All have new covers, some having being out of print since 1979.

Newcomers to Trek fandom will enjoy being able to read the oldest of the paperback novels but might ask why they should read the Blish books especially when so many fans have access to videos and screenings of the episodes. The Blish books are a gentle marriage of the original story and a shooting script by a master storyteller in a minimum of words that captures the essence of both. He produced a readable short story which was most probably a presentation of how the original author would have liked to have seen his story shown. Many lines appear that were taken from the final shooting script. The final shooting script was a long development of a story to fit it into the strict guidelines used for television. For this reason alone, I can recommend the Blish books to any Trek fan.

STAR TREK 7 contains six stories: *Who Mourns for Adonais?*, *The Changeling*, *The Paradise Syndrome*, *Metamorphosis*, *The Deadly Years* and *Elaan of Troyius*. Especially interesting are the definite parallels between *The Changeling* and **STAR TREK: THE MOTION PICTURE**, right down to calling humans - biological infestations and how the exploring Terran satellite becomes a mixture of alien and original programming - searching for its creator and home planet. A must to read. *Elaan of Troyius* is portrayed as a different character, physically, than shown on the screened episode.

STAR TREK 8 has *Spock's Brain*, *The Enemy Within*, *Catspaw*, *Where No Man Has Gone Before*, *Wolf In The Fold* and *For The World Is Hollow And I Have Touched The Sky*. Blish has taken two of the least popular Trek episodes and retold them as

readable tales - not bad at all - and removed the seven "he/she's deae, Jim"'s from Wolf In The Fold. For The World Is... has all the poignancy of the screened episode with only a few differences.

The new covers on the Corgi editions are better than some of the past ones. This issue however, Kirk could have been anyone with a pained/puzzled expression. A nice touch in the covers is a circle of space with a dark planet off centred and the Enterprise angling outwards which created the impression of the IDIC symbol.

VULCAN! by Kathleen Sky and TREK TO MADWORLD by Stephen Goldin were both published in 1978 and not reprinted since 1979. VULCAN! is a novel on a more personal level than TREK TO MADWORLD, in which Goldin buries the snatches of personal element - one theme noticeable especially in the last chapters and considering how important it is to the outcome of the story, it is perhaps too underdeveloped.

Of the two, I enjoyed VULCAN! more, as the story, told in a flowing style, concerns itself with relationships in the context of crisis and the characters conformed to and embellished the ones we so enjoyed in the series. The crisis consisted of a planet of spiders who may or may not were sentient, that stood in the way of the moving Romulan Neutral Zone. True to Federation doctrines, if sentient, the inhabitants should be contacted and given the choice of allegiance (Romulan or Federation) for their mineral-rich planet. To this end, the Enterprise carries Katalya Tremain, top Federation scientist, to the planet to work with Spock. However, she has this tiny character fault: she hates Vulcans.

It is a well-told novel with action and understanding equally balanced and no sticky, unrealistic relationships at the end, where it would have been very tempting to degenerate the story into a romance.

TREK TO MADWORLD on the other hand, had a tiny smattering of romance, hidden at the end of the book. The characters are unembellished in this novel. In fact, apart from their names, they barely had any character at all at times. The plot was a standard fan/straight sf ploy. On their way to an emergency, the spaceship is plucked from normal space along with two other ships of their most feared enemies (why not the Gorns as well, I asked myself. They hold a considerable section of the galaxy as well....) by an all-powerful being/spirit - in this case a non-conformist Organian - who searches for more to his existence than he has, despite all he has and can do.

It's competently, although somewhat blandly, handled as the Organian, Knowil, takes them across his created world, illustrating their ideas of excitement, sex, companionship, etc. The answer is obvious but the ending is a cop-out by the author who was trying to tie up the ends rather obviously: disposing of the necessity of completing the original mission and the displacement of over six hundred colonists, a difficult lady who could have made a more exciting impact by merit of the hints about her character given earlier by the author, and a poor undeveloped Romulan character who was thrown into the situation to play a romantic foil for her.

This book, I feel, seems like an unpolished fan story instead of the slickly told one that it could have been.

THE STARLESS WORLD (first printed in 1978) and DEVIL WORLD (first printed in 1979) - both by Gordon Eklund and both last printed in 1979 - THE STARLESS WORLD going to four editions between 78 and 79, with good reason. Both books are fast-paced with an even mixture of adventure and really interesting character development; however, THE STARLESS WORLD seems to hold more to capture the imagination than DEVIL WORLD.

In THE STARLESS WORLD, the situation is similiar to TREK TO MADWORLD in that a force/power/being captured the ship, taking them to a strange world (in this case, it is a Pellucidar of Edgar Rice Burroughs design without the external world.... ie. a hollow sphere with the star in the centre and the planetary surface then facing it... fascinating if one can discount little things like the size of a star etc.) where they must find a way of reasoning with/defeating/escaping from the

being/etc. In this case the characters are easily recognisable and developed with the plot. There is a definite mystery element and some background to and development in a cameo way of the character of Uhura. There are even a few Klingons tossed in - Klingons who could have made wonderful characters in themselves and it is great pity there have been no fan follow-ups to this book including the tales of the adventures of these Klingon exiles (including a deposed Klingon princess). However, one major draw-back to the book is the scene where Kirk endeavours to reason with the Power to have them freed - the planet and all its captives and occupants are about to be swallowed by a black hole - to escape the holocaust. Supposedly, we are painted a picture of a vengeful being - yet it gives mercy at the sway of some really weak arguments given by Kirk. However, since Kirk did have this ability to change the mind of machines and beings with his words (no matter how unconvincing they sounded to us - it must have been his charisma) in the series, then we can hardly argue that it could not be done in this book.

And of course Kirk manages to find himself a white-furred bride (of an almost H. Beam Piper's Little Fuzzy description - no indication at the end is given to the divorce proceedings so we may assume that for the rest of his adventures, the man is a bigamist...).

DEVI WORLD uses the combination of the adventure ploy of a beautiful damsel in distress and science fiction's favourite - a powerful being/machine/essence - whatever. How Kirk manages to talk any respectable area Commodore into letting him break quarantine on a planet because his gonads have dictated his actions (and that of his starship), is an indication of the man's obvious charismatic powers. But apart from that, this book offers some interesting characters and situations, especially the Danons, a dying race of once great space explorers who are the picture of one's concept of devils, yet appear to have friendly, helpful natures beneath their terrifying exteriors.

There is much to tempt the reader: a planet which seems to cause insanity in those who have the misfortune to land on it; a man who has rejected the Federation, has lived with the Klingon Empire and now claims to have immortality due to some strange gestalt on this planet; a beautiful Jainist (a hindu religion), his daughter, who seems to have some secret of her own; a mysterious tower and an evil entity that only Spock can feel. The elements are spun together well in an entertaining story with a climactic ending.

Both these books are worthwhile reading - I can definitely recommend them.

WORLD WITHOUT END by Joe Haldemann. This was the second reprinted novel - the other being PLANET OF JUDGEMENT. Both are good solid adventure with the emphasis on adventure. Haldeman introduces a complex multi-stranded society which is unique, and certainly makes you think, with its many strings of plots... tossing in many, many pieces of information and facts used in other Trek books, tv episodes etc. Very well-researched.

STAR TREK 9 contains: Return to Tomorrow, The Ultimate Computer, That Which Survives, Obsession, The Return of the Archons & The Immunity Syndrome. First printed in 1974, this is the second printing (Corgi edition only).

STAR TREK 10 contains: The Alternative Factor, The Empath, The Galileo Seven, Is There In Truth No Beauty?, A Private Little War & The Omega Glory.

Please note: the reissues are currently priced by Corgi and Bantam at \$3.95 which is exceptional value considering that the new novels from American currently cost \$3.50US.

OTHER RELEASES FOR APRIL WHICH HAVE, IN ANOTHER EDITION, BEEN REVIEWED PREVIOUSLY:

TIK-TOK by John Sladeky/Corgi pb, dist. in Aust. by Transworld Publishers. 174pp. AS\$4.95.

YESTERDAY'S MEN by George Turner/Sphere pb, dist. in Aust. by William Collins. 223pp. AS\$5.95.

OTHER CURRENT RELEASES:

TRANSWORLD:
BANTAM (USA):

THE COLOUR OF MAGIC - Terry Pratchett
A CANTICLE FOR LEIBOWITZ - Walter Miller
REBEL'S QUEST - F.M. Busby
THE MASTERS OF SOLITUDE - Kaye & Godwin
UTOPIA HUNTERS - Somtow Sucharitkul
TO OPEN THE SKY - Robert Silverberg

PENGUIN:

THE TRIPODS TRILOGY - John Christopher
PAVANE - Keith Roberts
ADVENTURES WITH YOUR COMPUTER - Rade
TWILIGHT AT THE WELLS OF SOULS - Chalker

MAY RELEASES:

DOUBLEDAY:
PENGUIN:

ENCHANTER'S END GAME - Eddings
BROKEN SYMMETRIES - Paul Preuss
COILS - Zelazny and Saberhagen
NEW FOUND LAND - John Christopher

TRANSWORLD:

THE ENCHANTRESS - Han Suyin (h/c)

AND FUTURE TITLES FROM THE HUTCHINSON GROUP:

HOPEFUL SHALL ARRIVE SOON - Philip K. Dick
GROUND ZERO - Bob Shaw
THE MAN IN THE TREE - Damon Knight
THE BOOK OF BEING - Ian Watson

STAR TREK 9 contains: Return to Tomorrow, The Ultimate Computer, The Motion Pictures, Obsession, The Return of the Archons & The Immunity Syndrome. (Printed in 1974, this is the second printing (Corgi edition only).)

STAR TREK 10 contains: The Alternative Factor, The Empath, The Galileo, Is There a Truth No Beauty, A Doomed Little War & The Omega Glory.

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