

THE MENTOR

SCIENCE FICTION

contents

April 1988

No.63

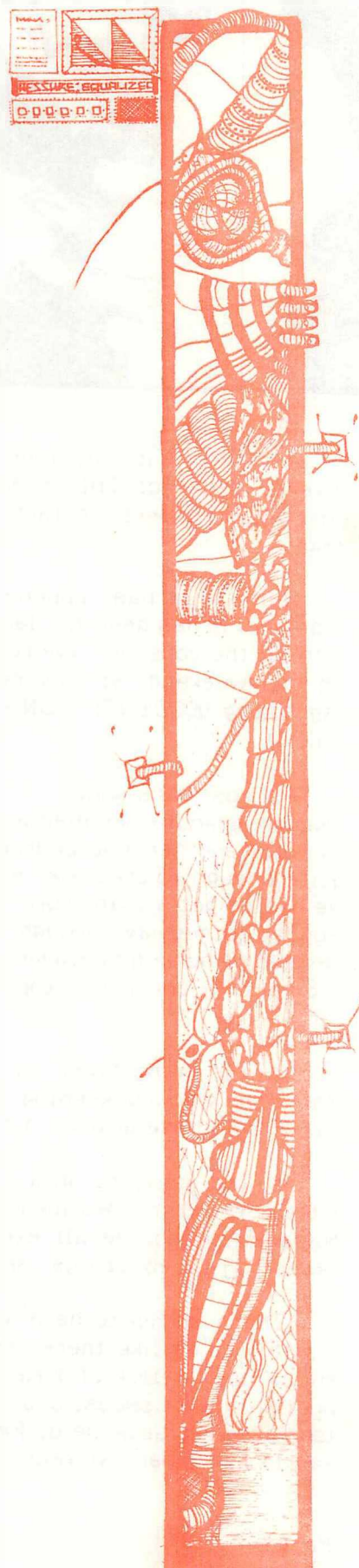
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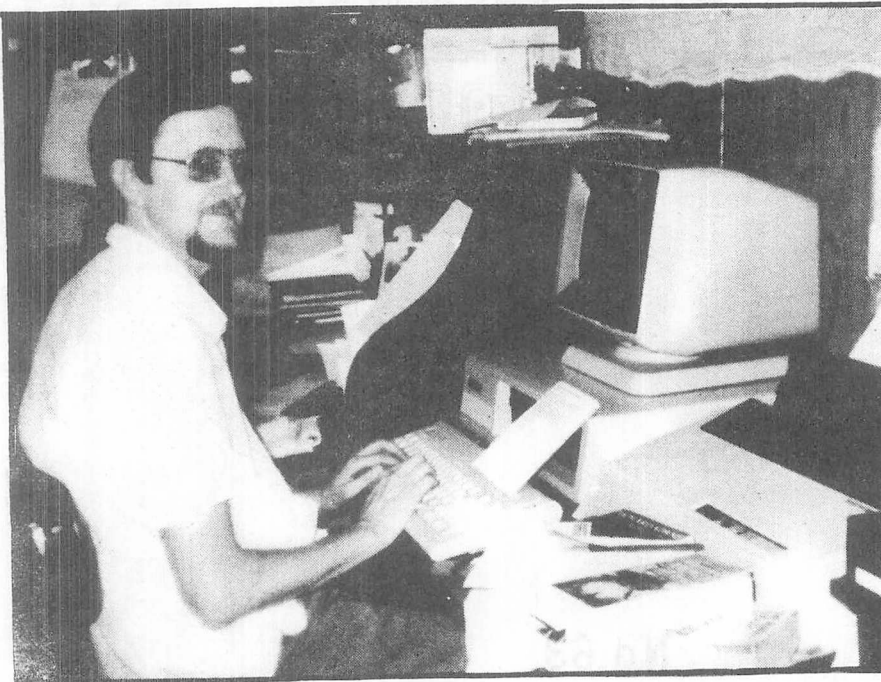
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THE MENTOR Science Fiction, edited by Ron Clarke for R&S Clarke, 6 Bellevue Road, Faulconbridge, NSW 2776, Australia. Published whenever he can afford it. Available for the usual and \$2 per issue. Contributions are solicited. This issue is quite some time overdue. There have been some short 'review' issues out which were distributed in Australia only.

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CLARKIE'S COMMENTS

Well, here it is only a year since the last genzine issue of THE MENTOR. There have been several issues of THE MENTOR REVIEWS, but they were aimed to bring book releases to Australian readers. In fact, there will be a review issue with the Australian mailing this issue.

Quite a lot has happened in the Clarke household since then - ECCENTRICON has come and gone. It has been the largest convention we have run, with multi-strand programming. As with all the cons we have run so far it broke even - the PostCon report is being printed with TM this weekend. With every con we have run we have published a Postcon report, often 20+ pages long (ECCENTRICON's is 40 pages). I don't know any other regular con which has done this.

As most fans know, we have four children and live in a three bedroom house. Early last year my grandfather died and left my mother enough money for her to pass on enough for us to build another two bedrooms, bathroom and large (17'x 15') study for Sue. There wasn't quite enough to create an extension that didn't look like a box perched on the other roof, so we had to get a loan from the credit union at work. The builders worked through from about August to midway through December, when they completed the extension. Through all this several of our kids became ill and our finances hit an all bottom low, and when we had to buy a carpet to cover the top floor, our credit accounts went into the red and still haven't recovered.

This is being typed on 15.4.88, but when it is posted will depend on available finances. For those who are keeping track of the numbers, number 62 will be printed next, then number 64. (I could have sworn I did a number 62...)

I was going to do a comment in this editorial on the Victorian attitude for the last fifteen years to a Worldcon in Sydney generally, but I went on a one week long live-in Middle Management course all expenses paid courtesy of Bob Hawke, so I was unable to do the research needed. If I get around to it it will be in the next issue.

There seems to be a dearth of fanzines published in Australia recently - there are no monthly zines like there used to be and I don't think there are any bi-monthly ones. I know my excuses - lack of time because of the attention the children need and thus no urge to publish giant issues, and money, because of the economy. At the moment unemployment is low; however because of Federal government cutbacks in the Australian Public Service (5% a year) next financial year, starting in July, several Departments will not be taking in any

staff. This has never happened before, but apparently the men who joined the Public Service after WWII have all retired, and almost no-one is going out. This will create enormous problems in the future.

There is an interesting statistic that shows where the general interest in science fiction is at the moment. I am Treasurer of the NSW Star Trek Club (ASTREX), and have been for the last seven years. Sue started it in 1976, after Shayne McCormack's first ever Australian Star Trek Group DUSK (Down Under Space Kooks) folded. Sue and I, as R&S Clarke, had been duplicating the club magazine, and back at the first issue in August 1976 it had five pages. There weren't that many members around then - about 34.

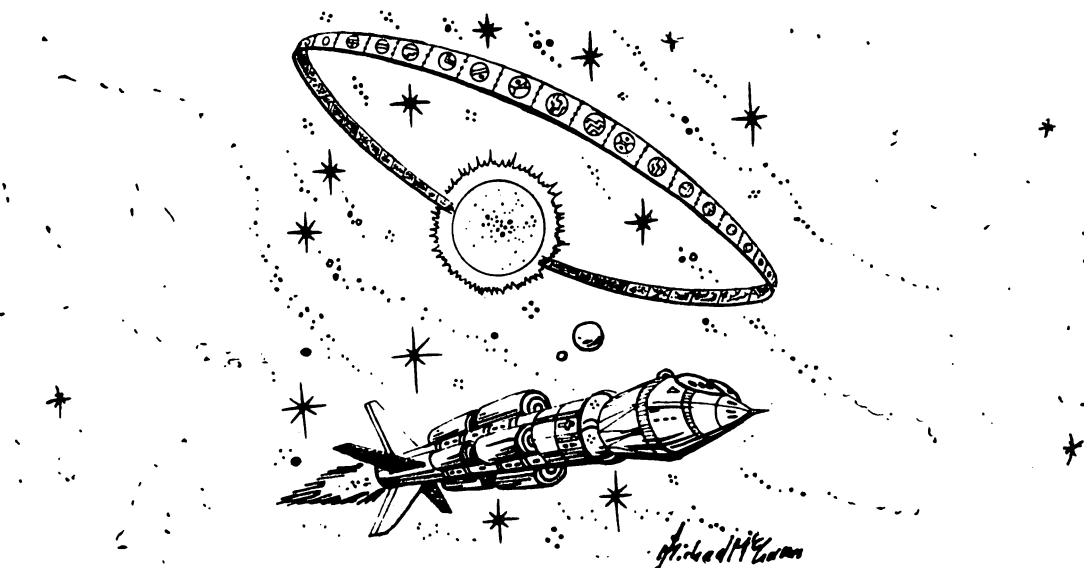
The club is still going strong. So is the magazine, DATA. The Club has about 250 paid up members. The magazine is now full offset, 56 pages, with a four colour cover and a print-run of 270. And we are still printing it. It is published bi-monthly and is free to members. Membership in the club is \$12 per year, which makes each issue \$2 each. Even though it is a NSW club, it has members all over Australia and in the US. Each State has a Star Trek club and there are other media clubs. Club members buy videos, paperbacks and comics of the show.

Where are the SF clubs of yesteryear?

One of the reasons I go along to meetings, other than because I am on the Committee, is because of the enthusiastic attitude of the members. Each meeting attracts 20-30 people of both sexes, about even attendance. Being a younger age group in the whole than sf fandom, it gives an old codger like me a bolster to my Sense of Wonder and fannish activities.

Some of the Conventions being run by mundane (sorry) fans have lately been including events that media fans will come along to, which is a Good Thing, because that fandom is where there is an untapped resource. Media cons have panels, fancy dress parades (not Masquerades, where people wear masks), fanzine workshops, art displays and other events that mainstream sf cons also have. The best of the artwork tends to be more professional than that in SF cons, and you will find that the prize winners in mainstream sf cons in the fancy-dress are media sf fans. The fans coming to the fanzine workshops at sf media cons are interested in putting out fanzines - both Sue and I gave talks on duplicating and offset printing at the one at ECCENTRICON, and had follow up discussions with prospective editors.

What I am saying is that all is not lost - the fannish spirit lives on in the younger generation of sf fans and they are writing and publishing in Australia.



FUGITIVES

BY MAE STRELKOV

THE GILLED MOTHER

I was five when my parents first sent me to a Chinese kindergarten in Shanghai, back in 1922. They were missionaries and they wanted me to grow up to be a missionary too. My mother's parents had raised her to be a missionary from the age of two in the inland city of Huchow, China, back in the last century. How could I fall the tradition? Their ancestors in turn had been pioneers - preachers and missionaries - in the U.S.A. and elsewhere, right back into the 1600's. My father, on the other hand, was a convert to the fiery evangelists of northern England when he was a boy, and he met and married my mother in West China, where I was duly born a year later there, in 1917. (Beneath the famous mountain of Budda, Omei, or rather, at its foot.) They were already middle-aged, and I was their only child.

As for the resulting attitudes a child with such a background risked developing? Varied has my diet been; and today - in the depths of South America, beneath Bolivia's heights in the Province of Jujuy - life has been more varied still. But, for me, the most striking thing I've yet come across remains China's oracle-bone writ and what it seems to have to tell us about our pre-history. I don't "divine"; I am no divine (such as we have in our churches). But permit me to list a few "divinations", or "conclusions", anyway..

Firstly, there's the puzzle of a certain gilled mer-mother named formerly the Mien, Now Min for "the populous Chinese nation", (when she appears incognito in another guise), i.e. in her "seaweed" disguise. (See this ahead again.) But let me tell you of my first glimpse of Min's "character", when used as a phonetic glyph found in the modern Chinese ying of tsang-ying for a housefly.



I thought it a very beautiful character as I studied it together with a class of merry Chinese girls in a mission kindergarten in Shanghai. I'd already learned Chinese from babyhood, for my mother talked to me in both English and Chinese from the moment of my birth.

I thought the flaps on the sides of the character represented the fly's wings, and the hammerhead of a top must be its big head with the bold, bulging eyes.

Only years later, I learned differently, when I finally could begin obtaining sourcebooks on archaic Chinese forms. By then I was living in Latin America with my husband, and the children we were raising at Argentines. (Vadim, my husband, was born in Russia and raised as a Russian in North China. I have remained a Britisher, though at heart still a Chinese.)

It came as a bit of a shock to me to learn that my beautiful modern Chinese character, (that "housefly" I'd found so amusing at the age of four or five), was in reality once a gilled monster. (She had other identities also I'll mention ahead.)



China had a writing style over three millenniums ago, I'll refer to their "Small Seal". In this style, she was their Mien (Mian).

What sort of a water-dwelling creature might it have been? Phonetic usages suggest she was a siren in one "incantation"; but she played many other roles including representing turtles, toads and tadpoles, for instance. The usage of her glyph today when read simply min for "obscenities" disappointed me. I don't like to think of lovely merfolk as "obscene". Certainly, they don't wear bikinis to "look modest" today; they must still swim around bare-breasted like Eve before her Fall. Or like any bygone lovely Cretan lady! (Only the Patriarchal Era did we all turn suddenly so prurient!)

The Chinese, of course, don't link this gilled siren with the "water-plant" or perhaps "seaweed" representing their "mother", and also read Min now the "the populous Chinese nation"; but let's have a look at it all. "Our Lady of the Water-weeds", we might well select as a title for "Min, the Gilled Siren"! In any case, there is a story recalled in China that formerly the Chinese had gills and webbed digits till their "first civilizer" Fuhsi, (a "Noah" type), helped them get rid of same after a flood.

As a gilled siren, Min was very active. She mated with all sorts of strange creatures and their emblems, including in one case an "attacking pestle" called the T'ar formerly.



I've given here a typical oracle-bone form. It was an all-purpose idea, and seems to have been an instrument that could be also used as a net for catching birds with, or as a winnowing-fan, a basket and so on.

This attacking pestle in time came to be viewed as a pitchfork "accompanied by loud cries", and in its present form is read and written as t'o:



for "crocodiles" or "iguanas", which certainly attack - or crocodiles do. I've seen many a huge iguana in South America but they'd never attack unless you stepped on one when wading in some mountain stream.

The Min gilled lady, then, could have saurians as her progeny, no doubt even of the humbler class such as lizards, like the Guarani, Paraguayan lizards named Mandira and Taragui. (I might add that in modern Chinese, when Min is "being a tortoise", she's a kui, representing the mantic wisdom her shell then can provide, when used in the old oracle-bone way by the Chinese.) So it does seem that Min, as the mate of a certain T'ar of our pre-history, produced mantic mysteries of some sort linked with lizards, iguanas or the like long ago, symbolically. Mandira... Taragui? Was a fuller form, say, Min-taragui, or Mandira-gui? Was it an invocation? A mantra? Manito-type?

Actually, the iguanas above represented and recognised as resulting from a union between Min and the T'ar, were simply called D'ar in China, long ago. The Min part of the name had been dropped. But what of a truly awesome, fabled monster: the Minotaur of Crete? Is this a fuller, older form?

We all know the accepted story of the Minotaur... the bullheaded monster born to Pasiphae and a white bull that had come forth from the sea. Taur in the name suggests tauros, the Bull. Min is from the name of their "Firstborn", Minos.

Well, Minos may rule in some Grecian concept of Hades, (competing with Hades himself, or Pluto). But in China, it's their Mother Meng down there, who kindly gives the drink of forgetfulness to souls about to reincarnate. Her character shows a baby above a vase of sacrificial blood, a glyph meaning "firstborn" too. It seems that not only in the Bible did God request of an Abram his firstborn son! Menes of Egypt was a first one too!

But what actually was Crete's Minotaur? (In "real life", that is to say). Was it only the "Rumbling and Heaving One" beneath the earth; the "Earth Bull" who threatened to overturn everything? Or was there an actual off-bounds labyrinth, perhaps even serving as an aquarium-cum-zoo? A very noisy, noisome place! After all, Crete's sailors travelled far and no doubt brought back some very queer animals. The Bible tells us Solomon imported "apes and peacocks", but I can't forget that in Egypt "the ape sits beside the balance", to make certain that all the weights are honest and correct. And, in an old Chinese character, a pair of scales can suggest a gibbon (once read there giwen) in a phonetic usage. Maybe the "apes" of Solomon back then result from misreading of some old bill of lading... a sort of "seal" showing an ape or gibbon and meaning "Weights as per specifications", controlled by that ape or gibbon in charge of the balances! (Perhaps an impolite reference to the aboriginal traders with whom such far-travelling merchants had dealt!)

(modern form)



Min (=Mien) had other mates as well. One such had for his symbol "the Mushroom that stands like a Man"; = 𡗗, and they coupled in the following way to represent what in modern Chinese is written as ch'iu for tadpoles "that swarm like mushrooms", (say the Chinese). But there is more to it than just that, as a study of this mushroom of China brings to the surface.

I will mention more details gradually, but meanwhile remember Grecian tales of Perseus who founded Mycenae, naming the city for a Mycos mushroom. And Sisyphus funded Ephyra, later known as Corinth, peopling it with "men sprung from mushrooms" too. He sponsored commerce and navigation, and it so happens the Mushroom-Man of China long ago, when called the Mliuk:



bargains with his customers "with a kindly look", for he is shown in this case about his wondrous "eye. Hee, below, you have the Mushroom Man and the gilled Min Lady "caught in the act" of uniting, so long ago. What a union! A gilled lady and a mushroom-man!



What a way to "generate" or represent tadpoles! And indeed what patience had the Chinese to go on writing it that way down the endless-seeming centuries! But they had a good thing and they knew it instinctively. They were the repository of lost clues, which we'd erased - often deliberately - elsewhere, as we marched along preaching against all the older things.

I mentioned "Min in disguise" as a water-plant or seaweed, so here is her story in the old Chinese forms. In some old representations you can link her with quite another series for "the Mother of Vegetation and the Deep" which I won't be getting around to discuss here, but the emphasis in such a role is on her generously-flowing breasts. But below, you have the simplest forms from old Chinese bronzes, where she starts off as a mere homeless wanderer called the Tar or Tier, etc. sailing the world's waterways in search of a place where she may sink her roots and turn into "the populous Chinese nation", Min now:

民.



Min (mien), who was the Tar (tier, etc.)

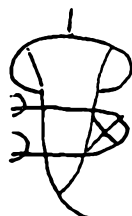


As you see, she develops foliage only once she could sink her roots somewhere and "bear abundant progeny". She did intend to try to obey the old command, "Be fruitful and multiply", but obviously she wanted first to make certain her children would have a home, and be safe.

Dante knew a myth about her - this Min-t'o or min-the-Tar - concerning the founding of the city of Mantua. (See his INFERNO). It seems this seeress named Mantua "wandered the world's waterways in search of a place to sink her roots", and at last she found this unsavory flat in the midst of a swamp and there settled with her ministers to practice her evil arts. In punishment for her mantic approach to reality, Dante puts her head on backward in his hell. (A very Ptolemaic one, is his Hell, with Satan at its very heart, and thus at the

heart of all Creation, leaving God stuck away out on the rim, somewhere. That was the pre-Copernican view.)

Well, I mentioned kui  for mantic wisdom, representing a tortoise-shell used for.....divination long ago. So we can have a glimpse from a Small Seal Chinese form of Mantua or Min-the-Tar in such a role. Here she is, below: Also drawn thus: 



As you see, her bodily form is almost unchanged, in the second example; but to play the "tortoise" role they stuck on "a bit of shell" and some "feet". I think in this case kui must have had an older reading such as quali or uari which is still an Andean name for turtles. Consider the Indo-European ghelu - for "tortoise".

Shoulder-blades of oxen were also used for seeking oracular messages, obtained by heating same till they cracked. No wonder in Leviticus the "shoulder-blades of sacrificed oxen" were the "priests' portion". This must have been so in prehistorical China, too!

I wonder if it would be worth digging in the region of Sinai for such bones? In the Far East "Sinai" (as China was called by the Greeks) they abound, and used to be called "dragon-bones" and were powdered up as medicine for scholars who had stomach upsets.

Mind you, I'm not hinting that I "explain everything" by "the Lost Ten Tribes". They were much too recent. It's Stone Age stuff we seem to be considering...

Min-the-Tar, as I've come to think of her, could - as you see - play many roles: gilled siren (as herself); tortoise; tadpole; iguana; toad; and even such a lowly one as a mere fly. And she could be viewed too as inanimate "water-weeds".

As I delved deeper I began to feel uneasily that in Min-the-Tar we have a very old portrait of "Life, Breath" or of Eve herself, as the "Mother of all living". Certainly we still undergo a stage when within the womb, when we haven't yet "lost our gills", and look like any old embryo. As for the relationship with a fly, I reached the conclusion, (while studying also echoes in American Indian tongues), that primitives when observing decaying corpses noticed how flies flew forth and so they decided same were the souls escaping. (If they tried to count "How many souls", it must have been a confusing business, not very favorable to the development of a stable early theology.)

So, if now, I compare Eve with Min, am I letting a very lively fly escape from our civilization's moldering corpse? What will our divines do with it? Swot it? Or put its head back on, backwards, the way Dante treats Mantua in his pre-Copernican World View?

THE REARING COBRA

Min could be a rearing cobra or a frightened rabbit at will. As a fertile, "lascivious" hare, she is still called either Mien or T'u in Chinese:



versus



: "Mien the Doe hare".

I won't tell of all her vicissitudes as a "profligate hare" throughout the planet, though I came across quite a few clues; but it would take too long.

Far more impressive is Min when she's freed of her gills by that "First Civilizer", old Fu-Hsi (or Fu-Xi) of Chinese myths. She turns into a rearing cobra, gills inflated, as the evidence in their Small Seal form actually shows, below:



And that rearing cobra competes with a horned rhyton, in representing some very strange modern concepts such as "Earth", "a coffin", "steep and rugged paths" and so on, in a host of modern usages.

Here too is the rhyton:



"Gills of Cobra" become
"Ears of ox or bullhead".

That rhyton reminds me firstly of a goat's head, with the typical beard goats have. But it reminds me also of the artificial narrow beard tucked onto some Pharaohs' chins, long ago. Furthermore, it could as well remind me of the beautiful rhyton in the shape of a bull's head, found in the ruins of the palace of Knossos, Crete. And still more, I recall that the deities of the people at Ugarit feasted with such rhytons in the form of animal-heads, adorning their table. Same must have been tremendously symbolical, once. In modern Chinese usages, the hints still seem to appear. The Chinese suppose their usages of old phonetics occurred "just by chance". I doubt it, for I usually find the echoes thereof the world over, in even older forms, and I came to suspect "it all goes back to Stone Age times", during the last Glacial Age, before we left our "Caves of Winter", and when traditions were very firm and old from a period even earlier, somehow and somewhere. (But don't judge me by my guesses here.)

The bull or ox was a religious symbol in the Old World in many societies. So was the cobra. But one sees by the old Chinese examples, that it was a protean concept indeed.

Even more shocking to me when I got this far in delving deep down, was the fact that Eve's own glyph was the original form of the "cobra" of the Chinese. What? "Did Eve know how to write?" you say? Certainly, once the Patriarchal Age took over, Woman was kept very uneducated, (as much as men could manage it, for she'd always been "far too smart" and needed a little "taking down".) But she had many ways of recording her thoughts, and the more I study ancient weavings, symbols and so on, the more I realize the patterns she used were a way of recording messages. (As in the old Greek tale of poor Procne whose husband cut out her tongue so she could not tell of his wickedness, so instead she wove her message in a tapestry which she sent to her sister, who thus learned all. Surely she used phonetic symbols he could not decipher. She was turned into a swallow in punishment of a murder that resulted, as she had her revenge. (But details are not for now. To analyze every aspect takes much space.)

I've had plenty of time to think all these things over and come to conclusions that I'd not risk mentioning lightly now. They require longish explanations. Each story has its own place in the long tale.

Now, as for whether Eve could write or not, in China's oracle-bone forms we do find specimens of her "signature", showing a serpent at a heel of a mysterious "Fallen Foot" (Compare the upright foot, tiag, for "foot" on its own in old Chinese, with our slang term for a foot, "dog". A basic root found in Amerind tongues is tiik, (= finger, hand), tika (=toe), and "pointing" is part of the old idea):



How such strange designs evolved into that rearing cobra: of the over 3000-year-old Small Seal form, is astonishing, when you think of it.



Yes, the "cobra" here in the oldest Chinese examples, seems to be attacking a foot, though in one case it has fused with the foot, which foot now forms the serpent's head. In another example, the serpent really looks somewhat "ox-headed", doesn't it? There seems in the third example even to be a mere "tadpole aspect", (If it isn't a "Portrait of an eager Spermatozoon").

Christians who read this will inevitably have been reminded of the "proto-evangelium" in the Book of Genesis, where the Serpent is told that the Seed of Eve will "crush" its head while it will only manage to "bruise" the Seed's heel.

Are there two Hebrew words for "crush" versus "bruise"? No! That's merely our translators' preference. The term in both cases in Hebrew was shup.

All over the world you find myths where a serpent or a scorpion or a dart pierces a hero's vulnerable heel. The serpent "lies in wait", (which shup also means), but the contest is equal in a sense; for both may die as a result of the encounter.

At least, that is how the Biblical version appears. There are other aspects I might point out too, in this older oracle-bone set of examples. But first to consider this shup role the serpent plays, (hidden in the grasses like a twisted root against which one might trip), while the foot threatens the Serpent's head alike, in the shup encounter.

The concept of "tripping" is very interesting in echoes found in the Araucanian (Mapuche) tongue of the natives of Chile. They've a lot of old English words in their language. (Don't ask me how or why.) But as their tongue seems also to reveal what might well be regarded as "still older Chinese words", I don't know what to say about it at all. Call it "coincidence", and I'll not blame you a bit. I call it "fun"!

I am trying very hard not to be solemn and serious, though any discussion on philology tends to end up that way. But such a style sounds too boring for me to bear, so why lapse into such a deadly approach? (I'm not trying to impress philologist; I am, rather, impressed by them - absolutely in awe!)

If you want to label this present writing-style of mine and the contents of this story, call it "A take-off on everything", even our most solemn beliefs, at times.

- May Strelkov.



TOO LATE THE INVITATION

BY JULIE HAWKINS

Deskarsi watched nervously as the planet grew larger on their screen.

"Are we doing the right thing?" Alsar, his second in command asked, as he stood beside him, his spidery tentacles curling anxiously. "After all, they only have two bases off-planet, apart from their stations."

"The Protectorate believes so." Deskarsi was hypnotized by the beauty of the planet.

"Why did we wait so long, we've known about them for centuries."

"Apparently they weren't ready, or the Protectorate wasn't."

The planet grew larger and an object appeared around the curve, several smaller dots seemed to be attach it to the planet.

"We'll be approaching the station in fifteen minutes." Alsar informed Deskarsi.

"Open communications," he turned to Alsar. "Let's see what kind of reception we get."

"I hate these first time contacts," Alsar said as he turned to the controls. "How did we end up with this job?"

"Just the luck of the draw. We've had it easy for too long in the outer regions."

"Communications open." Alsar reported.

Deskarsi stepped up to the monitor. He had been selected because of the similarity between his race and this new one, he was also the fastest student in the language school.

"Greetings Planet Earth," he began his well rehearsed speech. "My name is Deskarsi and I represent the Protectorate, the controlling body of the planets in this galaxy, the Milky way, as it is known to you. I come as an ambassador with a message of friendship."

There was a strained silence as he and his crew waited for a reply. Attack was always a possibility with first time contacts and his ship was on alert.

"This is Commander Rowan Arnett of Earth, Station Pacifica. We have you on our monitors and we welcome you to Earth. You are guaranteed safe passage as long as you are in our space."

"Arrogant, aren't they?" Alsar commented.

"Thank you, Commander. We would like to dock with your station and come aboard, if that is permissible." Deskarsi ignored Alsar.

There was another period of silence as the Commander spoke to someone off screen.

"Permission granted. But please refrain from carrying any weapons."

"I understand Commander, and thank you." He turned to Alsar, "Docking procedure can commence, and please hold your tongue."

"Which one?" Alsar said, as three prongs protruded from his mouth.

"Be serious, Alsar." Deskarsi grinned and watched a shuttle move alongside to guide them in.

Deskarsi stepped from the docking tube and had a look around. Not what I'd call nice, he thought as he looked at the bare, drab walls. A man came towards him and Deskarsi wasn't surprised by the weapon at his belt.

"I am Commander Arnett," the man held out his hand then dropped it as Deskarsi looked at him strangely. "Welcome to Station Pacifica."

"I am Deskarsi, representative of the Protectorate. Thank you."

"If you will follow me I will take you to the man in charge."

Deskarsi nodded and the Commander turned to lead the way. As they reached the door two armed guards stepped into the room and positioned themselves on either side of the doorway. Deskarsi stared at the Commander then turned to the docking tube. He nodded his head and two armed guards from his ship took up a position either side of the tube.

"Precautionary measures, I'm sure you understand." Deskarsi said to the Commander, who nodded. "Shall we go."

As he was led through one corridor after another Deskarsi took mental notes of his surroundings. He was surprised by the basic structure around them, compared to their stations, this was filmsy. Yet there was something about the people, or maybe it was the atmosphere they created. They seemed confident and secure, seemingly not intrigued or overawed by his presence.

Deskarsi delivered a message to the man in charge, informing him that he needed to see a delegation from the planet to deliver his complete message. Four hours later he was stood before a special meeting of Earth representatives.

The variety of faces before him didn't surprise him but their indifference did. He had a feeling that they were there under sufferance, only showing him a measure of respect. His nerves had to be controlled as he began his speech.

"I am here to represent the Protectorate and to offer you an invitation to join them. It has been decided that now you are a truly united world you are eligible for membership." He stopped as a mumbling broke out among several of the representatives. When they were silent again he continued.

"The invitation is extended to the planet as a whole and the entire population must be given the opportunity to decide. If you accept, a whole new world will be opened up to you."

"Our Protectorate is made up of seventy different races in this galaxy and we are in constant contact with numerous Protectorates in other galaxies. We have the ability to travel beyond our galaxy and if you join us our knowledge will be passed on to you."

"What are we expected to give in return?" a narrow eyed man asked.

Deskarsi was stunned. This was the first time that question had been asked so soon in the proceedings. He had already realised that these people were different to any other race he had encountered and a strange sense of fear overcame him as he looked at the man. Asian, he thought as he remembered his briefing.

"All we ask is that you open up your planet to anyone who wishes to visit or open trade negotiations. Your planet has a lot to offer and we have a lot to give. Also you will be asked to submit any plans that may have any effect on the galaxy to the Protectorate for discussion."

"Does that mean we have to have permission to carry out anything within the galaxy?" someone else asked.

"Yes, I suppose you could say that." Deskarsi was puzzled by their lack of enthusiasm.

"So if the Protectorate decides they don't like our submission they can stop us from carrying it out."

"Yes, but purely for the good of the galaxy." This wasn't going the way he'd hoped it would.

"What happens if we don't accept their decision?"

"You will be penalised with trade losses and fines." Deskarsi couldn't understand this. These people didn't seem to realise what they were being offered.

"Will the Protectorate want a say in the running of our planet?"

"Only in matters pertaining to trade or war. The Protectorate has not caused any friction between races or caused a lowering of financial levels. Instead, it has opened the way for previously limited worlds to expand and join the other members of their galaxy."

"Why haven't we been approached before now?"

"Up until the last hundred years your world was divided and antagonistic. The Protectorate was waiting to see whether you would blow yourselves up or whether you would become a united world. Fortunately you grew up to become one race and now I can offer you this invitation."

"When do you need a reply?"

"Whenever you have decided. We will remain until you have put it to your people." Deskarsi wanted to get back to his ship, these people worried him./

Once he was back in the comfort of his cabin Deskarsi sat on his bed and pondered over these people. They weren't eager to join the Protectorate as he had expected, in fact it seemed to be the opposite. They were almost rude in their indifference. Maybe they weren't ready yet. A knock on his door startled him and he stood up quickly.

"Come." he called.

"How did it go?" Alsar asked as he entered.

"No good," Deskarsi sat down again. "They don't seem interested in joining the Protectorate."

"That doesn't surprise me." Alsar said as he curled his tentacles and made himself comfortable in a chair.

"Why?" Deskarsi asked, still deep in thought.

"Well, look at their achievements. They've gone from primitive beings to star travel in the blink of an eye. There is no way they will give up their independence unless it suits them."

"What do you mean, 'star travellers'?" Deskarsi was suddenly alert.

"We just received a message from the Protectorate. It seems that an Earth ship landed on Berengian several days ago. They have been opening trade negotiations."

"What!" Deskarsi was on his feet again. "How did they get there? That's on the far said of the galaxy."

"They left two months ago." Alsar clucked in his shell as Deskarsi looked stunned. "That's quicker than we could do it. They apparently have discovered the secrets of space time distortion."

"I don't believe this." Deskarsi paced the floor as his mind worked. "No wonder they didn't seem eager to join the Protectorate. Have we been issued any further orders?"

"Only to try and convince them to join, the Protectorate doesn't want them as an enemy."

"Terrific." Deskarsi sighed as he dropped onto his bed. Alsar clucked again and left.

"We have decided against joining the Protectorate." the Earthman said.

Deskarsi had expected it but he was still shocked. It bothered him even further that they had only sent one man to meet with him.

"Can I know why?" Deskarsi asked dejectedly.

"We don't need them," the man said bluntly. "I'm sure you know by now that we have opened up trade negotiations with the council on Berengian."

"They will never trade with you, they are members of the Protectorate." Deskarsi interrupted.

"They already have." the Earthman spoke again. "We offered them better deals than your Protectorate, without any conditions. We have also been approached by several other worlds who have heard of our negotiations. They are fed up with the rulings your Protectorate has made. It has stagnated and its members are looking for new ideas."

"Our Protectorate has been in existence for millions of years, long before life on this planet began. Surely you don't think that this one planet could change something that has lasted so long." Deskarsi tried to hide the panic in his voice. His world was falling apart and he couldn't stop it.

"That's the problem," the Earthman said, "It has been the same for so long that it's members are disillusioned by it. Maybe if we'd been approached earlier we might have been eager to join, as you expected us to be. You're about a century too late, we have our independence. We've come of age."

Deskarsi sat resignedly taking in the Earthman's words. As he thought about it he realised the truth in them. They had waited too long and now they would suffer the consequences.

"I will pass your message on to the Protectorate." Deskarsi stood up. "Do you know what your actions will cause? There are worlds out there who will remain loyal, no matter what. I only hope that we don't all regret what you've done."

"I don't think so," the Earthman stood up also. "We have opened up a new horizon. Things will change but we believe for the better."

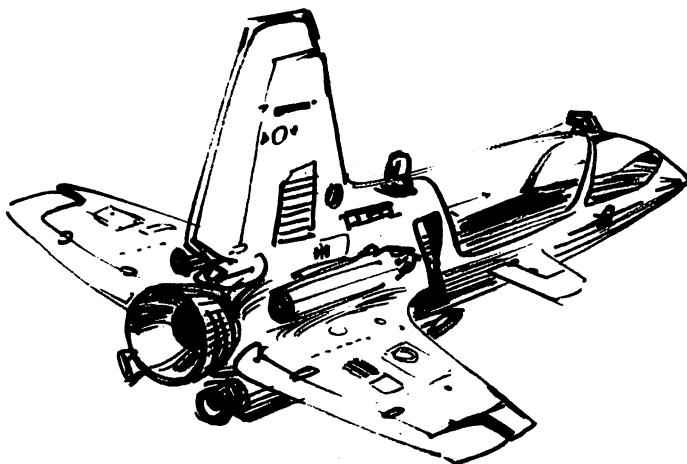
"Let's hope this universe is big enough for it." Deskarsi reached for the Earthman's hand.

"The Protectorate won't be very happy about this." Alsar said as he stood beside Deskarsi, watching the planet Earth recede on their screen.

"I know, but they left it too late. This race should have been approached well before they advanced this far, whether they were divided or not. The Protectorate will have to read carefully from now on; they stand to lose a lot if they make the wrong move."

"Maybe they already have," Alsar clucked. "Maybe they already have."

- Julie Hawkins.



THE YANKEE PRIVATEER

by BUCK COULSON



Juanita and I were back at Wiscon this February, and had good weather again. The convention seems lucky; February is not a good time to be in Wisconsin. We got to see some old friends we hadn't seen in years; Lesleigh Luttrell and Don and Maggie Thompson. Don and Maggie are also my editors at COMIC BUYER'S GUIDE, and they brought down a box full of tear sheets of my column, which I also hadn't seen in years. (The checks always arrived, however, so I kept writing.) Juanita and I had breakfast one morning with Don, Maggie, Lesleigh and Lesleigh's current lover or boyfriend, or whatever it's called in Australia. I'm not sure what the current term is in the U.S.; it changes so rapidly these days. Lesleigh is being an anthropologist and a disc jockey in Madison, and doesn't go to conventions any more. (We met everyone at the restaurant.)

The most amusing part of the convention was the room set aside for the filk; it appeared to be the bridal suite. A huge canopied bed, complete with mirrors and lights, with a jacuzzi backed by a floor-to-ceiling mirror at the foot of the bed. Aside from the ridiculousness of the bed itself, the main problem was that there was only a space a couple of feet wide between bed and jacuzzi, which restricted access to the far side of the room. It was restricted even more when Mike Stein sat on the edge of the jacuzzi with his cello, and the harpist - I never got his name - sat beside him. There was a distinct lack of chairs in the room, and one can't really play a harp or a cello while sitting on the floor. The violinist did get a chair, though. The bed gave a very bizarre cast to the proceedings. I'm not sure why the sing didn't degenerate into marital folksongs:

"Had a wife and got no good of her,
Nice and handy I got rid of her,
One fine day I chopped the head of her,
Just in time for Lanigan's Ball."

Ever notice how many songs there are disparaging marriage?

For once my tape recorder was working, and Suzette Haden Elgin was there, so I spent a lot of time in the filks. I fell in like - rather than love - with Suzette at first meeting, which I gather is quite common with people who meet her. I'm not sure whether she wrote her book on verbal self-defense as a purely intellectual exercise because she's never had to use any personally, or if she's constantly using the principles on everyone she meets.

I got on their alternate history panel at the convention; sometimes I suspect that Phil Kaveny invites us up there just so he'll have someone to talk history with. A.J. Budrys was probably the star of the panel this year, however, along with a "local historian" who may have been from the University of Wisconsin and might not have been.

I've been thinking how much I owe the old SATURDAY EVENING POST magazine. I acquired an interest in history from reading its serialization of Kenneth Roberts' NORTHWEST PASSAGE; I found out about Martha Keller's poetry when "Brady's Bend" was published there, and that's led to a tape from Juanita and accompanying song book by me; and I discovered science fiction when Heinlein's "The Green Hills of Earth" was published there

in 1947. It took me a few years to find out that other people wrote the same stuff, and a few more to decide to dip a toe into fandom, but it all comes from that story.

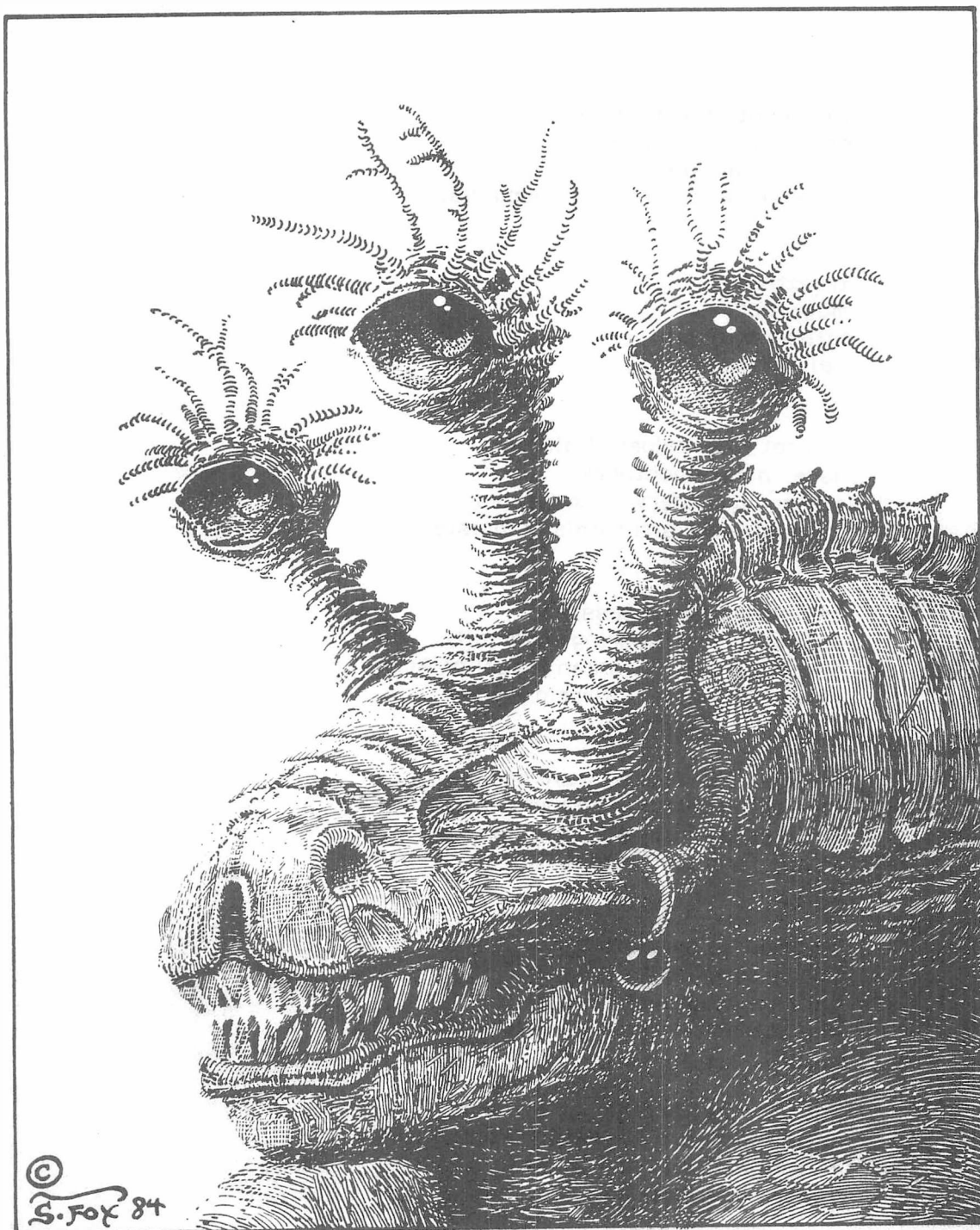
I've been reading the magazines for my review column in CBO, and I just finished Lori Allen's "Time Windows" in the June F&SF. It's based on the common idea that youth flies by before we know it and suddenly we're old and where did all the time go? I wonder how many people really think that way? Some must, of course, or it wouldn't have become a cliché, but does it really involve most of the population? Juanita suggested that it was the "jock syndrome"; the guy who had the high point of his life at age 17 when he caught the touchdown pass for his school. But surely there can't be that many schoolboy heroes in the population, and not all of them suffer from the syndrome. I worked with a man who did; I got to hear, several times, all his schoolboy sports triumphs, and I've encountered others.

Juanita and I, however, admire the attitude of Bobby Plump. In 1954, his school of 161 students was playing a school of over 2000 students for the state basketball championship. There was something over 600 schools in the state at the time, and these two had reached the final game of the tournament. Plump shot the winning basket, with two seconds left in the game, and made his school the smallest ever to win the title. He immediately became, and has remained, the biggest state hero in the major state sport, and in 1985 the movie "Hoosiers" was based (very loosely) on his exploit. His three seconds with a basketball was a high point of a magnitude that very few people even dream about. But in his public utterances, he generally says something like, "Yes, it was nice, but it was a long time ago and I have an insurance agency to run." An attitude to be commended.

For myself, I've had a pretty good time for all my 59 years - well, 56 years; I don't really recall much of the first three. I didn't have the high point of my life 40 years ago, and for all I know, I haven't had it yet. It might happen tomorrow. I've had high points pretty well scattered over the years so far. Killing my first rabbit at age 5 was one (and an unusual one, even then; most fathers didn't take 5-year-olds hunting with them). People seem to think that marriage should be a high point - mundane women especially think this - but Juanita is just as nice to be with now as she was in 1954, so it was hardly a point at all. A high plateau, maybe. Gene and I selling our first book was a high point, but like the hunting, it didn't stop with one; I suppose it might have been the high point if we'd never sold another one. Winning a Hugo for YANDRO was nice, but I was just enthused when an editor wanted to make a book out of Liz Fishman's YANDRO columns - unfortunately, it never got done. Getting to England in 1979 on a special fan fund is probably the high point of my career to date, but there is always the possibility that I'll do it again. (Not much of a likelihood, but a possibility.) Having Lesleigh Luttrell offer to drop out of the first DUFF race in Juanita's and my favor was almost as emotional an event, anyway. (But there wasn't enough money for two of us, and we didn't have it, so instead we dropped out in Lesleigh's favor. Not that we'd have allowed her to drop out, anyway.) I suppose some people might consider the performing of their son's marriage a high point, but Bruce and Lori had been living together anyway, so I didn't see it as any big deal. Finding a new friend is always a high point, but that happens too frequently for it to be the high point. I suppose that being Fan GoH at a Worldcon was a sort of high point, but we've done it at regionals so often since that it doesn't loom that large in retrospect. Especially since some of the regionals gave us better deals. I guess either I've never had a high point in my life, or I've had too many that none of them really stand out. But I'm certainly not wondering where all the time went, or assuming that my life has been drab ever since a certain point in my past. And if you are, wake up!

I wrote an "interactive juvenile" book in January, and then rewrote it in 9 days in February. That's where you read 3 or 4 pages and come to a "decision point" which determines the course of the story until you reach the next decision point. Writing one is more like constructing a jigsaw puzzle than anything else; certainly not like any other form of writing. I had to draw a map to keep track of where I was; I later found out that these are Standard Operating Procedure and called "trees", but I had to find out for myself that they're necessary. They don't look like trees; they look like a children's board game, with different

paths and interconnections. I immediately thought of the "Uncle Wiggily" game I had as a child. ("Uncle Wiggily" was a white rabbit, and his adventures were chronicled in several books, as I recall, and eventually the game was produced.) No wonder the literary quality in these isn't high.



PREPARING FOR THE MILLENIUM

BY STEVE SNEYD

the negotiator a creature
of sweeping curlicues
teasing familiar recollection
slipstream of dusty childhood vision

freezframe
mug-shot of
hilltop coinback
Celtic horse

god rot it why does it also
have to have hoofshake
slimecold rubbery of congealed
old tealeaves and ruthless insistence

on discussing endlessly
in deadly detail boring thankfully
defunct Marso-Titanian School of Art
better known as Outworld Pubism

so beautiful it must have been
this being before we taught it
for purposes of getting a signatory
in due form to the deal /

to greet to speak to behave in
polite company to ape our
tedious procedure here in
the Starshine Inn when before it was

just another brother of the wind
even now there are still traces of magic
see how its metabolism sets
its liquor intake burning a halo

a fringe a noble extra mane of flickering
harmless flame you can see faces
of lost loved ones in no harm done
at all except the odd cheapjack

customer in shock spilling his drink
all over each other: anyway any damage
will be paid for, the deal we do here worth
a thousand worlds let alone a thousand

thousand rooms in pseudo-antique taverns,
now today we buy a silver world's cloak
of wings, the perfect cure the extract
trials have shown to all

our aging, discontent, lovelessness, lack
of vigour, loss of lust for going on,
and what further use have these wonders
now for such feathered but no longer flight-

-worthy organs, now we have taught them
the modern way around these dismal times.

- Steve Sneyd



In the Fall of 1985 the Kiev sf club 'Svetovid' announced a contest for the best anti-military sf story. The results were intended to be announced in May 1986 but the Chernobyl disaster made an Autumn deadline more practical. Fans from Moscow, Omsk, Krasnoyarsk, Nikolaev, Volgograd, etc arrived on the fifteenth to the twentieth of October in Kiev to participate in the contests closing ceremony. The judges' board decided not to give the main award. The first place was a tie: *THE LIFE, FEAST, SUFFERING AND DEATH OF ROGET CELIE THE IMMORTAL* by the young Krasnoyarsk sf writer Andrei Lazarchuk, and *CANNED HAPPINESS* by E. Filimoniv from Harkov. The second place was taken by *THE VALLEY WITH THE UNBLEMISHED SERVICE* by S. Bulyga from Minsk, and *THE X HOUR GAME* by M. Shalamov from Perm. Third place winners were Alina Boloto/Gorlovka and Vasili Gorvat/V. Pushkino, Carpatians. Prizes were also given to other authors - a poem *RAY BRADBURY'S MARS* by A. Lubensky, and to others. Professional sf writers also came to the meetings - A. Dmitruk, A. Teslenko, V. Zayats and representatives of the publisher Molod who offered to make the contest annual; however 1987 saw it cancelled. Molod promised to publish an anthology instead. The cultural program included a visit to the house on Andreevski Slope where Michaeli Bulgakov lived, meeting the sf writer Valdimir Savchenki, and the young Boris Stern.

The 22nd to the 24th April 1987 saw the annual Aelita award event and fandom's meeting in Sverdlovsk. The seventh possessor of this Leningrad award was sf writer Olga Larionova for her novella *SONATA OF THE SEA*. The prize bearing the name of the beautiful girl from the novel by Alexei Tolstoy was given for the first time to a woman writer. The former laureats were the brothers Strugatskys, A. Kazantsev, Zinovi Yuriev, Valdislav Krapivin, Sergei Snegov and Sergei Pavlov.

The magazine Ural Stalker found that the event drew a record number of fans: about 200 were present, representing 60 clubs from 50 cities. It was also at this meeting that a new sf prize was given. It was named after Ivan Yefremov, and will be awarded annually for contribution to Soviet SF development. Its first winner is Gerogi Gurevitch. On the day he was awarded it, Gurevitch celebrated his 70th birthday; regrettably he could not attend the Aelita ceremony. The award was accepted for him by fellow Moscow sf writer and friend Sever Sansovski. Other sf writers, such as V. Babenko, S. Drugal, V. Krapivin, and critic V. Gopman attended.

Among fannish activity was a discussion on the creation of a Council of Representatives from SF Clubs hosted by Tbilisi, Tiumen and Vinnitsa clubs. Despite certain opposition among fans, the Council was founded and has already proved useful: with its setup Aelita interviews, short hand minutes and lists of meetings were mailed to attending clubs. The end of the Aelita event saw the compiling of letters to the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, CCof komsomol, the Central Board of the All Union Society of Lovers of Books expressing the concern about the situation in the SF publishing

industry, and drawing their attention to the poor quality of the publisher H. Molodaya's Guardian SF line and the current problems facing sf clubs. The letters were signed by all present. They also carried a request for help in the convention organised by Krasnodar fans and scheduled to run from the 21st to the 28th September, 1987. Regrettably, though a certain allowance was given for official response, nobody answered except oskomizdat's formal reply that sf publishing is hale and hearty.

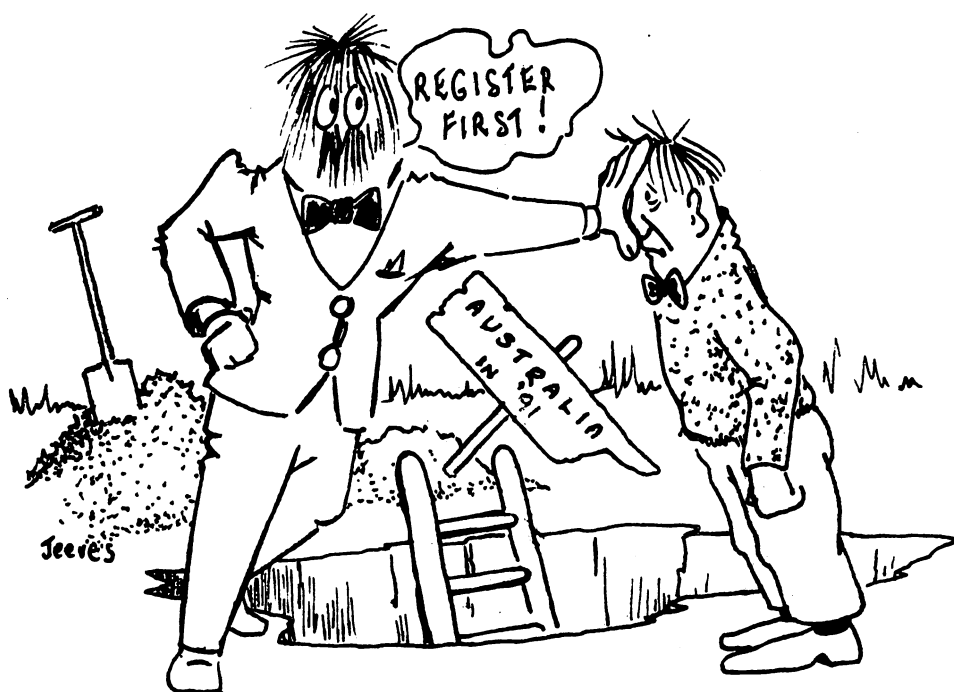
On the 26th April the last fans left Sverklovsk and, since I was on vacation I continued on - to Perm and then Leningrad, where I was lucky to visit the famous Boris Strugatsky's workshop for young sf writers which he conducts on a regular basis, and then went on to Moscow. Writers from the publisher Molodaya Guardia (V. Thsherbakov, Yu. Medvedev, V. Faleev and others) conducted a workshop for young sf writers from Siberia in Novosibirsk in June.

Kerch sf fans organised a Summer Camp in July on an island in the straits between the Black and the Asov seas, which was called (because of the abundance of gnats) Mosquito Mange (from a phrase in ROADSIDE PICNIC by the Strugatskys). It is the first time such an event has been tried, the original idea coming from writer Andrei Lazarchuk at the Kiev meeting. The camps were organised around the snail's principle - you carry your own house around. Fans from Leningrad, Ufa, Tuimen, Naku, Sevastopol to name a few, flocked there.

On the night of 27th July, 1987 Soviet sf writer Dmitry Alehandrovich Bilenkin died in the operating theatre when his heart stopped. He was 53.

The traditional Tsiolkovsky readings were held on the 15th September in Kaluga. SF writers who took part were V. Mihailov, V. Babenko, Alan Kubatiev, V. Copman and others. On the 17th September a special coin was struck celebrating the 130th Anniversary of K. Tsiolkovsky and pictured the monument to him in Moscow. It is a one ruble nomination.

- Boris Zavgorodny.



1953 - THE GOOD OLD DAYS??

BY MICHAEL O'BRIEN

Browsing on the bookstalls at your local fair gives you the chance to pick up lots of trash and the occasional treasure. I still haven't decided which class my latest purchase belong to.

Back in the year of 1953, a British company named Right Way Books published a tome by Vernon Heaton entitled WRITING FOR THE AMERICAN MARKET. Back in those days, an author in London or any other part of the U.K. could make a nice living by writing for American magazines and using dollars to support himself in a part of the world that then had a comparatively low cost of living. Indeed, the publishers claim that "For some years Heaton has made his livelihood and earned dollars for Britain almost entirely by writing for the American and Canadian markets" and I have no reason to doubt them, although I'd never heard of Mr. Heaton previously.

Naturally everything in the book looks extremely dated to a modern reader, but there's a certain quaint charm in the advice on how to sell to magazines like BLUEBOOK, COLLIER'S or DIME WESTERN MAGAZINE. But then I hit the chapter on science fiction!

Mr. Heaton starts off quite reasonably by pointing out that this genre is almost exclusively American and most of the publications seen on British bookstalls originated in "the States" where there are twenty magazines devoted entirely to science fiction. (Hard to imagine today.) He tells us that our stories must be scientifically credible and contain conflict and sympathetic characters. Well, so far, so good. But as we read on, we begin to wonder what sort of stories Mr. Heaton has been reading and what kind of authors he knows in the field.

"For the imaginative writer it provides scope for unlimited output without a great deal of skill or attention to style and the quality of writing... the time needed to turn a phase neatly, to describe a character's peculiarities and to portray an emotion, can all be given up to pushing the story along. Downright statements are sufficient without any need for the finer shades of description." Well, that disposes of science fiction as an art form. But what about the science part if the fiction can be dismissed?

Mr. Heaton goes on to explain that "it is a fact that such writers are generally the same type that produce westerns and detectives. It is merely a question of understanding what this field covers." The answer, he says, is simply to study the market. "Your story must be written scientifically - that is to say it must contain a modicum of verisimilitude; written with a goodly sprinkling of scientific jargon to lend credence to the word 'scientific'. There is no need to take up the study of science to obtain a background knowledge of all the scientific expressions used by the chemists, physicists and astronomers. Read a dozen such stories and you will find all you can possibly use." Almost as an afterthought, he adds that "with so much matter at your disposal, plotting is simple."

Mr. Heaton supplies the names and rates for the leading sf magazines (AMAZING, ASTOUNDING, FAMOUS FANTASTIC MYSTERIES, FANTASTIC, FUTURE, GALAXY, MARVEL and PLANET STORIES) but one wonders if he's really been reading those or whether he's been browsing through cheap British imitations like AUTHENTIC or VARGO STATTON. For when he says "In such a field as this, there is room for the merely competent author as well

as the expert... it can even become a more profitable field for the ordinary but imaginative writer than for the stereotyped though brilliant author", it's hard to credit he has read any of the following authors who were all active in the science fiction magazine filed back in 1953:

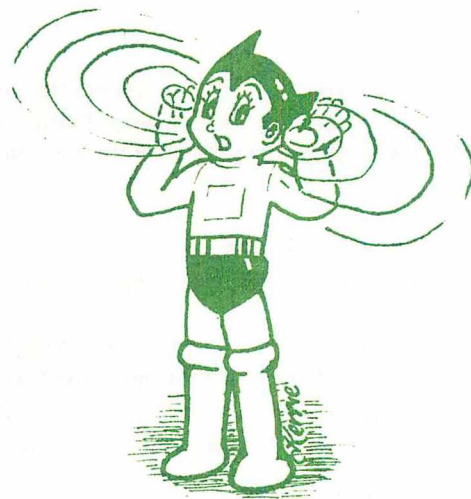
Fritz Leiber, Walter M. Miller, Damon Knight, Theodore Sturgeon, William Tenn, Ward Moore, Arthur C. Clarke, Robert Sheckley, Philip K. Dick, James Blish and Alfred Bester.

It's sad to think that some aspiring writers may have taken Mr. Heaton seriously and tried to churn out some hastily-written potboiler hoping to make it big in the American magazines. As Ursula K. LeGuin told us when she visited this country, if you try to write a brilliant story you may turn out a piece of garbage, but if you try to write rubbish you'll succeed every time.

- Michael O'Brien.



The R. & R. Dept.



MAE STRELKOV, 4501 Palma Sola, Jujuy, Argentina.

The piece titled SHIPWRECK in TM 59 with the illustration alongside I did find haunting, but that is because I've spent so much time on our oceans (Pacific, Atlantic, Indian) when younger, and also in Southern Chile (1937/9) where the haunted southern canals, with their glaciers and icebergs, harbor the "Caleche", phantom ship that is dreaded by the fisherfolk down there.

I did enjoy Buck Coulson's remark re never paying attention to people's opinions, so he doesn't mind when people express opinions that disagree with his. I think that sums up the way I feel also. Yet I get very stirred up over the nonsense going on in the USA right now... it's all so silly and pseudo-pious, this Iran/Contra business. But then, that, in a way, affects me directly in the sense that I have by now sunk my roots deeply in Latin America's lifestyles, and feel all the tremors "underground".

But, for example, I likewise can't get excited over the intricacies of mating arrangements from age to age and land to land, while yet I'm most interested in the Levirate marriage customs for "raising up seed to the dead". And that is because of my theory that it goes back to Stone Age times. I certainly read in some little Spanish booklet years ago, here, that in remote Andean heights a new widow used to go to her husband's grave accompanied by three males who then took her "in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost". No doubt formerly it was "in the name of the great Scarab", which had trinitarian aspects that absolutely horrified the first missionaries from Rome and Spain, in the Andes. Things suggesting Stone Age survivals, yes, that will interest me till I draw my last breath, for it is part of our hangovers found in all our present-day beliefs. And I'll keep trying to sort out the clues that have come my way, to the last.

Right now, I've been mulling over a bit of amusing irony that cropped up just last Sunday. Our Sylvia and Tony, (our youngest two), have rounded up all the simple folk of the region to go into volleyball in a mad sort of way. Well, it must be fun, for our daughter Alice and her husband from Canada were here just a week ago for a brief visit, and our kids got the husband Neil so fascinated by how volleyball is played here, he was "caught". (Alice didn't play as she is expecting her first, and so we all are, therefore, eagerly.) Neil taught the local players a bit of "How one plays volleyball in Canada," but enjoyed the fast and disorderly way it's played out here. "You have to have to have tremendous reflexes!" (Playing with the local folk, their way! A lot of local are more Bolivian-Indian than Spanish.) Well this past Sunday, A huge crowd of young folks and kids trooped along once the games were over, to drink gaseosos (Cokes, Sprites, etc.) at a nearby poliche with our kids, and then the "Game of the evening" began for the next few hours. (Though Tony broke off to play pool also for the "next few hours," with several alert local girls.)

As for the "Game of the evening," you'd never never believe it but it's the one thing I learned when I was four years old in a Chinese mission kindergarten in Shanghai, taught me by my fellow kindergarten students, amongst whom I was learning to read and write in Chinese, (together with my English ABC. taught me separately by my grandma.)

This game is "Yang, Ching, Pao" in China, and to hear all the local natives out here in these remote wilds now chanting it in great excitement hour after hour, I really find it comical, as I think it over. Did I come all the way from China to teach these Chinese-looking natives (via my children), "Yang, Ching, Pao?"

In China I also played it with English-speaking children, in which case we'd shout together "Stone, Paper, Scissors", if we were thinking in the English way. (I'm still not sure what yang and ching suggested but I figure that pao is the pao for being "enfolded, wrapped up.")

And the theme of the game is simple: "Paper wraps stone, but stone breaks scissors and scissors cuts paper", so it's a game of "Win but also lose". What is the message in this that it so attracts all the local natives even as the generations of Chinese children have played it ever since humanity's pre-history? Looking for similarities, what type of human represents the "stone"? Mentalities that are inflexible? True believers who'd stand by their outworn dogmas till they die? They have the power to control all cutting weapons, (dreadful "scissoring" approaches to living, like clashing armies on the march!) And those same "scissors" can reduce paper to shreds. But what does paper suggest? People's minds at work, trying to write down opinions, possibly? And "paper" is what enfolds and smothers "stone", at long last! Or put it differently: "stone" represents the ultraconservatives. (Like those on top of China right now. They've shaken off the "enfolding" of radical thinkers, alas!) And, in the middle of the inseparable threesome, "scissors" (cutting symbols) are chopping up a ream of papers put out by daring young thinkers, who can enfold their stony elders no longer for right now. But the cycle will, I think, continue. "Stone, Paper, Scissors", always, throughout Time! "Scissors in action an old Chinese pattern very X-like, can also suggest "mutual action and reaction"; for a pair of scissors functions only if the two blades are synchronized perfectly.

If this threefold "pattern" at all represent humanity as a whole, I do think I'd choose the "scissors" in the game. True, it can represent warfare and the destruction of lots of paperwork, (even libraries, which are precious if not full of twaddle and dogmatic utterances long such outworn), but I'd not want "mere paper", would you? We snow ourselves under lately, more and more, with our writings. (I know I do) I want to present my findings (in the old, possibly stone-age "language") succinctly, but I still haven't managed it and am tempted to call it quits, though I doubt I shall. Thousands of pages in ever-multiplying stacks are piling up. I've started sending out odd bits wherever someone asks for a sample. Right now, Erik Mayer wrote me that he's in touch with many new friends in Comic Fandoms, university students, etc., and he asked me for some of this old language stuff the comics editors feel they could use. I'm sending items, gladly. (You may have seen my two chapters on "The Bird of Negativity", that Robert Mapson pubbed? That sort of material is heavy reading, as I do recognise. It's packed in such a depth in my brain after all these years of constant study, I did long to get it all "out", but that's the difficult part, and after last year's bout with "nearly dying", I've learned I must spend what time is left thriftily, i.e., "leaving said" as much can be told.)

Fanzines do come in still, though I write few locs of late, but I had to answer gradually. But if one doesn't jump in with both feet to argue fiercely with other loccers, one feels a bit "out of it", and besides I do try to study a fanzine very thoroughly (and get the feel of each writer too, if I can) before answering, and that takes a lot of time, so I sometimes put it off, and time passes, and I feel guilty and guiltier.

TERRY JEEVES, 230 Bannerdale Rd., Sheffield S11 9FE, UK.

LOC pages in Mentor 60.. excellent! Coming in at the tail end, I gather that Harry Warner and the late and sorely missed Rob Gregg both think selling fan art at Conventions is unfannish? Why so? for years our UK Cons had fan huckster tables selling a variety of things - a practice which faded once con organisers found they could charge dealers CASH MONEY for such tables. This only left the Art Show as a place to sell one's wares - and why not? No one is being FORCED to buy. If someone thinks an item worth buying, does it matter a tinker's damn whether it is pro for fan? Again, I personally have often been financially strapped at conventions. The selling of sundry artwork has often eased the pressure on my wallet.

[I have noticed the practice of charging huxters for table space - Sue and I at our cons have (it helps defray some of the room expenses). We have charged \$10 a table (6' long) since our early cons (1980). We go mainly to media cons now, and have noticed that some of the Queensland and Victorian cons charge \$30-\$40 a table. In fact, the 1988 media con in Melbourne (being run by a Duff candidate) is charging \$60 a table. I hope it is 6' long! - Ron].

Why do women go to church? That's a question which has many answers. My wife goes because she believes in her religion. Many go from habit - to get out of the house - to meet friends - to show off clothes - to avoid censure - etc etc. There is no SINGLE reason.

PETER BRODIE, 15/16 Waratah St., Cronulla, NSW 2230.

FLIGHT OF THE RAINBOW was very well-written but also confusing and jumbled. The story just didn't seem to be getting anywhere and really didn't seem to have a point. I read it several times but still couldn't 'get the hand' of it. Like I said, good writing, but for what purpose?

Enjoyed THE STRUCTURE OF SOCIETY summing up. Mainly because it was more accessible than John's previous scholarly works. Not to disparage John's abilities but I always wondered wot such a series was doing in an SF mag. Just to prove we can be obtuse as other journals?

I never considered we were living in a multi-cultural society but one that consisted of us, the wogs, the slopes and the abo's; to use the vernacular. I spose I'm doing the real aborigines a disservice as they're busy living in the heart of the country quite sensibly having nothing to do with our society. It's the professional abo's who are such a pain. And no, 'm not a racist, just using current reference re the status of various cultural groups here amongst the majority of people, whether they'd admit it to themselves or not.

Malcolm English's portfolio was great. Mystical, eerie and very pro. The content actually suited the new layout of MENTAL. The hand/sword drawing was very visceral for some reason. Powerful image. The more you look at it the more you get. One of the most finished portfolios I've yet seen in MENTAL. Would like to see more of Malcolm's work. His cover draws immediate attention. A few more covers by Malcolm would be a Good Thing, y'know.

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

The interaction of FLIGHT OF THE RAINBOW was exquisite. It's always pleasing to see more of Steve Fox's artwork and Gail's story was image-invoking with a compassionate and literally uplifting end.

Oh, yes, a progress report - the optometrist tells me my eyesight has improved 60%, but I've still got tons of old books and comics to flog to pay for my second hand computer and

raise money to buy a printer. I may have to try selling something at cons even if I only get 5c each. I don't want to dip into my savings if at all possible cos I hope to finish the last year or so of my degree at Armidale (if only so I can catch up on reading the psychology journals - there are so many it's not funny!) if the fates are gracious to my plans for a B.A. So far this year I've read thru what surely would have been about 6ft of books if piled together and it occurs to me to wonder if it is possible that some of us have literally read our way thru miles of books - wonder if someone could work out a measurable equation for it?

TERRY BROOME, 101 Malham Drive, Lakeside Park, Lincoln, LN6 OCD, Lincs, UK.

From Mentor 60: THE SCAVENGER - Helen Sargent. Very Anecdotal, with a familiar opening. Would natural telepaths (nt's for short) really see artificial telepaths (at's) as Frankenstein monsters? It not only is paranoid, but inaccurate. The phrase 'Frankenstein Monster' conjurs up all sorts of images: of a patchwork body (1), a visually ugly character (2) who is an outcast (3) and though intelligent (4) is unable to keep control of his/her own passions (5) - with which an st would not be identified. The only points of similarity are that there has been tampering with human bodies and perhaps loneliness and depression would be states common to them both.

At's would not be seen as replacements for astronauts. Firstly, there are nt's (and you don't get astronauts without spacecraft and suits), and secondly, astronauts are seen as pioneers of a new and material frontier - telepaths cannot fulfil that desire. The needs of the human race for expansion in the material universe are quite different from any of the needs that make the idea of telepathy so appealing. In some ways they are opposite (in that expansion into space fulfills our desires for space and isolation from our neighbours and telepathy, or the idea of it, is seen as fulfilling our desires to come into closer contact with one another).

The story raises a third point. At the top of page 11, Helen has written that the telepath cannot read people with an 'unconscious wall' (we'll forget the mutilation of english here, and the obvious jokes, concentrating on a more important point) - and finds only partial success with others because their walls have bricks missing. But there doesn't seem to be any connection between these walls and a person's orientation - that is, their state of mind, how well-balanced they are. People who put up blocks or walls usually have something to hide, and self-deceit plays an important role here. People who don't put up walls should be well-balanced, confident and open. And yet Helen has these people reacting to their minds being read as if they are not well-balanced, confident and open, but have inhibitions, insecurities and lack confidence. There is a contradiction. The only way I can see to remove the contradiction is not to abuse the word 'unconscious' as it appears to be abused here. The sentence has to be changed anyway because the story isn't about walls which have been knocked unconscious, as the sentence tends to suggest.

In Britain, a club can deny membership to anyone if they don't like the applicant - the applicant has no grounds for a case, even though he/she may fulfil all the criteria for a member. So I don't understand why the 'Telepaths' Club could not refuse the protagonist membership.

I don't see how 'heat' can be melted?

The media would never lose interest in a 'pioneer' of any sort - as the first of the at's, the protagonist, would command media attention for a long time, perhaps until his death, if there isn't any real news, the media will create some. If telepaths are that rare, no-one is going to waste money making one and then not putting him/her to use. S/he would not so simply and quickly be cast aside. Surely the protagonist would've had some idea how telepaths are treated before he became one himself, so that becoming an outcast would be no

surprise? In fact he could not have minded, so why does he complain so bitterly? And is he really going to go through with the next operation without any thought of the consequences? People who have major operations just don't do that. Finally, what happened to the other nine volunteers? Couldn't he have remained in contact with them? Didn't he ever see them? If not, why not?

The story is flawed in many small and large ways and isn't helped by its anecdotal and unlivened, dull prose style. A lot of scope for improvement.

THE BOOTH is a very good story by comparison - the explanation for the 'hero' being in it is rushed and could do with some development, but on the whole I was favourably impressed. THE LONELY BUNYIP is a lovely story, variation on the Princess and the Frog, the idea goes back to very early folklore and it's been used often in modern sf and fantasy. Despite the old plot, it is a beautifully told tale and if this appeared in a professional coll. or anthol. I'd buy it if I had the money just for this story. All power to Greg's pen, and let's hope we hear alot more from him.

Sue's conrep was fun - but is she a Burszynski or a Bursztynski? And is John Alderson an Alderson or an Adlerson? The article on adultery was fascinating - it didn't talk over my head, and it didn't talk down to me. I didn't pick up any personal comment (unless the wording, "where men are treated with despite" at the top of p.38 counts - a case being made that he doesn't use such an emotive word as 'despite' in the reverse situation). The sources, too, are varied, without too much reliance on any one, unless you count THE NATIVE TRIBES OF CENTRAL AUSTRALIA, which - considering the amount of space awarded the book, would be unjust. Very well-informed, I was greatly impressed by the piece and hope John can keep up the standard in future.

I wrote last time informing you of Rob Gregg's death on September 29, 1986. His loc - with his usual acerbic wit - must have been one of the last things he wrote. Dave Collins has been collecting for a Fund, so far having raised about £70 (the target is £100), in memory of Rob and the money will go to his favourite charity (Animal Aid). The response has been abysmal - it isn't likely the target will be reached, despite Rob having contacts all over the world, and being friends with many of them.

MICHAEL HAILSTONE, PO Box 258, Manuka, ACT 2603.

Van Elk's CHECKOUT brought me up with a shock at the end, after what had seemed to set out to be no more than just a personal tale of mundanity. As it throws some light on a strange experience I once had, (just one month before that described in the article TOTALLED in TM #60), I feel I should tell you that tale.

After the dismissal of the Whitlam government I felt strongly driven to do something against the shackles of American imperialism that was denying us our national independence, so I joined such a group, which was planning to protest against such things as Nelson Rockefeller's visit and the American bicentennial celebrations in Australia, and, more relevantly here, the secret American base at Pine Gap. A trip to that base was planned with contingents from Melbourne and Adelaide as well as Sydney and Canberra. As it happened, the petty beureaucrats organizing the trip called it off, but only the Sydney-Canberra contingent. I would rather not go into all the details, as they are not all that interesting now, but they were to me at the time, so much so, that I wrote a letter about the whole disgraceful fiasco to a Melbourne magaine called THE INDEPENDENT AUSTRALIAN. I was sure our group was infiltrated by spies. Interestingly enough, as this was some 21 years before I started CRUX, I expressed my interest in publishing an Australian sf magazine. In this light I feel the last paragraph of my letter is worth quoting:

"To quote your advertisement again: 'The role of the magazine is to preserve, build and promote a progressive Australian culture, to reflect the aspirations of the Australian people in the growing movement to achieve a truly independent Australia.' The small contribution that I would like to make towards this end is the establishment of an Australian science-fiction magazine. According to an advertisement in Nation Review there is apparently already one called Void, obtainable across the counter only in Victoria (Why? one wonders). However it strikes me as a right copout since it prints mainly stories by already well established overseas writers such as Robert Silverberg, and therefore has no right to claim to be an Australian science-fiction magazine. Quite frankly, I have grave doubts as to whether such a project is worthwhile, since there is a widespread impression that the Australian people, being an artless self-effacing lot, just don't want such a thing as Australian science-fiction, they don't want to read about themselves but would rather import it. I would like your views on this..."

(I feel [and probably did at the time], that such remarks would have gone down like a lead balloon on that mob of propagandists, but I also feel that I was basically right in one sense: I don't think it's worth all the effort I put into CRUX, as I got very little recognition in the end.)

I can quote from that letter, not because I kept a carbon copy, but because it came back to me from the Dead Letter Office. The letter was correctly addressed, yet it was returned to the sender. Because I had not written a return address on the envelope, it was opened. And presumably read and digested. Is that the kind of thing they do where Van Elk works?

JOHN J. ALDERSON, Havelock, Vic 3465.

I replied to Terry Broom's previous letter, not because he had got hold of the wrong end of the stick but because he had raised something worth explaining. The reason for so heavily documenting the work was because I was being called a liar or worse with every undocumented statement and if my style has been terse it was again partly for that reason, and partly to keep the articles as short as possible. However it seems that I can keep explaining why women being barred from playing league football (so I am, by-the-way) is irrelevant until I am blue in the face. It's simply a red-herring. I must disagree about the usefulness of fiction as against a book of fact (whatever the hell that is, because a writer of fiction unconsciously mirrors his own age, even when attempting to do otherwise, and this latter is a purely contemporary phenomenon.

I did not refer to Joy Hibbert in my article. I largely ignored her writings because of her insulting me. As far as feminists go she is very mild to many. As for attacking feminists in my article I feel perfectly justified in doing so because as a whole they are blatantly lying about our society and are trying to degenerate it to those societies "where men are held in despite". In my introduction I stressed the purpose of the series was to give a true basis of our society so that anyone who then wished to reform it would know what they were doing. The connection with Joy, to quote Terry's own words, is "so tenuous as to be non-existent".

Ah, Julie Vaux, so I've offended "all those people who think they are Celtic" by confusing Highlanders with Lowlanders. Oh dear! When the Scots took over Ireland, the place became Scotland. When they invaded Dalraida that became Scotland, and when they took over Pictland (the Highlands) that became Scotland. They then took over the Lowlands?? I am afraid that whether they should or not, the Highlanders refer to themselves as Scots speaking in English, in Gaelic, of course, they are "Gael". The term "commoner" is unknown in Scottish law and there were no Highlanders who were not clansmen. Strictly speaking Burns was a "Hielanier", the Hielais being that mountainous part of Scotland near the Borders. The Lowlanders occupied the low country along the Forth and running up the east coast. The Hielaniers are now usually called Borderers. Serve you right if you only get a bottle or two of Scotch for Hogmanay.

BRIAN EARL BROWN, 11675 Beaconsfield, Detroit, MI. 48224.

Sorry to see on the back pages that you won't be doing large entries anymore. I was always amazed that you had the time to type up so much material - or could afford to publish it. Sadly reality has come to roost at Ron's Roost.

Richard Faulder's extrapolation of Steven Fox's cthuloid drawing was a lot of fun, it reminds me a lot of Greg Benford's ACROSS THE SEA OF STARS. Both men try to concoct outrageous biological schemata and justify it with careful appeals to science and known evolutionary oddities. Richard does an excellent job here. Maybe he'll be encouraged to try it again.

THE YANKEE PRIVATEER is something truly remarkable from Buck - a con report. Buck, I thought, loathed con reports and trip reports and so on. Here he is writing one. (Maybe I'm confusing Buck's dislike of reading other people's reports with his like of writing about his own con and travel experiences). Confederation was a good con. I didn't see nearly everybody I wanted to, but met others I wasn't expecting to, so things balanced out. Buck shouldn't feel too bad about not recognising Kathy Sanders in costume as Auntie Entity, it seems like putting on a Tina Turner Frightwig totally conceals a person's identity. Just the Halloween before one of the local fans dressed up as Turner and greeted me at the door when I arrived later. Totally failed to connect the person who opened the door with anyone I knew.

I was at a party recently where some old photos from the 50s were being passed around in hopes of identifying all the people pictured. I thought this was a good idea, the only pity was that the people passing the pictures around were the fans featured in those pictures. They could no longer remember what all their old friends looked like. So I think it would have been nice if the photos accompanying Sue Burszynski's Kinkon report had listed names. Only Angus McCaffrey in his suit of many colors is obvious. That Sue is pictured on p.34 could be a good guess, but only a guess. But who is working Registration on p.32, or presenting the award to Sue (?) in the top picture on p.33 or the trio in the bottom picture on p.33?

To clarify Mal Ashworth's confusion - I greatly enjoyed ROADSIDE PICNIC. I think it is one of the most 'accessible' of the Soviet sf reprinted in the West. I went to see STALKER because I'd heard it was based on ROADSIDE PICNIC, that the Strugatski brother had even scripted it. The movie runs 3.5 hours and only vaguely resembles the book. There were so many long travelling shots that I suspect it could easily be re-edited into a 2 hour print with no loss of plot or detail.

I would hope that Boris would begin a series of short biographical sketches of Soviet sf authors that could eventually be collected into an encyclopaedia of Soviet SF.

As for Western fans publishing Soviet Sf.. Boris, most Western fans aren't organised into clubs and most of what clubs exist are not anything like SF clubs in Russia, being mostly organised fellowship with no further program or goal. What few 'clubs' that might publish Soviet sf would include the New England SF Assoc. (NESFA). They do quite a few books already. The Los Angeles Science Fantasy Society (LASFS) and the British SF Assoc. (BSFA). The Fan Assoc. of Central Texas (FACT) might try something like that, too, but that's all the clubs I can think of who would have the resources and inclination to publish Soviet sf in English. (Mind you, it would be a nice way to spread some of LaCon's excess profit...

TERRY BROOM, Address as above.

It's really strange coming across a loc written 6 months ago. I find that even with Britzines - so many changes in circumstances in so short a time.

[By the time you read this, the following loc will have been written about 12 months ago... - Ron.]

FLIGHT OF THE RAINBOW - terribly drab title for a lovely, if traditional sf story. Thraak's rescue at the end was unusually optimistic and warmly felt. The only query I have is Gail's choice of the word 'keeled' - a word which will always remind me of budgies in cages keeling over in a tragi-comic way. Such an inappropriate word. I take it the Hrods are capable of altering their own genetic make-up, which implies feedback from their minds to their cells, the cells changing in response to the message. The politics is a bit dubious - it's clearly a goody/baddy story, but why the side-taking? On what grounds? Are the attackers the upper-class preying on the middle class, I wonder? Or are they communists preying on capitalists? When looking underneath the surface sympathies of the story, it is perhaps too easy to discover propaganda, an elitist attitude. This exercise can be done with many stories: I'm not criticising, but exposing a weighted viewpoint. Heinlein and Simak also do it, as do most sf writers at one time or another.

Anyway, I enjoyed the TOTR a great deal - funnily enough, I didn't think much of Steve's art - too unclear, cluttered, with an all-too familiar Fox-style Bug-Eyed-Monster.

John Alderson's summary of THE STRUCTURE OF SOCIETY next. Society is more than simply a grouping of intermarrying people. The environment effects social structure, laws and customs, - as laws and customs, the social structure effects the environment. The natural environment effects social structure and social change changes the environment to something increasingly artificial, increasingly more readily remouldable. These unnatural changes effects the social structure and that in turn re-effects the environment, ad infinitum, or to destruction.

Anthropology looks at many reasons for change, not just social reasons (as sociologists restrict themselves to), but I see no heading for environmental cause in Alderson's essay. I can think of at least two good examples of environmental influence on society - the audio-cassette and the coka-cola bottle.

The cassette brought many western bands to the peoples of the Communist Block sowing the seeds of increasing Western influence in stules. The Second World War took American soldiers to many backward countries and with them went the coke bottle, introducing the 3rd World to American culture, and luxuries the obtaining of which increased the capital debt, created schisms between lifestyles of the growing rich and the poor, created increasing reliance on rich or affluent countries for financial support - allowing the USA (and other rich countries) to get a foot through the door of power. The best way of taking control of a country has always been through making the victim country rely upon your support (for financial backing, or trade).

The Japanese are finding difficulties with exporting the DAT system, for they still haven't caught onto the software market (a DAT system is useless without the Digital Audio Tapes themselves - the production of which would be controlled by American and European manufacturers). The exporting of DAT systems is crucial for their recently flagging market, and without the support of the victim-countries to produce the tapes, their economy will begin to suffer a decline (a danger often faced by companies which expand too rapidly and saturate the market for short-term gain, pinning long-term gains on new advances such as DAT). There are several reasons software companies in the monopoly countries don't want DAT introduced. DAT sound is better than CD sound, and unlike CD can be rerecorded indefinitely. DAT, like CD is, also capable of storing video images, so there are obvious applications in the video and computer markets. CD is still a baby industry and DAT would destroy it - bankrupting or severely harming many large businesses (such as Phillips and Sharp who have invested a large amount of capital in CD). It would effectively bring forward the end of vinyl lp's, and would also mean the death of blank audio-cassettes. Since Japan has been the only one to have developed DAT so far, it has the current monopoly on the systems, so victim countries become reliant on supplies, and money is taken out of the national economy. The introduction of DAT so soon after CD, - in fact it's introduction ever, will spell disaster for the economy of many countries ... and thus the question of "Whither

DAT?" becomes a political one. DAT represents a revolution. It's a ridiculous situation as DAT offers great potential to revolutionise society, and paves the way for the next step (BRAINSTORM?) - from which there could be potential gain for everyone. However, as things stand, the only people to gain are the consumer, and they only in the short term, a situation which would not have arisen if political and capitalist systems never existed. I could go on - the tobacco industry... The tobacco industry is interesting as it is now undergoing a whiplash effect after its high-speed drive into soldier's lives during WW1 and what we now know of medicine and health - raising changing ideas of taboo, for example. This partially explains the tobacco industry's involvement in sport-sponsorship and medical research - establishing a symbiotic relationship with the powers that could destroy it, rather than its old parasitical approach. Governments won't outlaw cigarettes as they draw a lot of their budget from it. Instead, they milk the tobacco industry, keeping a tight leash on it so that it never attains a position of greater power. This system has obvious similarities to drug production and trafficking.

Marriage is a religious or legal affair, whereas I was always led to believe that the word "society" refers to the ENTIRE social make-up of any given group, regardless of religion, law or particularly social mores. I therefore do not agree that India does not have a society and that you couldn't have an all-male or all-female society.

The fault with Alderson's piece is that he has given "society" a meaning it does not generally have, a meaning suited to lead to the conclusions he'd already mapped out in his mind. His conclusions, relying on a faulty building block are therefore just as faulty, it not more so, as he piles prejudice upon prejudice in a sloppy manner that makes the whole edifice creak and groan and sway rather alarmingly. If I said the feminist movement equalled the Nazi movement I could no doubt draw some parallels and conclude the feminist movement is an evil we should all attempt to stamp out. There are obvious flaws in that initial assumption, but the conclusions may appear to be well-founded unless the foundation is recognised for the unhealthy thing it is. Alderson's piece does just that - it's a house of cards built on shaky foundations.

As a subject of a male-dominated society who has already shown his prejudice towards women Alderson would not, of course, find a society where women are "treated with despite". I wonder if this goes some way to suggest Alderson's society treats women with despite, as such a society would certainly draw the conclusions he has drawn. Rather than decide this matter for himself, he should have asked a group of women to write on it, women with differing political views and perceptions, for as a subject of a male-dominated society he can hardly be said not to be biased. Nor can I, but at least I admit the possibility of bias exists. Any report should consider the possibility of bias and take steps to reduce that, or point out that it may be present. Alderson has his conclusions and he is fitting his research to corroborate them, putting the cart before the horse. He should do the research first and then make conclusions from that material, whether he likes them or not.

Now something more serious. Malcolm English's Portfolio - TM cover was wonderful, capturing the atmosphere of a dust(?) world very well (an effect aided by the means of reproduction?). The insect with the bright wings and rider was a delight, but the sword in the lake with the cheap hand-for-handle effect, was such a horribly clichéd image. The woman's face was well-drawn, except for a slightly wrong nose and left eye.

PAMELA BOAL, 4 Westfield Way, Charlton Heights, Wantage, Oxon OX12 7EW, UK.

Congratulations. The Mentor is the only zine I have seen (so far) to have a photo of the Supernova. Oddly enough astronomy seldom gets a mention in the majority of zines, (unless attached to a space flight/programme argument). I wonder if that reflects fannish interests or if fans tend to keep the subject in a separate compartment of their lives?

When I saw Steve Fox's delightful drawing I smiled to myself, recalling Jack Cohen's lectures on allens and his dislike of elbows. I wonder how Jack feels about two elbows per arm? Gail's story, although somewhat derivative is very well written and I do love a happy ending. I rather suspect that the work of Malcolm English loses out in reproduction. I feel that the stark white space of wings (search lights?) on the first picture in the portfolio jar to such an extent with his over all style that there must have been differences in the original. I like the soft technique, attention to overall design detail and some of the ideas, the clasped hands of the Lady of the Lake and Excalibur is quite enchanting, again the lack of any detail on the blade detracts from the picture. I fail to see the idea, meaning or mood of disfiguring a pretty girl with grotesquely elongated eye lashes.

Oh groan, Peter Brodie. Well, OK, smile inside, in fact to be very honest I'm glad to see the shaggy pun tales coming back more and more into fanzines.

The summing up did not, alas, clarify The Structure Of Society. I think you should have thrown a little editorial weight around on that one, Ron. I would have asked that each episode be prefaced with details of cultures studied with dates (particularly the Scottish and Aboriginal cultures), a clear definition of the use of the words culture and society, some clarification of the title or at least the objectives of the exercise. John Alderson seems to have made a scholarly study of a number of cultures and while there would seem to be valid comparisons to be made between the cultures studied, the sudden leaps in references to modern Western Societies and Cultures seems neither structured nor scholarly. If John edited the series down for The Mentor he did his readers a disservice. If it is not edited down, either as an editor asked to publish a work of research or scholarship or as a board looking at a doctoral thesis I'd say do some more work - give some more thought to your basic material. You know where you are coming from, but it is not at all clear that you know where you are going to. Pity, I'd much prefer to discuss the thoughts arising from the subject rather than be only able to criticise the presentation of the material. I hope that despite this one being a near miss you will continue to make space in The Mentor for this type of material.

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

The cover and portfolio by Malcolm English were delightfully whimsical. I don't know if the foggy effect was in the originals, or is a product of the printing (although with offset, I doubt the latter). If the drawings had been of commonplace subjects such an ethereal style would merely have looked affected (as indeed the last drawing - the female face - does - the tendrillike eyelashes are not obvious enough to offset the ordinairyness of the rest of the face), but the whimsy of the subjects means such a style is appropriate.

Gail Neville's short story was a good piece of work. The images were rich, and the prose flowed well. That so much could be wrung from a single illustration is also a credit to richness of information that Steven Fox crowds into his drawing.

A word about the format of your sixty-first issue. I do hope that this will not be the one you will be using in future. I have no objection to lying A4 on its side, but this is not the way to do it. Since you are pasting together your layouts anyhow, it is little more trouble to paste up, and no more trouble to print and collate into center-stapled A4. While such an approach doesn't lend itself to art portfolios as well as your current format, you can at least have a full-A4-sized wrap-around cover and centre-page illustration. In any event, except for most of the portfolio, most of the illos were half-A4 or less.

[The layout for last issue was chosen solely to display the portfolio to its full advantage, and since I wanted to get as much into as small a number of pages as possible, I chose 15 pitch, which meant that the pages had to be broken down into smaller units otherwise all that print would have been daunting to read. And if I went down the page, the extra-long column would have looked strange. - Ron.]

GARTH SPENCER, 1296 Richardson St., Victoria, B.C. Canada V8V 3E1.

John J. Alderson's latest sociological article got my hopes up - then dashed them. I've taken sociology and anthropology and poli.sci.courses, I've even passed them, and never once got a hint that there was even one valid, commonly-accepted theoretical structure for evaluating society as a whole. Alderson seemed to promise one - and I think he failed to deliver.

Must I conclude that the state of the art science is that what you get out of a sociological analysis is what you plunged in with? In that case, Alderson's summary of social structure, by examining sexual and marriage mores, is only useful for examining those areas. Perhaps I missed something but that does not seem a sufficient basis on which to "type any society". Could you please send back issues, with a complete run of Alderson's articles. I believe I have only received the last two.

Must I also conclude that professional jargon is different in Australia than elsewhere? So far as I know, the terms "non-dominated", "women-dominated" and "male-dominated" simply don't exist - outside of Alderson's article. The definitions Alderson gives are for terms like "matrilineal" and "patrilineal".

To the best of my knowledge, no evidence has been found for a persuasive case that there have ever been matriarchal societies, apart from Israel and the New York Jewish community. (I could make reference to the Anglo societies in which you and I grew up but we just don't talk about that.) In contrast to societies which are both patrilineal and patriarchal, I gather, one finds societies in which property, family, clan memberships and/or trade descends through one's mother's family, and important parts of the power structure are organized through a woman's society, cross-cutting the male power structure. The Iroquois are a case in point.

Again, perhaps I've missed something - a case built up, or a declared intention - but what I have seen of Alderson's articles just doesn't persuade me that Anglo society is a "women-dominated" society.

Granting that different societies have different structures, still they hve, as it were, much the same vital organs. The fact that Alderson acknowledges he did not treat education, social control, politics, war, private property, etc., means that he only dealt with the reproduction syste, or connective tissues. He hasn't pointed out a basis for comparative anatomy, which in my view is desperately needed.

Why did he skip so much? Why is his treatment supposed to be fundamental? He simply didn't say. In a final article I should think he would recapitulate and sum up his reasons.

And I have no idea whether Alderson is simply summing up conventional wisdom, or arguing against it.

All in all, I am left with no reason but to think that our modern industrial societies are ill-fitting patchworks of incongruous, inconsistent customs, of ideals and habits gathered from varied, mysterious and forgotten sources, not unlike a dog's breakfast.

BORIS ZAVGORODNY, c/- Poste Restante, Central Post Office, Volgograd-66, USSR.

From what Brian Aldiss supplies in his TRILLION YEAR SPREE Mal Ashworth, it is evident that Orwell was indeed well acquainted with the works of Zamyatin. Looking at the general number of American and English SF translations I remain calm, however, Roger. Because such filtrations occur, as for example in the magazine AROUND THE WORLD there appeared CITIZEN OF THE GALAXY by Heinlein. It was accompanied only be two lines for

clarification: novelette (!) and an abridged/short translation. However in reality the translation represents only the first two chapters of the novel. I agree that it is difficult to influence very much. But it does give an indication of what is the best side of Am. and Eng. science fiction. The Trojan Horse you've mentioned, exists but what is the worth of the culture which can't protect itself?

Andres Tarkovsky died. A pity. A few fragments of recollection by Arkady Strugatsky about the history of Stalker's creation.

Tarkovsky kept the film in his head. There was a queue to develop films and he preferred not to wait. The film was shot in and around Tallin in 1978. Well, something went awry in the Mosfilm machinery shop and a number of reels were badly developed (half of the planned footage, which cost 2/3 of all the allocated money). The committee offered to close the film and begin anew. Tarkovsky refused. Two weeks later Tarkovsky called up Arkady Strugatsky. He entered his room, glued himself to the wall - legs, back and head - and, looking at the ceiling said quietly, Tell me, Arkady, weren't you tired when you rewrote STALKER ten times. Arkady said "I tired of it a little". Tarkovsky replied "Yeah, and nodded benevolently a few times. "Well, what do you say if we make STALKER into two episodes?" Arkady didn't catch the meaning of this straight away, but something was evident. They would not be given time, money and reels for the second part. And we would not have the film finished at all. The Strugatskys began to create a new version according to the stated wish: The chief thing was Stalker must be a completely different man. Arkady said that he remembered that he sighed. He didn't know how he worked with others. Arkady brought the new work and they both decided on it. It would not do, Tarkovsky said, do it over. "What is wrong with it?" asked Arkady. "I don't know. You're the scenarist, not I. So re-do it". Arkady did another draft. "It is worse, re-do it." Arkady sighed and crawled to his typewriter. "Yeah, it is something. It seems that this phrase has an interesting twist. Try to develop it." Arkady had stared at "this phrase." A phrase like any of the others. In his opinion it was there by chance; anything could be there. But he re-did it again...

Arkady came to the final discussions. The film was shown. And a score of people in the hall had to decide the future of the film, and how many copies to make. Suddenly in the depth of the hall somebody cried out "Who will go and see this trash?" It was decided to make 194 copies for a quarter of a billion potential viewers. For Moscow alone they sent three copies, and in the first months in Moscow two million people saw the film.

So it happens.

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

Van Elk's material was interesting. I know the U.S. Postal authorities used to read YANDRO, but it didn't seem to be an official act, and after the first few times they certainly weren't secretive about it; when I'd bring in the stack to be mailed out, a couple of the clerks would take one copy off the top and go off in a corner, giggling. When we moved to Hartford City and I started with Overhead Door, my boss told me, after I'd been there awhile, that he knew all about me before he ever read my application. I looked a bit odd, and he said "My brother works for the Wabash Post Office."

As Jack Herman pointed out, I don't pay a lot of attention to conventions that I don't attend. He's lucky that I didn't say that Baltimore was the Worldcon before Atlanta, because for me, it was. But I did have a sort of vague idea that it had been held somewhere else, in between...

Terry Broom is much too logical to become a successful fan. Fans, especially fanzine fans, value the emotional outburst for its own sake. (Convention fans have to deal with the

real world now and then in the persons of hotel managers, house detectives, and so on, though it's questionable if they actually have any more sense because of that.)

I'd probably buy some of Julie Vaux's old magazines, but the shipping charges would probably cost more than I'd be willing to pay. No art; we own too much to get it all on our walls now. I think we still hav a Freas original in a closet something... though maybe I just missed it when I checked the last time.

Enjoyed two out of three of the artfolio; didn't care much for the girl's face. It came out as sort of messy, rather than strange. The other two, and your covers, are good. The drawing on FLIGHT OF THE RAINBOW looked like something by Frank R. Paul (that is not exactly a compliment, from me) but didn't reproduce well.

Gundagai, at least, is a name I recognize, but you're not supposed to stop there; you're supposed to stop at "Lazy Harry's, on the road to Gundagai"...

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

The front cover of the 61st The Mentor takes full advantage of your cinemascope format for extra effectiveness. It occurs to me that this is one of the very fan fanzine illustrations in recent years that can't be properly comprehended at once glance. It requires the eye to look first at one part of the illustration, then at another, because of the extra width and the wealth of objects pictured. I feel the proper surge of the sense of wonder at the back cover. I suppose the supernova occurred some millions of years ago if not billions of years ago, and if there were intelligent creatures on some solar system about halfway between the exploding star and Earth, could they have imagined that what they were beholding would in another million-year or billion-year length of time reach the pages of a fanzine published by a race that hadn't yet attained real humanity yet? The portfolio is disturbing because each of the illustrations has something disturbing about it which doesn't become evident at first. I thought the second drawing was just another Arthurian sword in the lake until I noticed there are two hands, and I thought at first glance that the young lady had forgotten to comb her hair back from her eyes.

FLIGHT OF THE RAINBOW is an effective little story. Like most fanzine fiction, it gives the impression of being too short for its potentialities. But it's well written and it manages to get some suspense into its few paragraphs.

I'm not sure if CHECKOUT is fact, fiction or half-and-half. Mostly fiction, I suppose, because Van Elk would hardly have written it for a fanzine if the events described in it had really occurred. But about six months ago I went through a period during which I knew some of my fannish mail had been opened and inspected. In several cases large envelopes which had been sealed were taped shut again and in one instance I was forced to pay a good bit of postage due because the editor had slipped a small personal note between the pages of his fanzine; the note would never have been spotted if the envelope had accidentally become unsealed through accident, but needed to have been found by someone opening the pages of the fanzine in which he'd secluded it. I'm pretty sure this resulted from the Ted White episode and my presence on a mailing list for fanzines which had been mistaken as a customer roster.

Terry Broom's loc reminded me of an old dream which I don't suppose I'll ever see converted into reality. Terry wrote about the fact that fiction gives some insights and information about real life but also is lavish with things that come solely from the writer's imagination. I've long wished that a large-scale survey could be made of all the important and widely read fiction of the twentieth century by panels of experts, including a lot of senior citizens, who would separate the real stuff contained in these stories from the falsehoods. This would be enormously helpful to readers of future centuries and to the

researchers of the future because there are many things in fiction that are neglected or totally overlooked by writers of non-fiction. For instance, where can you find in non-fiction copious examples of the way men, women and children really talked in the 20th century in various parts of the world? John O'Hara and Sinclair Lewis captured to perfection the middle class and upper class vernacular of the East and Midwest of the United States, respectively. Who will know that two or three centuries in the future without assurance from people who were there and have attested to the accuracy of the conversational style in documentary form? It should be extended to movies, most of which are a wild mixture of reality and Hollywood hyperbole. Screen a movie before a panel of persons who are familiar with the time and place it's supposed to represent, and let them mark down on a minute-by-minute scale that this living room set is exactly like a rural family's living room in the 1940s but the garments the actors are wearing in it aren't in the proper fashion.

I don't know what amazes me most about the book reviews: the amount of professional science fiction and fantasy fiction you manage to read between issues of The Mentor, or the rocket-like ascent of prices for those books in Australia where it seems to be even worse inflation than in the United States. Will the welfare state soon find it necessary to give grants to low-income parents so they can buy for their children the youngster-oriented science fiction and fantasy that only more prosperous families can afford to purchase regularly? It's as if the publishing industry were trying to get rid of customers at a time when the temptation to watch the television screen is greater than ever thanks to price reductions in that field. I don't know how it is in Australia, but prices continue to tumble in the United States for video enthusiasts. Just a couple of years ago, \$200 was the lowest price you could find on a color television set at a reputable store but now they're available for as little as \$150 or less, and a desk-top sized black and white television set large enough to be viewed without eyestrain can be bought for less than \$50, one-third less than the minimum not long ago. Prerecorded videocassettes and blank cassettes also are dropping in price (except for the most recent and most highly publicized movies for VCRs) at a time when the dollar's troubles on foreign markets should be causing their price to rise.

[The latest inflation rate in Australia is around 6%. The cheapest colour TV is about \$399. Most people don't buy black and white any more. The cheapest videocassette is about \$8 for a well known brand, and there are a lot of movie length prerecorded ones going for about \$25. I think unemployment is about 9%. - Ron.]

RICHARD BRANDT, 4740 N. Mesa #111, El Paso, TX 79912, USA.

I assume Richard Faulder's article in The Mentor 60 was in response to the Steven Fox illustration, a clever idea, although as a biologist Faulder certainly lets us have both barrels of his extrapolation.

There's a problem with the logic of Helen Sargent's story: since she spells out for us that natural telepaths already existed, why are the characters so uncomfortable around the narrator when he acquires his artificial telepathy? One would think they would have had time to get used to the presence of telepaths, if their place in society was as established as Helen implies. Yet those who encounter the narrator behave as if such a faculty was unprecedented, as though the very idea of a telepath is what unsettles them...

Zavgorodny's SOVIET SF CHRONICLE is the kind of roundup that might be of use in a publishing trade journal, but didn't add much to my enjoyment of the fanzine. His LETTER FROM A SOVIET SF FAN, on the other hand, is peppered with intriguing anecdotes. What I find useful is his term "Unobvious SF" to refer to allegedly "mainstream" works with sfnal aspects - it's a useful name which I may take to using myself. (The piece might have been edited a little tighter to remove some of the awkward and just-plain-wrong grammar; I know that might have removed some of its "charming accent", but it might have made the reading smoother going.)

[The articles already have been corrected for most of the grammar. Unfortunately sometimes two meanings could be meant by a sentence, so rather than change it to one meaning, I leave it along in case the meaning I might have changed it to is the wrong one meant. And there isn't time for the month or so turnaround in mail. - Ron.]

What's really sinister about Michael Hailstone's TOTALLED is running across it without being listed on the contents page. And the title was the first one that leaped out at me as I was flipping the pages the first time I picked up the issue! What a coincidence! Seriously, a large universe with a very long lifetime has plenty of room in it for coincidences; trying to establish some meaningful causation is just an example of humanity's trying to impose meaning on a random and uncaring universe.

On Diane Fox's letter: Correctly extrapolating your trend, you would wind up with two towns, each of which insisted the Yankees were the folks in the other one. For the essence of the "Yankee" is that it's always someone else...

JOHN J. ALDERSON, Address as above.

Some months ago several Aboriginal women, trained apparently as anthropologists, were upset because they were refused a grant, I think it was, to carry out some studies within their own community. It is surprising that having done a course in anthropology they still did not realize what anthropology was all about. They were quite rightly refused as they were not qualified to do anthropological research amongst their own people.

Recently too I heard on the ABC a review of a book by Marvin Harris. It was scathing, and ended with : It is an axiom in anthropology that a native does not understand his own society. Harris, whom I quoted with great care in my series THE STRUCTURE OF SOCIETY, was writing a study, in anthropological terms, of his own country and people, the United States of America. I cannot give the name of the book, because, frankly, it did not interest me. Harris wrote very well on the place of the cow in Indian economy (India, not America in case there should be confusion), but with shocking prejudice on the Yanomamo, so much so that all his conclusions are in total variance with the facts as he gave them.

Now I look forward with some anticipation the book of an Aboriginal anthropologist on the white Australian, and objective as I try to be and as I believe I am, I still anticipate not only surprises, but even some incredibility. On the other hand the findings of sociologists on us white Australians generally leave me cold with either Well, we've known that for years; or Well, how silly can you get! So, what is the difference?

I have, many times, explained that sociology examines us and anthropology examines them over there who don't bother to wash. Actually its not quite that at all. Anthropology examines a culture from outside and finds out what sort of a "machine" it is. Sociology examines a culture from within and determines how efficiently the "machine" works. Thus one's own beliefs and prejudices get in the way of studying one's own culture from outside, we are too much part of it to see it. On the other hand the sociologist, with all his statistics, graphs and the like is unlikely to get into our Aboriginal society and examine it as an insider and so tell how efficiently it is functioning. Consequently our known prejudice has created two sciences in order to overcome this. (The hard sciences also have this problem but correct mathematically for the displacement caused by the act of measurement. So those of you who have so persistently accused me of prejudice are not likely to be embarrassed by finding yourselves at one of my parties.

However, despite all this anthropologists can still make mistakes. Last century the Victorians (not us enlightened chappies who dwell south of the Murray River but those who inhabited Victorian England, - well, in this instance) regarded themselves as a fine upstanding male-dominated society. Well, how deluded can you get! But notwithstanding,

their anthropologists had a tendency to believe most other societies were also male-dominated and consequently collected their information from the men. Actually they would not have got it from the women in any case. A case in point was the gipsies and the studies concentrated on the men instead of, as we now know when it is too late, they should have got it from the gipsy queens.

But we know better than that now. Ah ah! ah ah! Which brings us back to Marvin Harris, who is a product of one of the three most women-dominated and women-orientated societies in the world. (One of the other three is Eire and you can guess the third of the trio for yourselves). But Harris and his colleagues sincerely believe that they are actually a male-dominated society who treat women abominably, and see most other cultures in the same light. Indeed the science of anthropology has degenerated to a yellow journalism bent on demonstrating what rotten bastards men are. Regrettably English anthropology is more than inclined to follow the same path. Thus politics influences our sciences, and don't forget, don't ever forget that feminism is just another political movement.

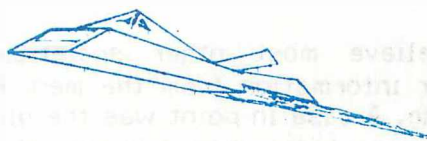
Now the point of relevance. I have indeed been accused of not being relevant because of the twelve different societies I examined. But those societies were chosen to give, as much as possible, a primitive, a semi-advanced and an advanced culture in each case and trying to avoid the emergence of irrelevance. One must do this to avoid being snared with a great host of red herrings... "When I think of all ways women are disadvantaged..." as one correspondent put it. It is difficult to circumvent the conditioning of our own society, and believe me our conditioning is heavy indeed, and it starts nine months before we are born. But try to be objective, try to stand outside and ask, What has this to do with the point in question? We get carried away with that nonsense that everyone is equal. Of course as soon as you get a tape-measure it becomes obvious that everyone is not equal. Very little more research will discover that everyone cannot run as fast or lift as much or throw as far, so you hedge and hint about mental ability, something harder to measure, and when intelligence tests are brought up you dismiss them as inaccurate, but you will not face the fact that people are not equal and because they are not equal not everybody can do this or that, and because you compare women against men and they show up badly you convince yourself that women are badly treated. Well, that's nonsense, and more to the point, irrelevant.

So I studied removed societies. The findings are relevant to us. What we find about such societies allow us, if we open our minds, to type the society to which we belong, however much it may hurt the ego. Just for the record, some of the findings surprised myself, before I started I would have found it hard to believe that the Melanesian societies are the closest of any to the English society. Our own Australian society (at least the official one) is descended from the English. That the Melanesian man wears a bone through his nose and the English man wears trousers is irrelevant.

It is a point to remember that the science of anthropology exists because we know we are prejudiced about our own society. But the last thing we want is for a political platform to be incorporated in our sciences.

WE ALSO HEARD FROM:

Harry Andruschak who has a new address at PO Box 1422, Arcadia, CA 91006, USA; Julie Hawkins (at last I have gotten around to printing your story); Don R. Fidge; R. Laurraine Tutihasi (did I get around to sending you that article); John Foyster; Mike O'Brien who sent the article in this issue and his new address: 12 Tower Road, New Town, Tasmania 7008; Peter Brodie who liked the new layout; Walt Willis; the editor/s of The Blotter in Canada; Igor Tolsconnicou who is at University in Volgograd and finds such a life, as well as having a part-time job leaves no time for fanac; Steve Sneyd and Brian Earl Brown (again) and Tom Jackson.



REVIEWS

TO LIVE FOREVER by Jack Vance. Grafton pb, dist in Aust by William Collins. (C) 1956. 253pp. A\$7.95. On sale now.

This is one of Jack Vance's earlier novels, but reading it, it reads as good as if it were written in the 80's.

The time is the far future, when one of the last surviving areas of civilization on earth was Clarges on the Chant river. Not only did they have some of the technology of the old days, but they did their own research, one of the results was the discovery of a serum that granted immortality. Rather than give all the citizens immortality and create an enormous population explosion, the granting was done in degrees - when one did something that the society of immortals one of a series of shot was given. Thus did a person climb the ladder of society until ultimately he or she gained their hearts desire.

There were some that, because of the commission of violent crimes, were taken out of the running. One of the gains of immortality was the creation of clones which, if an immortal was killed, was given the memories of that immortal; thus life continued. Until one man with an almost insane drive to succeed brought the system to a grinding halt.

WE WHO ARE ABOUT TO... by Joanna Russ. Women's Press sf, dist in Aust by the Australasian Publishing Co. (C) 1975/77. 170pp. A\$12.95. On sale now.

Many of these Women's Press releases have been published in the US in the 'ordinary' sf mainstream; in this case by Dell.

When a space-cargo ship crashed on a planet that was marginally human-life supporting, the eight people who were thrown out in a life capsule before the main ship disintegrated thought themselves lucky. Most of them, that is. The blurb on the pb's back says: "Only one woman dares ask: What is this for? Should we not prepare to die rather than struggle, foolishly, to live?"

Things settled down in a fashion. Because of the paucity of medical supplies, one of the middle-aged men dies of a heart-attack - which could have been prevented by the protagonist, who has quite a pharmacopoeia in her various body packs. In fact it is the protagonist who is directly responsible for the failure of the passengers to live even a short time on the planet - she kills most of them, personally. Her idea is that they can't possibly survive for long anyway, so why not kill them now herself? That way she can pick her own time and way of death.