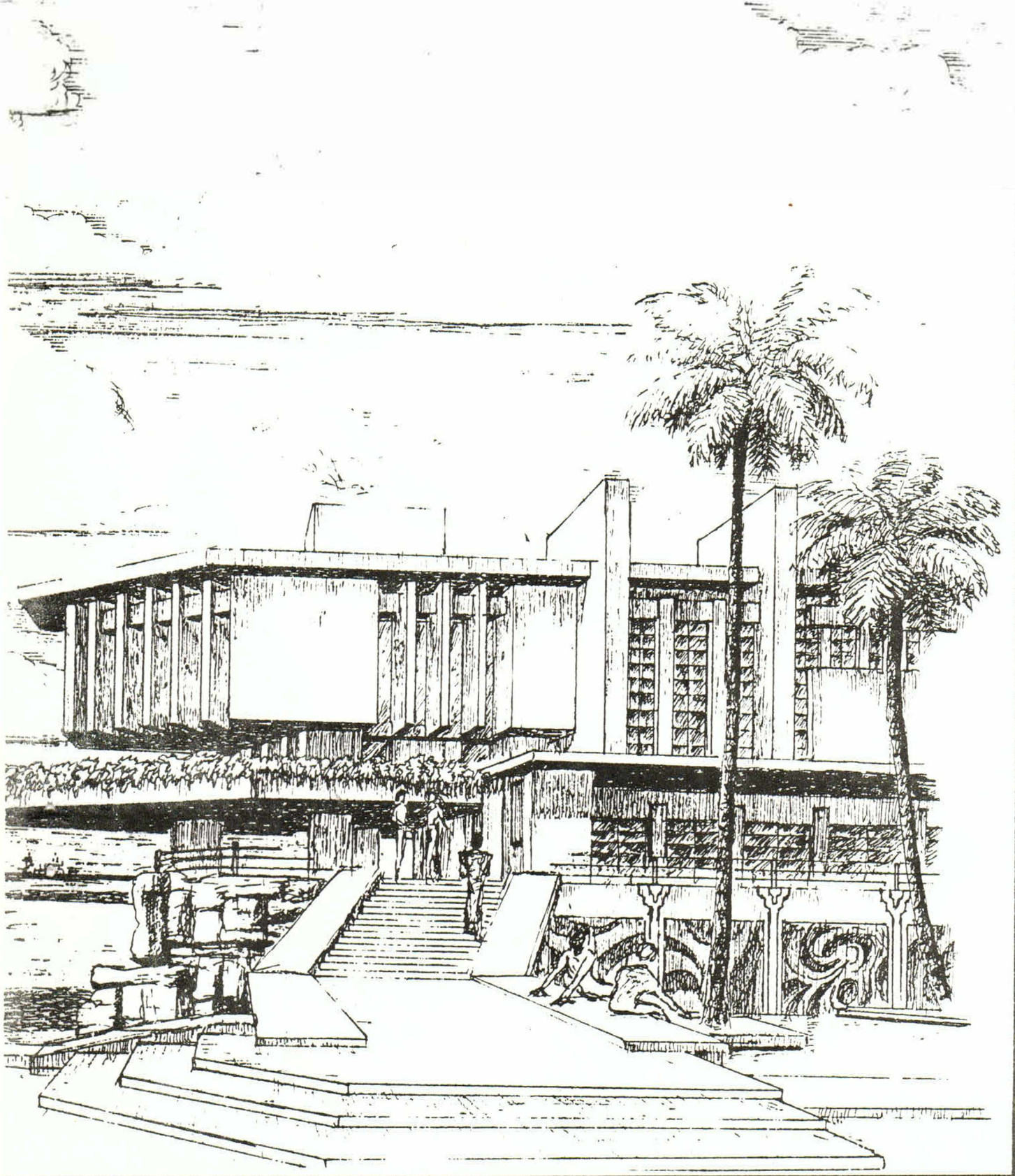


THE MENTOR 67



THE MENTOR

AUSTRALIAN SCIENCE FICTION

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EDITORIAL

This is the 25th Anniversary issue of THE MENTOR. It was first published by three high school pupils at Normanhurst Boys' High - Chris Guy, Richard Muir and myself in May, 1964. The first three issues were published by the triumvirate, then, it being the last year of high school, the zine was taken over by me. Richard Muir went off on his separate way, but Chris Guy and I remained friends. THE MENTOR was published regularly in those days, till 1969, when Chris, I and eleven others went overland to England in a double decker bus via India, Afghanistan, Iran, Turkey, Greece and Italy. The bus died in Italy and we each went our separate way.

It its time, THE MENTOR has published most Australian fans, either in articles, fiction or locs. It has seen the rise of Melbourne fandom, from the 1966 convention, through to the two worldcons in Melbourne, the split up of the original "Melbourne Mafia", and the recent phoenix-like rise of the Melbourne SF Club, apparently by younger fans.

It has seen the two earlier bids for a Sydney worldcon - 1983 and 1991, and the successful attempt by the Melbourne Mafia to prevent any worldcon outside Melbourne. With the 1995 bid, the concom are running into the same attitude - the Mafia's apparent desire to have no Australian worldcon outside Melbourne, and some Sydney fen saying "I don't want a worldcon here/I can't be bothered to help with a Sydney worldcon so I don't want anyone else running one here."

One of the noticeable things I saw, while looking at the three Indexes so far published to TM, is the turnover of fans writing for it (usually when they ceased writing they drop out of fandom). The turnaround period for fans has been mentioned to be about three years. I thought that with the mean fannish population becoming older this turnaround period of activity had grown. Except for the regular columnists (John Alderson, Bert Chandler when he was alive) the turnabout of the writers to TM, not including the Loccers, is three years. There are a couple of two year people, but one includes Michael Hailstone, who has been doing his own zine for some time.

The format of TM has changed a bit. It started off mimeod in a strange size larger than foolscap, then went to Australian Quarto, had one issue spirit duplicated, then went offset, then to A4 when A-4to was no longer available in mimeo. I then found that photocopy paper was about \$1 a ream cheaper than bond, and have been printing on that. This issue I'll try going back to bond to see if repro is better - I think it will be.

THE MENTOR itself hasn't changed in contents all that much. We started off with editorial, poetry, fiction and articles, and from the second issue, locs. In the past twenty five years the fiction dropped off to above one story per issue, but lately seems to have come back, with the proffered stories more professional. In fact, the fiction in this issue is up to prozine quality. At least one writer started off with fiction in TM - John Brosnan.

The editor himself has also changed - probably more than he would admit. I like keeping the distribution of TM to active readers - that is, ones who reply in some way to distributed issues. In 1964 I was a school kid, who used to spend much of his free time in his bedroom reading sf prozines and (later) books. I left school and started in the Australian Customs Service, but continued publishing. After I came back broke from my eight month around the world trip (which cost A\$2000) in 1970 I kept publishing. After I got married to Sue in 1975 there was a break in publishing, but lately things just seems to steamroller on. And I still enjoy publishing, otherwise I wouldn't be doing it. - Ron.

THE PEACEABLE KINGDOM

by Ian Lennie

It was morning. Magpies were gurgling in the nearby branches and there was a distant chatter of running water. Overhead the tent's canvas hung translucent, in easy billows, the lines and edges of the night before having slackened off comfortably. Despite the hardness of the ground Christopher Sylvan was tired enough and warm enough to drift in and out of sleep almost at will. It was always the same dream he slipped into. Or wakened into, because the dream-world appeared to him no less substantial than the green half-light of the tent.

He was the Budda, plumped in contemplation under a bo-tree. Though it was actually a eucalypt, because Chris had no idea what a bo-tree looked like. And the Budda was not sitting, but reclining, massive, like the earth itself, and rolling with it through vast empty spaces. A stone Budda, its patina of moss and lichens comfortably ageing it into the soil, so that its features were gradually but inevitably erased. And above it, more massive still, the great tree wrapped its roots over the stone, teasing out its weaknesses, splitting it along its faults. Chris, breathless, struggled to break from its clutches, but he was the tree as well, and his very efforts bound him more securely. The more urgent his struggles, the more the tree pressed down on his face. He tore at himself, reaching for air. And then he woke, his face buried in the cowl of his sleeping bag, the drawstring around his neck.

He should have been terrified, but was comforted instead. His heart slowed, his breathing eased, but the roots remained, wrapped about him. He drifted again into arboreal slumber.

Finding him was one thing. The big problem was getting him out. It would have to be a helicopter job but flying in there was tricky. Moreover, a great deal of soil would have to be brought up so as not to disturb the roots, which were already quite extensive. And the issue of pruning, which would obviously make the whole operation a lot simpler, raised a baffling host of medical, moral, theological and horticultural problems. On top of this, a growing and vociferous grouping of greenies and ecologists, supported by the local Member, were mounting a campaign against his being shifted at all, a campaign to which Chris had lent his how not inconsiderable weight. Something had to be decided quickly, or any move would be impractical. The whole thing was a can of worms.

The decision to move came after a national TV interview with Chris's wife tipped the balance of a hastily conducted opinion poll. Mrs Sylvan made an impression of steadfast dignity and quiet courage that moistened the eyes and lumped the throats of even the news team themselves, gluttoned as they were on tragedy.

Interviewer: (her elongated face clenched in a rigour of professional concern), 'Mrs Sylvan, before we begin, I want you to know, sincerely, on behalf of myself, the crew here, and everyone at the network, and I'm sure I speak for all the people of Australia as well, that you have our wholehearted sympathy during this difficult time.'

Mrs Sylvan: (immobile in dignity, only a twitch of fingers clasped modestly on her lap and highlighted in close-up on Camera 3 betraying the emotion she must be experiencing): 'Thank you.'

Interviewer: It's no secret by now, Mrs Sylvan, that you're in an absolutely unique and unprecedented situation in history. You are the first woman ever to find herself married to a tree. (Camera 2 uncovers the barest tremble of a lip, but otherwise Mrs Sylvan holds firm.) Could you give me some idea of the feelings you must be experiencing at this moment - fear, loss, anger, resentment, embarrassment?

Mrs Sylvan: 'I just want to say one thing. We don't care what terrible disease he's caught, the children and I, we love Chris, and we just want him home where he can get better.'

The move itself, which promised to be a spectacular piece of theatre, took place a couple of days later. First light found thousands of onlookers crowding the rim of the great gorge on both sides, many edging perilously close to a drop of over a thousand feet down sheer sandstone walls. Nature had even provided a curtain in the form of a bed of mist lying like cotton wool over the forest below, and seemingly thick enough to cushion the most precipitate fall. Somewhere under that cloud stood Chris, grumpy yet resigned, awaiting unsolicited rescue.

As the rising sun spread a widening band of gold down the Western wall, the sounds of the waking bush were overwhelmed by a less familiar dawn chorus - the clicking of tens of thousands of shutters and the whirr of video cameras. Everything was recorded - every leaf and branch; every unsuspecting bird that gave away its location; the mist as it rose moment by moment, taken from the widest angled setting in its spectacular context, to closely-framed artistic wisps as they detached from the main body. Theoretically there should have been enough snaps and footage to reconstruct a continuous, moving re-enactment of the entire event.

The arrival of the first helicopter led to a near-tragedy. Distracted by photography, the great crowd failed to register the noise of its approach, so that its arrival, sweeping low over the rim like a giant moth, came as a shock. Anxiety lest the event was starting ahead of schedule caused a general packing in towards the rim and, at one point, a sudden crush of numbers onto a deteriorating and ill-frequented lookout - a mere railed slab jutting over the void. The corroded reinforcing sagged with the unaccustomed weight and the concrete cracked with an audible snap. It seemed as if the press of people from behind would be too great for the panic-stricken occupants to get off. A quick-witted policeman, however, shinned up a tree, and with a loud hailer commanded the crowd at the rear to disperse enough to create a momentary weakness in the wall of humanity at the front. That weakness was quickly and thankfully breached by those on the fragile platform, which was then safely roped off and guarded to prevent further mishap.

Meanwhile, other helicopters in a variety of colours and emblems of sponsorship had joined the first in a cacophony of glittering blades. This created some uncertainty in the onlookers as to the proper focus of attention. The mist had risen as well, dispersing into scattered rags. It was now possible to see the valley floor and to get an occasional glimpse of the little stream whose labours had carved the gorge over a scale of time in which the onlookers and their species had barely registered. The clearing of the scene, however, only added uncertainty about the site, to uncertainty about the vehicle, of rescue.

Real life drama is often a contradiction in terms. Placed on a stage or screen, on a scale

where the whole audience, comfortably seated, can see and hear, with the significant highlighted and the trivial excised, events can be organised into a satisfying aesthetic spectacle. This was far from the case with Christopher Sylvan's "rescue". The stage, for one thing, was too vast, dwarfing anything short of a seismic upheaval. There was the issue of where to focus. Then there was the timing. The arrival of the helicopters cued the great crowd to action. But all that ensued was two hours of disorder with almost no-one on the ground or in the air having a clue as to what was happening. At the same time the cliffside vantage points became increasingly roasted as the day stacked up to a scorcher.

Eventually, around 10.30, those who could see anything at all, and were still paying attention, would have noticed a helicopter, which had hovered motionless for some time over a patch of forest near the east wall, begin to rise. The painful slowness of its ascent suggested a much heavier load than it was, in fact, lifting. Dangling from a length of cable and twisting slowly was a pinkish, elongated bundle, the bulbous lower half of which was wrapped in swathes of black plastic. As word got around, shutters began clicking like a chorus of cicadas. The bundle was hoisted above the gorge rim, then off to an unknown destination. And that was all. There were few in the great crowd who did not feel cheated, at least until the evening media coverage put them back into history as it happened.

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There had been a lot of wrangling among the major teaching hospitals as to where Chris should go. The curator of the Botanical Gardens had also put in a bid, but that wasn't taken seriously. Prince Charles got the prize, much to the inconvenience of Chris's family. It happened to be in a marginal seat, and they weren't. Accordingly, Chris found himself lowered, amidst the supervision of an army of experts, into a hastily excavated and screened-off visitor's car park.

He was given a lengthy medical examination, and only then was his wife allowed into the compound for a confidential visit. She re-appeared an hour later on the arm of a social worker, red-eyed and visibly shaken. It took some heaving from hospital security staff to keep the media, baying and straining at their leashes, from devouring her as she was rushed to a waiting car.

They were, however, not to be frustrated for long. Much to their surprise and unwarranted, as it happened, suspicion, they were told that Chris himself was ready and willing to give a press conference within the hour. In rather less than that time the Medical Superintendent ordered the gates of the compound open, and journalists, photographers and camera crews scrambled over each other for the nearest vantage to a remarkable sight.

An area was roped off in what had been the centre of the car park. Within it a mass of scaffolding and ladders, supporting an array of electronic equipment, partly surrounded what could best be described as an arboreal version of a mermaid crossed with a Hindu goddess - except that the goddess was a man.

From the waist up, the part conducting the interview, was a middle-aged, bearded man, unclothed and deeply tanned. A prominent hooked nose emphasised, by contrast, a pair of sunken and rather glazed eyes. It was not the face however, but the trunk that particularly commanded attention. Beneath a normal looking pair of arms there extended, from both sides, subsidiary limbs held stiffly at different angles, and whose ends bore bunches of what looked like flattened fingers, limply hanging, of a pale, almost transparent green. This branching of extra limbs gave the trunk its Hindu goddess look.

But if the credulity of the onlookers was stretched by what was above the waist, below it

burst all bounds. From a distance Chris's upper half looked as if it was mounted on a pedestal formed from the trunk of a sawn-off tree. Closer, it was evident there was no such discontinuity between the two halves. At about the level of the navel the tanned skin darkened further, and its texture became visibly coarser. There was no division at the legs, and the entire lower half appeared to be, and indeed was, rooted in the earth. Chris Sylvan was half-man, half-tree.

What with the popping of eyeballs, the flashing of cameras and the whirr of videos it was some time before the first question was addressed to the Medical Superintendent who stood rather irrelevantly exuding a dignity he thought proper to the occasion.

'Hey, Doc, what in the fuck's name is that thing?'

The press, hearing a familiar discourse established, visibly relaxed. The Med Super, predictably, bristled:

'Ladies and gentlemen, I hope we can maintain a certain level of decorum in these proceedings. The world is, after all, watching. But I suggest you direct your questions to Mr Sylvan himself.'

'You mean, that thing can talk?'

A voice of funereal depth and resonance, with just a trace of smug, swung all heads in Chris's direction.

'Yes, it can talk.'

Once again, briefly, the group was nonplussed. Then questioners trampled each other in an interrogatory stampede. Chris waited silently for them to clear a space for an answer, which they eventually did.

'Mr Sylvan, how did it all start?'

'Oh, you can call me Chris,' his voice boomed indulgently. 'Maybe it was something I saw in the woodpile when I was three.'

'What was that, Chris?'

'Wood,' he replied without a flicker of expression.

But the answers were not important. The image of the talking tree was sensational enough for the evening news and exclusive special. On the latter, Mrs Sylvan, between lavishly close-up sobs, was able to supply more background. She described her husband's increasing withdrawal from work, friends and family; his long trips in the bush; his almost religious unwillingness to sustain himself with, at first animal, and then, more alarmingly, vegetable life. He had even abandoned reading, claiming it was like playing with the corpses of old friends. He'd just sit in the yard, bare chested, facing the sun and seeming to absorb sufficient nourishment from it. Before the fateful trip she'd been so pleased he'd been getting together with his friends again. It had seemed like a sign of recovery. But the night before she'd had a premonition that something would go wrong and had begged him not to go... At this point Mrs Sylvan became too upset to continue the interview.

To make good TV the special should have ended there. Instead a panel of medical specialists and botanists, with no sense of theatre or occasion, rabbited on for half an hour afterward about the junction of phylum and xylem with the lymphatic and circulatory systems, and the relationships of respiration to transpiration. This was the stuff that guaranteed the

government channel its minority ratings. Only one point, raised by the panel, but passed over in decent haste, might have stirred some public interest - Chris's reproductive system. There apparently wasn't any.

'You mean he can't make it?' interrupted the alerted chairman.

The experts looked awkwardly at each other until one of the botanists, clearing his throat, grasped the nettle.

'To the best of our knowledge the reproductive apparatus appears to have been absorbed in the vegetable part of the er, subject - that is to say, the trunk. More than that at this stage we are unable to say.'

Chris continued his stay in the hospital grounds, despite his wife's attempts to get a court order to have him removed to his own back yard. Just what sort of entity he now was, and the continued validity of his marriage contract, proved to be something of a legal nightmare - or lawyer's paradise. Mrs Sylvan finally gave in, not through want of legal argument, but because of the consensus of botanical opinion that another move, so soon after the first transplantation, might be fatal. Chris, himself, seemed to show a vegetable want of feeling towards his family, saying he'd be happy anywhere there was sunshine, water, and good soil.

There were other things to distress the family - the inevitable Chris jokes, the level of which can be gauged by the following examples:

Q. What's the difference between Chris and a wombat?

A. The wombat eats, roots and leaves. Chris skips the meal.

Q. What makes Chris so happy and his wife so unhappy?

A. Chris is rooted all the time, so his wife never is.

There was the "Rank" deodorant ad too, in which Chris co-operated in his passively unconcerned way. It involved models of Vogue-like elegance swooning in his many arms and caressing his bark with long gloved fingers. "Rank", it was suggested, was equal to as many armpits as a man could offer.

After a few weeks of public excitement, interest in Chris, except as an object of study, died away. So much so that no-one who, a couple of months later, saw the gossip item in one of the dailies remarking on stormy public scenes between a famous model and her even more famous racing driver husband, would have connected this with the human tree. Chris, in fact, rated a meagre half inch on page nine of the same issue. To the wisdom of hindsight, however, the connection was actually there. The gossip item mentioned that the model's well established pregnancy appeared to be a bone of contention between the not-so-loving couple, the racing driver publicly denying any involvement in its origin. The model's best known recent assignment, the item noted, was the "Rank" ad. The item on Chris merely reported that botanists had made a breakthrough in understanding his reproductive system. Evidently, however, the sub-editor felt that readers could be spared the details.

The first sign that there was a bigger problem, and that it was centred on Prince Charles, came in a report to the hospital's executive about a sudden and alarming increase in absenteeism among the female staff. The cause, according to the staff medical officer, was an illness whose symptoms closely resembled those of morning sickness in early pregnancy. He used the words "closely resembled", because the sheer bewilderment of staff reporting the

problem, and the inclusion among them of two nuns from St Anne's doing specialist training, seemed to preclude the real thing. Angry husbands and boyfriends, and in one case the girlfriend of a gay charge sister, were less cautious about their conclusions. So much so that the staff counsellor had put in a compo claim for stress due to the number of tottering relationships he'd been called upon to prop.

Somehow, despite every precaution to hush it up, the story got leaked. To the scandal of the Board it appeared as: "Baby Boom Follows Hospital Orgy" in an interstate paper known for its want of circumspection. So the hospital had little choice but to call a press conference and give the official version. Unfortunately the staff medical officer unwisely remarked that, if the pregnancies were real, then at least a third of the hospital's capacity would be shut down within six months. This had the effect of creating just the note of sensation that the conference had been set up to avoid.

Following the media coverage, a lot more reports of pregnancy-related symptoms came in. Some of these were spurious, some explicable. But most created as much puzzlement and anguish as the cases at the hospital. A special clinic was set up to deal with these reports, all of which came from either hospital staff, visitors to the hospital, or local residents. Included among the last group, much to her embarrassment and dismay, was Chris's wife.

Of course Chris was the prime suspect, but it was a long time before a direct causal link could be demonstrated. This was due partly to the involvement of women who had no apparent contact with him, and partly to the division of knowledge into specialities. Because the hospital's investigation was primarily medical, they failed initially to consider a phenomenon alluded to in the newspaper item, which was causing botanists much excitement. Chris was flowering.

The flowers themselves were not very noticeable - small bunches of cylinders hanging upside down, about one centimetre long and flesh-coloured. And not many of them. Close up they were actually rather repulsive, having a fleshy texture as well as colour, and giving off an odour so like bad meat that they attracted large numbers of flies.

The flies were clearly part of the pollination process, the problem for botanists being - pollination of what? Because all the flowers were male, the little cylinders splitting to expose an elongated stamen bearing rows of anthers to which adhered hundreds of thousands of sticky, microscopic hairs. These hairs clearly stuck to, and were transported by, the flies. Those that remained were carried off by the wind as the flowers dried.

Under the microscope these hairs showed some interesting features. They appeared to have some animal properties, initiating motion by wriggling a long whip-like tail. They also, within a temperature range roughly that of the human body, had the capacity to penetrate between the molecules of most organic substances, to which they seemed immediately attracted. In fact they had the disconcerting habit, when being studied, of wriggling off the microscope slide and disappearing into the fingertips of the observer. It will come as no surprise that some of the women working with these hairs soon showed all the signs of pregnancy.

Unfortunately, by the time the whole story was put together, most of the pregnant women, of whom there was now over a hundred, were too advanced for a safe termination. The courts were clogged with suits for damages - against the Crown, against the hospital, and against Chris. But no laws or precedents seemed relevant to this particular matter. The Government however, cut through all the wrangling by enacting what was, in the opinion of many lawyers, a highly shonky piece of legislation - The National Parks and Wildlife (Amendment) Act. The Act summarily dispensed with Chris's human status, and that of his offspring, by declaring them noxious weeds.

While the Act protected Chris from litigation, it opened the way to his destruction as a threat to native flora. Within a week of its proclamation, in the early hours of a drizzling Saturday morning, a police bus, and several cars, without sirens or flashing lights, pulled up in front of his compound. These vehicles were shortly joined by a number of National Parks' Toyotas, a couple of hospital cars, and a municipal garbage truck. A police guard was mounted at the gates while a small party, looking like animated mushrooms under their umbrellas, filed in and gathered round a surprised Chris, startled out of a vegetable stupor by the glare of portable spotlights.

Before he could become aware of what was happening, and without a word being spoken, two policemen held down an arm while the Medical Superintendent delivered a heavy and, so far as the human aspect of Chris was concerned, possibly lethal dose of pethedine. As it visibly took effect the incongruous roar of chainsaws shattered the quiet night. In a few minutes Chris's trunk was severed, and he lay a prostrate jumble of arms and branches. Cutting up the remains into manageable lengths proved a grisly business, the little group being spattered with blood and sap. The garbage truck was backed in, quickly loaded, and driven off with police escort to the municipal incinerator.

The only unscheduled witness to this business was a member of the hospital's security service who, through some hitch, was not informed at the change of shift, and went to investigate the noise. The vision in his torchlight of the staff doctor, hair matted from the rain, eyes distraught, blood trickling down his face and clothing, and holding in his hand a bloody chainsaw, was one the officer would long wish to forget. It certainly destroyed his interest in video.

Of course there was a public outcry that saw some strange fellows in the one bed - the Liberal State Opposition; leading members of the local Labour Council; Friends of the Earth and greenie fellow-travellers; a developer who had seen enormous potential for tourism and had been buying up a lot of local land; and the Catholic Church. This last was enraged to the point of involving the Pope after the government proclaimed drastic follow-up measures. These were the issue of the contraceptive pill to all Sydney women of fertile age and, more heinous still according to the bull "Quando Arbor Homo Est", read at special masses at every church in the archdiocese, the right to impound and destroy any issue of the condemned plant. Despite the opposition, there was also a lot of praise for what was seen as leadership and decisive action in a time of crisis, and opinion polls reflected the overall popularity of the measures. On the second principle that you unite two factions by attacking a third, social cohesion was somewhat restored by the biggest campaign against flies since the Chinese Cultural Revolution. With Chris's stump sealed and the compound under guard the whole incident seemed under control at last.

"E" wing of the hospital was a free-standing building set up as a temporary during the Second World War, but still used for infectious cases, mainly hepatitis and, more recently, AIDS. It was well away from the main hospital complex and at least half a kilometre from the car park where all that was left of Chris, severed over two months ago now, was still under constant guard.

Sister Rosen sat alone, in an island of discrete light, a study in concentration as she bent over the crossword from the afternoon paper and waited for the early morning change of shift. On either side of her ward station two corridors of infected humanity stretched away into darkness. She savoured these small hours when, except for the rare emergency, nothing more serious disturbed her peace than the mutterings of a feverish sleeper, or a particularly difficult word. She had one of these at the moment. The last word, 37 DOWN - "Sit at this; it will

grow on you" (9) - was proving to be not at all tractable, as indeed it was not. She actually had four letters, -E--T--LE, but this was not making things any easier because she kept seeing BEETLE, which was obviously useless. After half a frustrating hour of trying to banish the word, and with her head now full of BEETLES, she was reduced to the last resort of working systematically through the alphabet - undaunted by, because oblivious of, the 11,881,376 combinations this method could possibly throw up.

Sister Rosen was not a superstitious woman, nor particularly imaginative, nor easily frightened. But occasionally, in the quiet hours, there would be an odd noise, or feeling, or intuition that suddenly made her wary - getting the spooks she called it. Once there really had been an intruder - the lover of one of the hepatitis cases sneaking in for a quickie. He'd nearly taken the place apart on finding he had to stay on as a patient. More usually, however, the spooky feelings remained just that.

She was having one of those feelings right now. Something, she had no idea what, had made her look around. She felt wary. She got up, and with unusual tentativeness, padded down each of the long corridors. Everyone seemed peacefully asleep and there were no apparent intruders. So she went back to her station, still a little troubled, but with BEETLE well and truly shaken out of her mind. This seemed to help. Lightly she pencilled in TABLE at the end of the column, then set out again on a more hopeful trek through the alphabet. On reaching the letter V, the answer was at once so obvious she couldn't believe how blind she'd been. However, she did not have the satisfaction of marking in the ultimate VEGETABLE. As she reached for the pencil her uneasy feeling came back, quickly turning to outright alarm. The desk in front of her was palpably quivering.

Her first thought was "earth tremor" and the evacuation of the patients. She had no time, however, to wonder long. The vibrations spread, intensified, and with a massive cracking and snapping of floorboards, she and her chair were propelled upward into the air. She screamed, the chair slid back and she was thrown to the floor, hitting the back of her head and momentarily losing consciousness. What she saw on coming to made her wonder if she really had. A human head on a five foot high stalk had burst through the floor of the nursing station. It was regarding her with concern.

'I'm terribly sorry,' it boomed, in a voice that seemed to come from the depths of the earth. 'I hope you're not hurt, but I had no idea where I was coming up. Shall I call for help?'

The head, of course, was Chris. Or, rather it was in a way, because an identical version of the same head made some eighteen surprise appearances that night in a five kilometre radius from where Chris was first transplanted.

Some of these appearances went unnoticed for hours. Others were less discreet - the middle of the local shopping plaza, the occupied bedroom of a nearby house, the west wall of the hospital's psychiatric block. This last intrusion split the entire wall from foundation to eaves, regressing a number of the patients forever beyond the reach of professional help, and a number of staff to the condition of their patients.

By the following afternoon civil defense squads were engaged in the rather nasty business of lopping off the newly emerged heads. It was one thing to be told you were engaged in emergency weed eradication, quite another to find yourself an honorary headsman in a State that had abolished capital punishment over thirty years ago. It probably made the job a little easier that Chris's only expression during the whole grisly business was an enigmatic Mona Lisa smile. The basis of his complacency became apparent over the next two days when forty five new heads appeared. The lopping, it seemed, stimulated growth at a fantastic rate.

Poison, administered through the severed stems, was only locally effective because of the gigantic size of the plant. The authorities were forced to an unpalatable conclusion. Chris's

entire root system would have to be dug up. And, clearly, the longer the delay, the greater the destruction that would be wrought. Despite this, court injunctions from affected property owners held things up for several days, during which over sixty new heads had to be lopped.

The final operation was vaster and more destructive than anyone had imagined. Civic minds boggled. Removing a labyrinth of roots up to three feet thick, reaching to a depth of over fifty feet in places, and spread over a fifteen kilometre radius, left a devastation little short of saturation bombing. Scarcely a building escaped anything from minor damage to total demolition. If nothing else, however, the operation impressed a sharp lesson. The size of the problem required action swift as it was firm. In future there would be no more carping injunctions.

That consensus lasted until the babies arrived. Some presented no problems than obstetric. They were so clearly inhuman - more like small, slimy shrubs - that their disgusted mothers rendered them up as easily for destruction as if they were in fact the noxious weeds of their legal status. Other offspring were clearly within the vegetable range, having only a few human features - feet, for instance, instead of roots - or the merest suggestion of a human face that might equally be, even to the uncritical eye of motherhood, only scars or markings in the bark.

But, at the other end of the spectrum, were babies quite distinctly human and few, indeed, with no apparent vegetable features at all. The image of a distraught baby, whose only crime was a fine layer of leaves in place of hair, torn from the arms of its frantic mother by a gun-toting government gorilla, did nothing to gain public support for stern measures. Many births went, metaphorically, underground - a "crime" in which a lot of doctors and midwives happily conspired; the more so as the number of "genuine" pregnancies coming to term at this time was also at risk of forfeit. To many it seemed like the return of King Herod. And, as with Herod's purge of the first born, it failed in its object. The new era could not be contained by official decree.

Even the many babies that were destroyed made an immediate comeback of a sort. Most of the women, to their consternation, or distress, or both, who had been delivered of tree babies, soon found themselves pregnant again. It seemed that Chris's seeds were able to lie dormant in human tissue for a long time, only to be reactivated again by a fertile female. The choice for those women bearing seeds were either more tree babies, or permanent infertility. Moreover, of all the women originally placed on the pill as a precautionary measure, none knew whether she was bearing seeds or not. The only way to find out was to go off the pill and risk an immediate pregnancy. And even supposing that pregnancy was terminated, the same problem was posed again, because no woman knew how many seeds she might be carrying.

While the full ramifications of this took some time to trace, it was still true that the population originally exposed to the seeds was small. The situation was certainly serious, but it did not seem beyond control. The real vegetable time bomb lay in those babies who had survived the purge. Amongst them of course were a number of normal human babies who grew up to live normal rich and full, or normal warped and twisted human lives - insofar as it was possible for the coming generations of humans to do so.

The others, the tree babies, also seemed to develop normally. The odd tree feature had to be camouflaged, but otherwise they seemed to fully justify the triumph of maternal instinct over law that had kept them alive. The girls, who overall tended to have less tree characteristics than the boys, never, in fact, showed any unusual tendencies. The boys, however, when they reached puberty, simply vanished, to reappear rooted in their chosen patch of ground and at the centre of an epidemic of pregnancies. They were then, of course, destroyed with greater or less havoc, depending on the length of time they had to get established. In every case there were pregnancies, and subsequent births that escaped detection. The instinct of humans to protect their young was, ironically, the trees' greatest ally.

Fifty years or so hence the area around what used to be Sydney looks like many former population centres. From coast to mountains the plain has been reclaimed by thick forest. What once were suburbs are now mostly covered by the canopy. Below it the houses, cracked, uplifted, and shattered into rubble, are being painstakingly amalgamated with the soil. In the central business district deteriorating skyscrapers still dominate the blue-green carpet, their lower levels covered in moss and lichen, their upper stories corroding frameworks of shattered glass. Strangely enough, those two international symbols of what is now scarcely more than a large village, still survive. That coathanger bridge, now rusting and uncared for, still spans the harbour, totally out of scale with the trickle of pedestrian traffic still using its broad carriageway. Across Sydney Cove, the hollow, discoloured shells of the Opera House, now the home of millions of squeaking, shitting fruit bats, looks like a fantastic, decaying meringue, the centrepiece of some abandoned party.

At ground, and underground level, are a labyrinth of roots, writhing, probing and sprouting with a vigour that makes the building of any substantial edifice as futile as setting it on the waves of the sea. The decay is aided by wandering bands of feral men, at first numbering millions globally. Realising they were the last of the species of men who want to be men, they took to the roads in an orgy of carnage, pillage, rape and destruction. Their numbers have dwindled now to scattered bands of geriatric savages, tottering about the countryside like the last of the Golden Horde, and living mainly on drunken reminiscence.

Large numbers of women and children still occupy temporary dwellings in scattered forest communities, or in the viable remains of human civilisation. Of the children, the boys wander off at the age of four or five to face the increasingly difficult task of finding a space for favourable growth. The girls, like their mothers, look forward to a life of continual pregnancy, because mutations of the trees' seed can now evade any form of contraception short of the complete hysterectomy for which there are no longer the facilities to carry out.

In a couple of generations, however, there will be a release from this bondage through a natural decrease in fertility. With all viable parts of the earth forested, the human race will have served its purpose as a phase in the development of the tree. It was a risky phase from an evolutionary viewpoint; on the one hand the human race gave trees what they had always lacked - the mobility and intelligence to choose the best conditions for their development. On the other, it had come close to bringing about the extinction of all life forms.

But at last the tree reigns supreme. The peaceable kingdom has been achieved on earth for the first time since the garden of Eden - providing, of course, that you think it's peaceable to establish your own place in the sun by choking off your neighbours. But it's probably an advance on annihilating both yourself, them, and everything else besides.

The End



THE YANKEE PRIVATEER #8

by Buck Coulson

Juanita and I began our 1990 convention year on Feb. 2, when we drove the 135 miles to Nashville, TN, for Confabulation. It's a small con; only 113 members this year. Normally we'd pass it up, since our huckster table has to pay for our convention-going, but they'd made us Guests of Honor last year at their first convention, and we wanted to show that we appreciated it. They're nice people. The hotel is small, and geared mostly to tourists, and there are antiques all over the place. I'm particularly charmed by an old-fashioned hand-operated washing machine in one of the halls. We'd arranged to share connecting rooms with our son Bruce and his friends Emily Vasquez, Lee Swartzmiller and Kathy Hamilton. Kathy moved over to the extra bed in our room. One of the features of this con was an exchange of Christmas presents, since Bruce hadn't been able to get over to see us at Christmas, due to car trouble. Huckstering was poor, as expected, and there was no outside parties that I know about, but I alternated between the filking and the con suite, and finally went to bed about 3:00 AM both Friday and Saturday. Guests this year were filkers Bill and Brenda Sutton, and author John M. Ford, who had a fund of very funny stories about fans and pros. As usual in US cons, it closed in the early afternoon on Sunday and we drove home, arriving before dark. A nice little con where I know -- and like -- most of the members.

Our convention preparations are pretty well down to a science. Our dog Severian is taken to the vet's in Marion (15 miles away) to be boarded, extra food and water is set out for inside and outside cats, and the car is loaded according to a pattern that seldom varies. The back seat of the station wagon is folded down, and the bed is filled with a cooler, boxes of huckster materials, and suitcases in a standard pattern. I'm supposed to avoid caffeine because of my heart and sugar because of my diabetes, and not all cons stock caffeine-free, sugar-free soft drinks. I also take very little beer or liquor because of the calories. (I keep wanting to tell Mike Ford to not drink so much, but it's his life; he also diabetic.)

On Wed. Feb. 7, we took Sev over to be boarded again, and on Feb. 8 we left for Continuity in Birmingham, some 600 miles away (probably closer to 700 by the way we want.) Normally we wouldn't travel that far, but the concomm had promised to pay all expenses. Because of the distance, we took 2 days to make the drive. We'd thought of a train, but the US train schedules are strange and arbitrary; to get to Birmingham by the closest way, we'd have had to travel south the Indianapolis to get a train, north to Chicago, then south to New Orleans, and back northeast to Birmingham. Forget that shit. Besides, we have friends in Murfreesboro, TN, whom we hadn't seen since we stopped by their place on our way to the Atlanta Worldcon in 1986, so we drove there on Thursday, and went on to Birmingham on Friday. We alternate driving. I usually take most of the back roads and Juanita drives on the freeways, because they bore me to distraction and she prefers them. On to Birmingham on Feb. 9, with Juanita taking over just as it poured down rain. No problems finding the hotel, because US concoms generally send out maps with their flyers. Once there, the clerk couldn't find a room reservation for us,

so we went up to the second floor where the convention registration was. The head of Guest Liaison happened to be there, and she came down with us and pounded on the desk until the clerk unearthed the reservation. After that it became fun, though it seemed a bit odd because we knew so few people. We'd previously met Charlotte Proctor and P.L. Caruthers-Montgomery, and nobody else.

It seems a relatively wealthy group. The major guests were Robert R. MacCammon and Jennifer Roberson, and there were 9 total guests, but the con still paid for our room and overpaid our travel expenses and meals, and presumably did the same for the others. As usual, we spent our days in the huckster room when we weren't on panels, and at night Juanita filked and I hit the parties. There weren't a lot of the latter; the con had between 400 and 500 members, but a lot of them were gamers, who went off into the gaming rooms and didn't mingle with the real people. Programming ran until 9:00 PM; most midwestern cons stop the program at around 6:0 and devote the entire evening to parties. Friday night there was a tornado alert, but I'd imbibed two drinks of what I later discovered was 40% vodka (these were served in regular 6-oz glasses) and went to bed early and missed it. Juanita said the filkers looked at the solid walls of the filk room and the huge pillars here and there, and said "Why go to the basement?" and stayed put. Some fans did get herded into the hotel basement, but the tornados missed the hotel by about 2 miles. Saturday night there were a few parties and I alternated between the con suite and the filk and went to bed at my usual 3:00 AM time. The con closed at noon Sunday and the huckster room shut down at 3:00 PM -- it's actually the last part of the con to close, hucksters being what they are -- but we'd been given our room for 3 nights, so we stayed on for the dead dog party and the final fling of the concom and the guests who stayed over, who went out to a restaurant en masse -- something over 20 of us at one huge table made of several small ones hastily shoved together. A nice way to finish. On Monday we left, and had time to stop at the Rocket and Space Centre in Huntsville, AL. We didn't have time for the full tour, which includes the Redstone area, but we went through the museum and the "Rocket Park", which has everything from a replica of Goddard's first liquid-fuel rocket to the German V-1 and V-2, the US X-15 research plane, and on to a Saturn V and a full shuttle assembly. Marvelous place for a fan. Then back to Murfreesboro for the night, and on home on Tuesday.

On March 8 we were back on the road for a Wiscon, in Madison, WI, about 375 miles from our house. This time we drove 300 miles to the DeWeese home in Milwaukee the first day, and drove over to Madison with Bev DeWeese on Friday. (Gene came over on Saturday, attended his panel, checked out the huckster room, and went home. Gene is in training to become a hermit.) At the hotel, we found we really didn't have a room, this time; we had expected Hank Luttrell to make us a reservation, while Hank thought the Deweeses were going to make it. We were rescued by the arrival of two young women for whom the hotel had mistakenly reserved two rooms; we took the extra one. But things looked unpleasant for a while. We've been going to Wiscons for several years, and recognise a lot of the faces. (I "know" a lot of con fans, converse with them at every con we both attend, and haven't the vaguest idea what their names are. It isn't all my memory; people put only their first name on the badges, or leave it entirely blank. Names don't seem that necessary. When Lois McMaster Bujold came up to me at a Marcon a few years ago and gave me a copy of her first book, I was totally astonished; I'd been talking to her for years - she said I was the only person who did talk to her at her first con - and never knew her name.) Attendance at the con was down from last year, but still about 530. The con was enlivened for us by the presence of Don and Maggie Thompson, who are both old friends and y editors for my reviews in COMIC BUYERS GUIDE. Don hasn't lost his touch; while I was looking over the pulps another dealer had for sale, Don came by and said in mock surprise, 'Oh, you made it! Did you get time off on that shoplifting charge?' Of course, I'd never seen that particular dealer before, but he didn't snatch his magazines out of my hands, for which I was grateful. (And I bought three of his magazines.) After this con, we stayed over Monday with the DeWeeses, hit a used-book store where I bought an album of 78 rpm records -- I'm not quite up with the world of CD's yet -- and some exotic groceries not available in Hartford City.

We came home on Tuesday, collected dog and mail, stayed home 2 days, and then on Friday left for Millennicon in Dayton, OH. Severian by this time was getting very tired of shuttling back and forth between home and the boarding kennel. The Dayton trip is about 120 miles, not much of a trip. It's a smaller con; around 300 members. Again, we know most of the people present, by face if not by name. I'm told there is a rule of thumb among US hucksters, that a successful con is one where you take in over \$1.00 per convention member. At Dayton, we took in about \$2.50 per member, and were quite pleased. And this even though the huckster room opened several hours late on Friday, due to the convention's inability to get a previous group out of it. I bought several items there, including a new edition of Basil Rathbone's autobiography, and a children's book about engines by L. Sprague de Camp. Enjoyed ourselves, talked to a lot of people, and I got to become friendly with a Long-Haired Retriever, a breed I never heard of before. The dog looked and acted a lot like a somewhat shaggy Labrador Retriever. Bruce, Emily, and Kathy came down briefly to see us, but didn't stay long. They presented me with a t-shirt with a dollar sign on it, which I'll be using at future conventions when I'm huckstering. Dayton isn't all that far from their homes in Columbus, OH. Our old friends Bob and Betty Gaines, of Columbus, were also there, and helped us get our status at this year's Context straightened out. (We're going to that one strictly to see guest Susan Schwartz, who has been a long-range friend since the last several years of YANDRO. I hope to get her over here for a visit after the con, but I don't expect I will.)

I'll be making 12 conventions this year, and Juanita will do 13, if things work out as planned. She also will have 3 cons on successive weekends later in the year, which she isn't exactly looking forward to. She'll go to the World Fantasy Con, in Chicago this year, strictly for business purposes. I have no business to take up there, and it's an expensive convention, so I won't bother going.

I guess if I attend 12 conventions a year and only do columns for 2 fanzines, I'm now a convention fan, right? Just dabbling in fanzine fandom... though one of the pleasures of Millennicon was meeting fanzine editor Tom Sadler. He turned out to be one of the faces I recognized from previous cons but didn't have a name to attach to it until now.

The "extra" coming back from Millennicon was stopping at the location of Fort Jefferson, built in 1791 during St. Clair's campaign against the Indians of Indiana and Ohio. The last one he built, as a matter of fact; a bit later he was soundly defeated by an Indian coalition under Chief Little Turtle, "the only time a U.S. army was destroyed in the field", according to one historian. (Custer had a regiment, not an army.) Nothing is left of the fort, but there are some metal plaques describing what was there. Another of the pleasures of con-going is the occasional location of an historic site along the way, so I combine my two major interests.

-Buck Coulson



THE JOURNAL

by Margaret Pearce

"Eureka" was scrawled across the page in red ink, against the scribbled equations and calculations.

It was very enigmatic. I flipped back through the journal. There were dates, names and price lists against the long columns of items, quotes for work to be done, scribbled equations, and once with a sensation of heartstopping tenderness I recognised my birth date underlined.

I was beginning to dimly realise the reason for my late uncle's lack of assets. The death of my uncle had been assumed after so many years absence, and his estate wound up. As heir, I received a modest legacy of \$3,000, accumulated stocks and shares, and his safe deposit box. It only disgorged sheaves of notes covered in equations and diagrams and a small pocket journal.

The sight of the red leather covered journal brought back the memory of my uncle as nothing else could. He was a dark intense man, immersed in his experiments, and always coming and going on his mysterious journeys. He always treated me with an adult courtesy, remembered my birthdays, and dined at my mother's when he was bored with eating out. He was a bachelor and my mother and I were his only kin.

The red journal always lived in his back pocket, to be taken out and inspected, and consulted and updated. Appointments, chemical formula and travel itinerary were scrawled between reminders to pick up dry cleaning and where he put in his shoe repairs.

It was tied up rather clumsily with a shoelace. A twist of paper was tucked into it. I unfolded it. It was a short note addressed to me, and terse.

"Peter, you will be reading this if I have not managed to return. My journal and notes are dangerous. They are to be destroyed. Affectionately, William E.H."

I looked at the indecipherable sheets and sheets of notes and shrugged. My uncle, an undeniably brilliant scientist, was considered to be erratic by the rest of the family.

The rest of the journal was filled with my uncle's sloping precise writing. It was written in a different ink, a faded, rather blotchy brown. It seemed heavier and more forceful than my uncle's usually neat hand.

"I will not go to my death and let the lie live on. Time, my mistress of paradox, is running out for me. Marvic is snuggling against me with a brute acceptance of her fate, but I am a thinking trained observer, and observe I will until the end. Only then will I try to fasten the journal out of reach perhaps for some other traveller to discover.

I have my journal to record, and although I am crouched in this processing tunnel without pen or pencil, or indeed anything on me of metal or plastic, I can still use the feathers as pens, and I have my own sharp teeth."

I stopped reading and studied the writing more closely, holding the journal up to the window of the small room the bank manager had shown me into. The letters were crusted on the down stroke and where the quill had spluttered.

I dabbed my wet forefinger on a full stop, and it smeared faintly pink. I flipped over the pages and pages of journal yet to read, and felt faintly repulsed by the thought of how much blood had been expended to make this record.

"Whatever may be the ending of this line of research, the beginning can be considered ten years ago, when I discovered the old volume on the second hand book stall. Ignoring the fact it was hopelessly inaccurate and full of scientific superstitions and other fallacies, it was rather charming and entertaining. At the back of it however, the unusually large number of blank sheets were covered with equations and diagrams in a crabbed purple ink.

I studied them carefully. They started along the same lines as I had been researching, but his theories had however, swung off at a completely different tangent.

The more I thought about them, the more plausible they were. A time machine could be constructed, not along the lines of the Edwardian bicycle to carry you into the future, but creating a separate space continuum to suspend you outside time, so it could be re-entered at whatever point you selected.

It took me ten tedious years. The quartz crystals with the particular properties required could only be created through a trial and error form of experimentation. I ended up with something the size and look of a crystal phone box.

It was of course, a considerable improvement on the one used by that other time traveller. It had an atomic heart, and a computer, and most of the important parts were transistorised. I built in a lot more safety features, covering temperatures, air recycling, and a sort of molecular bumper bar to ensure I wouldn't materialise in anything already in the same space.

I entered, and slid the shield across with a certain expectancy. In theory I had designed and built a fool proof vehicle for time travel. It is always exciting to put hypothetical theory to a practical trial.

I set the computer on a re-entry at 500,000 A.D., but owing to some malfunction, or as I later calculated, some lessening of resistance, I re-entered at 802,000 A.D.

My theory that previous time travel might leave a defined path that the time machine could travel along was substantiated when I scrambled out.

The machine had materialised on a large expanse of green roof. When I clambered down I was being watched by the charming little people described by Mr. Well's time traveller.

They were the Eloi. They came scampering up, chattering and giggling in their soft voices. They were about a metre and a quarter high, and I towered over them. They did not seem alarmed, or even curious about where I came from. They gathered around, patting and touching me with evident admiration.

They all had a similar look about them. All of them had soft, prettily flushed features framed by rather short curling hair, in different shades of red, brown, black and yellow. Their

bright red lips smiled to reveal even rows of sharp white teeth. To make it more difficult to distinguish between sexes they all wore identical white tunics with gaily dyed leather girdles and sandals.

I looked around me. The green porcelain museum towered up behind me. I glanced back at my blinking crystal box with some satisfaction. If there were still Morlocks, they would find it more difficult to shift my time machine than that of the other traveller. My machine was balanced across two dimensions, and was unmovable, and the entrances would only open to my hand print.

It was late afternoon and hot. Behind the museum was a heavily forested crest. In front of me the cleared sloping hills rolled away to the horizon, a garden setting with winding streams and rivers through it, and the gracious white palaces of the Eloi dotted around.

After a while, the attention of the Eloi strayed. I was unable to understand their soft chatter, and they were unable to understand my signs and gestures. They drifted off to their play.

I strolled down the sloping hill. It was glorious sweeping countryside, and the air was fresh and clean. There were no insects to annoy me, and no animals to be wary of. I did see some birds flying high and fast across the sky, but I heard no birdsong from the clumps of trees, so I came to the conclusion perhaps there were none that were native to this particular locality. It appeared a pleasant vegetarian world, tarnished only by the threat of the nocturnal, carnivorous Morlocks.

I strolled into one of their communal palaces just on sunset, and the little people chattered and stroked me and pulled me down on to cushions encircling stone slabs.

The slabs of polished stone were loaded with platters of fruit, and each slab had its decoration of round openings where the peels and stalks were flung.

As I watched a circular central section of the table raised and a tray laden with fruit appeared. The little people grabbed, scooping it all out, and the circular section lowered again to make the flat stone slab.

I thought of where the fruit came from and shuddered. The Eloi were still unaware that the Morlocks were tending and fattening them like cattle.

They were chattering happily and offering me fruit off the platters. I recognised oranges and apples and a sort of pomegranate, but the little people's favourite fruit seemed to be a kind of hypertroied raspberry which oozed its red juice down their pointed chins. It looked messy and too juicy and I shook my head.

I concentrated on eating some floury thing in a three-sided husk. It was nourishing and quite filling. They had some sort of fruit juice in flasks, but it was salty and bitter and I spat it out, and went outside to the stream winding past. The water was pure and sparkling.

The little people were settling for the night in their communal hall, and I wondered about the Menace of the Morlocks. There seemed no apprehension or fear, or even any attempt to bar the huge doors. There was no moon, and it was getting very dark. I shrugged and found myself sufficient cushions to be comfortable, and thus spent my first and last night of rested sleep.

In the morning, I had breakfast with the little people. I was finding their chatter and continuous soft pats of affection whenever I was close enough to be touched rather charming. I tried to communicate with them in sign language, but apart from signing that I was hungry or

thirsty, there seemed very little to find out.

I left them still eating, and walked out into the fresh open countryside. My first vague suspicion that this paradise was not quite what it seemed was when I came to the apple tree.

There were ripe apples on the tree, and a layer of rotting apples beneath it. It seemed odd that the Eloi, who were so fond of apples, had not bothered to collect them.

Near it, an orange tree was loaded with oranges, and the ground beneath that was piled with oranges that had dropped and rotted. A couple of Eloi ran past giggling and pelting each other with ripe grapes. They didn't appear to be eating any of them.

I went back and picked a shiny red apple, and bit into it. I choked and immediately disgorged the mouthful of apple, my floury fruit breakfast and most of my morning drink of fresh water. It was indescribably bitter, with a cloying acrid bitterness that seemed to burn and shrivel my tongue.

I staggered down to the stream and washed my face and hands, and lay under the heavy shade of a shrub, waiting for my head and stomach to stop whirling. Either apples had evolved into an inedible species, or the Eloi were eating a different variety.

The giggles and chatter of the Eloi faded away, and there was silence, broken only by the ripple of the water. I must have dozed off. I opened my eyes with the uneasy awareness that something was watching me.

In the shadows of the shrub, two grey eyes were examining me. I stared back. It was a little creature, a little over half a metre tall, with flaxen hair straggling over a well shaped head. The eyes were wide spaced with curling yellow lashes, and it had a short pug nose and a well rounded little chin. Its skin was a startling clammy grey white. I wondered if it could be a Morlock.

It was clutching two of the floury three-sided husks. I examined the branches. Half hidden in the greenness odd bulges nestled into the limbs of the tree. I realised I was beneath the shrub that produced what looked like being my staple diet.

The Morlock smiled, and the yellow lashes blinked over the pale grey eyes.

'Ogg', it asked in a soft voice.

'Ogg yourself,' I answered.

It sounded like a young female, and not as viciously nasty as described by the other time traveller. There was an alert intelligence in the eyes watching me, and mildness was stamped on the broad open brow. It was garbed in a skirt of woven grass, with bright feathers decorating the girdle, and it had a necklace of berries around its neck.

It smiled and passed me one of the husks it was holding. From somewhere came soft giggles, and the small Morlock cringed into the shadows of the tree. It blended into invisibility and I moved out into the open, to strip the fruit and take a very small bite.

It tasted floury and satisfying. It, at least, was the same species that was piled on the Eloi stone slab tables. I sighed my relief and promised myself to be cautious in what I ate or drank.

I started back towards the green porcelain museum. I wanted to inspect my time box. Suddenly there were shrill shouted commands. The Eloi, who had been scattered around

playing, seemed to have gone mad. They were uttering high pitched yelps, and beating at the grass and bushes with slender silver wands.

The small Morlock was running blindly. It dodged past a group of Eloi, and blundered past me. It was heading up the hill to the porcelain museum. It was bleeding from welts and cuts all over it, and the blood was dripping redly across the flaxen hair.

I stood and watched. I understood the detestation of the Eloi for the Morlocks, but it was a very small Morlock, and I hadn't noticed where the Eloi had produced their silver wands from.

The Eloi came running up. Some had their noses to the ground and were licking up the trail of blood, and others were jostling them aside to get to it. There was something indescribably obscene about their short high pitched yelps and yips after the soft chatter and giggles of their normal voices.

'Now look here,' I started to say, completely forgetting that they couldn't understand me, when the one closest raised staring eyes that suddenly focussed, and he swung at my leg with the silver wand.

There was a stinging burning sensation. The pain made me stupid. I stared half comprehending at the trickle of blood oozing through my good linen trousers, and the Eloi greedily lapping it up, when another two Eloi ran at me with their wands swinging wide.

I moved back, but not quickly enough as the wands tipped my other leg. Blood started oozing out in slow drips. I turned and ran. The Eloi redoubled their chorus of yips and came after me, their faces flushed and hectic, and the too red lips gaping open to show the sharp white teeth.

I ran up the hill towards the museum, leaving a trail of blood behind me. I paused at the porch, but the effort of swinging on to the roof to the safety of my time machine was beyond me. I was weak and giddy.

I kept on limping at my fast hop into the building. I seemed to remember that they didn't like darkness, and some of the old galleries plunged into the hillside. To my horror, I could hear them pattering after me, their silver wands shining in the deepening shadows.

Whatever had cut into my thigh had bitten in deeply. The blood kept welling out. I was slowing down, moving at a cross between a hop and a stagger. The yips had a triumphant note to them, when suddenly there was complete silence.

I looked over my shoulder. Innumerable grey forms with blazing red eyes were appearing from shadowy corners and crevices. The foremost Eloi turned to run, swinging their silver wands, but the Morlocks pounced. There was the clatter of wands being dropped and briefly cut off screams.

The Morlocks started to gather in a tight circle around me. They were about the same height as the Eloi but more heavily built. Under the tangled grey, white, and yellow manes their red eyes glowed.

I shrank back from them. The beautiful Eloi had turned against me, and I was trapped by the carnivorous Morlocks. The circle widened to let the little flaxen haired Morlock through. She came up to me and tugged at my hand.

'Ogg', she said again.

I looked around at the silent waiting Morlocks, and started to shudder. My leg was warm and sticky and nerveless, and the floor tilted to meet me as I collapsed...

When I opened my eyes again, I was lying on a rough bed in a dimly lit cave, and my leg was bound up with bark and dried grass. I tried to move it. It was painful, but it did move, and the bleeding had stopped.

I tried to sit up, and the little Morlock sitting beside me giggled, and pushed me down again. She called something out, and an adult Morlock drifted through the opening.

I cringed at the sight of it. I must be imprisoned in their underground caverns.

It squatted beside me and placed a soft hand on my wrist. I shuddered at its touch. In the dim light I could see its fur was a soft silky white, and its face sagging with a thousand wrinkles. It must have been very old. Its faded light coloured eyes were inspecting me intently.

'Ooglanda?' it questioned, in a soft guttural voice.

'Uglanda yourself,' I said back.

It gave a soft chuckle.

'Voln,' it said, touching itself.

'William,' I introduced myself rather stiffly. It seemed odd that a potential meal and its eater should have to be on first name terms.

Voln chuckled again, and patted me on the shoulder. The little flaxen haired Morlock scampered out, and came back with some of the floury fruit and a gourd spilling over with water.

I drank the water, and ate my way through the fruit. The two Morlocks squatted and watched me with a mixed satisfaction.

'Gling,' Voln said, indicating the gourd.

'Gling,' I repeated.

His face lit up. I realised I was being given a language lesson. Despite all I knew of the Morlocks, my fears started to fall away. They had rescued me from the Eloi, who appeared to have gone suddenly mad, and were feeding and sheltering me.

The language appeared to have a very debased germanic base with a complex grammatical structure and a lot of abstract concepts. In a week I was able to make myself understood, and in another week, as my leg healed, I could understand the answers to some puzzling questions.

I was living with a small colony of Morlocks, not underground as I originally thought, but in the depths of the forest. Their homes were the hollow trunks of trees, or cleared out caves under the tangled roots. They were nocturnal and seemed obsessively secretive. Each entrance and airhole was concealed, and they left no visible trace of their existence in the forest.

To my surprise I found them a rather charming and close knit community. Unlike the Eloi, there were family units, with parents and other adults caring for the small children and the old and feeble. They bathed and dressed my injured leg daily, and kept me supplied with food and water.

During the time I spent among them, I noticed they ate the floury fruit and what looked like nuts and a form of wheat. I wondered if they were predominantly vegetarian, or perhaps only raided the Eloi when they craved meat, or perhaps there were different races of Morlocks.

Although they explained everything in very tedious detail, every time I turned the subject to the Eloi there was an embarrassed silence, as though I had overstepped the bounds of decency.

They appeared to be content to stay as far from the Eloi area as possible. The floury three-husked fruit was more abundant in the Eloi area, and they sometimes crept in to harvest it. Marvic had left her return too late when I first saw her, and was hiding till she could escape back under the cover of dark.

My leg headed rapidly, and the time passed pleasantly enough. I had the company of Marvic and Voln every evening, and slept later and later each day. I wondered if I would end up nocturnal if I spent enough time with the Morlocks.

One evening, there was an air of tension and excitement over the colony. Mothers were calling their children close, and pushing them back into their caves and hollows, and the men were gathering around Voln with serious faces.

I started to move across to them, and Marvic ran up and took a tight hold of my hand. I looked down at her, she would have only just woken up. She was looking scared, and her eyes flashed redly as she peered this way and that.

'I'm glad you are still safe. The Eloi are abroad.'

'This night?' I asked.

It was twilight, and the light was fading rapidly. Among the dense trees, it was already intensely black.

Marvic shook her head, but clutched me even more tightly.

'No, but they are raiding.'

I sighed and wished I could get some honest answers about the Morlocks and Eloi. The Morlocks appeared to be nocturnal but vegetarian, and the Eloi were diurnal and vegetarian. Was it just an inbuilt hatred that kept them attacking each other, or was there a more sinister explanation?

'What is happening?' I asked Voln.

'We are going to the . . . (and here he used a word I could not understand) to try and rescue some part of the bodies of our people.'

'May I come?' I asked.

It was an impulsive thing to ask and I immediately regretted it. I wanted to find out the puzzle behind the Eloi and the Morlocks, but I doubted my ability to understand anything on an expedition conducted in the pitch blackness.

They turned and set off in single file and I hurried after them. Marvic tugged at my hand. It was so dark all I could see was the redness of her eyes as she kept blinking her tears away.

'I will never see you again. The Eloi will eat you.'

I sensed Voln ahead of me stiffen, and he said something through the darkness. Marvic scampered off and Voln held my hand and led me through the blackness.

After a while I heard the light patter of Marvic returning. She pressed my fingers around a handle and removed material. Light filtered out from the bulb-shaped ends of the stone I was carrying. Marvic wound the cover around my wrist. If they wanted darkness I would have to cover it.

'Where did you get it?' I asked.

Marvic shrugged. 'It would have been something the Old Ones left.'

The Old Ones! Their hand still seemed heavy on this world, and yet they must have vanished centuries ago. Their buildings and artifacts and statues still stared across the rolling countryside. The Morlocks knew so little, and the Eloi didn't care.

The light revealed the dirt walls and tangled roots of the winding tunnel. In the glimmer of light I could see that Voln and the other men had woven bags swinging from their belts.

They were going to collect bodies, or parts of bodies, for burial. As we padded along I tried to remember what Voln had explained about their beliefs. They buried their dead, together with the seed of the tree that looked like a tall fir. They believed that if even one scrap or shred of skin was planted with the seed, the spirit of the Morlock would inhabit the new tree. Questions as to what they thought happened to the spirit of the Morlock if his body was totally destroyed only led to horrified silence.

The passage sloped down and opened out into a large cave. I became aware of the hum of machinery. The Morlocks were gathered around a small opening. One by one we went through. Voln touched me to stay very close to him, and Marvic pressed herself against me.

I held up the light. The pounding of machinery was very loud, and the air was warm and stuffy. It was a vast arched cavern, and all around the huge machines towered up.

The Morlocks crept in single file across the huge cavern, and seemed to relax when they reached the small tunnel at the side wall. It was very low and I followed them on my hands and knees.

We came to another series of huge arched caverns, and one by one the Morlocks scrambled down onto the stone paved floor. There were tables of white metal, and an overpowering smell of fresh blood in the warm air. The Morlocks were drifting like luminous ghosts around the tall machinery.

I followed them, stepping carefully in their path. We climbed up some steps onto a railed walkway. The smell became a stench. Marvic was whimpering, but the Morlocks were collecting further along, their red eyes glowing down at something.

The machinery was throbbing and humming. The light gleamed off stainless steel, and a moving conveyor belt, completely protected by a close steel mesh. It wound and snaked in and out of the tall machines.

I moved along to where the Morlocks were standing. It was between machines, and the conveyor belt was pushing raw skinned joints out, to pile up in front of the next machine.

There was a hole ripped in the steel mesh, and the Morlocks were leaning over and trying to scoop them up before the conveyor belt moved them against the other machine, which was opening and then shutting a small panel.

I kept walking past the next humming machine and shone my light over to where the conveyor belt came out again. I felt ill, and the light wavered in my hand.

Circular fruit was falling into the containers; hypertrophied raspberries, juicy black plums and shining pomegranates. On one side taps were emptying a steady stream of red blood into the waiting line of flasks.

The conveyor belt rose in the darkness towards the lifting circular pillars. I shuddered. I knew where we were exactly. Under the food hall of the Eloi's graceful classical white palaces. The warm blood-laden air drifted past me, and I had trouble keeping my innocuous tea of floured husk down.

Well's time traveller had been dreadfully wrong. It wasn't the Morlocks who were carnivorous, although if you glanced at them gathered around the white metal tables trying to sort out their bits of relatives to take back for burial, you could be mistaken.

I thought again of the Eloi, with their sharp teeth biting into the alleged raspberries and plums, and the redness running down their pointed chins. I recalled grimly, there were no old, no sick, and very few young among them, and certainly no disabled.

I kept pacing along the walkway, oblivious of the whimpering Marvic pressed close against me. The Eloi would long ago have lost the technical knowledge to build the food processing plant. It probably required no maintenance, with its indestructible throbbing heart and corrosion free metal. They certainly understood its purpose and how to feed it, though. I had a sudden memory of the graceful cupola that the Eloi were trying to herd Marvic towards, situated halfway up the hill to the green museum.

The walkway curved around one of the deep wells. I looked up at the faint glow of light at the very top. I wondered which of the wells this one was.

As I stared the light dimmed over and Marvic clung even tighter. A small figure was hurtling down, and the fading echo of the yip yip yip of the Eloi reverberated. The body hurtled past us, still screaming, and then there was utter silence.

I held the light out and looked down, almost dreading what I would see. A fine mesh had broken his fall, and the light for a second reflected off placid eyes. The mesh tilted him onto the conveyer belt beneath me, and he was being moved along slowly. As we watched he rolled over and slumped into unconsciousness.

Marvic pointed to the side of the mesh.

'Look, the go-to-sleep spikes.'

I shone the light down. Around the edge of the mesh were the glitter of needles. I gasped my comprehension and bundled Marvic back along the walkway.

It was a beautifully efficient food processing factory, and naturally anything alive and struggling could wreck delicate machinery. I wondered if the needles tranquilised or killed and shuddered again.

Anything thrown into those wells would end up processed as imitation fruit and back on the Eloi tables. The reason for the Morlocks distance from the Eloi settlements and their

secrecy became clear to me. The sleeping Morlocks would be helpless if the Eloi raided with their silver wands. All the Eloi had to do was push bodies down the wells that were dotted all over the countryside. When they ran out of Morlocks they would throw their own kind in, the old, the helpless and the children.

I thought of the gaily dyed leather belts and sandals. The light shining on the crude woven grass skirts and the feathers woven into the grass belts of Marvic filled me with exquisite pleasure.

What I needed was something to wreck the machinery. If I destroyed the food processing plant, the Eloi could cannibalise each other into extinction, or become vegetarians.

I pounded my bare hand in frustration against the warm stainless steel walls. I had nothing with me, nor had it occurred to me to bring anything that sophisticated in my time machine. I would have to go back in time to get the right sort of equipment to destroy the food processing plant.

The walkway rose and dipped and went around machines. The others appeared to have already left. I could see the tunnel into the wall as a vague shadow on the other side of the cavern. I turned back and went down some steps that led to the floor.

Marvic was shaking so much I picked her up and carried her. I was walking across the paved floor when it dropped from under me and I fell. Fortunately, I landed on my feet, and in the centre of the mesh. I held the light high, looking at the circular panel I had fallen through, but the walls around were shining steel.

Marvic pointed and murmured, and I trod into the centre of the conveyor belt. The edges were lined with needles, and any weight caused them to dart out. I walked along to where the conveyor belt vanished into the huge humming machine, and walked back to where we had fallen. The entire conveyor belt was covered over with the heavy steel mesh, and close to the edges were the needles. There was no way out.

I inspected the belt more closely. It was made of very fine rollers. I tried to force my double-headed light in. I got the first bulbed end in, and the rollers closed up smoothly around its neck. Because of the other head, something was sticking, and with a grating screech the conveyor slowed and stopped.

I sat down by the dim light and Marvic huddled against me. We might starve to death, but we were not going to end up as imitation fruit for the Eloi. As I sat there I wondered about the fate of the other time traveller. He also never got back. Did he discover the secret of the Eloi in time? I thought of their affectionate patting hands. They must have been delighted at our extra size and weight.

I reached in my back pocket for my journal, and felt for my pen. It was gone, as were my coins, and buckle. I peered across into the shadows below the slanting mesh. In a narrow gutter were an accumulation of rings and buckles, and some coins and what looked like my pen. It was logical enough, a magnet to remove anything inedible before it got as far as the first machine.

I was not going to be cheated of recording my knowledge however, and I took a feather from Marvic's girdle. It has a sharp heavy quill, and I sighed my satisfaction.

I bit my hand till it started bleeding, and started writing."

The brown writing with its splutters and blots stopped there. I turned over the pages anxiously. He must have got back, and if he did, where was he?

At the end of the journal I found a brief half page of writing in prosaic blue biro.

"We waited hours and hours, perhaps even days. Marvic slept and I wrote steadily. Marvic eventually stirred and sniffed the air.

"They are back," she said, and called in a high pitched ululation.

The red eyes gathered on the walkway above us.

"Back to the trap," Voln instructed. "We have a rope."

I picked Marvic up, put my journal back in my pocket, and balanced on the sloping mesh. A soft rope fell down.

They dragged us up. In the blackness, all I could see was the circle of red eyes around me.

"There are traps set over all the surfaces down here and on the surface," explained Voln's voice. "Follow closely."

They had buried the remains of their people with due ceremony and then headed back to see what had happened to us.

I asked them to take me to my time machine, and explained I would return with something to destroy the machinery of the caverns.

Marvic wept and protested, but they brought me out through the porcelain museum into the porch. It was barely dawn, and the graceful palaces were silhouetted against the red sky. My machine still glinted, locked onto the ornate roof.

"We will have to go," Voln warned. "It is getting light."

I had one last glimpse of Voln pulling Marvic into the shadows as I climbed towards my time box, and then I turned my dials back to the twentieth century.

No one was particularly interested in my return. I bought my nephew a bike for his fourteenth birthday, and collected the various rather sophisticated explosives I required.

I intend to leave tomorrow. There are a few problems I intend to iron out, like shifting the time machine spatially, but they are only minor.

The journal will be left with the notes on the machine in my safe deposit box, and if Peter, you are reading this, kindly obey my instructions and destroy them."

I came back to the small private room with a shock. The light was fading from the square of window, and I was suddenly aware I was hungry. I must have been sitting for hours.

The door opened. It was the bank manager.

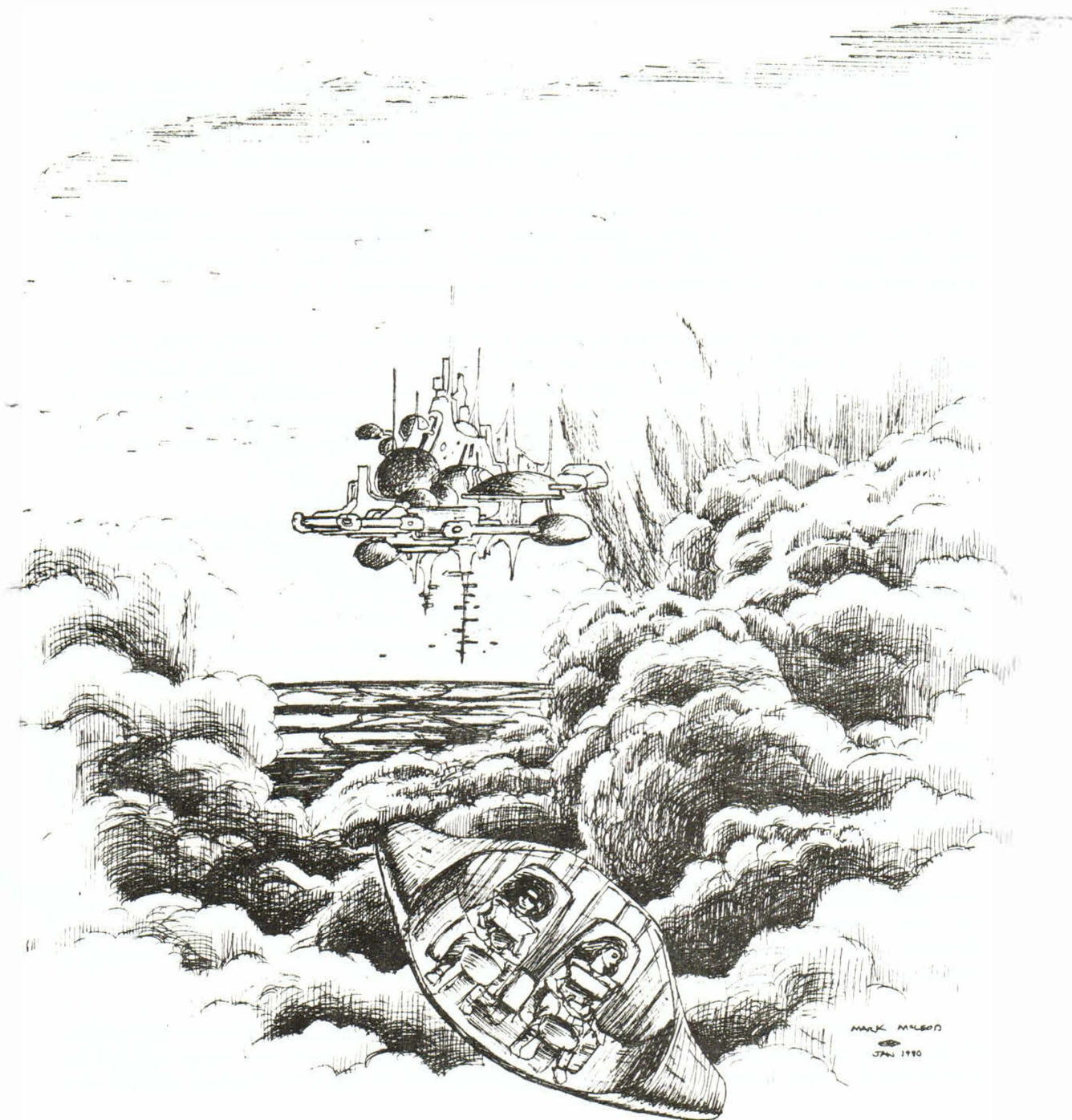
"Time to go," he smiled. "Your uncle leave anything interesting?"

I clutched the notes and journal tighter to me as I rose to follow him out.

"Only my future," I replied.

My uncle wasn't aware of it yet, but he had bequeathed to me his mistress of paradox, time. I was going home to study up on my physics, and start investigating the properties of a particular kind of quartz crystal.

The End



MARK MILSON
JAN 1990

"..THERE'S A STRANGE GREEN GLOW..."

by John Tipper

These words come from the mid-50's sf movie, *THIS ISLAND EARTH*, the script of which was loosely based on a three-part story appearing in *THRILLING WONDER STORIES* in the late 1940's. The scientist Carl Meacham is flying his way back from Washington when his jet gets into difficulties. An "external force" takes over the controls and lands him safely.

TIE happens to be one of my favourite movies, otherwise I wouldn't be writing of it. The sf movies of the 1950's have a special appeal to a growing number of people. For those of you who grew up with *STAR TREK*, or perhaps *STAR WARS*, and who haven't really had much exposure to movies of that period, let me try to explain some of the reasons.

If you thought it was a feeling of nostalgia for the movies of this writer's youth, you'd be incorrect. My family was not very well off and I could list the movies I saw in the 1950's on one hand. *THIS ISLAND EARTH* didn't cross my path until the mid-60's. No, the appeal of these movies rests in their straight forward presentation. The heroes are heroes, the villains are villains. What you see is what you get. By that, I don't mean that the characters aren't believable, that the movies lacked character development.

Certainly, action came before characterisation and there was catering to external pressures. The infamous and high-toned Production Code was still a force to be reckoned with, especially during the McCarthy Era when any writer, producer, actor... in fact, anyone employed by the Hollywood studios, could be "blacklisted" if they so much as shifted onto their left foot. Yet, *THE DAY THE EARTH STOOD STILL* made it onto the screen and is now seen as one genuine attempt to put forward the idea of peaceful co-existence, at a time when anyone who preached Peace was almost certainly branded as "communistic".

The sf movies of this period had no blockbuster to duplicate, as happened to those which came after *STAR WARS*. Sf was just another movie genre. No one felt the need to inject token humour or racial minorities, for example. Whether such tokens are good or bad, is outside the scope of this short article. The only token at the time was a romance, but in those days the couple would have been fortunate to have exchanged a kiss!

FORBIDDEN PLANET, *TIE*, *THEM*, *EARTH vs THE FLYING SAUCERS*... I can view these movies time and time again and still catch points of interest not noted previously, but I don't bother with trying to read things into them that weren't intended by the writers and directors. These movies were made to entertain, first and foremost. Well, after making a decent return for the studio!

They had about them a certain innocence. The scripts did usually reflect an awe or fear of the newly released power of atomic energy, but you could sit back and *enjoy* them from start to finish. How many sf films of today can be enjoyed so literally? Perhaps the first two

STAR WARS movies, ALIENS II and a handful of others, in my humble opinion.

The preceding words were contained in an article I wrote some time ago for a Victorian Doctor who apazine, STRANGE MATTER, which may explain why I never received any feedback. Upon reflection, I realised that (to me, at least) a similar contrast exists when looking at sf *literature* from then and now, 30 and more years later. Or, at what passes for sf literature these days.

The most recent first edition "hardcore" sf volume sitting in my library is Clarke's A FALL OF MOONDUST, published in 1961, so you can assume that I just don't like the majority of sf churned out by today's fantasy-orientated writers. (No doubt a lot of readers will dispute that statement.) Fantasy is, after all, the easiest genre of all in which to write. Anything and everything goes, with logic and believability thrown out of the window. This is not to say that I don't have favourite tales of fantasy. De Camp and Pratt's THE INCOMPLETE ENCHANTER and THE CASTLE OF IRON come to mind but these classics were penned quite some time ago.

I always regarded the crime story as being the most undemanding genre of all, having accumulated a pile of old SEXTON BLAKE library editions. It wasn't until I came across William F. Nolan's DASHIELL HAMMETT: A LIFE AT THE EDGE that I realised how much research was required to produce a really good crime story. Hammett created THE MALTESE FALCON and THE THIN MAN and this book is a great read, if you're interested in how a top writer develops his characters and plots. (ISBN 0 213 16886 3. My edition was published in the UK by Arthur Barker, 1983.) The author of this book penned the original LOGAN'S RUN novel, as well as biographies on John Huston and Ernest Hemmingway.

Some background information on Hammett will not go astray. He based his stories on events he experienced while a Pinkerton agent. In 1921, the pay was six dollars a day. Hammett tracked down counterfeiters, missing people and bank robbers, fell off a taxi during one chase and was hit on the head by a brick! Although the latter event left a dent in his skull, he refused to see a doctor. His most famous case was the so-called Fatty Arbuckle Scandal, which changed the course of Hollywood history.

If you're interested in finding out what went on during Joe McCarthy's "blacklisting" times, this book gives an insight. If you found the movies of the 30's and 40's somewhat lacking in sex, you should refer to the original novels, which were not bound by Will Hays Production Code as mentioned earlier. Most readers would know that movies were not to show such "items" as double-beds or dances "suggesting or representing sexual actions or indecent passion" but script-writers really had trouble in expressing themselves, if a 1933 inter-departmental memo from RKO Studios can be taken as a sample. The following words are listed as no-nos: alley-cat, bag, broad, chippies, cocotte, courtesan, dago, dame, eunuch, fanny, filthy, guts, harlot, hell cat, hellion, hellish, house-broken, hussy, in your hat, jeez, kike, lousy, madam, mistress, moll, nigger, nude, nursery, nuts, on the make, pansy, punk, rump, scut, sex, she's nothing more than a ..., son-of-a, trade, travelling salesman, farmer's daughter, trollop, virtuous, want you, wench... (this comes from another interesting book called BEHIND THE SCREEN by Kenneth MacGowan). If production companies wanted their movies distributed, they had to operate within the code, and consequently faced a fine of US\$25,000 if they broke it. Now, back to the written word, after that digression.

How much genuine research does the average sf/fantasy writer (or even the top liners) put into their efforts these days? Does a fantasy writer put in any research, or even need to? It never ceases to amaze me how readable stories written by the really good sf authors more than thirty years ago remain to this day. Even those postulating events and scenarios which have not come about. But of course back in the days when sf wasn't fashionable they had to make their

stories as believable as possible, if they wanted to escape the world of the pulps.

I'm not blaming the writers of today for their lack of effort, and if the old-timers want to trade on their past works, who's to blame them? I'm sure I'd do the same, if I had any past works. Clarke will always remain my favourite sf author, even though he sold his soul by expanding SENTINEL into 2001. A boring film turned into an even more boring and senseless book say I, ever so humble..

Maybe fantasy readers can tell me why they read the genre, a lot of which (judging from what used to appear in my mail from various publishers) would never have appeared between hard covers 30 years ago, or even in paperback. Such readers probably wouldn't dream of picking up an old pulp, or even of opening an old Lensman novel, yet I take off my invisible hat to those writers many decades ago who had the imagination and perhaps anti-social desire to write of events, inventions and characters outside of the mainstream of then current fashion.

Those writers could be excused for their lack of research, as they were the first to venture onto such relatively untried ground. Not so the writers of today, who one would have expected should have learnt from their peers. Is the current lack of expertise a reflection on the declining education standards of today? Have today's hack writers spent their adolescence reading comic books rather than Clarke, Heinlein and Bradbury? Did STAR WARS have such a profound effect on their juvenile fantasies?

To return to today's apparent preference for fantasy, is it due more to a nostalgic desire for fairy tales, an urge to once again experience the imagined joys of childhood? Why are so many readers so keen on keeping the company of dragons and other weird beasts? Is all this simply a sign of immaturity, coupled with a lack of ability to cope with day to day living? Lots of questions with lots of possible answers. Personally, I'd be completely happy if some kind soul would present me with a #10 Meccano (Erector Set for US readers) construction outfit.

Perhaps fantasy artists are responsible for the growth of fantasy writing. A dragon is, after all, so much easier to draw than a realistic space ship. A castle often appears a lot more spectacular than a futuristic city and is once again, a much easier object to draw. Stonework is more appealing than glass and evokes more vivid imaginings of what may be on the other side. Mace and broadsword are far more exciting than laser-gun, and so on...

When all is said and done, maybe fantasy simply appeals to many as an escape from a dreadful future, as represented by "hardcore" sf, into an impossible past. It will be interesting to see if the recent removal of the USSR as the Enemy and the possibility of more co-operation in space will result in an increase in popularity of the genuine sf story.

Although fantasy outnumbers sf on the shelves of most bookshops, there have been very few successful filmed efforts, although this isn't really a valid point, a robot being far easier to portray than a dragon. Still, I can't recall any successful fantasy films, apart from THE WIZARD OF OZ and the second version of THE THIEF OF BAGDAD - Korda, US/UK 1940. (I consider the STAR WARS movies to be sf, even if the science is a little thin at times...) Of course, this opinion is open to criticism, as I don't have a list of all-time money-making sf/f movies. However, if any reader can suggest a fantasy movie which was monetarily successful, I can check it on an alphabetical list. Once again, this isn't necessarily valid, as one would need to compare the admission prices in respect of films from different years.

ON THE BEACH, as an example, did extremely well when first released in the late 50's on the North American market, taking over US\$4 million, while 20,000 LEAGUES UNDER THE SEA managed US\$11 million five years earlier, a huge return for the time, although this would include a number of re-releases in the case of the Disney classic (another film which bores me almost to tears).

THEY LEFT

by Lorraine Cormack

The water ran down the stream bed and trickled into a hole. Alain realised that it was the last of the water. The stream was now dry.

'I think we're too late,' Lani said, somewhere behind him.

'Yes.' He was only vaguely surprised by the water's desertion. The trees on the bank, their leaves now browning around the edges, seemed unprepared for the sudden disappearance. The grass had apparently anticipated the fact long ago and followed the water on its long journey to Heaven knew where.

He turned his back on the once-stream to face the settlement. Lani wasn't in sight. He supposed that she was looking.

The door of the house nearest him was closed, like all the others. Compelled by a deeply ingrained habit he knocked, but didn't wait before entering. No-one would answer.

It must have been the living room. The furniture had been expensive once, smart, with a high sheen of comfort. Too many years of use had worn it to a level of comfort below that of the cheapest chain-store furniture.

Good housekeeping had not been able to keep the untidiness of living at bay. Magazines spilled out of a rack. One, its cover torn, had skidded across the floor to be half hidden by a dropped jacket. An inexpertly folded newspaper lay on a chair. Flowers, brought in to brighten the dreary house, had died in their vase. Records were unevenly lined up in their cabinet. He could read the name "Jan." on one pulled out much further than the others. An ever-thickening layer of dust coated everything.

He went from room to room, glancing briefly at the contents of some, looking closely at others. The debris of living lay everywhere - forgotten books, clothes, cooking utensils. When he reached a child's room he stepped just inside the door to make his survey.

Toys scattered the floor, abandoned went they no longer held interest. A teddy bear with a yellow bow tied to one ear lay forlornly in the middle of an unmade bed. One corner of the room was completely taken up by an elaborate game involving dozens of coloured figurines. A green one was contorted in screaming agony or ecstasy. A blue seemed about to kill an orange, unless it was the savagery of passion twisting it's body.

He reached out to touch a grey and white rocking horse, then pulled his hand back with distaste. The horse scarcely moved.

'Alain?'

'In here.' He could feel her arriving in the doorway, didn't bother to look around. The horse stopped.

'They're all gone.'

'Are you sure?' He turned his head slightly so that he could see her.

Her hands were clasped together, high on the door frame, supporting her weight. She was looking out of the front door, presenting her profile to him.

'I've looked. And called.'

He turned away from the horse abruptly, brushed past her. 'Let's go.'

'Where?'

He stared at the aging hills around them.

'It's sad,' Lani said, apparently realizing that he would not respond. 'They used to do so well.'

Her bright yellow hair was the only colour he had seen anywhere. Limp browns took no interest in what they adorned; whites had long since given up any fight and submitted to grayness. Any attempt to bring colour in had, he suspected, quickly been given up in the face of insurmountable odds.

'Pretty girl! So very, very pretty!' a wondering voice, laced with fear, sprang up to their left.

The beard had been growing unchecked for weeks, probably months. The clothes had possibly been expensive and elegant once. Since then, someone had half-heartedly tried to clean the smears of mud and dirt that almost obliterated the fading colours of the cloth. Small tears had gone unattended; some were now unravelling into large holes. The scraggy little man regarded them with eyes sunk far deeper in his face than nature had ever intended.

'Is he mad?' Lani murmured, still with one hand on the front doorpost. Alain was not at all sure that the white-haired man had not heard her quiet comment. Not that Alain himself really cared.

'I doubt it. Probably just wanted to get our attention without committing himself to anything he might regret.' He didn't lower his voice or turn his head to look at her.

There was a silence. If the man had heard their exchange he wasn't going to let them know it. His eyes flicked up and down, quickly absorbing the slender pair. Alain knew without looking that Lani would have fastened a disturbed gaze on the old man.

'What happened here?' Alain asked. He wasn't particularly interested, but there would have to be a report. In triplicate. Lani as too emotional to write it accurately.

'They died. Or left. Why did you come?' The voice was wary.

'We heard there was trouble here.' Lani took a step forward. 'We were sent to help.'

'How many died? How many left? Where did they go? When?' Alain prepared to

write it down.

'I'll show you.' He set off at quite a fast pace; maybe he wasn't such an old man after all.

'Oh dear,' Lani murmured. She matched her pace to Alain's

Nothing on the hill was any different to the settlement, except that there were no houses. The path was as rough, dusty and uncared for as the part of it running between the houses. On the hill the lack of grass made it difficult to define without the houses on either side. The same now-dry stream bed coincided with the path in places.

'That many died,' the old man said.

Alain and Lani looked down the other side of the hill. At first the graves had been marked with elaborately carved, carefully placed stones; many of them were now being worn down by weather. Gradually these gave way to wooden crosses that became rougher and rougher as they went further from the foot of the incline. They in turn were replaced by sticks bound together in the shape of a cross and lopsidedly stuck in the ground.

Alain made a note of his estimate of the number of graves.

'Were any of the deaths natural?'

Lani turned horrified eyes on him. 'Alain! You don't think... Not really!' She seemed to forget why they were there at all, Alain thought.

'Oh yes, of course... at first. Old age mostly. A few through illness.' The old man was disinterested in this.

'How many?'

'Less than a tenth of those.'

Alain was not particularly surprised. Their briefing was sketchy - inadequate some might have said - leading him to expect the worst. This wasn't excessive.

'So many?' Lani said softly. 'How many escaped?'

He shrugged. 'Twenty... thirty.'

'Where are they?' Alain asked him.

'Hiding.' The wariness was sharp again.

'Where?'

'We want to help,' Lani said. She was looking at the graves instead of the man.

'What could two of you do?'

'We can ask for back-up if we see fit,' Alain said.

'I doubt that you would. We're hardly worth a salvage operation in your eyes - are we?' The shrewd eyes looked at Alain sideways.

'Show us the others,' Alain said.

They were clustered tightly around the ragged huts. Evidently they were forced to sleep eight or nine to a one-roomed shack - the only alternative was sleeping in the open.

Alain noticed that they had gone to no particular trouble over the shelters. If it rained they would probably leak. They certainly wouldn't stand against a harsh storm. The walls were lopsided, with gaping holes. The doors were hung with pieces of ragged cloth, too short and torn to do any real good, and uniform in their threadbareness.

'Oh, Alain...' Lani reached out a hand to an ancient child. It skittered back wildly.

'No,' Alain said before she could move towards it. He knew without looking the enquiry that would be in her eyes. 'There's nothing for us to do. Nothing we can do.'

'We can't just leave them.'

'We have no choice.' He looked at the shattered people before him. Crumbling men, fearful women, wary children. All clustering together here, hiding in the hope of a little safety. 'Not really.'

'Alain...' Her voice was barely a whisper.

He walked briskly back the way they had come. She lingered for a moment, then nodded resignedly, admitting the accuracy in his assessment. She followed him with well-trained, unhurried swiftness. Neither looked back.

'What did you expect?' the old man asked a woman with pleading eyes. 'Help?'

the end



THE SCIENCE FICTION FILMS OF 1953

AN OVERVIEW, by Glen Chapman

The great renaissance of the modern sf film (started in 1950 with *DESTINATION MOON*) was still in full swing in 1953. The genre was nevertheless facing great difficulty in gaining respectability. Although the low budget down-grading of the genre was yet to come, a few films were released in 1953 that marked the beginning of the trend. Many of the films from this year suffered from an almost crushing mediocrity, but enough good productions still surfaced with a quality across the total monetary scale to make the year a worthwhile study.

1953 was dominated by alien contact films, and to a lesser extent, invasion films. It is then fitting that one of the most remembered films of the year should be *WAR OF THE WORLDS*. Loosely based on the H.G. Wells novel of the same name, it attracted by far the biggest budget (reported to be around \$800,000) of any film released that year. Drawing only limited elements from the original story, such as the style and direction of the invasion, it totally ignored much of Wells' commentary on the human condition. As a result the film was much maligned by many science fiction readers when released, though it still thrilled a far less discerning public.

George Pal, the producer of the film, was one of the first film makers to make a viable living from sf and fantasy films, having secured hits with *DESTINATION MOON* (1950) and *WHEN WORLDS COLLIDE* (1951), as well as a number of fantasy subjects, including *THE GREAT RUPERT* (1949). He chose to up-date the storyline to the contemporary USA. Further, he removed the Martian tripod fighting machines and replaced them with gliding dish-shaped weapons inspired by the lines of the manta-ray, or devil fish. The other, and perhaps least Wellsian of the changes, was the inclusion of strong religious overtones, even to the extent of a heavenly choir joining in for the final credits.

The film opens slowly enough with a large meteor crashing near a small town not far from Los Angeles. Events move quickly as it becomes apparent that a full invasion from Mars has begun. The army encircle the meteor, a climactic battle takes place and the army is decimated. Returning to Los Angeles, a decision is made to drop an A bomb on the advancing Martians; this also fails. Man is in rout all over the world as final resistance begins to crumble. The central characters, Dr Forester and Miss Van Buren, await their fate in the ruins of a church as the Martians systematically destroy Los Angeles. Suddenly the fighting stops. Emerging from the church they are greeted by the sight of crashed machines. It is then explained that the Martians, whose blood is unable to carry an immune system, have succumb to the common cold.

The film's imagery is dynamic, and it is not hard to see who over two thirds of the film's budget was devoted to the special effects. The film is remarkable in it being only one of two

films made in the USA in that decade which were devoted to the total invasion of Earth (the other being EARTH VS THE FLYING SAUCERS (1956)). Further testament to the film's production qualities was its three Oscar nominations for that year: film editing, sound production and special effects, winning one for the last category.

Another special effects orientated film of 1953 was the haunting BEAST FROM 20,000 FATHOMS. This film is a total opposite to WAR OF THE WORLDS. Whereas with W.O.T.W. the threat is perceived as external, BEAST deals with a threat created by man's own stupidity. More to the point, an atomic explosion, the said explosion being detonated at the north pole.

As a consequence a giant dinosaur is awoken from the ice, striking out for its ancient breeding grounds, located in the Hudson Bay. After a number of sightings, largely ignored, the creature surfaces in New York harbour. Running gun battles between defense forces and the creature extend into the night. Rather humorously the police manage to loose track of a 40 ton dinosaur in the middle of New York. Finally re-emerging from the harbour at Cony Island, it becomes entangled in a roller coaster.

It had been found that an atomic isotope fired into the creature's neck will kill it. As this is done the roller coaster catches fire, the combined effects being more than enough to destroy the creature.

This film marks a number of firsts in science fiction cinema. Most importantly it is the prototype giant monster movie, a theme which was to go on and dominate the second half of the decade. The film also led studios to believe (for better or worse) that very low budget films could - given the right circumstances - make enormous profits. In this film's case a budget of around \$200,000 realised a gross profit in the region of two million dollars. As a result of this a rash of "giant monsters on the loose" films bombarded the public, slowly declining in quality as the decade wore on. Most notable in this field are THEM (1954) and TARANTULA (1955). However, it is a mistake to include the Japanese super monster or Kaiju Biga films, by their own admittance the Japanese consider themselves far more influenced by such films as PREHISTORIC WORLD (1926) and KING KONG (1933).

The film's storyline is based around a short story by Ray Bradbury, THE FOG HORN, which manifests in the film leading to the haunting scene where a coastal lighthouse is destroyed by the monster, totally filmed in silhouette.

Of the monster itself: it was brought to life by a young Ray Harryhausen, receiving his first screen credit after being an under-study to Willis O'Brien, the creator of both King Kong and Mighty Joe Young. Using stop motion techniques developed by O'Brien, Harryhausen parades the creature around the screen in a series of shots that were to become mandatory for later monsters. Harryhausen's work for this film can't be called imaginative, but with bigger budgets and more experience he went on to create such masterpieces as the Sinbad series and JASON AND THE ARGONAUTS (1960).

Ray Bradbury again found himself involved in science fiction cinema in 1953, this time he had a rather large hand in the screen play for IT CAME FROM OUTER SPACE. The film marks the entry of Jack Arnold into the genre. Arnold's use of desert settings and strong belief that man can overcome any external threat thrown at him from nature became trade marks in the genre, as exemplified in this other works such as the CREATURE FROM THE BLACK LAGOON (1954) and the classic INCREDIBLE SHRINKING MAN (1957). The film was shot in 3D, thus showing the first attempt at putting novelty back into sf on the screen. Sadly either Arnold wasn't comfortable, or didn't understand the full potential of 3D and it remains largely unused for the film, although the film itself works equally well seen flat, or with glasses.

Perhaps as a result of Bradbury's involvement, or despite it, the film has gone on to be

EDWARD L. ALPERSON
presents



STARRING HELENA CARTER · ARTHUR FRANZ · JIMMY HUNT

CASTING BY LEIF ERICKSON · HILLARY BROOKE · MORRIS ANKRUM · MAX WAGNER · BILL PHIPPS · MILBURN STONE · JANINE PERREAU
AN EDWARD L. ALPERSON PRODUCTION · Released by 20th Century-Fox

SCREENPLAY BY WILLIAM CAMERON MENZIES · RICHARD BLAKE · EDWARD L. ALPERSON, JR. · RAUL KRAUSHAAR
ASSOCIATE PRODUCER

PREHISTORIC SEA-GIANT RAGES AGAINST CITY!



**THEY COULDN'T BELIEVE THEIR EYES!
THEY COULDN'T ESCAPE THE TERROR!
AND NEITHER WILL YOU!**

WARNER BROS.
PRESENT

The Beast From 20,000 Fathoms

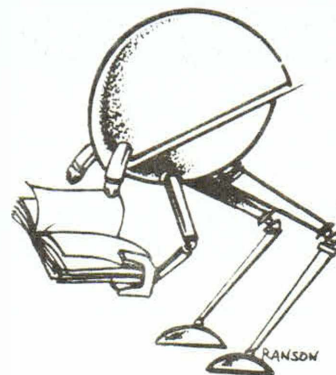
CAST OF THOUSANDS! OVER A YEAR IN THE MAKING!

CHRISTIAN PAULA RAYMOND DEAN KELLEYWAY KENNETH TOBEY JACK PENNICK

SAVED BY THE SATURDAY EVENING POST STORY BY RAY RABSON

SCREENPLAY BY JACOB ARONSON AND JACOB ARONSON

WARNER BROS. 



regarded as one of the most cerebral sf films of the decade. What makes the subject so unusual is the inclusion of basically friendly aliens (a rare theme even today).

The film opens with Carlson being the only witness to a meteor crash. He tells the local authorities, but a search fails to find it. Continuing the search himself Carlson finds the object and rightly deduces that it is not from Earth. Soon people from a nearby town begin to disappear, being replaced by zombie doubles. Carlson locates the source of the trouble and finds that the alien's ship has in fact broken down, thus requiring humans to act as slaves to repair it.

As the alien's need more and more labour, the town becomes alerted to what's going on, and storm the alien base. Carlson holds off the attack barely long enough for the creatures to make good their escape.

Of all the films to see the light of day during 1953, perhaps the most under-rated and in some ways the oddest film to appear was INVADERS FROM MARS. Of the successful films this one had by far the smallest budget, rated around \$150,000, yet what was achieved with this is staggering. The film's director William Menzies, whose pedigree was impeccable, having worked on THINGS TO COME (1936) and as director on GONE WITH THE WIND (1938), was making his last film.

The story opens with a young boy witnessing a UFO land in a disused sand pit behind his house. In the morning he convinces his father to go and investigate. The father returns some hours later strangely different. Soon two policemen suffer the same fate. Finally the boy's mother similarly turns against the boy.

Desperate, he turns to the police, who he discovers are in a similar state. A nurse, thinking him mentally disturbed, treats him. In the process she is convinced of his story. It is revealed that a rocket base is located nearby and that an act of sabotage has occurred. Convinced the two events are related the boy approaches the military. After explaining the situation to the commander of the base, the general believes the boy and orders an attack on the pit.

During the conquest the boy confronts the leader of the Martians. It is explained that Man's pre-occupation with atomic weapons and space craft is considered dangerous and they, the Martians, plan to stop the experiments. The military manage to destroy the Martians and return everyone back to normal.

The final shot of the American release shows the boy awakening to see the invasion really beginning. However, the European version treats the story as real and ends it there. Why this was done has never been explained. Although it is interesting to note that all the new prints of the film being released for TV are in fact the European version.

What makes this film so odd is the treatment of the boy and the depiction of his environment around him through his own eyes. Menzies used a great deal of oversized sets to illustrate the film's point of view. Most notable, of course, in the police station scenes. The said same treatment is said to be a manifestation of the communist threat then perceived to be infiltrating the US.

To be fair to the film, this is a little wide of the mark. Menzies was English, thus not exposed to the same stimuli as perhaps Arnold, or Robert Wise. Adding credence to the argument is the successful remake of the film in 1987 to which many of the main elements remained unchanged, yet still seems quite relevant today.

The four films thus far discussed make up probably the most worthwhile entries of the year. Most of the remaining films range from workmanlike, such as PHANTOM FROM

SPACE, involving an invisible alien who crashes on Earth and finally dies when his air supply is gone, to down right deplorable, such as ROBOT MONSTER. I'll make mention of this film only by virtue of it attaining cult status in the early eighties as one of the worst films ever made. Director-producer-come-writer John Tucker wobbled between claims of sheer genius and suicide as he tried to defend this film, even at one point threatening legal action against a local LA radio station for derogatory remarks made about the film.

The film was made on a budget of \$80,000, but looks as though far less was used. The central character, the "Ro-man", consisted of a man in a rented monkey suit topped with a diving helmet, resplendent in a TV antenna. He charges around the set madly looking for the last survivors of the human race who, protected by a force field, need to be killed individually.

Going about his appointed task, the Ro-man falls in love with one of the young women. Succumbing to the human/alien love dilemma he waves his arms madly as the king of the Ro-men destroys his wayward henchman. As with INVADERS FROM MARS, a young boy awakes at the end of the film to find that it all has been a bad dream. Sadly, Tucker didn't have the same luxury.

In a genre largely dominated by US ideas and production houses, it is interesting to note both Mexico and Britain had their first productions in the genre this year. The Mexicans released EL MONSTRO RESUCITAGO, which is loosely based on the Frankenstein's monster theme. A theme that was to dominate almost to distraction the output of Latin American sf cinema well into the 70's. They did, however, occasionally break the mould with CREATURE FROM THE BLACK LAGOON style films.

Britain's entry is of a far higher quality. THE FOUR SIDED TRIANGLE signalled Hammer Studios entry into the genre, who later became a major force in horror productions in the late 50's. The British attempts at science fiction tended away from the spectacular and concentrated more on mood and scripting (a trend that continues today with such TV productions as DR WHO and the excellent 1990).

THE FOUR SIDED TRIANGLE deals with a scientist who perfects a machine that can clone people. He accidentally duplicates his fiancée, who promptly falls in love with a rival. To make matters worse the original also falls for the same man, thus a four sided love triangle is created.

Lastly, 1953 signalled the end of an era, the 15 chapter Columbia production THE LOST PLANET became the last of the great serial sf adventures. Serials had been in decline since the late forties, coinciding with the market penetration of television. Columbia, along with a number of other studios, quickly moved into the new medium with such series as SPACE PATROL and SPACE CADET.

Looking back now, after some forty years, it is pleasing to see how many of the films have aged so well. The only one that seems to have suffered to any great degree is BEAST FROM 20,000 FATHOMS, though it still enchants with its naivety. If for no other reason, western fans will find Lee Van Cleef's first speaking part as the shipper charged with shooting the creature, of interest (although it is extremely difficult to find a copy of the film with this scene intact).

As though fate had a hand, his main nemesis in those later westerns, Clint Eastwood, also made his debut in a monster film, TARANTULA made the following year, playing the fighter pilot who napalms the giant spider.

Having discussed the films, I have made an effort to track down places where they may be viewed. Also at the end of this article you will find a complete list of all 1953's sf releases.

WAR OF THE WORLDS: A brand new print of this film is shown regularly on Channel 10; it is also widely available, although in a slightly shorter version, on video.

BEAST FROM 20,000 FATHOMS: Again Channel 10 gives this fairly regular airings, although the print is only black and white. The original murky green tinting for the monster seems to have come out in the wash.

IT CAME FROM OUTER SPACE: The 3D print of this film is in Australia, and has occasionally been shown at the Mandolin theatre in Sydney. Also the ABC have the rights to the "flat copy".

INVADERS FROM MARS: Yet again Channel 10, on the Elvira's Mystery Theatre, although it is the European version. If desperate, the remake is available through most video shops.

ROBOT MONSTER: Available through specialist video shops. The Valhalla cinema in Glebe shows this about every twelve months as a triple feature along with PLAN 9 FROM OUTER SPACE and the bizarre GLEN, GLENDA.

FOUR SIDED TRIANGLE: To date only available from the USA. Some copies may have leaked into Australia.

COMPLETE LISTING OF 1953 SF FILMS.

ABBOT AND COSTELLO GO TO MARS. The pair blast off for downtown Mars, but land on Venus, which is populated by Miss Universe contestants. Except for the rocket flight the film is boring and badly short on laughs.

ABBOT AND COSTELLO MEET DR JEKYLL AND MISTER HYDE. After having met all of Universal's other monsters, the boys are transferred back to London to meet Boris Karloff, playing the central character. Take away Karloff and you don't have much left.

BEAST FROM 20,000 FATHOMS. Refer main text.

CAT WOMAN OF THE MOON. The moon is inhabited by telepathic women, wearing leotards. They attempt to dominate the crew of an American expedition. Due to a falling out amongst the women, the men make a break for it and return to Earth.

DONOVAN'S BRAIN. A man's brain is removed from his body to try and save him from death. Robbed of his physical body he uses telepathy to try and control those around him, before being killed by a bolt of lightning. For the trivia buffs the future Nancy Reagan plays the medico's wife.

FOUR SIDED TRIANGLE. Refer main text.

INVADERS FROM MARS. Refer main text.

IT CAME FROM OUTER SPACE. Refer main text.

KILLER APES. A scientist attempts to breed vicious apes, in the hope of selling them for fun and profit. Has a good try at knocking ROBOT MONSTER off its throne.

THE LOST PLANET. A mad fiend, set on world domination, kidnaps a leading scientist. As usual, things go wrong. The villain tries to escape but his robot space pilot miscalculates the course and he is blasted into infinity.

MAGNETIC MONSTERS. Richard Carlson, hacking up for his fourth film this year, combats a new isotope that eats energy. Finally brought to heel by a massive 9 hundred million volt blast. Far better than it sounds.

MESA OF THE LOST WOMEN. This time the scientist is trying to breed vicious women rather than apes. As usual, he fails. The mesa referred to in the title then explodes, leaving only one survivor.

EL MONSTRO RESUCITADO Nice twist to the Frankenstein story. This time the monster turns out to be nice kind of guy and the doctor turns out to be the monster. Odd idea though - Mexicans making a film based on an English novel, starring an American, set in the Balkans.

NEANDERTHAL MAN. A mad scientist invents a serum that turns him into an ape man. Typical drive-in fodder before he is killed by a sabre toothed tiger of his own invention.

PHANTOM FROM SPACE. Refer main text.

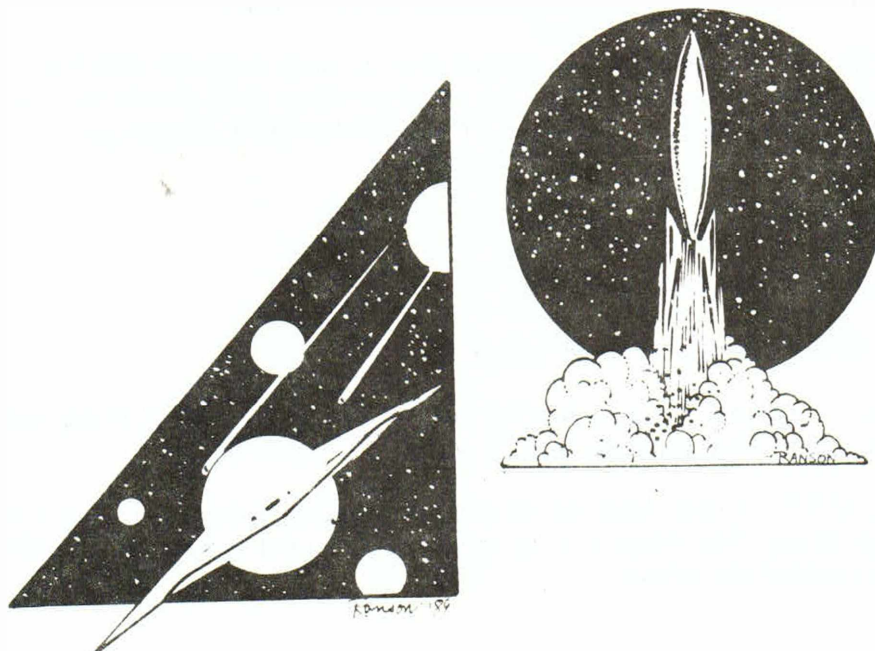
PROJECT MOONBASE. Originally made as a TV pilot. Concerns a man and a woman who are stranded on the moon and are married by satellite. Don't loose any sleep over this thing - chances are pretty good you will never get to see it.

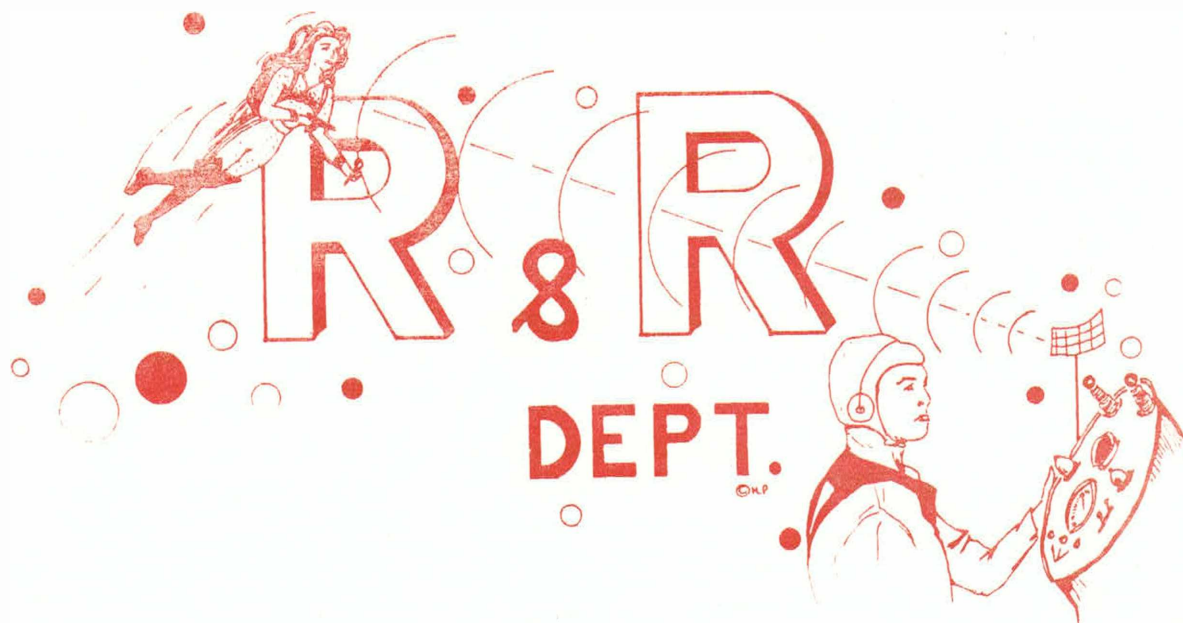
ROBOT MONSTER. Refer main text.

SPACEWAYS. Murder mystery set on Earth, in space, back on Earth, etc, etc. Claimed at the time to be the only case Sherlock Holmes couldn't solve. Most people couldn't even figure out what the crime was. Worth a look if you are desperate.

THE TWONKY. Based on a very good short story from the forties. A television from another universe, the twonky tries to dictate life until the hero fights back and turns the set off. The short story had a far more downbeat ending in which the hero is killed. Then the set patiently awaits its new master.

WAR OF THE WORLDS Refer main text.





LORRAINE T. CORMACK, 24 West St, Bathurst NSW 2795.

THE SUMMER OF '92 was beautifully plausible - obviously very carefully worked out. But to be honest, I can't see the American administration passing up a chance to play soldiers, election year or no.

Regarding your laments about Australian fanzines: perhaps one of the difficulties is relatively small circulations, and the problem of drawing new fans in. I wasn't aware until recently that such things existed, and I bet I wasn't alone in my ignorance. It was sheer luck that I happened across a couple of addresses. It seems to me that without some sort of publicity, fanzines are always going to be limited in the scope of contributors and (often) quality of production.

The problem, of course, is how to publicise them, and where to get the money to do it. I'm short on suggestions... However, I edit the University of Canberra's campus newspaper (we used to be Canberra CAE, if you've heard of us). I should be able to slot in an article, including some addresses, if you think that would help anyone? I'm studying for a BA in Professional Writing. Not journalism - things like script writing, novels, short stories... all useful stuff when it comes to getting a job. I don't write many articles, mainly because I find it so hard to find ideas, while I don't often have that problem with stories. It's a funny degree in many ways, as you can't teach someone talent...

I thought that all the fiction in TM 66 was of a particularly high standard. I enjoyed it all. LETHE by Grai Hughes was especially chilling because it was so incredibly real. It's so easy to imagine that happening in just that way.

THE ALPHA EXPERIMENT by Margaret Pearce, too, showed an excellent perception of the predictable ways humans tend to behave. Rebelling against authority and fighting among themselves is the least of it.

Jozef Szekeres' PORTFOLIO was a lovely addition. The drawings were beautifully executed - such attention to detail. They were rather male, though, which is something I've noticed in a lot of fantasy art.

JOHN TIPPER, PO Box 487, Strathfield, NSW 2135.

Peggy Ranson's cover on THE MENTOR 66 is a beautiful piece of work. (I may not like

reading fantasy but I *love* fine artwork in any genre.) All of the artwork in this issue is of a similarly high standard and I was particularly happy to see Jozef's work showcased in this issue, as I was tremendously impressed by the art he displayed at CONSPIRE. Jozef, I have a photo of you chatting to Dudley Simpson. Let me know if you want a copy, as I don't have your address.

Another story from David Tansey, and once again I find it the best story in the issue. To almost repeat what I said in my previous loc, David writes in a clear, easy to digest style. Quite a contrast to that adopted by the author of LETHE, for example.

I always find the tales of other fanzine editors printing methods and related problems vastly entertaining. Having never used any equipment apart from a photocopier to produce a zine, I'd like to "doff me lid" to those of you who have survived spirit duplicators and other seemingly nasty instruments of torture! My current Sanyo 1200Z copier is about to pass 200,000 copies and is due for replacement, once I summon up the courage to cough up the required \$\$\$\$. Most likely I'll be hiring a genuine Xerox, as they now come with a plate (rather than a drum) which is replaced every 20,000 copies under the warranty agreements. I remain in awe of those of you commanding offset copiers.

The reason I chose offset is that it gives clear images for artwork and the black stays on forever. And, of course, the lengths of the print runs I do. I print DATA magazine for ASTREX, the Sydney Star Trek Club. The cover is usually in at least three colours and I do about 320 copies. The zine is at least 50 pages, and sometimes 60. That makes 8,000 sheets of paper per issue, that is 16,000 passes through the machine. Or 96,000 per year for that zine alone. Sue and I probably do as much again ourselves. That is, about 200,000 pages per year. Which is, by your figures, a new machine per year. The offset press is built to take this (the one we have is about 25 years old); with 5,000 sheets per hour (83 sheets per minute) it's a bit faster than a photocopier... - Ron.

DAVID TANSEY, GPO Box 2061, Canberra ACT 2601.

The review section is mandatory reading. One thing I like is that you review not only the new releases but new editions of old favourites (eg REACH FOR TOMORROW and TAU ZERO). One thing about SF is that older novels and collections *can* withstand the test of time. No one person can ever read *all* the best SF, and it is important to separate the wheat from the chaff. So it doesn't really matter if you read TAU ZERO in 1970 or 1990.

The artwork portfolio was something I'd never seen in the previous issues of THE MENTOR I happened to have. It came as a welcome surprise. The foldout "centrefold" was a novelty. If Jozef Szekeres is producing this level of work at 19 then he has a big career ahead of him. I must say my favourites of the lot were the more original themes, ie, the drawings on pages 31 and 39, as opposed to the ones on, say pages 37 and 43, the kind which you often see. One question, why is the drawing on page 41 only half-finished? Was it deliberate, to emphasize the female character?

The originals of most of Jozef's works are A3 (that is, double the page size I use in TM) and are in black and white. You can imagine what the Lindsay type and the foldout look like that size.

That drawing was only a sketch for the completed work - I included it in the portfolio to give the reader some idea of the extent of Jozef's works. - Ron.

To the LoCs, especially the two concerning my story THE SUMMER OF '92 in THE MENTOR 65. Firstly, Julie Hawkins' letter. Yes, it's not a story in itself, there is no plot, no characterisation; but the point was not to entertain the reader but to educate him/her. There was no space for a full story-line, but in a different forum I might have time and space to do one.

Thanks for the favourable comments, Julie, but if the story became boring for you I hope it was because it came too close to reality.

Now to the inimitable John Tipper's letter. I have met John once, briefly, at the March 1989 Conspire convention in Canberra, and we have corresponded and exchanged fanzines since then. To attempt to answer John's queries:

(Yes, John, I did get your pun that you were happy to "attack" my story, yuk-yuk.)

#1. ANZUS only requires, by my understanding, that the US "consult" with us if we are attacked, not to automatically rush to our defense. Even if it requires the US to help us, they may wriggle out of it for reasons outlined in the story.

#2. Re Indonesia's supply of refined oil. I must admit this is something I hadn't considered. But remember, the aircraft movements I describe are short hops, and are undertaken in relatively large aircraft (eg Dash-7's) from many airstrips that possess fuel storage capacities.

I'll build on this if I ever expand the scenario to novel-length.

#3. Many books have appeared about "the yellow peril" invasion of Australia (see Van Ikin's AUSTRALIAN SCIENCE FICTION, University of Queensland Press, 1982). It has been a common theme in Australian literature.

After I wrote the story (early last year), a friend in Sydney loaned me THE INVASION by John Hay (Hodder & Stoughton, 1968). This is a piss weak story and never actually mentions who invades (with help from the Chinese). I can provide details if you want, John.

Would such a book be regarded "racist", you ask. I know many Indonesians, they are nice people. But, like I said in the story, how do you balance that against the atrocities committed in East Timor and Irian Jaya? 100,000 deaths won't just go away.

Am I a racist? I don't know - what does it mean nowadays? As an SF writer I can present any possible future I can envisage. I don't think I'm a racist - my wife is an Asian.

I hope I don't just disappear from the face of the Earth (Dear editor - I hope you didn't send a copy of TM #65 to the Indonesian Embassy or the Defense Department?)

What *is* under Parliament House? you ask. Ah, now we're treading on delicate ground. It is obvious that there is a bunker and war-room deep under Parl. House (not to mention the journalist who stumbled down there when filming the construction). An old navy friend of mine told me about the secret installation under HMAS "Harman", and how it is entered. I don't think he was joking, but then again I may be gullible. The rest is supposition.

As to the whole background to the story. Well, over 1985 to 1988 I worked and travelled extensively in Papua New Guinea, including the border region. I saw the possible invasion scenario, wondered why no one else had, so decided later to do it as a story. And, a friend of mine who worked in the Indonesian Embassy there said, when I asked him what his ambitions were, that he didn't want to be ambassador, he wanted to be the first *Governor*. Think about it.

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

The cover of THE MENTOR 66 was quite nifty. Very Boris. Just one thing, wot is a fantasy scene doing on the cover of an SF mag? One other thing, while it might be trendoid to have, like, the fem leading da way into battle it is also very stupid. When facing a mother of a

monster like that you need muscle not delicate skills with a spear. The Conan type should be upfront. But all in all, well drawn.

Onward. THE WHEELING SYSTEM DARKENS by Shane Dix. Well... the basic premise is totally understated. *Why? Why? and Why?* Wots so good about chucking in the machines and living in the buff amongst the trees an stuff? How do they survive? Why chuck the machines away? Why not adapt them? Why build walls? And so on... It reads like the first few pages of a novel, but it isn't by any stretch a short story. The whole premise is too improbable anyway. Well-written but "eh".

UNDER PRESSURE by David Tansey. Hmmm... well, he states that Aussies are the pick for deep-space exploration due to their "lack of cultural blinkers" and the fact they they're "used to wide, open spaces". Is this guy kidding? Ozzies are one of the most culturally insular of all peoples, but in our case the wogs start in New Zealand. Jeezus. As for the wide, open spaces, you pick up yer average Oz who has spent all his life in a city and put him down in the middle of the great outback and see how happy he is. I stopped reading as soon as I came to these bits as they seemed a ludicrous and unnecessary invention which didn't bode well for the rest of the story. Maybe it was a comedy? Yech, anyway.

John Alderson's article (was it?) was full of so many mistakes I don't know where to start. Writing IN comes before writing ON. Just check with the Egyptians, the Sumarians, Babylonians, etc. A nice soft wet clay tablet and a stylus preceded the pen and paper route by a mile, simply because there was such a scarcity of other materials. Sigh. I could go on but I won't. What a load of shit. What's something like this doing in the zine, anyway?

LETHE by Grai Hughes. Far too poetic and flowery. I gave it a miss after the first coupla pages. Maybe she should have sent it to NEW IDEA? Yech.

The art portfolio was amazing. (Wot? He actually likes something in the issue?) But first... I didn't read Buck's YANKEE PRIVATEER column because I'm not a con goer but I'm sure he had lotsa interestin' stuff to say for those who do indulge in such things. Now... where were we?

Oh yes. John Tipper gave mention of Jozef Szekeres' work to me several months ago and he was raving then (well, he always raves), but I have to agree. This is the best fan art I have ever seen. Actually it brings up one of Jozef's points, wot is fannish and wot is pro? I know I've seen some real drek in the so-called prozines and some real art in the so-called amateur mags. Jozef immediately goes to the top of the tree in the fan(?) art realm for me. A real portfolio, too, showing the artists ability to produce different types of art as required. Particularly fave is the Alice and Rabbit shot. Take a good look. It's like a photo taken with a fast lens. Alice has just turned around and has caught a glimpse of the rabbit (all the while she is continuing her turn). Check this photo/drawing out carefully, you'll see what I mean. It has real dynamics. Can't express it any better, not being artistically trained.

Couple more things: the drawing of Wendy Pini's ELFQUEST character on page 29, Winnowill, is excellent but it should have a copyright indication for Wendy, not Jozef. The copyright symbol followed by the date of creation of the character and the name of the original artist. Jozef can't copyright someone else's work, tho he can sign his name with the drawing as long as copyright is indicated. I mention this as protection for both Jozef and Ye Fabled Ed. Issues of this zine do go to the US and a friend of a friend of a friend of Wendy Pini's might draw her attention to it. It can be a good idea for all artists to sign a waiver to the fact that all material submitted is their original creation and if not to indicate what isn't.

The robot on page 43 is a direct copy of Hajime Sorayama's work, also, and no copyright is indicated. Sorayama is famous world-wide for his sexy robots and females. The head of the 'bot is a very distinctive aspect of Sorayama's work, it's almost his signature.

These are a couple of the traps young fan artists can fall into. Anyway, having said all that, I'd like to say *please* more of Jozef's work. I was also wondering if Jozef is familiar with anime(animay), unadapted Japanese animation? I think his style(s) would suit its expressiveness and energy. He did say he was in the animation field.

THE ALPHA EXPERIMENT by Margaret Pearce was well-written but I doubt some of the statements, such as grown children being able to bond (with parents they've never seen) in only a few months, and so on. The ending was a bit Deux Ex Machina, also. Still, the best of the bunch this month.

As always the book reviews were of great interest. It's about the only way I keep up with wot's coming out these days and know that the reviewer isn't full of crap. Keep 'em coming, Ron.

Well, to take some of your points: THE MENTOR prints both what I consider good sf and fantasy (see the Bunyip story some issues back), which is why the fantasy cover. Maybe the monster just came over the headland just then and surprised the couple?

As for John Alderson's article, I suppose what is shit for some is fertiliser for others. I think if you had continued reading LETHE you might have changed your mind... and as for Buck's column - he would have been writing it for non con goers such as yourselves, or for the majority of Aussie fans who have never been to a con with 1,000+ attendees. - Ron.

R. LAURRAINE TUTIHASI, 5876 Bowcroft St, #4, Los Angeles, CA 90016-4910, USA.

I particularly liked the two stories, THE BEST OF BOTH WORLDS by Sue Cartwright and THE TRANSMITTER by Louise Hollingberry in THE MENTOR #64. The ideas were not exactly new, but I found them entertaining.

I think Skel is rather misleading about the US Postal system in his letter. We do get mail on Saturdays unless it is a holiday. Basically, we get mail once a day, six days a week, except for holidays. There is a special service called Express Mail, which may be delivered on Sundays. It's supposed to be an overnight service. Mail is processed on the same days as deliveries, that is, six days a week. They recently stopped processing mail on Sundays. First class mail is generally delivered in four days inside the country. Within a single city, we frequently get next day delivery. I think there are only a few countries in the world with equal or better postal service.

BUCK COULSON, 2677W-500N, Hartford City, IN 473498, USA.

I enjoyed the art by Szekeres, though I think the "Alice in Wonderland" illustration was the best. *Everybody* in fanzines does more or less naked females, and not every reader is a sex-struck adolescent. (Though, admittedly, a good many are, and the group includes middle-aged adolescents as well as those in the usual meaning of the term.) There really is more variety in the female form than one ever sees in fanzines. This art is very well executed, and I'm sure the subject matter will be popular.

Refusing to read fiction in fanzines has saved me a lot of time, over the years. I used to write some of it, too; everybody does, and I understand that some fans even enjoy reading it. Which is fine; then I don't have to.

Comment on my own column; our Christmas exchange with Bruce took place during Confabulation, in early February. Two months of Christmas; that's not too many...

I promise to never put a revolver muzzle behind Terry Broome's ear and blow his brains out. (Unless he irritates me *profoundly*; that is...) Seriously, while he may prefer *now* to "feel like I was going to sleep" when given a lethal injection, does he really believe that a dog's thinking parallels his, or that a dog knows ahead of time what's coming? And what if he's in a coma at the time of his death -- does he possess some arcane knowledge that will let him know what's going on? I can assure him that a .22 revolver doesn't leave any particular "mess", even when used on a cat. Mostly, not even any blood on the ground. Terry must have seen too many bad movies; he should try one of Donald Hamilton's detective stories. Hamilton is one of the few authors who actually knows something about guns. As for violence, presumably he eats some meat. Has he ever thought about how an animal gets changed from a living creature to Sunday dinner? Anyway, I put that bit deliberately to jolt people, and I'm grateful to Terry for telling me that it worked. The real me includes use of firearms whenever necessary, and I also go hunting on occasion, for meat for the pot.

Professional filk tape producers have perfectly good, if small, studios and tape quality is as high as it is in most commercial tapes. Convention tapes are lower quality, since they're recorded on portable equipment. Juanita and I did record one studio tape in our living room, with equipment loaned from Firebird, but the raw tape was also worked over in the studio, some backup material added, etc. On the other hand, most filk tapes consist of a single voice with backup, much like early folk music recordings. Only a few groups have recorded. Which is just as well, from my point of view; I like single voices. British-style filk tapes are, so far, of lower quality than American; they haven't been made for as long, and nobody starts out with a professional studio and experienced staff.

Actually, YANDRO wasn't copyrighted, but de Camp copyrighted his own material in it. We sent him 5 copies of issues he was in, and he did the rest. However, some fanzines are copyrighted. There is an amusing story about Ray Palmer publishing a story lifted from a fanzine without paying for it. At which point he was informed that the fanzine in question (INSIDE, for anyone who recalls it) was copyrighted and he had the choice of paying for the story or being charged with infringement. He paid. This was when he was publishing his own OTHER WORLDS, after leaving the editorship of AMAZING.

My Russian correspondent told me a couple of years ago that he had no trouble receiving books from the US, but that magazines didn't always get through. We've never figured out why, except that *maybe* it's because magazines have editorials, and the Soviets feel that these are somehow dangerous. No telling if that's actually true.

R'YKANDAR KORRA'TI, 252 East Loudon, Lexington, KY 40405-3636, USA.

A couple of technical things; first, LOW ORBIT already has a Canadian fandom columnist; I must have not been paying attention before. My letter should have said, "I'm trying to get a Soviet Fandom column started, as well". I'm also looking for somebody from Western Europe. Secondly, how do Australians spell Australia? I ask because your subheading says 'Australian Science Fiction', but your bottom note on the same page says 'distributed by R&S Clarke...NSW 2776, Australa' with no 'i'. (If this is not a typo, I'm not trying to be snide. I'm actually wondering if American English spells it differently than Australian English.)

You're not the only one after a regular Soviet column. Both Boris and Igor seem to be caught up in planning VOLGACON and I think both will be too busy for the next year and a half. That 'Australa' was a typo. American spelling does annoy Sydney siders sometimes, especially when they spell Sydney Sidney. By the way, 'Australia' is pronounced 'Strail-yuh' - Ron.

More directly pertaining to the magazine, however; I don't understand why you make

such a big deal out of who owns the reproduction equipment. In your editorial, you say "Some of the latest neofans... have others print their zines (sometimes professionally).. This isn't in the fannish spirit - after all, in the past Oz fans went as far as to type their zines using carbon paper when their own duplication facilities weren't available. Maybe things are too easy with readily available photocopying apparatus available at most offices...." I find this sort of nostalgic, anti-technological approach to be uniquely anachronistic in a science-fiction magazine. Not to mention the fact that, at least for a large percentage of neofan publishers, owning one's own reproduction equipment is 1) too expensive to justify and 2) impractical for size considerations. I couldn't make room where I live for a printing press, or even a decently-large photocopier. It's all I can do to have the typesetting/word processing/etc computers (we use Amigas) and printers (eclectic mix) set up all the time. With housing and apartment rates climbing the way they have been, I wouldn't at all be surprised if many of the less-financially-established publishers were in a similar spot.

Not that I'd fall back to mimeo if I did have the room; I simply think offset is easier to read. I *did* publish a 'zine using a technique apparently similar to yours once (ever heard of PROMETHEUS or SCENARIO? I didn't think so...), and the printing quality was the most difficult problem we had to overcome. People here didn't want to look at it if it wasn't at least photocopy quality. Of course, this was more of a general-public reaction, as back then, I didn't know that fandom *existed* much less its values.

Just out of curiosity, what did you mean by "...Of course much of today's fan publishers type up their zines (or get others to), and take it to an offset printer or photocopy it. So they don't have as much input in printing the thing as we do." Mine is photo-ready when I take it to the printer; I retain absolute control over layout, et al. Once you're to the image you want, what kind of additional control does running the press give you? I'm asking in all seriousness, because I really don't know. What tricks can you pull off, and what are the advantages?

Taking the above in order: Putting out a fanzine is not only soliciting material, typing it up and posting it off: at least half of the enjoyment in doing it is running the thing off, be it spirit, mimeo, offset or photocopy. You ask nearly any fan who has put out a couple of years worth of issues whether he or she would rather give it to someone else to print or do it themselves. There is something creative in running the stencils/plates through a machine, adjusting it, adding ink, and seeing the finished product falling out of the end of the machine. As I said, some fans don't even type their own zines (mostly media fen, if it comes to that) and they get it professionally printed or offset.

Most of the mimeod pages of THE MENTOR were of offset quality - the reason I went *to* offset was for the illustrations. The electrostencilled book covers for the Review section were easier to do mimeo than offset, and they didn't have to be screened.

When you have your own offset press you can adjust the ink while you are running it, to darken or lighten illos so you have exactly what *you* want. Also you can run off colour for a fraction of the price the commercial places charge. I wouldn't consider my attitude anti-technological - after all, I use a computer, dot matrix printer, offset printer and am planning on getting a laser printer. What I am saying is that some neofans are too *lazy* to go and have to help run off their zine; they *pay* to have it run off. - Ron.

On the fiction: THE REVIVAL reminds me of a book I read some time ago in which a similar theme was explored, but of course I can't remember the title - to steal one of Rod Smith's lines, I've got a mind like a steel sieve. I think that's why I knew what was going on far too quickly for the story's good.

THE SUMMER OF '92 I found interesting, not so much for the storyline itself - we get a lot of this sort of plot in America, having lots of paranoid writers and readers to lap them up by

the metric tonne) but in discovering that at least some Australians have the same geopolitical nightmares that many US citizens do. For some reason, it had never occurred to me that this might be the case; after all, you're much closer to very powerful and potentially hostile neighbors than we are (with the exception of the Bering Strait, but that isn't even so much of a problem anymore...) so I suppose it should have, but somehow it didn't. I'm not sure what this says, but it did make me think a bit, and I like that in a story

IGOR TOLOCONNICOU, c/- Poste Restante, Central Post Office, Volgograd-66, USSR 400066

THE SUMMER OF '92 by David Tansey is well written, but causes one to recall gaming, in real life there are many more safeguards and too much resistance to oppression look how many bloody wars are fought to a standstill

The idea of REVIVAL is a nice trick Congratulations Louise

Nola Frame Gray mentions in her loc John Myers Myers SILVERLOCK which I recommend to every ardent reader It is a rehash of popular themes and written to high standards

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

The 65th issue of THE MENTOR has arrived after an exhilarating dash across the briny deep that lasted just under three months, if I've interpreted the postmark correctly

Your pessimism about fanzine publishing in Australia made me feel a bit more optimistic. The apparent paradox results from the fact that you convinced me the scarcity of fanzines from Australia in recent months isn't altogether due to my having been dropped off mailing lists of a lot of fanzine editors in your part of the world. Thanks to my uncanny ability to find something new to worry about, even after reading an editorial devoted to gloomy reflections, I might point to one additional ominous circumstance. At one time when there aren't as many genzines as there used to be, both in Australia and in the United States, there is an even greater scarcity of young fanzine editors. Most of the genzines that do exist are published by fans in their thirties, forties, or older age categories. What happened to the old tendency for fans to peak as fanzine publishers when they were in their teens and twenties? And dare we hope that today's younger fans will eventually begin to publish fanzines or will they continue to specialize in congoing and movie watching and club meeting attending?

Strangely, after I had posted TM 66 with much the same comments about Oz fanzines in THE R&P DEPT. a few arrived that week - SFP, ETHYL, ONE OF THE CLUTZ, and a couple of others - some - ETHYL and ONTIC - are apparently put out by younger fans - Ron

Postage rates in Australia are even worse than those in the United States but we're trying to catch up with you. The postal service has announced its intention to raise rates again within a year, and even though a rate increase requires approval by federal authorities, such a request has never yet been turned down.

David Tansey's THE SUMMER OF '92 is fairly well done, although all along I kept thinking that maybe he should have simply written up this possible sequence of future events as an essay instead of sandwiching it between brief opening and closing events. I don't doubt that it could happen but somehow I have the impression that it wouldn't cause as much consternation in Australia as that which arises from the concept of United States nuclear submarines in Australian waters

The bad things that happened to the Coulsons on that train trip shouldn't be blamed on trains. People are the real culprits. Behavior in public has become gross and unthinking and uncontrolled in almost all phases of life in the United States and there's no reason to expect people to be civil and considerate on trains as an exception to that general rule. City buses in Hagerstown have a sign posted at the front, which lists a long series of forbidden activities: no smoking, no drinking, no eating, no abusive language, no placing bundles or purses on empty seats if this forces a passenger to stand, no seat-changing while the bus is in motion, and so on. Every now and then someone writes an indignant letter to the newspaper about the dictatorial attitude of the bus management. But the real significance of the list is the fact that it wasn't needed three or four decades ago when nobody would have considered doing such things on a public vehicle (except smoking, which wasn't prohibited until about twenty years ago). And there's a good reason behind each of those restrictions. This was proved the other day when a boy ignored the no eating rule and popped a Lifesaver in his mouth just as the bus braked. The slight jolt sent the candy into his windpipe, and he probably would have choked to death if the driver hadn't managed to dislodge it with the Heimlich Maneuver three minutes later; she had called an ambulance over the bus's communications equipment but it hadn't arrived yet.

It's interesting, but yesterday I was reading Arthur Koestler's 1967 book THE GHOST IN THE MACHINE for review, and I came across the following quote: "the emotional instability of Western society and particularly of its youth, is obviously a consequence of the breakdown of the traditional hierarchic structures without as yet any alternative in sight." Of course in the past twenty years the "instability" has worsened. - Ron

THE REVIVAL is closer to a real story. It will probably be soundly thrashed by most of your loccers for its dependence on a religious belief but I thought it was a legitimate theme for fiction and I don't recall having heard of it turning up in this particular way in previous science fiction stories.

I receive an occasional mediazine, although Nola Frame Gray is correct in explaining that by and large they don't give away any copies. If it's devoted to something I know nothing about, like STAR TREK or DARK SHADOWS, I write a letter explaining I appreciated the thought but I'm out of my depth and can't properly comment on it. But I am on the mailing list for a couple of mediazines devoted to the movies which I loc just like any other fanzine, even though one of them doesn't include a loc section.

I've just read for the first time one of the older books you review, DERYNI RISING. It left me wondering why it gained so much popularity. I found it hopelessly derivative of Ruritania and sword and sorcery traditions, the author didn't satisfy me with explanations for why magic wasn't used in all circumstances instead of just occasionally, and I seemed to sense an unpleasant type of homosexual content in the way Morgan couldn't keep his hands off the adolescent boy and such apparent symbolism as the thrusting of the long pin into the child.

GLEN CHAPMAN, 29 Janice St, Seven Hills, NSW 2147

I thought David Tansey's SUMMER OF '92 well written if somewhat naive from a military point of view. The border fighting that sparked the war in West Irian has been going on for some six years that I am aware of. Yes, and Australian regular army units are involved. However, having said that, the style captured the mood of the moment brilliantly.

The other story that caught my eye was THE REVIVAL by Louise Hollingberry. It is such an obvious story it really amazes me it hasn't been written before. I also feel that with a bit of lengthening and tidying up there could be a pro sale. ANALOG in particular seem very interested in this style of story.

In THE MENTOR 64 Mae Strelkov made mention of the Dogone tribes of Africa. To be frank their story is one of the greatest lumps of dis-information force-fed to the world. The star Sirius B, the star in question, was discovered in 1864. Yet Dogone claims did not surface till the 1940's. It is now believed that the Smithsonian Institute's expedition of 1931-32 is the most probable source of the corruption of their creation myth. Even if you wish to dismiss the above, the fact still remains that Sirius B went nova somewhere between 50 and 100 million years ago and, sadly, Earth is not nearly far enough away from the blast to have saved them, anyway.

Having said the above, I must confess to agreeing with Mae over the origins of our species. I think that there is far more going on than meets the eye. Trouble is, how hard is it going to be finding evidence?

While on the subject of dis-information, John Alderson's letter in THE MENTOR 65 and article in 66 display a very sad lack of regard for the actual facts. Or is it just attempts to twist facts to fit one's pet theory?

Firstly, Menes, the fabled first ruler of united Egypt, is at best hypothetical. The first mention of Menes in Egyptian history was in the third century B.C. some 2700 years after his supposed rule. If he did in fact exist, he certainly did not invent irrigation, but merely dammed at Saggarah and sited his capital there. Any connection between Menes, Minos and Manu is farcical to say the least. There is absolutely no evidence that any of them had any connection what-so-ever with ancient Persia.

To understand Egypt's development of writing, one must understand their very pragmatic outlook on life. They tended as a rule to develop ideas to fulfill a need. A good example of this practice is their mathematics - formulae to build the pyramids, which evolved over a very short period, yet they never studied the maths as a means to itself.

It is interesting to study your summation of a pre-dynastic invader. Oddly, this invader managed to obliterate all trace of itself, both in its home land as well as the area of its advance, or at least as far as Egypt.

In particular, the Scandinavian runes you place so much faith in, are interesting. They, in fact, did not evolve until about 600 A.D. The only culture in that region that could fit the bill were Kitenen-Midden, people dated somewhere between 5 and 3 thousand B.C. but alas, to let you down, they expanded from their homeland in Denmark well to the north, into the present day Baltic States.

Your article in The Mentor 66 is also of the same quality. To say that the Egypt of the period consisted mostly of mud flats is naive indeed. It is well known that during this period, particularly in the region of the first cataract, large tracts of savannah still existed. So much so that lions made up the royal body-guard right through to the late kingdoms. You yourself give the clue to the transition between rock drawings and papyrus - this being mud. To add weight to this suggestion is the unsupported claim that over 5,000 clay tablets were destroyed in the great fire at the Alexandrian library. Lastly, if your fabled inventor of writing, the Western Europeans did exist, why has such a dynamic society failed to spread any of its ideas? It is an archaeological fact that up until the dawn of the Greek culture, all ideas spread from the south, whether this be from either Egypt, Minoan or Mediterranean culture.

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

TM 65 just arrived. PLAIN LIKE A HOODED MASK is actually one of mine, though I'm flattered you think it deserves to wear Andy Darlington's name, since I admire his work a lot.

As a train fan, enjoyed Buck Coulson's account of his rail journey. I thought *our* service

was suffering rail wise badly enough, due to government's hatred of public transport; but if a place the size of Indianapolis is down to one train a day, America's rulers must be even busier paying lip service to environmental concerns while backing away at the most environment friendly transport mode. Interesting about the two deck train. Two-level carriages are used in suburban trains in East Germany, but I didn't find the upper deck as good view-wise as I'd expected; the windows there were angled at a steep slant inwards, making looking out a matter of bumping your forehead, and also meaning the names of stations far below couldn't be seen, creative paranoia about getting off at the right stop!

jan howard finder, 164 Williamsburg Court, Albany, NY 12203, USA.

Over all I enjoyed THE MENTOR 65. I'm sorry to hear that zines are, at least in terms of numbers, declining. I remember the fun I had doing THE SPANG BLAH, tho at the end I just couldn't afford the time it took. Yes, Worldcons probably do take a hell of a lot of energy out of fen. First the fury and then the ashes.

THE SUMMER OF '92 has the wrong country invading. I'd probably opt for India. Also, the PM was a fool to announce his nuclear option. Winners always write the history books. I'd like to believe that a US gov't wouldn't sell Oz down the river so lightly, but one never knows. Economics and politics cause interesting combinations.

For my part some of the worries are for the Russo-Iranian war (12-36 months off), the annexation of parts of Poland & Czechoslovakia by Germany in the '95-97 period, a war involving the Indian sub-continent: India/Pakistan/afghanistan/Indonesia, then there is the Cambodian/Viet-Nam thingie with the US & the USSR on the other side; Viet Nam's. Plus the crazies in the Middle East. Of course, with Indonesia about 11x your population, and the birthrate higher than yours, but India is about 50x your pop and an even higher birthrate. Hmmm, maybe Oz should think twice about pulling out of a defensive treaty with the US. Nice country and small pop.

Buck's comments about trains brings to mind that I rarely travel by train in the US, but when I'm elsewhere I make greater use of them. For two reasons: 1) they run more often in other countries and 2) I'm not usually in quite the time bind and have built-in time for a train ride when I'm on vacation. I rather like trains. Dennis Stock's up in Brisbane is a steam train buff.

If the opportunity arises, do see THE HUNT FOR RED OCTOBER, EARTH GIRLS ARE EASY and FIELD OF DREAMS. All so very different and worth the viewing. Finally got around to reading Eric Drexler's ENGINES OF CREATION. A must read for any sf fan or writer.

Boskone was fun. I fitted it in between some ski weekends. I went to the annual gathering of the Dorsai Irregulars. It was a nice party with about 60 folk. Next weekend I'll be off the BALTICON, then nothing until WESTERCON over the 4th of July Weekend.

I finally got around to reading THE FATAL SHORE. It is interesting, but not the history I thought it to be. It is really a look at the idea and effects of Transportation, plus how the penal system was run in Oz for the first 90 years. It was quite brutal. For non-academic history I liked the series by William Stuart Long (Vivian Stuart). It is sort of a 10 vol. soap opera, but fun.

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

No, I'm afraid THE SUMMER OF 92 doesn't work for me. It may be David Tansey's

viewpoint of current world affairs and the likely outcome. I certainly can't see grounds that suggests the scenario David puts forward being a reality next year. I'm not quite sure how the Indonesians would justify invading Australia because of what the British had done to the people, most of the islands that made the new state of Indonesia at the end of 1949 had been ruled by the Dutch, then occupied by the Japanese during the war. It is all too possible that any public figure will be assassinated by some madman, Prince Charles is less likely than most to be a victim. I would not have thought that rice was a viable crop in many parts of Australia. Apart from the factual holes in the story the He starts off on what seems to be a solo observation, then suddenly he has a Rusty beside him and then, when he mounts his attack for no strategic reason with no specified objective, the undergrowth is alive with his fellow freedom fighters. The story that He is so anxious to write down "because he has special knowledge" contains no knowledge that would not (within the scenario given) have been common knowledge.

THE REVIVAL works much better, the ending is signalled a little too soon perhaps and it might have been better if Jane had not been the viewpoint figure. The environment is consistent with itself and while the components might be very familiar the idea of using cryogenics to prove the existence of the soul is new to me.

WE ALSO HEARD FROM: Scott Campbell, Linnette Horne and Margaret Pearce





REVIEWS



CURRENT SF and FANTASY RELEASES.

PORTAL by Rob Swigart. Grafton pb, dist in Aust by Collins/Angus & Robertson. (C) 1988. 346pp. A\$9.95. On sale now.

The Portal of the title is taken from the computer game of that same name. (We have an Apple version of it). The Portal is also a door into another Realm.

When the one man crew of a returning starship returns to earth to find all humans vanished, he is naturally disquieted. He searches around and finds that the worldwide computer network is nearly completely down. He does manage, after much trying, to link onto an AI named Homer, who had been created by the 21st century human to tell stories. With Homer's aid the astronaut manages to find out what happened in the time he was away. The novel is written as a hardcopy of the story as Homer told it to the waiting man.

Because of the way the novel is written, it is not an easy read, but I did find that perseverance paid off, and quite liked the plot. **PORTAL** is one of the new computer adept novels, and if you are into computer games, this could be a good intro to sf.

WHEEL OF THE WINDS by M.J. Engh. Grafton pb, dist in Aust by Collins/Angus & Robertson. (C) 1988. 352pp. A\$10.95. On sale now.

THE WHEEL OF THE WINDS is set on a world of almost perpetual cloud cover, a world one half of which is dark, with no sun, the other half of which has a perpetual overcast. This world is unique and Earth sends a ship to plant a weather observation station. The two humans are dropped off; unfortunately one is killed, and the other is captured and tries to escape to try to send a message to his colleagues.

The story is told from the viewpoint of the humanoid natives of the planet. The Warden of the castle from which the Exile escaped by hang glider is given the task of finding and re-capturing him. With the native is a ship's captain who is a friend of his. They succeed in capturing the Exile, but in doing so manage to turn the Council against them. They depart, determined to find the Exile's lost equipment and then return to turn their prisoner over the authorities. The journey around the world is good sf adventure, simple told, and makes a good read when one does not want a book that is too 'deep'.

LAYONDYSS by Robert Holdstock. Grafton pb, dist in Aust by Collins/A&R. (C) 1988. 475pp. A\$9.95. On sale now.

This is the sequel to **MYTHAGO WOOD**. I had read and reviewed this when it came out in hardcover - but do you think I could find that review?

Mythago Wood is an ancient piece of that forest that covered Britain back before the Romans invaded. Over the centuries the forest had been hacked and burned away, and now just a fragment - Mythago Wood - remains. In that wood Harry Keeton came into conflict with the ancient mythos that still lived in the wood. Those figures lived there as in the subconscious, and it was only there they had solid form. **LAYONDYSS** follows the exploration of that mythos as Keeton's sister, Tallis, herself journeys into the wood. She comes across things from the far past that changes her - for in the Wood she lives another life. She ages there as anywhere, and the figures of the mythos live, love and die around her as she ages.

I found the creating of these basically English mythos a little heavy going. No doubt if you were brought up in a school in England and your background was built with these myths then the reading might have been easier. Not to say that this is not a great novel.

THE ARCHIVIST by Gill Alderman. Unwin Hyman h/c, dist in Aust by Allen & Unwin. (C) 1989. 367pp. A\$34.95. On sale now.

The sub-title for this novel is "A Black Comedy". **THE ARCHIVIST** is Gill Alderman's first novel, and whether she is a good one is up to the reader. Certainly this novel is very well constructed and polished; the prose flows well and the emotional attachment for the two principle players for each other is handled well, with understanding and clarity.

The Archivist is the guardian of forbidden knowledge, as well as helping the matriarch in background information for some of her decisions. Many of the countries of the planet Guna is the City, a construct that has lasted some four thousand years. There have been rebellions over the years, but none so planned and executed as that created by the Archivist himself, with the aid of a frozen group of female soldiers from the remote past. Cal, the golden boy raised by the gutter people, found himself, because of his native intelligence, aspiring to better himself. Then he caught the eye of the Archivist...

Well created adventure sf, with that additional bit that makes for a thoughtful novel

TATJA GRIMM'S WORLD by Vernor Vinge. Pan pb, dist in Aust by Pan Books. (C) 1968-1986. 277pp. A\$10.99. On sale now.

The strange copyright dates actually mean that several parts of this novel were published in the sf field (**ANALOG** and **ORBIT** 4) before being welded together so the seams were invisible

The central premise that backgrounds this novel is, I dare say, unique. The planet the book is set on has a sister world easily visible in the day sky. The world has a large continent the interior of which is desert and mostly inaccessible. Barbarian tribes roam there. There are groups of island chains where civilisation has risen. To keep news flowing, giant barges have been built and sailed around the world by sea, visiting each port, and dropping off news and publications. The printing presses were actually on board and on one boat had been for over seven hundred years. The famous magazine that this barge sold was *Fantasie*, and the magazine had that type of story, though within the last thirty years, the type of fiction called science fiction on earth had been going well, what with the advancement of science.

All had been going well until a barbarian girl from the interior had shown up, and was given the job of masquerading as Hrula the Barbarian princess to sell more magazines. This is the type of novel that has hidden meaning for readers in sf fandom. Enjoyable sf.

THE WITLING by Vernor Vinge. Pan pb, dist in Aust by Pan Books. (C) 1976. 220pp. A\$10.99. On sale now.

There are some authors that sparkle and whose novels the reader finds it hard to stop once they are started. I hadn't read any of Vinge before **THE PEACE WAR**, and though that they were quite entertaining. Both **THE WITLING** and **TATJA GRIMM'S WORLD** I found hard to put down. In fact I read **THE WITLING** through in two sittings (at less than an hour in the train each day this is good...).

The action in **THE WITLING** takes place on a planet whose inhabitants can teleport. This is set out early in the novel. The background gives the reasons for the development of this talent and how it has affected the civilisation of grey-skinned aliens. When two humans land on the planet surreptitiously and are caught before they can withdraw the event sets in train a political situation between the three groups of aliens on the planet who are trying to make what use of the alien (to them) technology. The action is sf adventure, but the background is well thought out and plausible. If you are a reader that likes sf adventure backed up with well thought out science then these two are for you.

THE LEMURIAN STONE by Stephen Hickman. Fontana pb, dist in aust by Collins/Angus & Robertson. (C) 1988. A\$9.95. On sale now.

The Lemurian Stone can prophesies many thing. At the moment the empress of Pharazar has many things to worry herself - the least of which are the scenes shown by the stone: that of a horde of bestial figures led by what appeared to be a demon with wings and of hideous hue. The Stone also showed her several persons who it was later revealed would go with the Princess Tara on a journey that would lead through death and destruction (the princess wielded a mean sword) on a quest to obtain three weapons.

The weapons were very hard to obtain, and they had to fight their way through humans as well as other monsters to obtain her destiny. The author was an artist before he wrote this volume, and it shows in the well described scenes and backgrounds - quite colourfully described.

All in all it is a typical quest fantasy; books of this kind are still selling well after then years or so. If you liked the DragonQuest novels then this is for you. Quite well written Sword & Sorcery.

BEAMRIDERS by Martin Caidin. Pan pb, dist in Aust by Pan Books. (C) 1989. 411pp. A\$10.99. On sale now.

This novel was first published by Baen Books in the USA - now I can see why they have a reputation for publishing hard sf.

BEAMRIDERS is really a mainstream books that uses sf trimmings. Back in the 1940's it would have been pure sf, but science and sf writing techniques have progressed much since then. This novel really has the hallmarks of a Campbell serial in **ASTOUNDING**. It seems that scientists in Venezuela have been working in secret on technical advances in laser beam technology and have succeeded in using one as a teleportation beam. All is not quite simple as it seems, however. The US military have several fingers in the pie and various US politicians have staked their career on holding on and secretly directing events in the South American country so that ultimately the US (of course) benefits. Kind of like letting the South Americans do all the work and raking in the takings.

I found it hard going - mostly because, I suppose, the spelled-out technology was a too simply set out and I wanted the action to get on a little faster. Not a bad novel for those starting off in 'hard' sf, so that might be a good area to push for the publicity section of the publisher. Will probably do well in the non sf section of bookshops.

JINX ON A TERRAN INHERITANCE by Brian Daley. Grafton pb, dist in Aust by Collins/A & R. (C) 1985. 412pp. A\$9.95. On sale now.

This is the second adventure of Alacrity Fitzhugh and Hobart Floyt. Since I haven't read the first adventure I can say that this novel is complete in itself and easy to understand.

JINX... is a science fiction adventure, or even a "space opera". Floyt was sent out by the EarthService to bring back a starship he had inherited. The government blackmailed Alacrity so he would go with them, and conditioned them both to follow the EarthService's plans. Part way through the novel Alacrity has his broken, and near the end so does Hobart. The end up in a planet using slaves labour as well as pleasure - both sexual and violence. The two, together with their women friends and shipboard alien, managed to escape, find the ship and have a go at overthrowing a centuries old conspiracy.

The novel is face paced and hangs together well - the fast pace helps. The characterisation is a bit better than normal in space operas, and all in all a fun book read. And the cover artist actually illustrated a scene from the novel.

SORCERER'S SON by Phyllis Eisenstein. Grafton h/c, dist in Aust by Collins/A&R. (C) 1989. 378pp. A\$29.95. On sale now.

The land this novel is set in is ruled by kings, but sorcerer's had the fear of the people. The sorcerer's lived by themselves, and their servants were demons enslaved by rings of power created by the sorcerer. One such demon was Gildrum, who was the most powerful demon enslaved by Smada Rezhyk. Rezhyk was like most of his lonely breed - arrogant and fearful, both together. He was arrogant that his sorcery was the best, but fearful of his neighbours, especially the sorceress Ormoru, who used nature to do her bidding.

Rezhyk was convinced that Ormoru was out to do him in, and when she refused his offer of marriage he sent Gildrum to her in the guise of a knight to impassion her and get her pregnant. This he does, and she bears son. Unfortunately for Gildrum he falls in love (as far as a demon can) with her, and she with him. He must disappear, however, as his master's slightest whim is his command. When he is with Rezhyk he is in the guise of a graceful, blonde fourteen year old, and it is this form that Rezhyk likes, best, both to help him in his sorcery and to bed.

When the boy, Cray, grows up, he is determined to find his father and he sets out on the quest, eventually returning and becoming apprentice to Rezhyk, his physical father, though he knows it not. Excellent fantasy.

THE AMTRAK WARS: DEATH BRINGER by Patrick Tilley. Sphere pb, dist in Aust by Penguin Book. (C) 1989. 373pp. A\$10.99. On sale now.

DEATH BRINGER is Volume 5 of the series which has really taken off world-wide. He has many readers - there are several at work, and they don't usually read sf.

In this volume Clearwater is out of the picture most of the time as a result of being hit with 50 calibre machine gun bullets. She spends most of the two-week span of the novel in intensive care in a wagon train. Steve Brickman, the renegade from the Federation who no-one seems sure who he is loyal to, is working with Cadillac in trying to rescue his kin-sister, Roz, from the Federation. Roz was actually looking after the stricken Clearwater. The Japanese were also trying to extract some vengeance from the tribes of Mutes, and they all came together at the Trading Post. Mr Snow, the Mute summoner, managed to get the tribes of Mutes that were on his side organised and in a frenzy of destruction about 220,000 of the Mutes were killed by tornadoes controlled by him. He also destroyed five Japanese riverboats and their crews and samurai. The effort drained him, however and later when he helped destroy a wagon train he killed himself.

This series is not bad science fantasy. How much fantasy will depend on the clarification of the "voices from the sky" - if they represent ETs or a psychic force.

SHADOWDALE and TANTRAS by Richard Awlinson. Penguin pbs, dis in Aust by Penguin Books. (C) 1989 by TSR. 335 & 338 pp. A\$10.99. On sale now.

The above books are Books One and Two of the Avatar Trilogy. Both SHADOWDALE and TANTRAS were written by Scott Ciencin, under his pseudonym; the trilogy is a joint effort by Scott Ciencin and Jim Lowder, an editor at TSR.

The books themselves tell of how three gods were banished from their heaven and end up on earth. They wander around looking for the sage Elminster. The heroes of the novels had in their possession an amulet that they hoped would bestow something on them. They have to leave their land, though, as they are framed for a murder. They find out that Elminster has something to do with the gods being there, and that he may have an idea of how to get rid of the gods.

As is usual with the TSR books, there is plenty of action and adventure for the reader to get his or her teeth into. TSR seem to have gotten the goals of the fantasy book reader down pat - and are following the lead they have found. Not bad for committee created books.

CONAN THE DEFLIANT by Steve Perry. Orbit pb, dist in Aust by Penguin Books. (C) 1987. 232pp. A\$9.99. On sale now.

Book 31 in the continuing Conan series. Steve Perry has taken over the mantle from Robert Jordan, and hopefully he will follow Jordan's lead and keep the series in the right mood.

In this book Conan is still young, and is trying to avenge a friend, who has been killed. There are, naturally, women in this book, one a warrior and the other dead. The dead woman is, naturally, extremely beautiful, though a little cold. The warrior girl seems to be not quite up to scratch in her fights with Conan, as he finds it relatively easy to defeat her.

They are not after Conan's body, but an object that can create for he (or she) who wields it an army that no-one can withstand. All this does not deter Conan, though, as he is determined to avenge his friend, come hell or high water. Well written and easy to follow sword and sorcery.

THE GHOST IN THE MACHINE by Arthur Koestler. Arkana pb, dist in Aust by Penguin Books. (C) 1967. 339pp. + indexes. A\$16.99. On sale now.

Actually, the reason I asked for this book for review was I remembered the title quote from the movie TRON, when they are attempting to get into the building. I wasn't sure what the book would be about, but it sounded good.

The dedication is "To the Fellows and Staff, 1964-5, at the Centre for Advanced Study in the Behavioural Sciences". If you have done any Management Courses at work or at tech you would have heard Koestler quoted, mostly in the ideas of the hierarchical systems that govern things from life, through to thought and other systems. The book follows his ideas via an introduction, through a debunking of the Behaviouralist schools of psychology and on through to the central idea of the book - that Homo Sapiens has something fundamentally wrong with him as a species. It is Koestler's idea that man is something like the Koala - his evolutionary spurt ended up wrong. With man, instead of ending up with a brain he could use to the full, he only uses about 5%. And the big problem is the co-ordination between the basic reptilian limbic brain and the modern lobes. He has in fact two brains going at once, and this is what caused that most dangerous activity - warfare with his own species. What Koestler ends up suggesting was quite something back in 1967 - and nothing much has changed in the last twenty years. *Recommended* reading. It isn't an easy book to read, but persevere and you'll not regret it. It's as interesting now as it was when it was first published. It is inspiredly written and has some good sf ideas in it which are as mind stretching as 2001.

GRASS by Sheri S. Tepper. Bantam trade pb, dist in Aust by Transworld Publishers. (C) 1989. 426pp. A\$16.95. On sale now.

I have read several fantasies by Sheri Tepper - this is the first sf novel by her I have read. I found her fantasies quite well written and was wondering what her sf was like.

GRASS started off quite slowly, I thought, and would take some getting through. The novel got much better, though, and I found that I was looking forward to reading the rest of the novel. It is set on the planet Grass, in the far future. Earth has colonies, and itself ruled, if not in name, by a theocracy called Serenity. Grass had been colonised by a group of dissatisfied aristocrats, and they still kept away from the other worlds. A virulent plague was sweeping human space, and the head of the church had heard that there was no plague on Grass. He sent his nephew and family to Grass to find out what was going on there, and if possible find a cure, if it existed. When they arrived on grass with their horses they found that they only had an inkling of what existed on that planet.

Engrossing sf adventure.

SHORTER MENTIONS:

THE KING OF YS: THE DOG AND THE WOLF by Poul & Karen Anderson. Grafton pb, dist in Aust by Collins/A & R. 528pp. A\$10.95. On sale now. Volume four of the series. The legends that this novel is founded on are good background for it. If you like heroic fantasy well written by an author/s well known for his fantasy, then you'll enjoy this.

IRON HELM by Douglas Niles. Penguin pb, dist in Aust by Penguin Books. (C) 1990. 314pp. A\$9.99. On sale now. Volume one of the Maztica Trilogy; based on the Forgotten Realms fantasy sagas. The land of Maztica is some way from the Forgotten Realms, however explorers have ventured that far and found the continent. This seems to be based on the Aztec Empire, the cover artist thinks so, too. For Forgotten Realms fans.

BOOKS OUT IN PAPERBACK PREVIOUSLY REVIEWED IN THE MENTOR IN THE HARDCOVER EDITION:

THE REINDEER PEOPLE by Megan Lindholm. Allen & Unwin trade pb, dist in Aust by Allen & Unwin. 263pp. A\$9.95. On sale now. Actually, this is a new edition of the paperback previously reviewed.

DEMON LORD OF KARANDA by David Eddings. Corgi pb, dist in Aust by Transworld Publishers. 399pp. A\$10.95. Book three of the Malloreon. By one of the best fantasy authors in the world.

AN ALIEN AFFAIR by L. Ron Hubbard. New Era pubs, dist in Aust by New Era. 347pp. A\$9.95. On sale now. Volume four of Mission Earth. If you couldn't afford to buy the hardcover volumes but wanted to continue the series, then you can get this now.

DRAGONSDAWN by Anne McCaffrey. Corgi pb, dist in Aust by Transworld Publishers. 465pp. A\$10.95. On sale now. The paperback available now. The novel telling of the first settling of Pern. Get it if you haven't got the hardcover.

WIZARD AT LARGE by Terry Brooks. Orbit pb, dist in Aust by Hodder & Stoughton. 291pp. A\$10.95. On sale now. Set in the land of Landover, it is a mixture of inept magic and things which go from bad to worse. Humorous fantasy.

CAUGHT IN CRYSTAL by Patricia Wrede. Orbit pb, dist in Aust by Hodder & Stoughton. 293pp. A\$10.95. On sale now. A novel "in the bestselling tradition of Marion Zimmer

Bradley's DARKOVER series". A heroine wielding a sword and races of cats and two other alien/magic races...

DR WHO: THE GREATEST SHOW IN THE GALAXY by Stephen Wyatt. Target pb, dist in Aust by Hodder & Stoughton. 141pp. A\$5.95. On sale now. It's been some time since I received any Dr Who books for review - the TV series is still wowing them, and the price of this volume will ensure kids buy and enjoy it. Get it for them.

THE DR WHO PROGRAMME GUIDE Vol.1 - THE PROGRAMMES by Jean-Marc Lofficier. Target pb, dist in Aust by Hodder & Stoughton. 128pp. A\$5.95. This is the kind of thing you get in fanzines - though the paperback binding ensures it will last rough handling. First screening dates, actors, plot synopsis, etc. For the collector and Dr Who fan.

THE YOUNG ASTRONOMER by Sheila Snowden. An Usborne Guide large size pb, dist in Aust by Hodder & Stoughton. 32pp in full colour. A\$12.95. On sale now. Just the thing for the youngster who is interested in the stars. With glossy paper and interesting text and illustrations this is a great book for the eager pre-teen.

THE WRITING BOOK by Kate Grenville. Allen & Unwin trade pb, dist in Aust by Allen & Unwin. A\$14.95. An up-dated book for aspiring Australian writers with all the basics needed. It includes grammar, and also Australian publishers. Worth getting if you are starting out and would like to sell.

OTHER CURRENT RELEASES (most to be reviewed next issue)

HODDER & STOUGHTON: MIDAS by Wolfgang Jeschke
JOURNEY TO THE CENTRE by Brian Stableford
INVADERS FROM THE CENTRE by Brian Stableford
RIMRUNNER by C.J. Cherryh
FLINX IN FLUX by Alan Dean Foster
LABYRINTH OF DREAMS
LADY OF NIGHT, LADY OF DARKNESS by Diana Paxson
MEMORIES by Mike McQuay
THE ASCENSION FACTOR by Herbert & Ransom
THE LAZARUS EFFECT by Herbert & Ransom
THE JESUS INCIDENT by Herbert & Ransom
THE SHADOW DANCERS by Jack Chalker
ENDANGERED SPECIES by Gene Wolf
DR WHO: THE HAPPINESS PATROL by Graeme Curry

PENGUIN: THE CASTLE by Franz Kafka
THE BEST OF MARION ZIMMER BRADLEY ed by Martin Greenberg
THE EROTIC WORLD OF FAERY by Maureen Duffy
METROPOLIS by Fritz Lang

JUNE RELEASES:

PAN BOOKS: FIRST FLIGHT by Chris Claremont
JASON COSMO by Dan McGirt

HODDER & STOUGHTON: SWORD & SORCERESS V by Marion Zimmer Bradley
DR WHO: THE SPACE PIRATES by Robert Holmes
COMPUTER PROGRAMMING / BASIC

COLLINS/A & R: THE DIAMOND THRONE by David Eddings

RANDOM CENTURY SONGMASTER by Orson Scott Card
SPEAKER FOR THE DEAD by Orson Scott Card
ENDER'S GAME by Orson Scott Card

JULY RELEASES:

HODDER & STOUGHTON: MASTER OF SPACE by Robert Vardeman
THE MAZE IN THE MIRROR by Jack Chalker
BRIDE OF THE SLIME MONSTER by Craig Gardner
REMEMBRANCE OF THE DALEKS by B. Aaronovitch
THERE ARE DOORS by Gene Wolf
MAN FROM MUNDANIA by Piers Anthony
SCIONS OF SHANNARA by Terry Brooks

ALLEN & UNWIN: DARK HAND OF MAGIC by Barbara Hambly

RANDOM CENTURY: THE DRAGON LORD by Peter Morwood
THE WARLORD'S DOMAIN by Peter Morwood
THE DEMON LORD by Peter Morwood
THE HORSE LORD by Peter Morwood.



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