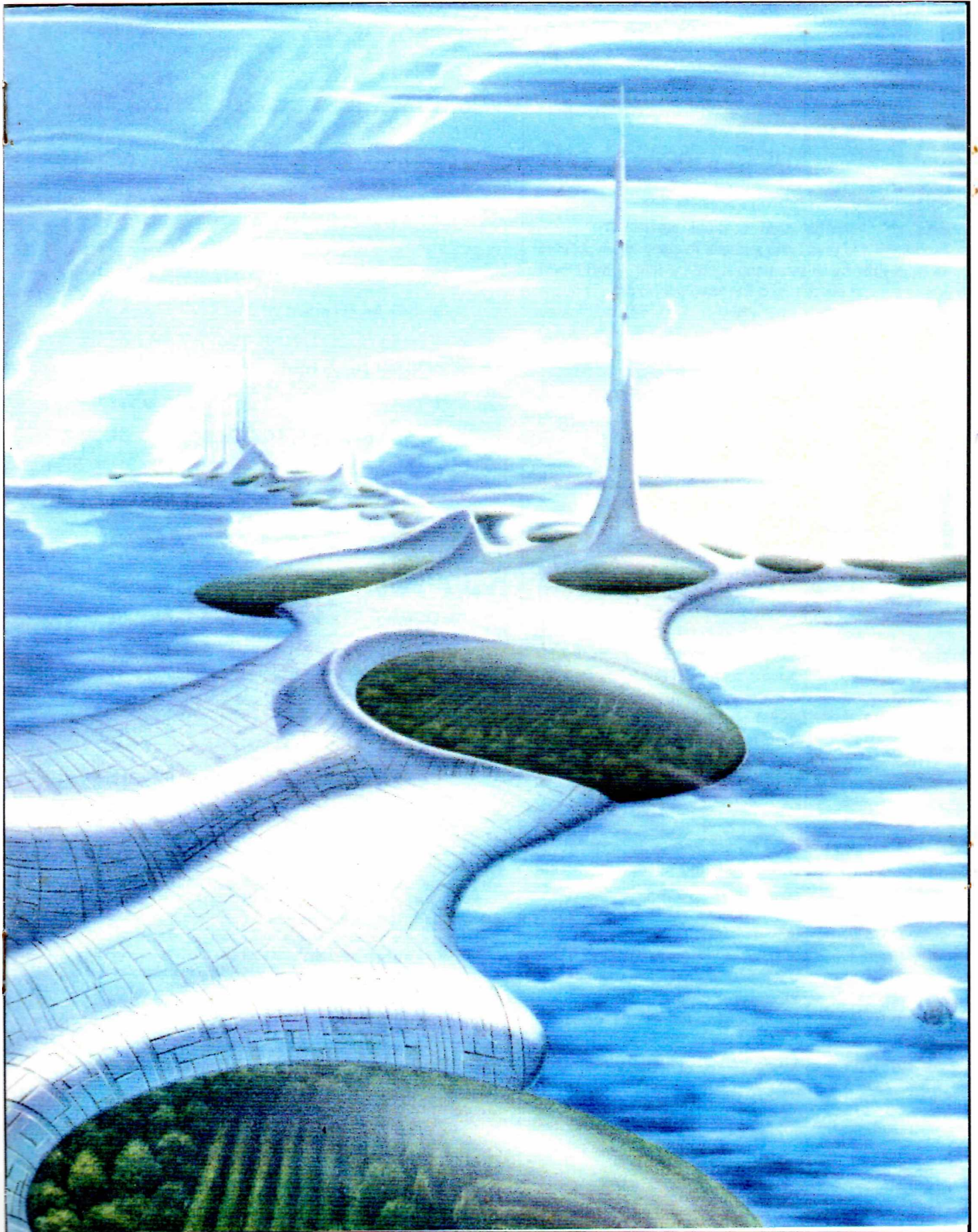


THE MENTOR 71

Australian Science Fiction



THE MENTOR

AUSTRALIAN SCIENCE FICTION

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THE MENTOR 71, June 1991. ISSN 0727-8462. Edited, printed and published by Ron Clarke, 6 Bellevue Road, Faulconbridge, NSW 2776, Australia. **THE MENTOR** is published at intervals of roughly three months. It is available for published contribution (fiction [science fiction or fantasy], poetry, article, or letter of comment on a previous issue. It is *not* available for subscription, but is available for \$5 for a sample issue (posted).

Contributions must be on a Prodos Apple II or IBM ascii file (DD or HD) or typed, single or double spaced, preferably a good photocopy (and if you want it returned, please *type* your name and address!) Contributions are not paid; however they receive a free copy of the issue their contribution is in, and any future issue containing comments on their contribution.

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The Editorial Slant

This issue looks a little different this time around. After years of wanting one I bought a Panasonic laser printer, plus a 386SX computer to go with it. The Apple IIe can do the laser printing, but the programme it uses, PUBLISH IT 3, is fairly slow, and can't do all the things that WORD FOR WINDOWS can do, like automatic page formatting and numbering.

I think it gives this issue a good clean look and the Times Roman 10 font seems to get more text in than usual.

I've had a bit of trouble with viruses - the 'slow' virus - but now have a virus shield to help make sure they don't get back on.

Another thing about this issue is that there is a heck of a lot of fiction. I've been swamped with contributions of fiction - and most of it has been good. Luckily I've also received articles - but I still want more articles and poetry to balance the fiction.

There are some people getting close to being cut off the mailing list, as I've had no contact with them for some time. **THE MENTOR** takes a lot of effort and time which I could spend on other things - and if I don't get any feedback these people are being dropped. This also applies to fans who send me only their Apa zines - sorry, but I don't think much of Apa zines for trade

I will be going over to VolgaCon in September, and had hoped to visit the Worldcon in Chicago on the way (the airfare is only about \$300 extra). Unfortunately the week in the Chicago hotel and the following week scrounging off anyone I could find is a little too daunting. I not have much cash as it is. Susan came back from a large SF media con last weekend and said that she had booked the motel rooms for the San Francisco Worldcon for the two of us. So all being well, and if we can get a child-sitter for about two weeks around then, We'll both be over for that con.

Susan has been overseas twice in the past few years - for the '91 bid in New Orleans and for this year. I've only been overseas for my 1970 trip - so I've been chaffing to go with her. I'm not really a party person - I'd rather go to panels, and tend to flake out early, while Susan goes on till about 4 in the morning. It's good in one way - we cover most of the con activities between the two of us. - Ron.

CASSIOPEIA B

by Maria-Louise Stephens

I sat on a stone bench in the middle of Melbourne and listened to the water rushing over the steps in the city-square next to the ruins of St. Paul's Cathedral.

All the fountains in the city were dry and lifeless, dust clogging their spouts.

There was a desperate shortage of water in the dry summers. The city-council had wanted to discontinue the waterfall, they called it "a waste", but the people had demonstrated and said they would all leave. This was the only joy left to them, seeing the water coursing endlessly down the steps.

A few strong men had carried benches from the walk-ways around the river Yarra and set them up in the square, even the ones outside the ruined cathedral had been taken, as the walls were not safe any more.

St. Patricks and St. Pauls had lost their spires a long time ago. They had crashed through the roofs. They had been beautiful churches, my parents had told me and even they had not seen them in their full glory. The gold mosaic of the High Alter had been vandalised, the windows destroyed by stones.

Today, no-one had thought of coming and joining me at the waterfall. People were afraid of the ultraviolet rays, but I felt it was safe here this early in the morning. I had brought with me a small bottle of clean water. I boiled every drop of water. I didn't trust the assurances of officials that they had repaired the water purification plant.

I felt different today, unafraid. Usually I sat with my back to a wall so that I could see who was approaching.

Sometimes I walked up to the top of Swanston Street and I was able to look right across to the hills in the distance. Most of the tall houses had fallen down and I had an unimpeded view of the Dandenongs, where my grandparents had had some land. Grandpa had generated his own electricity and he had electrified the high fence around his property after dusk. Too many people had come out of town to steal food. He produced everything the family needed on his acres and gave much away to groups of hungry boys and girls.

My hands stretched to the ground, broken stones and dust. How I would love to put my fingers into soil and grow something, see seeds sprout tiny leaves, then a stem, then fruit. My mother had told me long ago with tears in her eyes that finally they had cut down the last tall tree in the Dangenong Ranges. They were now known as the "Bare Hills".

After my parents' death I had joined some young people in one of the houses which were still reasonably safe. The owners had either died or moved away. One of the girls, called Helen, and I had taken over one very small room on the ground floor. We stayed together. Neither of us wanted to be alone. We never joined the bigger groups. Some of the boys had discovered a cellar with old bottles of liqueur and whisky. They drank it in the evenings. Some of the girls joined them, but when the boys became rough, they ran away. Helen and I were afraid and had pushed an old mahogany chest of drawers in front of our door that opened inwards. Every evening, until all the bottles were empty, there were screams and loud laughter and we guessed what was going on behind the door. Helen and I clung together and pulled the blankets over our ears.

It was always safe in the morning to come out of our room, everybody was asleep.

I knew that once there had been a special room, where one could go and be alone and wash, and one could pull a chain or press a button and water would cleanse away everything. We only had a bowl and a bucket. We had to empty it out in the mornings. We had chosen an old hole in the gutter, away from the house, which once had taken stormwater out to sea. Helen and I kept ourselves clean. We had put tins and other containers under the downpipes coming from the roofs and collected every drop of water when it rained and used it carefully. I had always heard that rainwater was clean and tasted sweet. This water tasted strange.

When I was too tired to walk far, I just sat on one of the benches in the city-square. There were no trains or tramcars. I had only seen them on old pictures. People even had had TV boxes and radios once. Then

one knew what was happening in the world. Now, we didn't even know what happened in the West, North or East of our own country.

One of the most precious things I possessed was a book of fairy tales. It looked shabby and barely held together and the gold lettering on the outside was faded. An ancestor of mine had brought it with him from Europe and I kept it in a plastic box. Some people, called the Brothers Grimm, had written these stories. When I felt depressed, I would gently turn the pages and read about swans and princes, about bears and geese, red deer and beautiful girls. They always told of a fight between good and evil and the good usually won.

Then one night Helen became sick and vomited bile. She was so thin. She had no strength any more to fight this sickness - whatever it was. That night had been particularly noisy. The young people had finally settled down. They all slept together. There had been a disease, called AIDS and before it had been conquered, many people had died, all over the world.

Once there had been historical records showing that spaceships had taken off from America and Russia in search of other planets, but we had never heard of them again. People had turned to religion. There had been a lot of singing and praying in the streets. Men and women had wanted something strong to believe in and Islam had spread over many parts of the world. They had said that Islam had strength, the Christian Churches had not. Some churchmen had given men and women something to hope for, a renewal of faith, but too little and some had said, it was too late. God had shown what He thought of His world - He had turned away and the world was lost.

In a famine years and years ago domestic and farm animals had been consumed. There were no cats and dogs any more. I had never seen a bird. Grandpa had still known names of birds and talked of the black of blackbirds and the iridescent feathers of starlings. Some of the remaining rivers contained fish, but no-one ate them any more.

I sat and thoughts were whirling through my mind. I thought it was time for me to go to one of the public eating houses and collect packaged food for the first meal. Some people who still had work, were fed at those places of work - we others, who were not so lucky, were given food parcels, dried or artificially produced edibles. I only had myself to think of now. Helen had died some days ago. Her body had been taken to a crematorium and all of us in that house had been chemically cleansed, the house fumigated, as the authorities did not know what she had died of.

Would it be better to be dead too? But I must not think that, as Grandpa had always said, as long as there was life in our bodies there was always hope. How wonderful it would be if those old tree-stumps in the square were again strong and healthy trunks and they had green crowns and birds would sing - call - chirp - or whatever they had been doing long, long ago.

My father had once passed on to me a 100 year calendar and I had worked out that this was the year 2777. Our family had believed in the number 7. They said it had been a holy number. This year of the treble-seven - could it be a year of change for all of us, still alive in the city, and maybe for me? Or would we all eventually perish?

The saddest thing that Helen had said before she died was that no-one had ever loved her and she never had had a child of her own. She had become a useless dry leaf on the old tree of life. I had cried and cried that night. Would I have to die like Helen, not loved and all alone?

There suddenly was a voice in my head, clear and strong: *No-you-will-not-die.* Where had the voice come from?

I looked around me. There was no-one there. It had been a long time, when my parents had still been alive, that we had sent each other thought-pictures. Now there was no-one.

I sometimes wondered if it would be better for me to leave the city and try to find shelter outside - but there would be no food. They had told us that the soil was infertile and dust clogged everything. Oh, just once to hear a bird sing.

You-will-hear-birds-again. I heard the voice clearly, reassuringly, as if someone somewhere knew how I felt and wanted to give me hope. I looked up into the sky. But the sky was empty.

My hear had sunk into my arms. The water still rushing over the steps, a sound that made me think of cleansing rain, of creeks gurgling along. It must have sounded like that, but I had never seen any. Someone had once told me that there was a place up North where wild animals had found shelter but they had become savage and never let anyone near. Surely they must have found water.

The sound of rushing water was gentler now - and then I couldn't hear it any more. I looked up and then slowly around me. I could not see. I could not see clearly the broken walls of the cathedral. The houses in the distance looked blurred, as if I saw them through a veil - and the veil had a light green colour - green, my mother had called green the colour of hope, of growth and of spring. What was happening?

Everything around me was indistinct. I wanted to jump up and run away, when light pressure on my head held me down. Would we have another earthquake?

We had experienced them even here in Melbourne. And afterwards there had been the horrid smell of sulphur, as if the earth deep down objected and revolted against what we had done to her, our Mother Earth who had fed us, clothed us and had been giving us of her plenty. And what had we done? We had poisoned the very air around her. At first we had taken all her minerals and her precious stones - then the oil ran out and the people had burnt the available brown coal and the forests - and the trees that had been left standing had died from acid rain.

Grandpa had told me that all the beautiful buildings and sculptures from ancient times had crumbled and he had asked: where will help come from? From beyond the stars?

Even the rabbits in Australia had been cleverer than man. They didn't breed when there wasn't sufficient feed - but man had bred. There had been more and more hungry children and many had died in infancy as there had not been enough food for them. What had we done to our Mother Earth?

It was right that she should object and punish us.

I sat quietly waiting - but there was no sulphurous smell or any trembling this time.

Today was the first day since Helen's death that I felt well. I could breathe deeply and didn't cough when the lungs filled with air. It was just as if the veil was covering everything unpleasant, as if here was an oasis of well-being.

I stood up and this time I could stand. Something touched my skin, I wanted to draw back, but I was not afraid. It wasn't a real touch, just as if something blew across me - delicate but so intense that the fine hairs on my arms stood up as if responding. Then - as if this had been a preparation - something *did* touch me - was it a hand on my shoulder?

I walked forward and the voice that I had heard before, said very quietly, like a humming in my head: *I-have-chosen-you.* Something gripped me. I could not see or hear anything - only feel. Suddenly the air seemed fresher still and it was warm around me. Not like the sun had warmed people - this warmth was surrounding me completely, as if my toes even curled around warm air. And then I fell asleep.

There were dreams. Not horrifying ones as I had had when Helen and I were occupying that small room. They had been so frightening that they had even coloured and invaded all our thoughts the next day. Here - there was a stretching of mind and body, as if I was reaching out to something beautiful but distant - and I felt so clean. That was stranger still.

Something-is-amusing-you?

And I answered quickly and joyously

'Yes, I feel so clean and fresh as if every pore can breathe separately.' I was still talking in my dream - or was it a dream?

I came to, ravenously hungry.

And again there was the voice: *Here-eat.*

There was a bowl filled with soup, thick and tasty. Then I slept again.

When I woke up the next time, everything around me was still, just the soft hum of machines, heavily shielded.

'Where are you, voice?' I called loud into this stillness and immediately the voice answered: *Are-you-afraid?*

'No, just lonely. Can we talk?'

'Of course. Do you know where we are?'

The voice sounded different, just like mine. There was no hesitation in the speech, not the monotony of a computer voice any more.

'I don't know,' I answered. 'I believe I am not in Australia any more.'

'You are right. We are on our way to Cassiopeia.'

'But that is a group of stars. I heard my father tell that Cassiopeia A was a supernova that was noticed in the year 1572. How can you be going to a star?'

'You are right, there are many stars, but there is also a planet, not visible from earth, far behind this constellation. We discovered it, searching for somewhere to live. The first man to set foot on it was a Czech and he called it CASSIOPEIA BUDOUNOST, the Cassiopeia of the Future. We all liked the name, but now we call it simply Cassiopeia B. It's much the same as earth, though with a lighter gravitational mass. I can tell you now where I and the other men on this spaceship come from. Did you know that spaceships left in 2100 from America and Russia to find a new earth?'

'I had heard.'

'We are the survivors of the Russian ship. We had a good crew, it was a good ship. There were young families with children, scientists, agronomists, teachers, doctors, botanists, farmers and livestock. There were failures and successes after they had discovered Cassiopeia B. They found berries on this new planet that killed the ones who ate them, there were vines that choked small settlements. In spite of this the colonists seemed to thrive. But suddenly there were several deaths. Nobody could explain.' The voice sounded sad

'It was only during the last 50 years that a medical team isolated a fungus that killed young pregnant women and the older mothers but did not attack the male colonists. So now we have a male dominated society. There have been young female children, when their mothers died, but too few to create a happy balance. This spaceship was sent back to earth to recruit more women willing to come and join us. While we orbited, we saw the destruction of the old earth, earthquakes, fires, sandstorms and soil erosion. Much of the planet is now covered by desert.'

'How is it that I can hear you?' I asked the voice.

'I am a telepath - and so are you. Didn't you know that?'

'Our family has always been able to communicate in the past, grandma, mother and I. But since I have been alone I have not found another being I could be so close to. Did you find women who wanted to come?'

'Yes, we found women, but not as many as we had hoped. We need the ones who have not given up hope, who are healthy in body and mind. So many are diseased and have lost their will to live. My name is Rurik. What did they call you?'

'My parents named me Miriam.'

'Miriam - it's a Hebrew word meaning bitterness - let's hope we can transform it into happiness. Sleep and we will talk again.'

I spent a lot of time on the journey sleeping and dreaming. I dreamt of a green planet, of fields I could walk over, of trees that bore fruit, flowers and hills that were covered with forests and above all I dreamed of water. I saw children, healthy and noisy and always there was a man with me.

Then one day the voice called me to leave my quarters and as I stood at one of the observation windows I saw many women doing the same, laughing and pointing. There, far away and yet so near was the world to which we were all travelling.

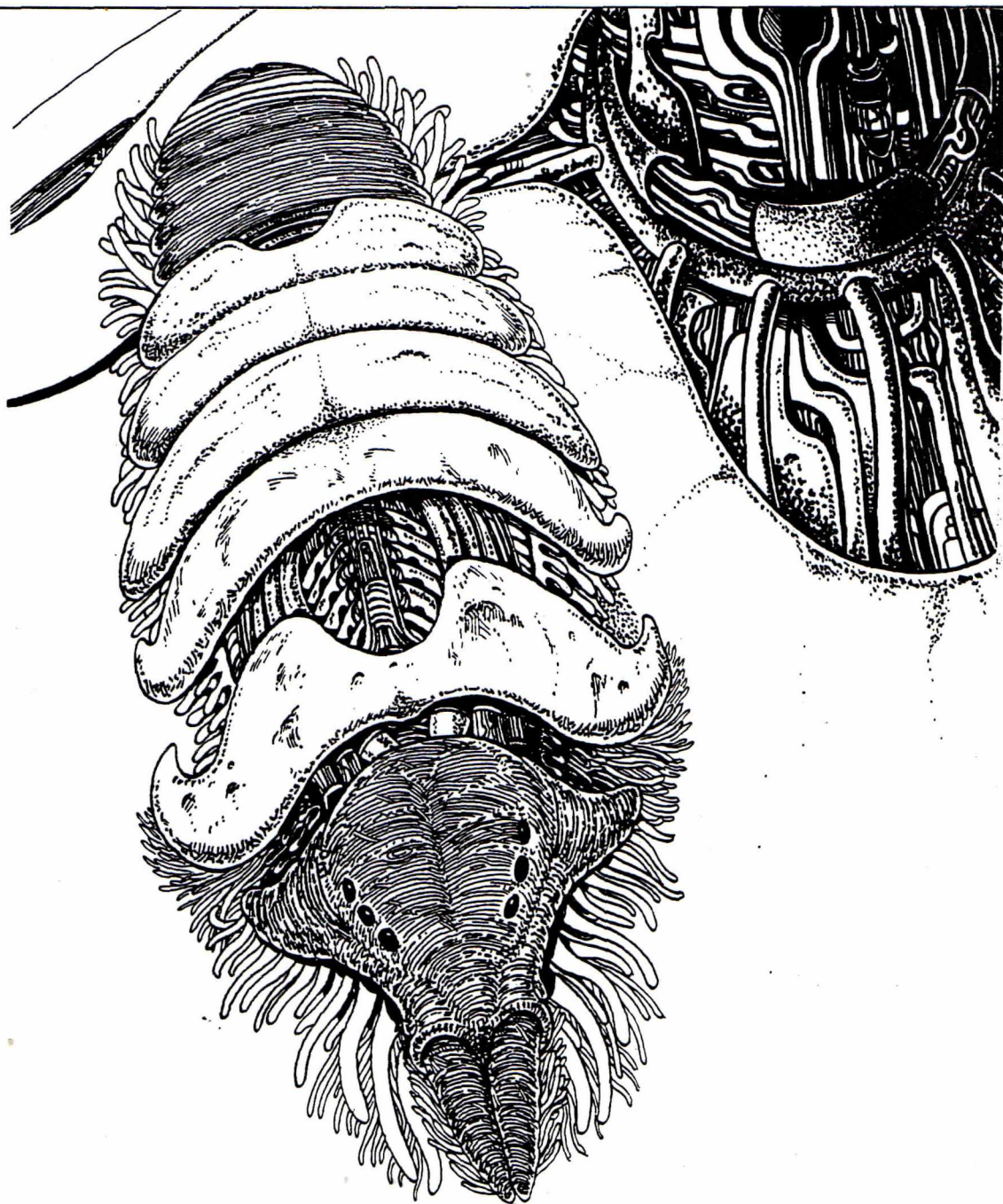
My mind had called to this voice that had talked to me for such a long time and I was finally answered - in person.

I looked up into a strong face, not a beautiful one, eyes that could laugh, a mouth that smiled at me. There was a thatch of hair that kept falling over a wide forehead and was constantly pushed back and then there was an arm that held me to him. I only said one word and knew it to be true: 'Rurik'.

He turned to me fully and repeated what he had told me once before: 'I have chosen you.'

A wave of affection surged over me and I answered: 'No, that is not so - we have chosen each other.'

THE END



THE YANKEE PRIVATEER #11

by Buck Coulson

At Millennicon this year, I performed my fifth marriage. First time one has been part of the convention program, but it went off quite well.

All of this began as a joke. I came home one day in 1969 to find a tasteful ordination certificate in the Universal Life Church sitting on my typewriter. (Juanita had opened the mail and couldn't resist a dramatic touch.) After getting over my surprise, I bought a cheap frame for it, and put it up on the wall to amaze visitors. Some time later, Denny Lien confessed to having sent in my name along with his. At that time, one didn't even have to send in any money; just send your name in and Rev. Kirby Hensley would ordain you. I thought it was pity that Denny couldn't have seen my face when I first spied the certificate, and then pretty well forgot about the whole thing. Good joke, now over with.

This changed sometime around 1977 or 1978. Bruce had graduated from high school, gone to college in Columbus, OH, dropped out of college but stayed in Columbus. (He's still there.) He was home visiting, and had called back to Columbus for some reason. I was paying very little attention until I heard him say, "Well, Dad's a minister." By the time I got the phone away from him, it was too late; I'd been committed to performing the marriage of two of Bruce's friends. Not knowing anything about wedding ceremonies, I asked Judge Joe Hensley and received a copy of the civil ceremony that he used. I also checked with the state of Ohio, hoping that there was a requirement that ministers had to live in the state, or something else that would let me out. No such luck; back came an application and a request for \$10. I sent it in and was duly accredited as a minister in the sovereign state of Ohio. Somewhat later, out of curiosity, I checked with Indiana and was told that "If your parishioners consider you a minister, the state considers you one." However, to date all my marriage officiating has been done in Ohio.

The wedding itself was somewhat of a shambles. There was no rehearsal because there was no way to get all the parties together more than once. The marriage was to be held in a botanical conservatory. The bride and groom

had looked at a little pool of goldfish with a narrow bridge over it and thought this was a charming location. Of course, at the time of the wedding, the pool had been drained and was a shallow concrete basin with some desiccated seaweed in the bottom. Everyone arrived in good time to find that the bridesmaids' dresses weren't finished, and the bride's father had forgotten to bring the punch-bowl for the reception afterwards. He was dispatched to buy one, with Bruce going along as a native guide to a region of Columbus that he didn't know very well because it was pretty strictly an industrial region. They came back with a stainless steel double boiler, which was eventually used for the punch. The site of the wedding was the tropical plants room, and the only area for a dressing room was the potting shed. The door was broken, so one of the larger female relatives went on guard in front of it. Then we stood around and waited. About 7:00, the bride's brother came in to say that we had to get out by 7:30 because another party had reserved the room for that period. A while later the bridesmaids dresses arrived and they hastily got dressed.

Finally the wedding party assembled, and the fans and relatives found seats. Since the room had been laid out with winding paths among the palm trees and other greenery, there was no such thing as a good seat. The official photographer, a young black fan, kept popping out from behind various plants to get his photos; I have my back to him, but Juanita commented later that it looked remarkably African. The wedding march was the march from *Star Wars*, played at top volume on a portable phonograph borrowed from Lori Huff. It was heard by absolutely nobody, because of huge overhead fans going "whump-whump-whump" as they circulated the moist air in the room. Bride and groom came up a path and over the little bridge. Bridesmaids and groomsmen marched along another path that intersected with the bridge path where I was standing. The paths were barely wide enough for two people, so the groomsmen had to squeeze between bride and groom and myself to get to their places.

The ceremony itself is short and went off well enough, with everyone talking loudly so we could hear each

other over the noise of the fans. Afterwards, one of the groomsmen, who was standing maybe 6 or 8 feet away from me as I spoke, said, "I saw you lips move and I saw him kiss the bride, so I suppose they're married, but I didn't hear a word of it." We repaired to another room for the reception, where the fans and the relatives made two distinct groups, and the bride's mother quizzed me on the tenets of my church. Since I hadn't thought up any, she didn't get much satisfaction.

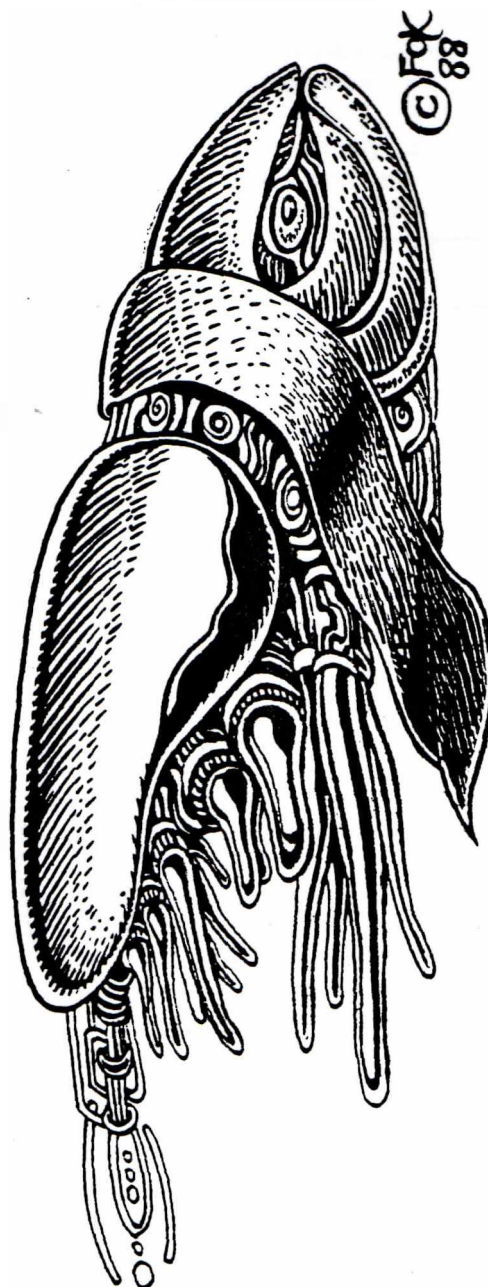
After that, marriages were easy. My second performance came with Bruce's marriage to Lori Huff, and it went off a good deal better. The bridal department that Lori went to had a "wedding consultant" on the staff, and she rehearsed us with grim determination, paying very little attention to what the people involved wanted. By the time of the wedding, we all knew our parts.

After that came a couple of "show" marriages for people who wanted a ceremony for their fan friends. One was supposed to be real, but at the last moment the bride's divorce papers didn't show up, so the wedding went off as scheduled and the couple had to get officially married some time later. (This happens: President Andrew Jackson and his wife discovered after their marriage that her divorce wasn't legal at the time she married Jackson, and they had to have another ceremony.) This was an SCA wedding, and the bride and groom wrote out their ceremony, and made me a monks robe to wear. Again no rehearsal, so I blew one of the lines of the ceremony, but otherwise it went off okay. An interesting sidelight was that the marriage was sent out over a computer network as it happened; one of the computer fans was pounding away on his keyboard, hooked up to a modem.

For Bruce's recent marriage to Emily Vazquez, I wasn't called upon, much to my relief. They got a Unitarian minister to do the job.

The surroundings for this last marriage were a bit strange. The room assigned was one used for "alternate programming" (which a marriage certainly is), and was set up as a cash bar, presumably for less solemn events. (The bar was not staffed while we were there.) No rehearsal, as usual, but I did meet with bride, groom, and matron of honour ahead of time to decide the basics, such as where we were going to stand. At the wedding, bride and groom were piped in by a bagpiper playing *Marie's Wedding*. Afterwards, I was somewhat bemused to receive all sorts of compliments about the beauty of the ceremony. It seemed quite simple to me, and it's very short, which I approve of. I passed the compliments on to Joe Hensley, since it's his ceremony. On the whole, I think I'm finally getting used to being a minister, but neofans beware; fandom is full of traps for the unwary.

- Buck Coulson.



Is Anybody There?

by Blair Hunt

The strange constellations gleamed coldly in the blackness. He was aware of the thin metal skin of the ship, all that stood between him and the vacuum of space. For the first time since he had joined the project he felt doubt start to nibble at the edge of his confidence. If they failed to find any trace of other intelligent life forms since the beginning of the space program then what was the point of sending him, all alone, to seek further. He felt a tightening in his chest; he must not panic.

He came awake with a shout that sent the cat bounding off his chest and out through the door of his cabin.

His mother's head appeared in the doorway: 'What's all the shouting about, Max? They'll hear you all the way up in Operations!'

This was something of an exaggeration. The Ops. Section was two kilometres away. Space Station *Sirius 1* was a big place and it needed to be. Standing on the very frontier of Earth's advance into the Universe, charged with the task of opening up new colonies and continuing the search for intelligent life.

Max swung his legs over the side of his bunk: 'It was just Magnus jumping onto the bed. It gave me a fright.'

'You should shut your cabin door. You know he likes to wake you up to play with him in the mornings.'

Max, who would normally have enjoyed the cat's play, found that the dream had made him strangely uneasy.

The feeling was soon forgotten when he arrived at the College. Max and his class were starting their final examinations. The results would decide what kind of work each would train for. It was the most important time in the life of any twelve year old.

By the end of the day, as he fell into bed exhausted, the dream was far from his thoughts

He ran his eyes over the banks of instruments. Behind him the beacon clicked out its endless message across the darkness: "Dot, do, dot... dash, dash". The receiver dish spun slowly, seeking a reply.

They had told him that the hardest part of his voyage would be to maintain his belief in the project, that the lonely months of search would sap his confidence and exhaust his courage. It seemed that they were right.

He remembered their final words to him before his departure: "This is the last attempt. Search for as long as you can. If you fail to find other beings then we must accept that we are alone in the Universe."

He was jolted out of his reverie by the jangling insistence of an alarm. He scanned the instruments again: oxygen, power supply? The alarm continued its clatter.

Max reached out to switch off the alarm beside his bed. Magnus lay near his feet, his yellow eyes inspected the morning, and his young master. He rose majestically and strode the length of the bed to sit on Max's chest and tap him softly on the nose with his paw.

Later that day the career's officer called Max into his office: 'You've done well in the finals, Max. Have you given any more thought to the kind of work you want to do?'

'Yes, something in the 'Life Search Section'.'

'Max, let me advise you against it. That section is going to be shut down soon; it's already been reduced to a staff of one man. Nobody believes that there are other life forms out there. Don't waste your time.'

The dream that night seemed even more real than the ones that had gone before.

He had found the reason for the alarm - a fracture in the fuel tank that supplied the main engine of

his small ship. The Life Support System would keep him alive and fed as he drifted, helpless, in the great darkness. There would still be power for the beacon, but he could never go home.

He sat at the ship's control console. He had done all that he could. All that remained for him was to keep the beacon running in the slight hope that he might find other beings who could rescue him and repair his ship. It didn't seem very probable. To make matters worse he seemed to have hurt his foot.

* * * * *

Max woke to find that Magnus had fallen asleep across the end of the bed and that the cat's weight had given him a sore ankle. He limped as he moved about the room, preparing himself for his first day at work in the "Life Search Section".

He tapped nervously at the door marked "Chief of Research" and jumped when a loud voice bellowed: 'Come in!'

The office was lined with storage racks, each overflowing with equipment. At one end of the room stood a huge desk piled high with papers and books. Behind the desk sat an old man wearing thick glasses and a cheerful grin.

'You're not a Martian, I suppose?' The old man demanded in a voice that boomed like thunder in the confines of the small room.

Max looked at the man in astonishment. 'I'm your new assistant, Max. There aren't any Martians, are there?'

The man peered at him through the thick lenses for several long moments before he spoke: 'The reason that this, once vast, experiment is now housed in this one room is because people think the way you do, young Max. That there are no Martians and no Venusians or Little Green Men of any kind. But here in this room, Max, we never say that there are not Martians. Understand?'

'Yes Sir!' said Max to the old man who sat, his eyes flashing behind his glasses, glaring at him over the desk.

The grin was back on the man's face. 'Don't mind me, Max. I've been fighting a losing battle to save this program for so long that I've forgotten my manners. I'm Linus McCloud. Welcome to the Section.'

'Are they really going to close us down?'

'I'm afraid so, Max. I doubt that we have more than a few weeks at most. After all these years without finding any trace of life they ran out of patience. They think it's just a waste of money. But tell me, what made you want to work here?'

Max, much to his own surprise, found himself confiding in the man, telling him about the dreams.

Linus sat deep in thought for a long time after Max had finished telling his story. 'We experimented with E.S.P. years ago. Some people seemed to be able to send and receive simple messages using only their

minds, but the money ran out for that experiment and we never went on with it. What do you think these dreams of yours mean?'

'At first I thought that I was the one in the ship, but last night, when I looked at the instruments I realised that they were marked in a script that wasn't from Earth.'

'You're probably just dreaming about alien life because it's something that you're interested in. Still, let me know if they occur again. Now we'd better put you to work.'

Max spent the rest of the day learning where things were kept in the crowded little room and clearing a small area of one of the benches to serve as a desk.

He went to bed early that night. He wanted to find out what was going to happen in the dream. There was no dream. He woke up to find his mother bending over his bed. 'Wake up, Max. You'll be late for work. You shut your door last night and Magnus couldn't get in to wake you up; you've slept in!'

The day was spent learning to use the receivers that rested on a shelf above his work bench. Listening, as they had for years, for a signal from the darkness of space.

'Any dreams last night?' Linus asked as they were locking up at the end of the day.

'No, it's the first night I haven't.'

'Maybe telling me about it got it out of your system.'

'Perhaps, but I have another theory,' said Max thoughtfully.

That night Max made a point of wedging his door open. He could not have explained why, but he was convinced that Magnus and the dreams were connected in some mysterious way and he wanted to be sure that the cat could enter the room if it chose to.

Sleep was a long time in coming that night. What if it was true that some alien stranger was trapped in a crippled ship, just waiting for him to help? At last, in the early hours of the morning, he drifted into sleep.

* * * * *

He could hear the beacon clicking behind him, sending its signal "Dot, dot, dot... dahs, dash." He looked again at the instruments, at the strange symbols on the dials. He forced himself to turn until he found what he was looking for, a polished panel that would reflect his image. He stared into it.

The face that looked out at him was covered with a fine brown fur. The ears were small and pointed. The place of Magnus in the line of communication was starting to become clear.

* * * * *

He knew, before he opened his eyes, just what he was going to see: Magnus lay at the foot of the bed, staring at him with wise, unblinking, yellow eyes.

Max spoke about the dream as soon as he arrived at work.

Linus agreed with him. 'I suppose it could be that, if the creature were some type of highly evolved feline, his thoughts might channel through a cat. I'm afraid that it won't make any difference to us, Max. I've just had word that we're to shut down to project today.'

Max couldn't believe his ears. 'But if we go to them and explain how close we are.'

'Max, all we have is a series of dreams, they wouldn't listen.'

'Will you go to see them and ask? What if he really is out there and we don't do anything to help him.'

'All right, Max. I'll talk to them. But I don't think much of our chances.'

Several hours later the phone rang. 'Max, it's Linus. I tried but they wouldn't listen. We've been ordered to shut down the receivers immediately.'

'But the dreams keep getting stronger. I'm sure he's getting closer all the time. We must leave the equipment on for a few more days.'

'I'm sorry, Max.'

'I'm sorry too. I thought they might refuse and I've jammed the door so that they can't get in.'

There was a long pause before Linus spoke again. 'They'll probably turn off the power. There should be enough in the batteries under the bench to run the receivers for a few days... Good luck, Max.'

As he put the phone down Max heard someone trying to open the door. A few minutes later the phone rang again. 'Open the door, Max.'

'No.'

'We're going to turn off the power, Max.'

'Go ahead.'

A moment later he was plunged into darkness. He made his way to the bench and switched the receivers over to battery power, then sat down to wait.

Max checked the meters one last time before admitting to himself that the batteries were too low in power to run the equipment any longer. It had been three days since the power had been cut, three days waiting alone in the darkness for a signal that never arrived.

Perhaps, after all, it had only been his imagination playing tricks. It was time to open the door. He had done all that he could.

He removed the steel bar that he had used to jam the lock. The door swung open. Two men rushed into the room and started to remove equipment. One of them stumbled in the gloom. 'Give us some power. We can't see what we're doing in here!'

As the lights came on Max turned to face the room. The men had stopped what they were doing and stood staring at the receivers that had been silent for so many years.

The sound was soft but distinct. "Dot, dot, dot... dash, dash."

THE END



ALDERSON IN THE DOCK

by John J. Alderson

P. You are accused of denigrating women: How do you plea?

A. Not guilty.

P. You are reported to have made the statement "She was the only educated woman I've ever met". Do you deny this?

A. No. However...

J. Silence! The accused will confine his answers to *yes* or *no*.

P. Is this not denigrating women?

A. No.

P. Surely this is contradictory. You deny women are educated, yet deny this is denigrating women.

A. ...

P. You cannot answer this question?

A. What was the question?

J. The accused is obviously of low intelligence. You must bear with him.

P. You deny women are educated?

A. No.

P. But you just said "She was the only educated woman I've ever met."

A. Yes.

P. Isn't this denying women are educated?

A. No. If I could...

J. Silence. The accused will confine his answers to *yes* or *no*.

P. If there is only one educated woman then all the rest must be uneducated. Isn't that so?

A. No.

J. We accept that the accused believes women are uneducated.

A. I do not!

J. Silence! The accused will simply answer the questions. Proceed P.

P. As you have claimed women are uneducated, isn't this denigrating women.

A. No. Yes.

J. What does that mean?

A. To be answered *yes* or *no*?

J. I find the accused guilty as charged. Take him out and castrate him.

A. I wish to appeal.

J. You can do that afterwards. Take him away.

* * *

To someone trained as a scientist as I have been, this line of questioning can never arrive at the truth. My later training as an historian mean an even greater range of questions to be asked and answered. And of course the idea of answering questions with a yes or no is absurd. An explanation at the beginning would have got the inquiry elsewhere than where it ended.

C. Now you say you've only ever met one educated woman. Now have you met other women?

A. Yes, a few. I guess I'm rather shy.

C. Quite so. Have you heard of other educated women?

A. Yes.

C. Many?

A. Not really.

C. How many educated men have you met?

A. One, I think. It was a long time ago.

C. You now of other educated men?

A. Yes, not many though.

C. Are you aware that most people in our society can read and write?

A. I agree, most people are literate.

C. You agree that most people go to school, and so are *educated*?

A. Yes. The difference lies in what one means by "educated".

C. Obviously you are using *educated* in a special fashion. To be educated in your sense of the term requires what?

A. Very briefly, and may I say I am following the poet Robert Graves, and the sense is of being educated as a writer or student of literature. To be educated one must have read one thousand of the most important books in the world. Most of these pertain to one's own culture and refers to the fundamental books of that culture. An

Irishman must have read the *Tain*, a Scot *The Brus*, and an Australian Adam Lindsay Gordon. Most people actually fall down in not having read the fundamental books of their culture. In addition everybody should have read such books as Plato, Homer, The Bible and the Koran. There is of course no fixed canon.

C. Are all these books readily obtainable?

A. Unfortunately, no. Our booksellers and publishers are Philistines.

C. What about our education system?

A. It attracts the uneducated. My teachers were of often barely literate and seldom sober. From the point of view of turning out an educated student it is steadily getting worse.

- John J. Alderson

Disconnected

by Lyn Elvey

Christine was in bed, and had been blissfully asleep until a moment before, when the phone had jarred her awake. She lay there for a few seconds trying to orientate herself and then, at the persistent ringing decided she had better answer it.

It wasn't until she was halfway to the phone that she realised she had pulled the plug out the night before, to stop her ex-boyfriend from ringing her at some ungodly hour.

It persisted in ringing, even though Christine had now reached it, and could see that it was still unplugged.

She picked it up, trying to decide what to say to a disconnected phone. The last thing she expected was a perfectly normal voice asking if this was earth, just as though they were asking if it was Monday.

Taking a deep breath and trying not to drop the phone she answered, 'Yes, this is earth. Can I help you?'

'This is the Universal Connection Company,' the voice replied. 'We are about to disconnect earth and want to confirm that service is no longer required.'

'Disconnect Earth?' Christine said.

'Thank you for your confirmation,' came the reply.

The phone went dead, Christine hung up and that was the last thing that Christine or anyone else on earth ever did.

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A Change of Heart

by Shane Dix

His long legs took the steps of the nursing home three at a time. From the outside it looked a cold and lonely place, which made his stomach tighten again with uncertainty. He couldn't help but wonder if he was doing the right thing in seeing her again after all these years; whether his visiting her would only add to the insult.

The girl at the reception desk leafed through the papers on her clipboard, searching for the name he had requested. Having found it, she eyed him suspiciously. It didn't surprise him really. As far as the hospital was aware, the woman he wanted to see had no children.

'I'm from the mining expedition,' he said, almost apologetically.

She nodded. 'She's in the Osterman Ward. Just follow this corridor as far as it will go then turn right.'

He quickly thanked her and moved off down the long and sterile corridor, weaving between patients that ambled along with fixed and vacant expressions.

He found her in the television room. She was sitting in a wheelchair with a shawl draped across her legs, her sullen features staring into space. There were others chatting softly to one another, and only a couple actually watching the television that chattered in the corner.

He stepped into the room, slowly, cautiously, unsure if he should take those few steps to her side. He fought the guilt and shame that was making him feel so sick inside and edged closer, looking at her in awe from afar.

Her hair was thin and grey, and her skin sagging and wrinkled. But beneath it all he could still make out the girl he had once known; the girl he had fallen in love with so many years ago.

After a few minutes she looked up and saw him standing there. He froze on the spot as her shallow and empty eyes fell upon him, hoping that she might not recognise him after all this time. But she smiled vaguely at him, and he could see in her face the doubt and confusion - as if she thought she were looking at a dream or a ghost.

He returned the smile, suppressing the need to run from the room, fighting the guilt that overwhelmed him and forced tears to his eyes.

'Hello, Susan,' he managed after a while.

She looked at him for a long time before answering, savouring the sight which had for so long been denied to her. 'I waited, Russell,' she said, her voice fractured and weak. 'I waited and waited for you.'

He turned away from her pained and tired expression, fixing his stare instead to the floor.

'You still look so young,' she said, almost surprised.

'I'm sorry,' he said.

'Did you find what you were looking for?'

'No.'

A long pause followed, leaving him to shuffle uncomfortably from one foot to the other.

'I had to see you, Susan. I had to say -' What? What could he possibly say to her? How could he convey his regrets, or express the remorse that ate away at him every night?'

'Billy died,' she said shortly.

'I heard.'

'Peter, too.'

'We were kept posted on the ship about our friends and family.'

Which was true, but the news would never reach them until about a year after the event, which amounted to three or four years back on Earth.

'You still look so young,' she mused.

'I missed you, Susan. You have to believe that. A day didn't go by when I didn't think of you. But I had to go.' He felt sick again for lying, but he couldn't tell her the truth. He couldn't bring himself to hurt her all over again.

'I missed you too, Russell.' She broke off for a few seconds, as though reflecting upon the years spent without him. 'I missed you too.'

'I didn't mean to hurt you, Susan. You have to believe that.'

Tears began to cloud her eyes and her nose started to dribble. He reached into his pocket and pulled out a handkerchief, then leant over and wiped her nose

clean for her. She nodded lightly and smiled, but he could see that he had embarrassed her.

'Both Lidia and Sam are dead, too,' she said.

'I know, Susan. I'm sorry.' It had broken his heart when he received the news. He'd never felt so helpless and so alone as he had then.

'Do you remember the days when we were planning a family?' She laughed a little at the memory. 'We were trying for months. Do you remember?'

'I remember,' he said, and the thought upset him.

They had been trying for so long to have children, and when they finally did, they were closer and happier than they ever had been. When he had left to go on the mining expedition, Lidia was just about walking, and Sam still breast feeding. They would have been thirty or forty on his return, and he would have been a grandad - despite being only a few years older than his children!

He had loved them so much. He had to keep telling himself that. He couldn't keep blaming himself for what had happened. It was wrong to think that things might have been different had he been home with his family.

'I often think about those days,' she said gravely. 'Sometimes I read over your letters to me. The ones you sent to me when we were first going out together. That time I had to go away overseas. Do you remember? I still look at them. I can still see how happy we were then.' She brushed aside a tear that had settled in the corner of her eye. 'We were happy then, weren't we?'

'Yes,' he said, 'We were.'

'Lidia and Sam used to ask after you. I told them you were out making a fortune for them.'

'Thank you.'

'Do you remember our walks along the beach?'

'Yes, I do.'

She stared at him for a while in silence.

'You still look so young, Russell.'

He cried now, openly. He fell to his knees at her feet and sobbed uncontrollably into her lap, burying his face into the shawl that covered her old and withered legs. She rested a hand on his head and gently stroked his hair. He hugged her tightly, trying to squeeze out the memories that were flooding back and hurting him, trying to crush out the years that separated them. He wanted to be old like her, sharing their last days together, remembering all the good times they spent together.

'Remember when I used to hold you while you cried?' she said softly. 'You always made me feel so useful and strong. You were just like a little boy, Russell. You were always my little boy.'

'Please don't,' he said, pulling away from her and wiping his eyes.

He stood back and looked at her, at all the ugly furrows of worrying and waiting that he was responsible for; and at the corners of her mouth that curved down

into a frown, where once there had been a constant smile. He looked at what was left of her hair - now grey and unkempt - and remembered when it had been long and blond, and how his fingers had combed through it...

'I kept all the letters you sent to me, you know,' she said.

'I know.'

'They stopped after a while. I thought you were dead. I waited for a telegram that would tell me so. But it never arrived.'

'I'm sorry.'

He remembered the letters that she had sent to him, and how he had burned them. They had arrived on the ship in waves, each mail-call finding him with about fifty letters - all from Susan. Most of them dealt with how much she loved him and how she and the children were missing him, which he found he couldn't tolerate after the first few letters. But often she spoke of the current events of the planet which - despite the official bulletins that the ship received - always intrigued him. He would hear of presidents and prime ministers that would pass through office in what to him was only a couple of years, and wars that were started and resolved within a single batch of letters; everything passing with such abruptness that it left him emotionless.

The dates upon each letter would change so rapidly that he could hardly believe it. Friends he had known, family he had loved, all dying, leaving him so empty and alone. He was too far away to do any good, and by the time he could send condolences the event on Earth would already be years in the past.

And then there was the letter that had told him of his children. How that had crippled him. Even now, so many years later, it burned at his conscience. He had gone back to the house on his return from the expedition, but it was no longer there. Another house stood in its place. The one he had built was gone, consumed by the fire that had taken Lidia and Sam away from him.

'You look so young, Russell.'

'Please,' he said, turning his head. Then, 'I really did love you, Susan. I swear.' And again he wanted to cry as the image of her as a younger girl crowded his thoughts.

'I love you too, Russell. I always did. I never stopped waiting for you. I never stopped waiting for the letters.'

He began to tremble unsteadily, and knew that if he didn't leave he would only be hurting himself more. Seeing her again, talking to her, was more than he could endure.

He crouched down beside her and laid his hand upon hers. 'I have to go, Susan.'

A tear came to her eye, then trickled down through the wrinkles. 'I waited so long,' she said.

'You have to believe that I loved you, Susan, despite everything I did. You have to know that I never loved anyone quite as much as I loved you.' He stood to leave. 'Please try to forgive me, Susan.'

She looked up at him for a little while, her eyes distant and heavy with sadness. She almost smiled, but the corners of her lips denied her and the worried frown remained.

'For what?' she finally asked.

He cupped her face between his hands, holding her gently, feeling the loose skin and comparing it to her younger days. He leant in close and kissed her lightly upon her quivering lips, then turned and walked briskly away, only briefly looking back to her before disappearing down the corridor.

Outside he stood at the top of the steps, leaning wearily against a pillar and breathing deeply. He wiped his eyes on the sleeve of his jacket and sniffed back some more tears that were threatening to squeeze out.

Then he saw her.

She was standing across the road from him beneath a tree, her bright coloured clothes mottled by the shade from the branches. She was staring up at him and smoking a cigarette, and when he approached her she folded her arms in a defiant manner. He stood before her, his anger tempered by the old emotions which rose up from seeing her again after all these years.

She was much older now, so much more the lady. Her hair was long and light, and her body firm and attractive. There were some lines across her face, but they didn't seem to spoil her features.

She lifted the cigarette up to her painted lips, sucked hard upon it.

'You've grown up in many ways,' he said, and heard the malice in his voice.

'I read about your return in the papers.' She shrugged. 'I had to come and see you.'

'Why?'

'I don't know,' she said. 'Maybe I thought there was something that needed to be said.'

'Like "sorry"?''

'Christ,' she muttered, and took another drag upon the pencil-thin cylinder.

'You promised me, Liz.'

'I was only fifteen years old!' she snapped. 'I was just a kid!'

'You *promised!*'

'And what about yours to that poor bitch in there.' She pointed over his shoulder. 'What about her? You didn't seem to concern yourself with morals when you broke your marital vows to her!'

'You knew about Susan,' he retorted sharply. 'You knew when I first met you that I was married.'

'I was *fifteen!* I couldn't even begin to appreciate what it meant back then, or how much my actions were going to affect her. I was rash and stupid. I was *young!* I felt important when you were hanging around me. I was in love with the idea of being with an older, married man. I was a little girl wanting to be grown up.' She laughed suddenly. 'I never loved you, Russ. Back then I guess you meant *something* to me,

but now I can see that you were just a dirty man with a penchant for school girls.'

'And you were just a slut,' he blurted.

'Yeah, right,' she said, shaking her head and turning to leave.

'Wait,' he said quickly. She stopped and faced him again. 'I'm sorry. Don't go. Please.'

'Look, I don't know why I came here. Curiosity I guess. But it was wrong. I should have stayed away.'

'I would have found you eventually.'

'I know. But at least then I...' She lifted her shoulders helplessly.

'Tell me,' he said soberly. 'Did you ever think about me?'

'Of course I did,' she said, surprised. 'Every time I passed your house or saw your wife, I thought about you. I thought about you constantly, wondering if you were even alive at all. But I didn't dare ask your wife. You know how it is. It's a small town. I wasn't sure if she even knew about us or not.'

'I didn't think she did,' he said, glancing back to the nursing home and feeling a pang of remorse bite at his heart. 'She wrote and told me about you getting married. I can't tell you how betrayed I felt then. I stopped writing back altogether after that. Couldn't bring myself to write another word to Susan. She kept writing though. She persisted. Kept her hopes up. But she was writing to an empty shell. I had no hopes, no dreams.. All I had was the wish to have back what I'd thrown away with Susan.'

He watched her shuffling uncomfortably on her feet, staring down at the pavement.

'Why did you do it?' he said.

'I've got to go,' she said.

'Tell me, please.'

'Look. It was all your idea,' she said bitterly. 'You used to talk about going on one of the mining expeditions, about coming back and being the same age as me. How the hell was I to know you were serious? You kept going on about how people aged slowly in space travel - things I barely understood!'

'But I was serious,' he said.

'There's nothing I can do about that.'

'Leave your husband and come with me,' he said, but didn't really believe it possible. He didn't even love her any more. How could he? She had just been a child back then. What he wanted was for her to take the place of Susan, to fill that vacuum in his life he had created when he'd left his wife.

'Don't be pathetic, Russ,' she said. 'It was thirty years ago. You don't mean anything to me. I was just a kid you sweet talked into going to bed with you. Your life was meant to have been with Susan. She was the one that loved you. Possibly more than you'll ever be able to imagine.'

She dropped the butt of her cigarette and crushed it underfoot, then without another word walked away down the street.

'I sacrificed everything I had for you!' he shouted after her, wanting to hurt her, hate her, but finding beneath his anger only contempt for himself.

He watched the distance swallow her, then sighed tiredly and looked back up at the nursing home. He considered going back up the steps, thought briefly

of chasing after Liz. Finally he tucked his hands into the pockets of his jacket, moved away into the cold and lonely breeze that swept in from the park.

THE END



A Pair of Arrows

by Mae Strelkov

As the body grows older, a person is tempted to "take it easy", enjoy the remaining years unhurriedly, sitting around. No "utquay" about it!

For myself, however, I feel ever harder pressed to reach a goal that seems endlessly unreachable... to leave behind me a clear picture of the vision I have had. But it's no "vision" in the sense of *seeing* strange apparitions or scenes. I have simply glimpsed the old linkages that make all the words on our planet which have ever been used by creature's tongues that fit as a part of all the other words also used. In short, no word exists without its fellows; all in harmony, if we could but glimpse it so. We cannot invent gibberish. Our minds will not cooperate. Madmen may gibber and howl, but that has meaning also and reflects their state. Portmanteau words also make sense when analysed. I do not believe even the most determined non-conformist can invent a word that is a *real* word (not just mumbled nonsense) and launch it into the world's languages, without such a word turning out to have ancient antecedents, based on patterns the human mind must ever follow.

There are languages where words get inverted and a negative may replace a positive statement or vice versa, deliberately done by the speakers to "keep secrets" or simply to be obtuse. But even there you can see how their little brains work!

Of course I have not studied all the world's languages. I have glanced at quite a few and - naturally - have given most of my attention to our own Indo-European roots, archaic Chinese, and the American Indian tongues around here now, where we live. This sort of approach to the study, I believe, demonstrates the presence of "the Word at work" in all Flesh, always, from the beginning of our planetary Space-Time, for the wonderful old patterns make sense everywhere.

The Bible contains marvellous old traditions, powerfully affecting generations of humans ever since it became the "Holy Literature" of the Jews so long ago. Additions have kept appearing (consider the sheer volume of the Jewish Talmud, for instance!), till the Catholic Church

sealed off the "Spirit's flow", and supposedly "inspiration ceased". "Revelation" or the "Apocalypse" remained the "last book of the Bible" for Christians, who have since inhabited arid territory spiritually save for the occasional brilliant lights of questing, questioning souls ever at odds with the mumbo-jumbo of their own times.

You may burn books and ban original forms of literature, but the Word goes right on working in human souls, and no matter how many bonfires are lit to burn the bodies of rebels and heretics, the Word is not quenched in our midst. Our languages increase in depth and complexity, and we have tools of speech that are powerful when well used. (Do I use them well? I'm afraid not. My sentences grow too long and involved, while my mind thinks at a kindergarten level, still, but also in a multidimensional way) and I would use old Chinese characters to couch my thoughts instead of English if readers were able to follow that type of speech. One day, maybe....)

A Biblical tradition speaks of a time right after the Flood when "the whole Earth was one language and of one speech". (In Hebrew it's rather "lip" for "language" and "words" for "speech", adds a footnote). I have also seen a translation where the whole world was "of few words", or, as I'd take it, just a few basic old root terms (modified, as Arabic consonantal combinations are still being modified by their changing vowels), while served perfectly the world over. It is those key terms I've sought all these years, although several decades ago I was warned I was crazy to do so and that philologists had already "proved" that there'd never been any Ur tongue. (But I'm not seeking some "Ur tongue" but rather the actual patterns of speech built into our very brains, a "Spectrum of Symbol and Sound" as infallibly present as is, say, the electromagnetic spectrum throughout Creation).

Before the Flood, however, there's another strange Bible text where God says, "My Spirit shall not strive with man for ever, for that (in their going astray) they are flesh". (Or, "for that he also is flesh"), and God adds

that henceforth the human life-span will be reduced to 120 years. This was in the days of the Nephilim or giants, called also in Dead Sea Scrolls texts "the Watchers" and "Sons of the King of all the Worlds", etc. (Sounds like spacemen to me!)

This "wrestling of the Spirit with the Flesh of Mankind" seems to me an aspect of the "Word at work", turning us from being mere lumps of animate meat-and-bone-and-brawn into finer editions of our former selves, so we feel and think and learn to understand more intensely what's going on in the universe all around and our own true roles within it.

I have never been convinced that life (as we know it) necessarily originated on our own planet. There are too many mythological memories of various peoples; tales where their ancestors arrived from some distant star.

However, as the Hebrew Zohar remembers, Adam did live earlier on other worlds, (if not just on alternate versions of our present Earth as also seems hinted at). But anyway, he (or an Adamic race) started things: his (or their) genetic endowments must have been very viable. As for Eve being taken out of Adam's side, a bit of genetic engineering may indeed have been done by those "Elohim", (which can be translated also "gods and goddesses" and "angels" or "judges"), at the start.

There's the text where Jehovah God says, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helpmate for him" - as per an old translation I'm using, the "American Revised" from 1901, based on the far older King Jams edition. I like these older translations, so literal, for the former translators were too much in awe to "interpret" as modern translators attempt to do, in rendering the text into "modern twentieth-century languages".

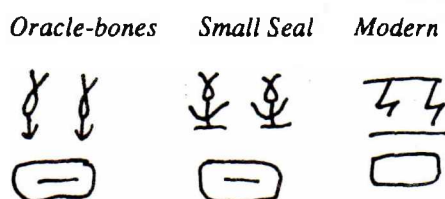
Well, and so the "lonely arrow" that was shot into our World at the beginning (disturbing, no doubt the unfortunate native-born Neanderthals) this "Adam" or "man of red Earth" as the first Cro-Magnon, really needed an Eve; and an Eve was therefore "taken out of him", from his side. A thorn in his flesh she may have been ever since, but what would he do for so long without her? This then was Adam's "sudden illness" - to fall in love with Eve:



: Dziot!

A PAIR "OF ARROWS OR BIRDS" IN LOVE.

Here's a Chinese oracle-bone form where a pair of arrows, later seen as "birds", plunge downwards side-by-side, above what was considered to be a rising sun:



You will recognise this as a development of the lone plunging arrow already seen, (or a bird, later) formerly read *tiet*, *sien*, or *tsiet*, etc, now: The old reading of the pair of arrows presented above was *tsien* earlier, but now *jin* or *chin*. So we have: "One plunging arrow": *tiet*. "Two plunging arrows": formerly *ts'ien*. *Iet* was the old Chinese word for "one". The *iet* sound reappears in a *ts'iet* old term for a seed beginning to sprout, (we're looking ahead), matching the Spanish *siete* for seven, which this *ts'iet* also meant.

When one bird or arrow plunges, it's at the hour of sunset. When two set off together, it's at sunrise, supposedly, when "birds go about their business, which is to feed themselves", hence the concept of "progress" is covered. Old words ending in a T or D seem to have been far rarer than a host of alternate word-endings with a final M, N or NG in Chinese, formerly. (M endings became N ones in the Peking dialect).

Once again we can use the Quechuan language as a sort of "control". If the old Chinese forms reappear in Quechuan usages (not necessarily for the object, say, of an "arrow or bird", but for the actions linked with those objects in China), there has to have been a very old link, somehow, going back (as I suspect) to Stone Age times.

Here is a Quechuan term: *chinkay-chinkary* for "as fast as an arrow", and it is based upon their *chinka* - "to elope, run away from home". Thus we see that the pair of arrows flying away long ago symbolised "lovers escaping". They could be "lovebirds", also, and an obsolete Chechuan *chinu* covered "the love-making of doves", found in a place-name used for a site known in Santiago-del-Estero, called Chinuna (where doves exchange caresses).


Other Quechuan usages of this *chin* include *chinchi* - "to coquet, smile", and *china* - "female".

But the old *sier* arrow, (*sh* today replacing the *s*, and the R ending long lost) of China, in its phallic aspects, still seems present also in the Quechuan *churu* for a handsome male lover, versus their *churiyay*, "to procreate" and "the multiplication of the human species". *Churi* is the word for "the son of the father" as against a mother's *wawa* "baby". (*Wawa* for a "baby" is found in China (the phonetic strongly suggesting "beautiful young women and their babies") and hinting at "loose" behaviour, in a pre-patriarchal age when women weren't yet dominated) and there's a huge, funny doll representing a baby, taken out - formerly, anyway - at certain festivals in Tibet: it was called *Wawa*, also).

A young and pretty girl or woman, elegantly dressed, is called *chura* in Quechuan. It's an all-purpose root, apparently, for there is also a *churay* for "to place, deposit" and even "inscribe" (ie write).

An arrow could apparently illustrate the shoot (what a word - "shoot"! One speaks of "shooting pains", also as well as "a stitch in the side") sent forth by a newly

sprouting seed, in old thought. Thus, here is China's old *Ts'iet* for "seven" - yes, another aspect of *tsiet dz'iet* already seen!


Compare it with their old *tak*, etc, when the first tiny blade shows itself at the top of the stem;  = *T'ak*

The horizontal line represents the surface of the soil. Below it is the root, getting through or past some obstacle and continuing downward.


One usage of the *t'ak* or *d'ak* aspect which is given to this "sprouting effect", occurs when this growth is taking place under cover. This old *T'ak* phonetic can then be used for a "House of the Dead", or also apparently for a country residence. Another old usage covers "four hundred sheaves", so it had harvesting aspects, like the "400 little gods of drink and harvest" known formerly in Mexico.


There's a pattern to be traced in all these changes. *Tiet* for "one falling arrow" becomes *tsien* (for "two falling arrows"), but a *Ts'iet* sprouting seed, as you saw, and that *tiet* "falling arrow" becomes a *tok*, also (and the echoes could be found, say, in Quechuan). Now, there above, the old *ts'iet* sprouting seed became *t'ak* by the mere addition of that little tick on top of the old character, but this same "sevenfold", *Ts'iet* could also be read *d'iet* when with a knife alongside, for "to cut"; also "eagerly; important".


The seed could develop in so many ways: here below now is represented "the underground germination" now read *tun* or *ch'un*, with usages for "a cave", and "to

 bury", and also for a little "town" where you put down roots. (*Tun* for a camp which is what we had earlier as our "town").




Next, "the underground germination" manages to send up roots in yet another modern Chinese *ch'un* for "Spring" and "pleasant", even "wanton": I have given below the older forms, for now.




 Or the seed could grow in another way to represent chiefly "roots" and "to develop": *chuan* or *tuan*; formerly in the old usage *ts'iuar* or *diwar*:


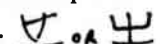
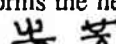
The full stories  would have to wait for some other opportunity, because there's much that ought to be told before zeroing in upon the story of the planted seed, taking root even now "in all flesh" Our genetic patterns? Our instinctual drives? just this morning there was a BBC rebroadcast of an old interview with Jung where he concluded, "Life cannot be endured if it is meaningless". Indeed, the more meaning that comes to light when you seek for it, the more wonderful does life become. As I can testify.


There is actually still another Chinese word in use for "arrow" - *chien* or *jian*, thus:  and it plays the role



in this phonetic appearance the role of "one who goes ahead", for the older Small Seal form of the phonetic showing a foot at a boat's prow reaching shore:




 while the oracle-bone form shows the foot above a "square sail" for a boat, , surrounded by a glyph I view as "crossroads",  though explanations vary. And this foot or footprint,

 "went ahead" just as an arrow "goes ahead" of an archer". In one phonetic usage it still covers "Venus at morn", when she proceeds the sun, rising in the East:  That foot (of a goddess once, like Venus? For  it is a "female" accompanying the foot at the prow in the Chinese usage), will leave footprints (when she lands at Cypress? where her cockle-shell beached in some mythologies). And in those footprints flowers will bloom in a sequence found not only in our Indo-European root that gives us "plant", hence "Sole-of-the-foot" (*planta del pieas* in Spanish still) because the heel dug a hole where a seed might be dropped and a plant spring up; the sequence in oracle-bone Chinese forms is this one:

- 1) Foot or footprint:  (*tieg*, etc)
- 2) Plant:  (" ")
- 3) It forms the head of a forerunner or baptiser named the *sien*: 

This old *sien* standing for "before, in Space or Time", is now China's *xian*, , also used for "late" in a phrase such as "my late father". Someone recently has "gone ahead": the buried *xian*. A plant above his head representing his foot or footprint continues "going, growing", as his new "head", proclaiming that the *Xian* or older *sien* is undergoing metamorphosis also, mysteriously, beneath the surface of the ground.

So the arrow that had more than one name in China: not only was it an old *sier*, now *shi*: ; it could be the forerunner", (sharing a role with the magical footprints of Venus at morn), and related to a mysterious co-forerunner who is evidently buried: the *Xian* now, also representing "before, in Space and Time". In short, the *tsien* pair of arrows:  have slipped into our age-old picture here in an incognito way. We have two forerunners each represented by a "foot that becomes a plant", mysteriously. Early *sien* or *tsien* figures! True, the *Xian* for "late" (my late father, etc) has phonetic usages not only for "to reform, wash, baptize", but also "to castrate". He was made of sterner stuff than Aphrodite or Venus, aboard her cockle-shell. She too "washed", but she only "sprinkled", like the dew that accompanies the rising of that Morning Star.

Another provider of dew was China's *Ok* , for "dew, to moisten", now , who was also the *Siog* when he laughs:  (now). On his own, however, as the *lok* or formerly *log*, his head hangs forward; he is "delicate" and awaiting "an untimely death". He will unite with his mate then to represent "magic and phantoms" and they'll

provide "an ominous influx" and other distressing ideas. (Isaac also was destined for a sacrificial, "untimely death", and his name also suggested "laughter").

His mate has a character of her own, where hands lift up a skull reverently, and a symbol for the "will-o-the-wisp" or "ghost-lights" is added beneath for her "body": Iog was her name also, or a fuller Biuk or Biog, etc.

I studied these old Chinese Og, Iog, Uk, etc., figures in their various old phonetic appearances many years ago, when I used to feel I had all the time in the world to tackle these puzzling old concepts. (Now I feel pressed for time at last, and yet, how can I be brief, or leaving out all the lovely old details?)

Of this old Iog and his attributes (as per the phonetic usages of the character), I wrote some twenty years ago, remarking... "Like the slim-waisted she-iog, his mate, emblem of "desire", Iog represents the concept of "delicate". Like a thistle, which is also covered in a usage, his old head nods in a chimney corner if he's still semi-living; and if dead, his propped-up mummy nods its head, still thistle-like. When he's covered by a "hole or cave" placed above him, he's "in a corner, hidden". When he's placed "on high", he represents a bridge. (*Chaca* in Quechuan). Up there he's still "delicate" but seductive, too; he suggests in a usage "to pet". He presides over the blooming of buckwheat. He's quite capable of suddenly "flying down". Like Isaac, China's *Iog* as the *Siog*, laughs bravely when facing an untimely death. But also, like Isaac, when ritually deceived by his *Biuk* (Rebecca) and their son Jacob, (with "a covering of goat hair" of the *ginnunga/Kaunake* type, which I've discussed in the following) he is blind and doddering in the final scenes. For example the Irish *Oc* = youth, versus *Eag* = death (pointed out in *Cohane's THE KEY*).

Kiog or *k'iog* were the older pronunciations of the "Iog on high" in Chinese. In the old naming process, where our predecessors gave names to everything, (or Adam did, as the Bible puts it) we were already bound up - eons before our turn arrived to be born - by the tangled web of deceit, or "original sin" - which is "the Lie". For often the names we gave to "lie", and euphonious names were given to horrible deities to gain their good will, one has to watch out for that. For naming is the most precious ability we've got, and should not be misused. One must give things at least their true names.

THE STITCHING DART OR ARROW

I have realized by now that the profundities of "the Word at work in all Flesh" can never be fathomed. The deeper I've gotten into these old relationships covering every aspect of life versus death we've experienced so far, the more I recognise we are but using (pretty badly as yet) the inexhaustible tools of language placed at our disposal back when our genetic patterns came into

shape, so mysteriously. We haven't used them yet as can be done, and as will be done by our children's children's children yet, hopefully. (Or by ourselves in a new state, somehow, within a new framework or "container" housing the soul that is the entire focus of evolution, but most churches reject this belief, alas).

Now, I've been mentioning Indo-European languages' terms such as *starets* in one Russian development for an "old man", earlier. It went back to the Indo-European root *sta-*, "to stand", hence "place or thing that is standing". A *starets* is someone of long standing. However, the alternate Avestan *zarat* for "old" has been traced back instead to the Indo-European *ger-* "to grow old", which now introduces into this story an alternate old Chinese *g'ier* for "old".

Now take our "stitch", from the old English *stice*, "a sting, a prick", from the Indo-European *steig-*, "to stick, pointed". If you've a "stitch in the side", you should find some stitchwort - a plant that might cure it.

There's a wonderful old character in Chinese for stitches (looking like embroidery somewhat, as in the following Small Seal-style example):



It is now read *cho* 𠂔𠂔 "to sew", and older readings ranged from *tiad* and *tiwat* to *twat*. At that time, years ago, when I was first studying these TWT old ideas, I happened to have been sent by a friend in the USA two little books on the Maori tongue of New Zealand. I'd taken time ff to rearrange their vocabulary under consonantal combinations, and so noticed at once how many old Chinese terms seemed to have matched Maori echoes. (The vowel arrangements are of course different, for not every language is monosyllabic as in Chinese).

The Maoris, incidentally, don't use the S, but I note that in its place they sometimes employ our English H. (The Spanish H is silent). So here is the Maori word for "to



Highly decorated Maori "Web".

storehouse on stilts.

sew, fasten up", also "the cross-lacing of decorative panel-work: *tuitui*. But they have a fuller form also as *tukutuku* for the decorative reed panels of their whare huts; also for "a spider's web".

Tui on its own could suggest to them "to pearce; sew", and also "the string on which anything is threaded". But the ability to scratch or incise patterns seems hinted at also in their *tuhi*, "to draw or write" and "to glow". (Also *tuhituhi*).

A barb or arrow-point served for so many activities! The Maori *hui* for piercing, etc., can suggest a drill operated by a cord. (*Tuiri* - and compare our "twirl"), and also a flea or sand-fly (with their little stings!): *tuiiau* in the Maori tongue. (In the same way, a whole series of Maori words which I glanced through brought to my mind - as I've mentioned - matching old Chinese forms. Perhaps the Maori terms might not resemble necessarily

Quechuan - or any other language's counterparts - but I'll find the old Chinese forms of any tongue, nonetheless, invariably, somehow. It's almost eerie!)

The "stitching barb or arrow" plays thus many old language making roles that include even sewing as you see, and making patterns also with a sharp point (needle, barb, etc.)

China's phonetic for "stitches" played many roles. A spider was a *tiad* figure when represented as "the insect of the stitches". Pigs dug (their snouts like sharp pointed instruments "unravelling" the fields), and so there's a usage for "to dig, as pigs do". Words can be used as barbs, so "quarrelling" is understandably on the same list. But there are other echoes for hunter-gatherer activities, as you walked with your basket and your digging-stick down a trail between fields of grain-bearing grasses and plants with good roots. Those Chinese stitches could suggest also a path. In the Araucanian tongue of the Mapuche of Chile I came across echoes of that aspect, "bit by bit, piece by piece" (collecting as one went). but also a term for sewing seeds (by hand, one by one, of course): *awedn*, versus their *wutrun*, "to store maize in shocks or *"huitrines"*. Repeated throbbings, etc., are covered by their *waittha*, *withan* (*huaytha huythan*), or *wuta* - a heart-throb or throbbing muscle, hence a "present-iment". Our own obsolete "wot" like our "wit" could suggest intuitions and comprehension also. Repeated insect bites covering one's body: to the Araucanians *wutron* idea. Someone crazy or foolish was in a *wedwed* condition. (Our former usage as "woody" could mean "crazy" too. The Nordic was also the god of inspiration and madness.)

One "poured libations" in an old *tiwat* or *tiad*, etc way, (of the "drop-by-drop, stitch-by-stitch", *wed-wed* proto-series for "repetition" of any sort). The pouring of libations also is covered by an old Chinese usage of the "stitches" character. The Araucanians had a *withru* spoon, "canal-shaped", which must have been like China's typical spoons, and I believe it was used in pouring libations also. Thus too their *witrun*, "to flow" (liquids, or a current). Even mere hiccoughs to them are *witrorun* ideas.

Quite a different set of echoes of the Indo-European *sta* - for "stand" I found in the tongue of the former Lules of Argentina. They had terms like their *styhic*, "to shoot an arrow", and their *stic*, apparently for a stitch; anyway "a thread". They also had a *stoque* for a decorative fringes or border of a garment, etc. To us a "stock" could also

be "a stiff band of material formerly worn around the neck and surviving in some military uniforms and clerical dress". Really, those Lules have wonderfully funny echoes of words we still use in English.. *pulump* for "thick and fat" (our "plump"?), *scelp* for green fruits and long hair (our "scalp"), and so on. Though I haven't spent much time studying their (now obsolete) terms as recorded in Carlos Abrego Virreira's huge IDIOMAS

ABORIGENES, what I did come across in passing I found very amusing.

So their act of shooting an arrow matches a word like our "stick", in that arrows are sticks in a sense and they stick into what they hit. In short, the *Sta*- proto-idea of stopping, reaching the end of a trajectory, sticking in, etc, is here also.

To halt an animal, today, the Quechuans cry *Shto* or *Shtu!* (A cry used by men on horseback nowadays). Generally, however, you find the age-old *sta*- (or *Ts-T*, etc) type proto-terms in Quechuan changed to *sh*, *ch*, etc. like forms by now. Hence, "to arrive" in Quechuan is based on their root *cha*-. And so their *charku*- means "to arrive at a high place" versus their *charpu*, "to arrive at a low place" (and a ridge between furrows is *charkuy*).

One also "arrives at old age", hence the Quechuan *chacha* standing for an old person, who's "doubly arrived"... *sta-sta* if we were saying it in the Indo-European old way, perhaps. Thus we've the Quechuan *chachaya*, "to become old". Old folks, unfortunately, may be "wise" but also "irascible", both aspects covered by the Quechuan *chachash*.

An old person tends to lie down quite a lot. Thus there's a usage of this Quechuan *chacha* for that too. Alternatively, they've the word *siriy* for "to lie", ("as in a tomb" where it's also used). (*Yacer* was the Spanish term given for same). The Quechuan *chacha-chachar*, how-ever, means "to go slowly".

The old in their tombs were spooky: *chachu* in Quechuan for the harmful emanations from ancestral tombs; also "to work harm by such emanations". To appease the angry ancestors, you cooked for them a special dish called *parpa*, or *parba*, now.

Then there's the Quechuan word for an "old woman": *chakwa*. "A lady *sheik*!" For the Arabic word "sheik" goes back to their *shakha*, "be old", hence *shaikh*, "old man".

The Aymara of Bolivia have both *achachi* and *cchari* for oldness, as if they echoes China's *tsiet* (old, infirm) versus China's *g'ier* for "old", we've yet to see.

Briefly, let me mention how I'd glance at some other language, while using the same cancelling factors. Take the Finnish *sies* for "stop" and *seisoa* for "stand". *S* becomes *ts* in our reckoning, and we get an older or alternate *tsaits*-like term. But with an *R* inserted, it becomes easier to pronounce, *staretz*, for example in the Russian form (for old), or "one of long standing" thus fits well.

Coming to a full stop, freezing in one's tracks or falling asleep all could fit these old patterns. Take the Quechuan *Chishi*, for the sleep of small children. But I'd even consider including their *sasa* for "difficult", for

Six Months to Read a Book...

by Joy Buchanan

Have you ever picked up a book and spent many hours lost in the excitement of the plot and the characters? I for one am lucky as I can read several books in one day; some people need a week, maybe a month; but how would you feel if you took six months to read a small paperback?

Well, my daughter is sixteen and she has a reading and writing disorder: dyslexia. To read a book takes six months, sometimes longer. It's hard to sit back and watch her spend so much time on one book. When we can get them, I get the speaking books, where my daughter spends hours on end listening to the stories. Some of these books go on for seven hours. Most libraries have them but not a fabulous selection: mostly too old for her, and the cassettes for the younger are too childish. I have fought for years against a school system to get better help and understanding for her. Schools try the best they can, but they have limited time and resources.

I have tried to put some books on tape for her but all I get is a sore throat and a dislike for the sound of my voice. I'm not a trained actor and I'm frustrated that I can't make the story exciting for her. It seems boring and monotonous to me.

Many of the words she reads are very confusing for her. When she tries to sound out the letters phonetically, the English language is not easy to master, and most words don't sound the same way they're spelt. It makes things very hard for a child with a reading problem to be able to understand and to even comprehend what these words mean.

It is easy for someone to say, "Use a dictionary", but if you can't read and spell properly, how can you use a dictionary as one word can have many meanings?

My daughter has started to read "Choose Your Own Ending" stories. These are very thin paperbacks that can take a good reader about 30 minutes to finish. My daughter takes a month, and she's so proud of herself when she's finished a book.

As a child, I escaped into my books. I became a space explorer, lived on the moon; in fact, I became the characters in my books! Put yourself in my daughter's place. How would you like to be the hero in slow motion for six months? My daughter faithfully reads about a page of a book every night. She is very determined in her quest to finish the book, whereas I would have thrown away the book a long time ago.

The speaking books bring her more satisfaction as the spoken word is, for her, easier to understand than the written one. Science fiction covers all the fields. You don't need to be an adult to enjoy it. My daughter's favourite book is RUBY 2000, which she can vividly remember years afterwards. Other books are just forgotten.

My daughter enjoys watching films and movies but never gets an opportunity that we take for granted: that of reading the novelisation of the screenplay, or the novel that the film was based on. Sometimes the films don't justify the written word.

My daughter will continue for the rest of her life taking six months to finish a book. She's seeing a neuropsychologist to find out what degree of brain cell damage she has. There is no hope, as once a brain cell has been damaged, it can't be replaced. So the pleasure of curling up in front of a fire with a good book on a cold winter's night will be denied to her. Think yourself lucky that you don't take so long to read a book.

The Crystal Out Of Space

by P. J. Roberts

It would be untrue to say that the object streaked across the sky - in fact it travelled quite slowly. It lingered long enough as it passed overhead to bring people out of their houses to stare wide-eyed up at the fiery orange ball of light that lit up the night sky almost as bright as day as it flew over Harpertown in the south-eastern countryside of Victoria.

'Did you see that?' asked Melinda Stebbins, leaning across the small hedge that separated their properties, to call out to where their neighbours, the Carolls, stood on their front lawn gazing up at the orangy glow.

'They could hardly miss it, now could they?' pointed out her husband Merv, failing to get a reaction out of his wife, who had long ago learnt to live with, if not appreciate, her husband's bursts of sarcasm.

'But what was it?' demanded Cherylyn Carroll, as she and her two teenagers - Jayne and Stevie - started out towards the pavement.

'It's only a comet,' insisted her husband Pete, instinctively following suite as the others stepped out into the street and started slowly down Rushcutter's Road, seemingly unaware that they had started to follow after the fiery object.

'Seems pretty low down for a comet,' said Merv, drawing a sharp glance from Pete, who as a local school teacher was used to having his word accepted without question.

'Well, let's find out,' insisted Cherylyn.

So they all set off down the street until they reached Hautman's Paddock, a large open field at the end of town, which led directly into the neighbouring forest. After a moment's hesitation at the back of the paddock, they all stepped out into the thickly wooded forest of wattles, pines, and grotesquely shaped ghost gums.

They had only followed the object for a few minutes when it became obvious that Merv was right: it was not a comet.

'It's going to crash!' said young Jayne excitedly, pointing overhead to where the shiny orange light had unquestionably started to come down.

'It's just like in *The War of the Worlds!*' said Stevie Carroll, grinning with delight as his mother shuddered at the suggestion of alien invaders.

'Don't be stupid!' chided Cherylyn, but her wide-eyed look indicated that she half believed him.

Only a couple of minutes later there was a loud explosion not far in the distance and they realized that the object had landed nearby.

'Sounds as though it came down near Lake Cooper,' suggested Pete.

And this time he was right. Except that the "comet" had come down in the inland lake, not just near it.

When they arrived at the lake, there was already a small group of onlookers, including Jim Cane, sergeant of Harpertown's two-man police force. However, they were all too intent on the object in the lake to even notice the arrival of the newcomers.

'Oh my God! My God, it's a diamond! A gigantic diamond!' shrieked Cherylyn as they saw what held the others so transfixed.

'It must be at least a million carats!' cried her husband Pete.

'A billion carats more like it!' corrected Jim Cane, noticing them for the first time.

And that was exactly what it did look like - a gigantic, multifaceted diamond, the size of a Mini Minor standing on end.

'My God! My God, we're all rich!' shrieked Cherylyn, rushing out into the shallow water to throw her arms around the "diamond", to hug it from joy.

Beaming like idiots Jayne and Stevie started to wade out after her, then stopped in mid step as she suddenly jumped away from the "diamond", as though bitten. 'Oh my God! My God!' shrieked Cherylyn. 'It's alive!'

'Oh sure mum!' said Stevie, thinking at first that his mother was trying to pay him back for scaring her earlier, until seeing the look of abject terror on her face.

As Cherylyn went running back toward the bank, Stevie and Jayne turned tail and sped after her.

For a few minutes they stood around on the grassy bank, trying to find out from Cherylyn what had happened. Finally, unable to make any sense of her hysterical mutterings, Jim Cane and Merv Stebbins rolled up their trouser legs, took off their shoes and socks, then waded out to where the "diamond" sat, twenty metres or so from shore.

After a moment's hesitation, both men reached out and placed a hand on a flat edge of the object.

At first they felt nothing unusual, but after a few seconds the shiny, diamond-like stone began to pulse softly, but distinctly, with a regular *thrumph, thrumph, thrumph*.

With each pulse it seemed to radiate out small bursts of yellow light. Although they hadn't noticed that from shore, when Cherylyn had touched it.

The two men pulled their hands away from the stone and looked up at each other, obviously both waiting for the other to speak first. Finally it was Jim Cane who took the initiative.

'There's no doubt about it,' he said, 'it certainly feels like a heartbeat!'

Although he had spoken quietly, in the still night his words easily carried to shore and were overheard by all. 'See! See! shrieked Cherylyn. 'You all thought I was crazy! But I'm right! He agrees with me!'

After Jim and Merv hurriedly returned to shore, they began to discuss what to do next. However, after Jim and Cherylyn's revelation, most of the onlookers only wanted to turn tail and scurry back to the (imagined) safety of town.

Early the next morning Jim Cane set out for nearby Glen Hartwell, to collect the nearest thing the area had to a research scientist - local coroner Jerry Green.

He also collected his Glen Hartwell counterpart, Sergeant Danny Ross, nicknamed "Bear" by his friends and colleagues, due to his tremendous height and barrel-like chest, although only a sergeant, like Jim, Bear was Jim's immediate superior. In the Victorian police force, when a number of country towns are policed by officers of the same rank, the officer in charge of the largest town has authority over the others. So, because Glen Hartwell dwarfed the much smaller Harpertown, Bear had authority over Jim Cane.

When they arrived at Lake Cooper, shortly after ten a.m., Jim was in for shock. The "comet" was only half the size that it had been the night before.

'My God!' he said, staring out through the windscreen of the Land Rover as they drove up to the lake. 'It's shrunk!'

After wading out to examine the object for a moment, Jerry Green corrected him, 'Not shrunk. Dissolved. I'm afraid it's only some kind of soluble crystal salt.'

'There go my hopes of becoming a billionaire,' joked Jim, although he had guessed the night before that it was no diamond. Although as Jerry continued to

examine the crystal, Jim thought, *But what kind of crystal has a heartbeat?*

Speaking for the first time since their arrival at the lakeside, Bear Ross called out to Jerry, 'Is it likely to do the lake any harm?'

Jerry shrugged and said, 'Without the proper equipment to run tests, it's hard to say. But if it was as big last night as Jim says, then so much has already dissolved into the water, that any harm it might do has already been done.'

#

Jim Cane heard of Lake Cooper two days later. He was in Montgomery's General Store in Goodwin Drive when in rushed Stevie Carroll.

Seeing the policeman, young Stevie breathlessly blurted out, 'Someone's killed all the fish in Lake Cooper!'

#

When he arrived at the lakeside, Jim found his constable, Paul Bell, and Pete Carroll kneeling on the bank, examining a pile of what from a distance looked like white shale. However, as he approached Jim could see that it was a metre-wide strip of bones - the chewed and mangled skeletons of seemingly millions of small fish, extending for a few hundred metres in each direction.

'Stevie and I came down early to do some fishing,' explained Pete, seeing Jim approach. 'After nearly an hour without a single bite we set off to find a better spot.'

'It was on our third attempt that we found them,' added Steve.

Although Lake Cooper was an inland lake, it was stocked up with fish when it periodically overflowed every few winters and joined up with the nearby Yannan River, which in turn led out into the Tasman Sea.

'So what do you think?' asked Pete Carroll.

Jim Cane shrugged and said, 'Your guess is as good as mine.' Taking up a handful he was surprised by the chalky brittleness of the bones that crushed to powder beneath his grip, as though whatever had devoured the flesh had also sucked all trace of fluid from the bones, leaving them as brittle as sun-dried pine needles.

'Looks like another job for Jerry Green,' suggested Paul Bell.

#

Over the next couple of days Jerry Green and Jim Cane investigated the cause of the killings, without coming to any conclusion. Except that, 'Whatever did it, certainly seems to have devoured every single fish in the lake,' as Jerry Green pointed out.

'But what could have done it?' demanded Jim.

'Some kind of dingo pack, perhaps,' suggested Jerry without enthusiasm.

'Some kind is right,' said Jim cuttingly. 'This lake bobs and weaves around for two kilometres or more. And part of it are many metres deep. No dingo pack could completely clean that out.'

'Then what's your guess?' asked Jerry pointedly, silencing the policeman, who was forced to concede that he didn't have one.

After finally conceding that there was nothing to be learnt from them, Jim arranged to have the small mountain of rotting fish bones carted away.

#

By the first week in December it was already obvious that it was going to be a scorching summer.

'Bloody greenhouse effect,' grumbled Merv Stebbins, blaming it for the record summers that they'd had in recent years, as he helped Melinda to pack the last of their lunch in the already cramped hamper, ready for their picnic with the Carols.

He picked up the blue can of insect repellent and started to spread his arms, to the amusement of his daughter, Louise.

'What are you laughing at?' he demanded.

'Dad!' You're the one causing the greenhouse effect, with that spray,' she chided him.

'One can can't make any difference!' he insisted, ignoring the wry smiles that Melinda and Louise exchanged at his expense.

Ten minutes later, outside waiting for the Carols, Merv eyed the growing line of traffic down Rushcutter's Road and said, 'Stupid buggers! Why drive all the way out to Glen Hartwell, when we've got a perfectly good lake virtually on our doorsteps?'

'The Glen is only fifteen kays away,' pointed out Melinda, 'not half a million,' drawing giggles from Louise and her brother Shane, and a sharp glance from Merv.

'That's not the point,' persisted Merv. 'Why waste time and energy driving fifteen kays to the Yannan River, when you can walk a few hundred metres to a perfectly good lake right here?'

'Yes dear,' said Melinda, rolling her eyes to the heavens, drawing more snickers from her two teenagers. She was tempted to add that a very shallow branch of the Yannan River was less than a kilometre from Harpertown, but then thought better of it.

When they finally reached the lakeside, however, their first attempt at paddling was a great disappointment. Although clear as glass, the water felt strangely thick and oily.

'Oh my God, it's so clammy!' protested Cherylyn Carroll, quickly wading back to shore.

'What do you mean, clammy? How can clear water be clammy?' demanded Merv, wading out a few

metres. However, after a short time he found an excuse to come back to shore.

However, the slick feel of the water didn't seem to bother the five teenagers who were with the two couples.

'How can you bear to be in that filthy stuff?' demanded Cherylyn, as Jayne, Stevie, and their cousin Dianne Matthews, who was staying with them over the Christmas break, continued to swim about in the lake.

'It's not so bad once you get used to it!' called back Jayne, leading the others out into deeper water.

'Don't go out too far!' Merv Stebbins called out to his own two teenagers.

'No dad!' called back Louise, sighing in exasperation, as if to say 'Fathers!', drawing snickers from the other four.

Despite their assurances, however, the five teenagers had soon paddled out of sight around one of the many bends in the twisting, serpentine lake.

'Are you sure you ant to swim in this gunk?' asked Dianne Matthews, grimacing in disgust at the sliminess of the water that felt like half-melted petroleum jelly.

'No,' said Louise, as they rounded the bend, 'but let's keep going till we're well of sight of the old folks. Then we can swim to shore and relax in peace.'

'Good thinking, sis,' said Shane, chuckling at his sister's deviousness.

They swam on for a few hundred metres more then started towards the bank.

Feeling something nip her foot, Louise looked down in terror, remembering the scene from the classic horror film, *The Creature From the Black Lagoon* where the creature brushed the heroine foot as it swam beneath her.

'Something bit my foot!' she called out to the others, who were all well ahead of her.

'Jaws lives!' teased Shane, who, unlike his sister, preferred modern horror films to the early black-and-white classics.

'Ha! Ha!' retorted Louise, still peering down at her foot through the clear water. Finally convinced that there was nothing else in the water with them, she looked up and started to swim after the others.

Feeling a sharp pain in her left foot, she looked down again just as her foot vanished and hot blood began to pump into the water from the stump of her leg.

'Shane! Shane, help!' she called as she felt a stabbing pain in her right thigh and her leg vanished to the thigh on that side. 'Help me! For God's sake help me!'

Stopping only metres from the bank, as Louise began to scream and thrash about wildly, Shane shouted, 'She's in trouble!' and the other four teenagers all swam back to help her.

'Give me your hand, sis!' Shane shouted as he reached Louise.

She started to raise it toward him, when with another spasm of pain her whole arm vanished from sight, allowing blood to stream from her shoulder blade.

'Oh my God! My God, what's happening?' shrieked Dianne Matthews, as before their eyes Louise vanished bit by bit, until nothing remained of her but a cloud of blood in the water. But even as they watched the cloud began to thin out leaving the water clear as pristine glass.

#- # -#

While Cherylyn and Melinda laid out the picnic lunch, Merv and Pete erected a large beach umbrella a few metres away, then promptly fell asleep under it, leaving the two women to swelter under the open sun.

'Isn't that just like men!' complained Cherylyn. 'They get a day out relaxing in the shade and we're left to swelter and do all the work.'

By a quarter to noon the lunch was set out and Melinda and Cherylyn went to the water's edge to call for the five teenagers.

'They've been gone a long time,' said Melinda.

'Yes,' agreed Cherylyn, shivering as she thought of her own paddle in the oily water. 'I don't know how they can stand to be in the dreadful muck at all.'

'Shane! Louise! Dianne! Time for lunch!' called out Melinda.

'Jayne! Stevie' called Cherylyn.

Five minutes later their calls had produced no response from the teenagers, but had managed to wake up Merv and Pete.

'What's all the racket about?' demanded Merv, annoyed at having his nap so rudely disturbed.

'For God's sake, the kids are missing!' snapped Melinda, startling Merv who wasn't used to her answering him back.

'They can't just have disappeared!' ventured Pete, as the two men went across to join their wives by the water's edge.

'Maybe they swam out of hearing range, then came to shore,' suggested Merv.

For nearly ten minutes they continued to call for the teenagers and argue about their best course of action. Finally it was decided that Melinda and Merv would set off along one side of the lake; Pete and Cherylyn the other and head toward Perry township.

The two couples had met up again at the other end of the lake, just outside the town of Petty, before realizing that one of them should have returned to Harpertown to notify Jim Cane.

'Oh my God! My God, we're not going to find them!' shrieked Cherylyn, drawing a reproving look from her husband, although he was every bit as upset as she was by the disappearance of the teenagers.

'Look, stay calm, honey, I'm sure we'll find them,' said Melinda Stebbins, only wishing that she could believe it herself.

Unfortunately Petty is too small to have its own police officer. However, the Stebbinses had relatives in the town, who readily agreed to drive the two couples back to Harpertown to alert Jim Cane.

Nonetheless it was already growing dark before Jim had organized a proper search party to scour the surrounding forest for the teenagers.

Although armed with powerful search lights, they couldn't help feeling a touch of unease as they traipsed through the eerie night forest. It was only a handful of years since Glen Hartwell and Harpertown had been savaged by a pack of wild dingoes. Though the yellow, native dogs are mainly found in the northern reaches of Australia, around Queensland and the Northern Territory, packs have been known to stray down south. And more than one dingo has been lit up in the headlights of speeding cars, while crossing Highway One, within kilometres of Melbourne itself.

They searched through the night and past dawn without finding any trace of the teenagers. Until shortly after eight a.m. Jim Cane heard a shout of, 'Over here!'

By the time that he had navigated through the thickly wooded forest to reach the point that the call had originated from, Jim found a small crowd ahead of him.

'What is it?' he asked the nearest man, getting no response from the old man whose face was white as a sheet and who looked as though he was about to faint.

Seeing Paul Bell kneeling by the water's edge, Jim went across to his constable and asked, 'What's this...?' stopping in mid sentence as he saw the large pile of chalky white bones, laying broken and chewed on the bank of the lake. 'You've found them,' he said stupidly.

'Three of them, by the looks of it,' corrected Bell.

'It... I can be them...!' insisted Merv Stebbins, refusing to believe the worst. 'My God, they only disappeared a few hours ago... They can't have been reduced to skeletons already...'

'Something's picked their bones clean,' said Paul Bell, getting a sharp look from Jim which silenced him.

'It... It can't be them!' insisted Merv, on the brink of a nervous breakdown.

'No... No, perhaps you're right,' agreed Jim, leading him away from the gruesome find.

After taking Merv away from the scene and ensuring that Cherylyn and Melinda were kept well away, they set to arguing over what had killed the teenagers.

'Crocs! It has to be crocs!' insisted the old man in the party. 'I've seen crocodiles strip a large carcass as clean as these in an hour or less.'

Looking at the pile of bones, Jim Cane was doubtful: they gleamed in the early morning sunlight as though someone had polished them to a high lustre. 'How could crocs get into an inland lake?' he demanded.

'Same way fish used to,' insisted the old man. 'Across from the Yannan River. You'd be surprised how

far those buggers can travel across dry land. A couple of kays'd be nothing to them.'

The argument might have raged for hours, except that fifteen minutes later the other two skeletons were located along the bank a few hundred metres away. That seemed to convince everyone that the old man was right.

So it was agreed to organize a crocodile hunt over the next few days. Rather than go of half cocked, Jim arranged for all the local constabulary to be involved: Bear Ross and Constable Terry Blewitt from Glen Hartwell; Mel Forbes and his constable, Andrew Braidwood from Merridale; Sergeant Murray Senkans and Constable Leslie Harrison from BeauLarkin, and most importantly (since he had spent five years on the Northern Territory Police Force and had experience croc hunting) Sgt. Con Rodrigues from LePage.

#

It was three days after the deaths of the five teenagers that the crocodile hunt finally got under way. Nearly two dozen heavily armed med were to be split up into three squads: the first two to patrol along both banks of the lake; the third to set out in a four-man runabout owned by Perry resident Dave Kelly, to search upon the lake itself.

Before the boat could set out, however, there was a debate over who should be aboard. Dave Kelly had to go to steer the runabout; Con Rodriguez was the only one with any croc-hunting experience, and, of course, the killings had occurred in Jim Kane's area, so they all had places. But argument raged over who should be the fourth man. Bear Ross had expected to go along as Jim's superior. But Murray Senkans had others ideas.

'Back off, Bear!' demanded Senkans, grabbing Bear by one arm as he started to step aboard the runabout. 'I have authority here.' One the other side of Harpertown to The Glen, BeauLarkin was as large as Glen Hartwell and roughly the same distance away. Usually Senkans was content to let Bear Ross take care of the small town's extra policing needs, but on this occasion he decided to argue The point.

'That's right,' agreed Leslie Harrison, keen to stay in the good books of his sergeant, who was famous locally for carrying grudges indefinitely against anyone who ever dared to cross him.

'No way!' said Terry Blewitt, coming to Bear's aid. 'The Glen has authority over Harpertown.'

'Crap!' shouted Senkans, obviously prepared to argue the point indefinitely.

So, rather than have the hunt delayed needlessly over a triviality, Bear Ross stood aside and said, 'Be my guest, Murray.'

Smirking like an idiot at his imagined victory, Murray Senkans climbed aboard the runabout, then was almost thrown into the water as the boat took off suddenly.

'You shouldn't have let that dickhead get away with that,' Terry Blewitt said to Bear Ross, making certain to speak loud enough for Leslie Harrison to overhear him.

'It's not important,' said Bear. 'The important thing is to make the lake safe for other kids to swim in.'

#

The small runabout patrolled back and forth along Lake Cooper all day without locating a single crocodile, or anything else that could have done the killings, until shortly before four p.m. when Jim Cane called to Dave Kelly to shut off the engine.

'What's up?' asked Con Rodriguez.

'I thought I saw something in the water,' explained Jim, moving across to the front of the boat. Standing on the triangular bow, he held onto the small guard-rail with one hand and peered down into the clear water.

He was soon joined by Con and Dave; however, Murray Senkans stayed back near the stern of the small boat. Partly from fear that it would capsize if they all went forward; partly because he thought that he had seen something in the water near the rear of the boat.

Senkins stood gazing over the back of the runabout into the almost glass-clear water. Although it was unlikely that anything could remain hidden from sight in such pristine water, he couldn't get over the feeling that something was down there watching him.

'I can't see anything,' said Con at the front of the boat.

Hearing the voice behind him, Murray started to turn and slipped, almost falling into the lake. His right hand did go under water, and in an instant the hand was nipped off at the wrist, allowing blood to pour from the stump into the water.

For a moment Murray Senkans held his right arm up before his face, his lips pursed into a question mark, staring aghast in shock and amazement as blood continued to fountain out from the stump of his wrist. Finally he found the voice to start screaming, more from shock than pain.

'What the...?' said Con, turning quickly. Then, seeing the stream of blood pouring from Murray's arm, 'My God!'

The three policemen started toward the injured man, when there was a thundering crash on the bottom of the boat.

Crying out in alarm, Jim Cane went flying head-over-heels backwards into the lake.

'The croc's under the boat!' shouted Con Rodriguez, as the crashing came a second time.

Then, as Jim started to thrash about, screaming hysterically, Dave Kelly said, 'My God, Jim's in the water! and ran forward to help him.

Seeing his friend bobbing about less than a metre from the boat, Dave leant over the guard-rail and grabbed Jim by one hand. Pulling with all his might,

Dave fell backwards into the boat, bringing with him one arm, the shoulders, neck and head of Jim Cane, whose torso had been brutally bitten right through by their still unseen attacker.

'Oh my God! My God, he's dead! Jim's dead!' shrieked Dave, backing away in horror, yet unable to take his eyes off the lifeless third of a man that he had pulled into the boat.

As yet another thundering crash sounded on the bottom of the boat, followed by a loud splintering of wood, Con cried, 'The boat's breaking up! We've gotta jump for it!'

'You're crazy! shrieked Dave hysterically. 'The croc'll get us if we jump into the water!'

'Not if we head straight for shore,' said Con, pointing to where the nearest bank was only fifty or sixty metres away. 'While it's busy wrecking the boat we can make it to shore if we're quick about it.'

'What about him?' asked Dave, pointing to where Murray Senkans now lay on the bottom of the small boat, having fainted from shock and loss of blood.

After a second's hesitation Con said, 'We'll have to leave him, we can't take him with us.' Seeing Dave Kelly's horrified look, he added, 'He's probably already dead from loss of blood anyway.'

Without further hesitation both men jumped into the clear water.

#

It was nearly five p.m. when one of the croc-squads on the shore located the wreck of the small runabout on the bank of the lake. Nearly twenty minutes passed before Bear Ross, Terry Blewitt and Mel Forbes arrived at the scene.

What could have happened?' asked Terry rhetorically, staring in horror at the mangled boat, whose bottom had been bitten right through.

'Could a croc have done this?' asked Mel, fingering the jagged point of a wooden spar that thrust up from the great hole in the bottom of the runabout.

'Possibly,' said Bear, 'but where are Jim and Dave and the others?'

There was a moment's stunned silence as the small crowd stopped to contemplate what had probably happened to the four men.

#

Over the next few days the two remaining patrols continued to search for the elusive 'croc' as well as some sign of the four missing men. But without success.

The search was already winding down, ready to be abandoned, when one afternoon Bear, Terry, Mel and Paul Bell plus a few others were slowly searching along the bank of the lake. The other men had already moved a few metres past him, before realizing that Mel Forbes had stopped.

'What is it, Mel?' asked Bear Ross, starting back to where his friend was crouching, peering intently into Lake Cooper.

'I'm not sure,' said Mel, straightening, 'but I think I can see a pile of bones on the bottom a few metres out.'

'Where?' asked Bear, walking up the the very edge of the lake. Too late he realized what Mel intended, and made a futile grab for him as Mel started to wade out into the shallow water.

'You can't go out there!' protested Bear.

'Why not?' asked Mel without stopping. 'There's nothing hidden in this clear-as-glass water.'

Gradually the others had grouped around Bear Ross, watching as Mel waded out into the lake. 'Find anything?' called out Paul Bell.

'No!' said Mel, perplexed as he reached the point where from the bank it had looked as though something white lay. Turning back in frustration, he started to wade back to shore, then stopped and began to scream shrilly.

Bear Ross started to rush forward to his friend's aid, then stopped in terror as the surface of the lake began to ripple strangely. Then before the eyes of the men on the bank, the water transformed, solidified and changed into the shape of a giant mouth.

A mouth that slowly devoured Mel Forbes from the feet up.

Finally the policeman's screams stopped as he was completely devoured. Then the watery mouth pursed its lips and spat, sending the mangled bones of Mel up onto the

bankside, at the feet of the search party who ran screaming with terror into the nearby forest, narrowly avoiding high-speed collisions with the conifers and eerie, grey-white ghost gums as they headed for either Perry or Harpertown, depending on which town each man thought was closer.

#

After the gruesome death of Mel Forbes, things quietened down around Lake Cooper. With almost a dozen witnesses to Mel's bizarre death, Bear Ross managed to convince the local coroner Jerry Green, who was a long-time friend of Bear's, to write out fake death certificates for the five men and five teenagers.

Then the lake was declared quarantined and a three-metre high wire-mesh fence was erected around the full two-kilometre length of the lake, to prevent anyone else from falling prey to the flesh-eating 'water'.

It was left up to Jerry Green, as the resident scientist, to try to explain what had happened. 'Suppose', he said to Bear Ross one day, 'that the crystal from out of space was a living being. For decades scientists have postulated that on other planets life might not be based on the element carbon, as it is on Earth, but on silicon or other chemical elements.'

'Suppose the crystal was a non-carbon based life-form, and when it landed in the lake, because of its crystalline structure it dissolved in the water. Then instead of dying, it took over the water in the lake, united with it, and formed a brand new life-form. In effect, carnivorous water!'

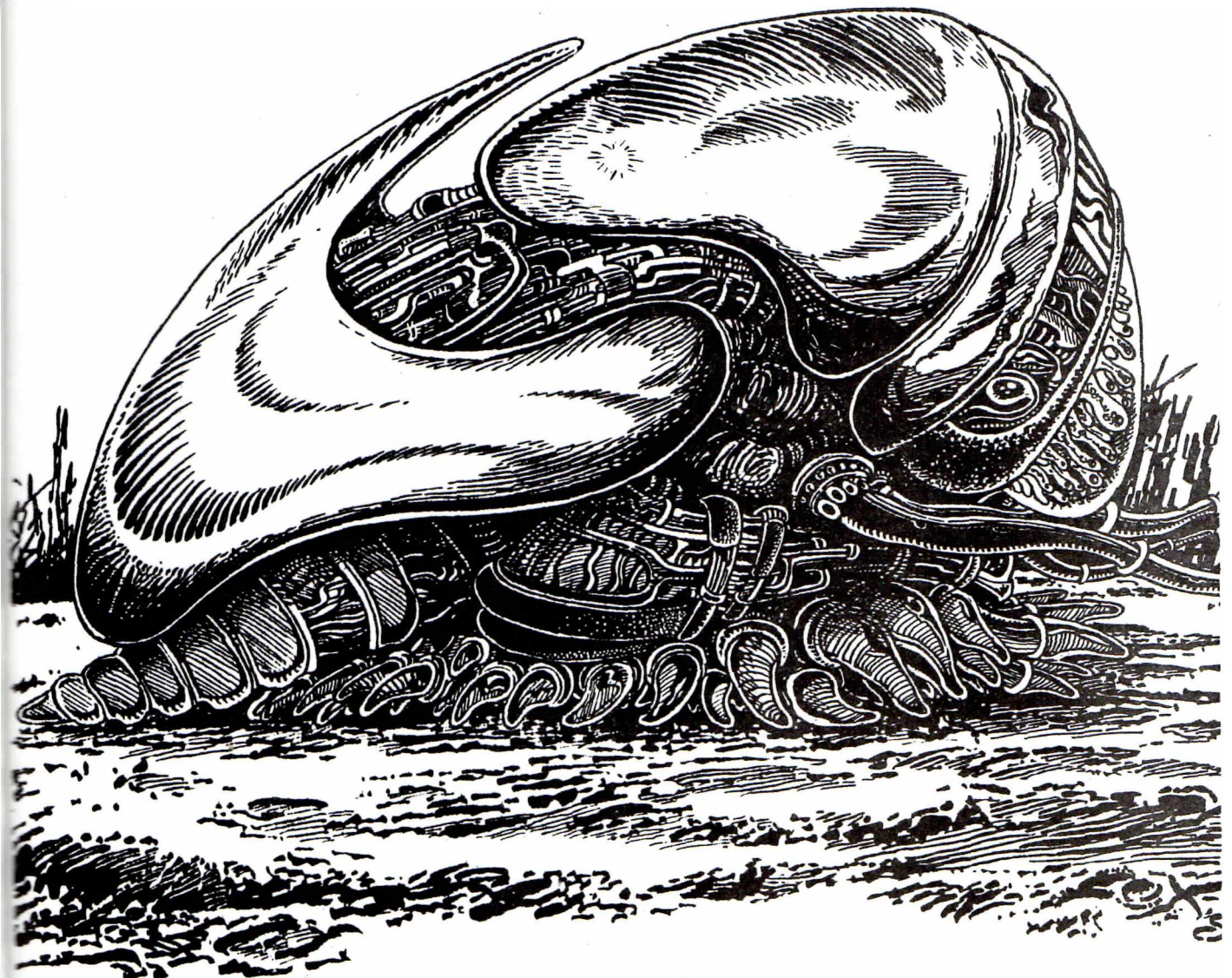
After the deaths of Jim Cane and Mel Forbes, Paul Bell and Andrew Braidwood were promoted to sergeant in their respective towns. And Braidwood took on a local teenager, Stanley Dempsey, as his new junior constable.

Otherwise nothing much happened in the area after Lake Cooper was fenced in...

Until a few years later, when in the winter of the year 2001, the Yannan River overflowed, flooding the area around Harpertown and meeting up with Lake Cooper. The essence of the living crystal was finally able to move on from the lake, to seek new feeding

grounds - firstly around Harpertown, Perry, Glen Hartwell, LePage and Merridale as it took over the water of the Yannan River. Then further afield, first Australia, then the rest of the world, as it followed the course of the Yannan out to the Tasman Sea, then into the Pacific, Atlantic, and Indian Oceans, until it possessed the oceans of the entire world. A giant carnivorous organism that surrounded all of Earth's land masses, devoured all of the fish and marine life across the globe, then waited for the greenhouse effect to melt the polar caps, giving it new body allowing access to increasingly greater parts of the land, where the human race cowered in terror from this deadly new life-form, the new dominant species on the planet Earth.

THE END



THE SCIENCE FICTION FAN QUIZ

by Rachael McGrath-Kerr & Claire Sykes

We all know that a science fiction fan is just someone who really likes science fiction. A rather general term, you might think, the same way that there are football fans. Well, in the same way that football has different divisions, science fiction fans may also be divided into different leagues. This quiz is designed to let you find out which league you're in.
No peeking at the answers.

1. *A new convention on your favourite s-f media has been announced. Which is your response?*

- a) "The cost! What a rip-off!"
- b) "Where do I sign up?"
- c) "I'll only go if it's run by Ron and Susan Clarke."
- d) "What do you mean by 's-f media'?"

2. *You realize that if you don't send a letter of comment to a contribution fanzine today you won't get the next issue. What do you do?*

- a) What a ridiculous comment! Someone's always writing in about your letters - you annoy/delight everybody!
- b) Con a friend into typing it for you, using a discreet bit of blackmail concerning the last convention they attended.
- c) Con a friend into composing and typing it for you by offering to clean their fridge, car, house, etc.
- d) Consider that these are very unfair rules.
- e) You give in, and send in some money instead.

3. *You send in too much money for a fanzine sub. What happens?*

- a) They increase your subscription proportionally because they appreciate your support.
- b) Your money's gone forever.
- c) You demand a refund when you realize your mistake.
- d) You don't subscribe to anything anyway.
- e) You're great pals with the editor so you get the fanzine for free.

4. *You have a huckster's table at a con. What would you like to sell?*

- a) Second-hand multi media.

b) First editions of many things, obviously wasted on the proles.

c) Anything vaguely electronic, including (pirated) video tapes.

d) Fluffy bunnies because they're the New Generation's answer to Tribbles.

e) Yuck! Fancy selling things at a con! There are *much* better things to do.

5. *Someone takes the place you wanted for your huckster's table. What is your planned course of action?*

- a) Ask them politely to move.
- b) Accidentally "push" the con's desk in the direction of their table, shouting "Exterminate!"
- c) Find that your table is okay, really.
- d) Beat the daylight out of that inconsiderate ignoramus and claim your territory.

6. *If you were asked to be on a panel, which topic would you be chosen for comment?*

- a) Coping with an alien mother-in-law.
- b) How to Time Travel in Bathrooms.
- c) Outer-space Warfare.
- d) How to get into the Fifth Dimension by using Action buses.
- e) Enid Blyton's influence on Robert Heinlein's Characters.
- f) Anatomically interesting Robots.

7. *You are chosen as a Fan Guest of Honour. Why?*

- a) It's out in the sticks and no-one else would go.
- b) You just *adore* being the centre of attention and being respected and admired.
- c) You just *adore* the Guest of Honour and would like to personally respect and admire them, etc., etc.
- d) You're a masochist.

8. *Which of these books would possibly cause you to breathe heavily?*

- a) SO LONG AND THANKS FOR ALL THE FISH - makes aeroplanes seen sexy.
- b) CONAN THE BARBARIAN - nice and obvious.
- c) FRIDAY - she gets the best of most worlds.

- d) FULL CIRCLE - guess why!
e. ROCKETSHIP GALILEO.

9. *It's a con costume parade. Which would you like to choose?*

- a) Chewbacca - you like the feel of hair on bare skin.
b) Dejah Thoris - you're an exhibitionist at heart.
c) E.T. - appropriate to your phone bill.
d) Lt. Tasha Yar - you're cute in uniform.
e) Data - you already have the complete lack of expression perfected and you're used to not getting any girls.
f) Dalek - suitably aggressive.
g) Yourself - you can pretend to be a Newcomer wearing a wig.

10. *You are asked to perform rishathra. What is your immediate response?*

- a) Accept enthusiastically, you've always liked exotic food.
b) Worry about anatomical compatibility.
c) Worry about possible offspring.
d) Ask what it means, and then politely refuse.
e) Ask first what it means, and then enthusiastically accept.

----oooooOOooooo---

RESULTS.

Check your answers with the allocated points and add up your score.

1. a=2 b=8 c=10 d=1
2. a=10 b=5 c=6 d=1 e=1
3. a=5 b=2 c=3 d=9 e=.5
4. a=6 b=11 c=6 d=8 e=1
5. a=2 b=15 c=1 d=10
6. a=6 b=7 c=1 d=6 e=10 f=2
7. a=1 b=8 c=9 d=.5
8. a=10 b=3 c=5 d=3 e=1
9. a=2 b=5 c=4 d=4 e=4 f=10 g=.5
10. a=-10 b=4 c=8 d=8 e=10

SCORES.

0-10.

You occasionally have the enthusiasm of space mould. For you, s-f is frequently another type of fiction with pretty covers. Come on, enjoy yourself in a new dimension. Go to conventions, subscribe to fanzines, and find out what's happening at your local s-f societies. (P.S. How can you read TM and get a score like this? Shame, shame!).

11-30.

You are a fun-loving fan. You care about s-f but also read other things. You would only go to a con if someone else paid, but then you'd join in enthusiastically. You're into s-f because it's there. It's about time you appreciated some more of its aspects. Become more involved. Don't just send in letters - send in articles!

31-50.

You are someone who appreciates s-f for what it is. You're willing to devote both time and effort to maintain your interest and you're also able to talk intelligently to those unfortunates who don't share your excellent taste in print and electronic media. You are a great ambassador for s-f - witty, fun and obviously intelligent. Get out there and make people happy!

51-103.

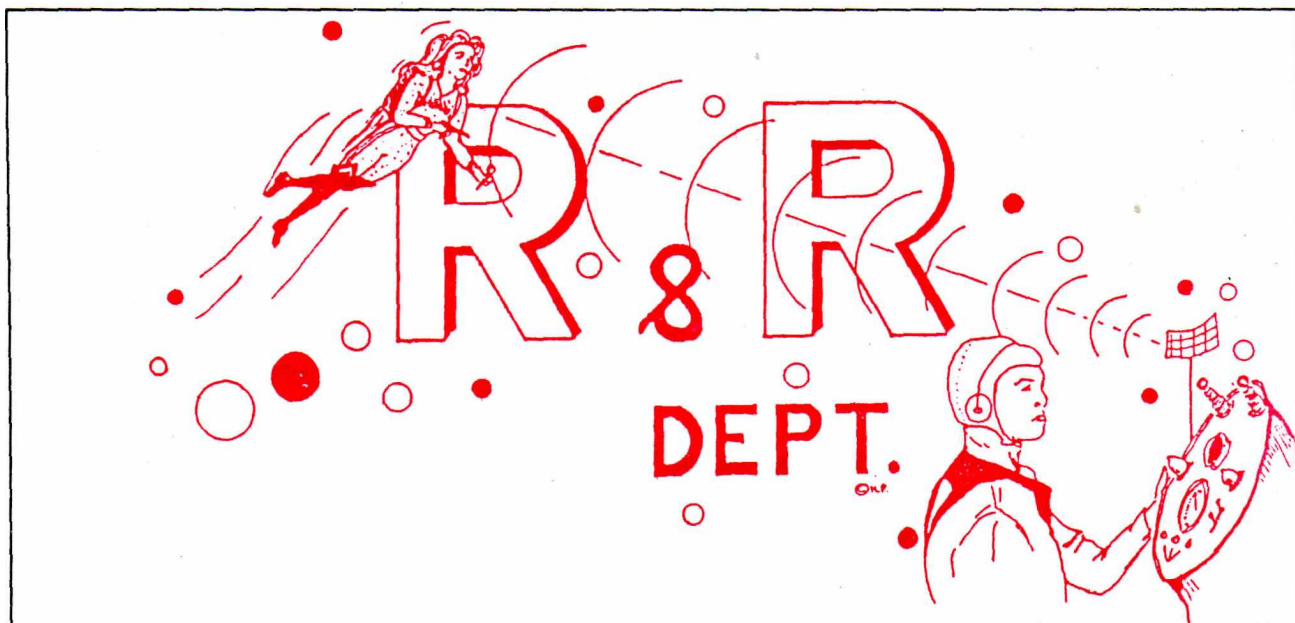
You're very enthusiastic, aren't you? At the risk of sounding heretical, there is a life outside s-f. You are in danger of turning into a Tribble. In your favour, you are undoubtedly noticed at cons. You're the one who probably talks loudly about all the books, zines, etc. that you've devoured and your costumes are incredible.

104.

Are you for real? This is a thoroughly incredible score. Maybe you looked at the scores first, and you add up worse than we do!

WRITER'S NOTE.

As with any quiz of this sort, the allocation of points is highly subjective, as is the delineation of parameters and the choice of questions. If the results are accurate, then accept them. If not, then feel free to do the quiz again, looking at the points, and getting the score for yourself that you want. It's entirely up to you what sort of fan you are, and any change is possible. We'd personally suggest that you aim for enthusiasm mixed with interest in many other areas. The future of s-f is in your hands.



HARRY ANDRUSCHAK, PO Box 5309, Torrance, CA 90510-5309, U.S.A.

Received THE MENTOR 69 today. WOW!! Talk about *impressive*. That is one heaping gorgeous cover you have there. As for your bus trip... amazing. As you say, the situation in some of the countries is such that your journey is not likely to be repeated by many fans. It certainly makes my 5 weeks in the Sahara Desert truck trip seem like an easy-going excursion, in comparison... although the company I booked with, Guerba Expeditions, does offer a Trans-Africa lasting 27 weeks. If I didn't have to work for a living, I'd be tempted to try it.

I disagree with Jim Verran about the acceptability of L. Ron Hubbard's WRITERS OF THE FUTURE Contest. True, Scientology and Dianetics are not directly related. But the whole concept of WOTF is to lend some sort of respectability to Hubbard. After all, all the paperbacks I have seen have Hubbard's name in huge letters before the words of WOTF. Sorry, but as far as I am concerned, no amount of money will buy any respect from me for a rip-off artist whose scams continue to wreck people's lives and syphon off money even after he is dead.

Meanwhile, I am coming up on 7 years of sobriety in A.A., since my last drink was 24 February, 1984 and I left the hospital on 17th March, 1984. As part of my program, I now work at the local A.A. office every Monday, 4 pm - 7 pm, answering phones. Good service work, but of course a bit time-consuming. Well, I was dropping out of LASFAPA for a few months - they can get along without me.

The CHICON V Progress Report #5 arrived last week. The only Worldcon bid advertisement is *Atlanta in 1995*. 1994 has advertisements from Winnipeg and Louisville.

As you may have heard, postal rates went up in the USA, and every fanzine fan is blaming *me*. Ah yes, the rewards of working at the Post Office. This airmail letter is now to cost 50c instead of 45c.

(US fans should count themselves lucky - airmail letter rate to the USA from Australia is about \$1.10. - Ron.)

Going back to the topic of cons - I have no plans to attend out-of-town SF cons. For one thing, I am short on vacation time after my trip to Chile. For another, money problems. I will be attending Bouchercon in October, since it is being held in Pasadena, about one hour's drive time away. That, and the local Loscon, will be my only cons for 1991. I have no plans to attend the 1991 or 1992 Worldcons. 1993 and 1994 are maybes. If Sydney does win the 1995 con, I'd be tempted to come, even tho I am not sure how to finance such a trip. (28.2.91)

Since Sydney has not dropped out, about the only fans we are likely to see are those coming to Medtrek in 1991. - Ron

LORRAINE T. CORMACK, 15 Gannon Pl, Charnwood, ACT 2615.

Wow! The first thing I thought when I saw THE MENTOR 69 was what a beautiful, beautiful cover it had. Getting those colors must have taken so much effort. Congratulations on the achievement. You should be proud of it - it really does the artwork justice.

Margaret Pearce's CREW WAITING left me feeling unsatisfied. The atmosphere, environment, and society were beautifully created. I liked the characters, and I thought the way the Captain dealt with the situation was accurate. But I wasn't at all sure about the way the discovery of the breeding cycle was made. If the elders were happy about the extra gene pool, why would they tell the Captain how to escape? And if they

had a good reason for telling him, why didn't they tell the crew of Mercury 1?

On the whole this was a good story - I enjoyed it, at any rate, and the only thing I wanted to pick at was the last page, page and a half. Maybe if that part was lengthened a little to give a more convincing explanation?

I liked SAUCE FOR THE GOOSE too. I didn't think it went anywhere in particular - it felt like it was building up to something, as though it was a opening fragment of something longer, but it was a nice little piece nevertheless. I did think that occasionally commas were used where a full stop would have been better, but that's probably as much a reflection of my own writing style as anything.

Some of Mark McLeod's portfolio I really liked. Others I disliked quite strongly. Actually, now that I look at them again, the one on page 91 is the only one I really liked. That probably doesn't mean very much, as I'm one of those people who know nothing about art except what I like. And my tastes are rather erratic.

One thing that did fascinate me was Ron's tale of his trip through Europe. Like a lot of people I did some wandering around Europe without much money as part of my growing up. The idea of doing it with other people interested me. (And, being a Cliff Richard fan and thus a watcher of silly movies like SUMMER HOLIDAY, I must admit the idea of travelling in a refitted double-decker bus has a special attraction for me.)

No doubt some of the article meant a lot more to people who were there or who knew the people involved than it did to me, but I enjoyed it nevertheless. It was a nice mix of interesting, amusing and informative. I liked it, thanks for sharing your memories with us. (9.3.91)

TOM JACKSON, 1109 Cherry, Lanton, Ok. 73507, USA.

You and your wife seem to be quite a pair of travellers! I enjoyed Susan Clarke's memoirs a few issues back about her trip to the States, but I must say you've decisively topped her with the story about your 1970 odyssey. I notice that although you left with a group of 14, you returned to your island home alone, like Odysseus. Did Susan wait patiently for your return like an Aussie Penelope, or will you spoil the analogy by explaining that you didn't meet her until later?

(No, I didn't meet Susan till 1972 - if I had met her previously it would have been a good bet she would have gone also. - Ron)

Your use of Walt Willis's bit for an introduction was a fine touch and I enjoyed the photographs, although I thought that along with the portraits of Chris Guy and John Brosnan you should have included a closeup of the 23-year-old Ron Clarke. I was delighted and amused all the way through your account. I quite liked the bits about Australian camaraderie, such as the women in Florence kissing you

goodbye, although I never figured out why announcing that you were Australian protected you from further harassment when you were travelling on the train to Switzerland. Also particularly wonderful was your moment in the field of red opium poppies in Iran and your vivid description of John Brosnan's tiny flat in London.

When you travelled from India to Greece, were you conscious of the fact that you were (more or less) retracing the route taken by Alexander the Great, albeit from the other direction?

I much enjoyed Buck Coulson's column, as usual. I infer I was supposed to pay attention to the ancient Hoosier lore, but the part that most impressed me was that Coulson carries a wallet with *fifteen* credit cards. I read last year that a group of Japanese officials offering ideas on how to improve the U.S. economy had suggested limiting every American to two cards - to encourage saving and discourage personal debt, and because no one in Japan understands why anyone needs more than two credit cards. (1.3.91)

MIKE GLICKSOHN, 506 Windemere Ave, Toronto, Ontario M6S 3L6, Canada.

Wow, you guys sure are cranking them out down there! It seems like only a few days ago that I locced #68 and here is the massive and extremely impressive next issue even before my letter can get to you for inclusion therein. Still, I suppose that's understandable. When a fannish couple gets into sixty nine the excitement generated must be pretty fierce... although one wouldn't have expected reproduction quite so soon (if at all!). Oh well, there are more things in fannish fandom than are dreams of in my philosophy and that's the truth.

Congratulations on a most visually impressive issue. The cover is both very nice artwork and very well printed, giving the issue a very dynamic appearance. And the rest of the issue lives up to that initial impression. You must be making several Australian artists (and one Australian printer!) very happy indeed with the quality of the work you're producing.

Your editorial deals with two areas of constant interest to fans: awards and clubs. Over the past 25 years I've had my say on both topics a goodly number of times and I expect I'll continue in the same vein for another 25 years at least. There are certain verities within the sf community and two of them are that awards never satisfy everyone and clubs come and go in cycles, with each new generation discovering for themselves the heady excitement of finding others who share their love of science fiction. Good luck with your club and may you enjoy many successful anniversaries. (I'm not sure I'd stick with the name, though: with fannish propensity for abbreviating everything you'll be called the BM group for sure and that's not a consummation devoutly to be wished!),

Interesting column by Buck, as always. CON-TEXT sounds like a convention I'd like (yes, I can enjoy

a con that doesn't have beer in its consuits... although I'd enjoy it more if it did) if I ever get back to the point of being able to go to cons without worrying about the expenses involved. And both Buck and Maia are right about fans: they tend to be less physically rough on their colleagues but they're far from slans while they do it. And with any cross-section of the population there are fine fans and fuggheads and it doesn't take too long to be able to distinguish between the two.

If indeed it was Walt's comment that sparked the report on your bus trip then that's another debt we owe him. It's a good thing that Walt is the literal personification of The Good Fan, though. The power he seems to wield is awesome. One small remark and whoosh! a twenty page article gets written. What else Walt might accomplish only Tom Digby or Paul Skelton could imagine.

I usually mention to you that I don't read the fiction in TM but while I was reading (and thoroughly enjoying) your trip report I wasn't sure I could make that statement about issue 69. Was there really a time when we were happy with floor space and a backpack for a pillow? Could you ever just pack up and drive across Afghanistan? Did meals ever cost a dollar and could an eight month trip be made for two thousand dollars? Surely this is just science fiction? Of course, I don't doubt you for a minute but the whole reading experience brought home very strongly to me just how much I and the world has changed in the last twenty years. It must have been an amazing experience to live through and I expect, if my own somewhat similar experiences are anything to go on, that the many problems and troubles you encountered had a greater impact at the time than they seem to in your report. Thanks for writing it all up... even if it did make me realise how staid and middle-class I've become! (Some six years before your amazing journey I took a 125 cc scooter around Europe during which time, among many other things, I slept on a picnic bench at the side of the of the Autobahn so not all of your experiences were enjoyed only vicariously by this particular reader.)

I wonder about the temperament of some people who write to/for fanzines: if they can't take even the slightest disagreement without getting testy and abusive perhaps they're in the wrong hobby? John Tipper seems to feel that anyone who argues with him deserves a full-frontal attack in return (better duck, Richard Brandt, he'll be after you for those comments in your loc) which is an intemperate response to say the least. Oh well, I've outlasted a good many overly sensitive fans with hair-trigger responses and room temperature IQs and I guess I'll outlast Tipper as well.

Jozef's centrefold is once again excellent, with beautiful detail and subtle shading. Once again, too, your printer deserves applause for reproducing it so well. I found myself regretting that Jozef hadn't filled in the rest of the serpent creature for an even more impressive piece of artwork. (By the way, and meant as observation only, not destructive criticism, the work is

not without minor flaw. The right foot is wrong with both the heel and the line of the toes being in need of additional work. This in no way makes it less than an impressive accomplishment but merely indicates that the creator is still mastering his trade, despite his considerable skill and obvious talent. This matches the thrust of my earlier comments and would have been obvious to Tipper if he had any skill or talent of his own.)

The McLeod portfolio was well worth printing and indicates another budding talent in your area. Some of the colour pieces didn't come across as well when rendered in black and white but happily we have the cover to imagine what they must look like in the original form. Mark is certainly another Australian artist to keep a close eye on.

Again it embarrasses me how few of the books you review I've actually read. Apart from a couple of old reprints the only book I actually own and have read was Resnick's *IVORY* which was a superb addition to Mike's growing reputation as a consummate story teller and fine stylist. (4.3.91)

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

Ta for printing up the FP list. It'd been my fave SF movie for yonks. You missed two tail-end items on the list. They were:

111) First filmic expression that religions, like laws, have all been created by man to master his base self. Commander Adams to Morbius: "That's why we have laws and religion(s) (sic) Morbius, because we're all monsters in our subconscious."

112) Correct definition of animal genuses re footprint cast of monster.

113) The use of the term "hyperdrive" during the opening monologue; though *SF readers* were long familiar with it.

That folk tale, *THE KING AND (HIS) SON* was translated from the Cornish. My covering letter to Ron explained why the style was so loopy. Having to smooth out some areas and fill in gaps while trying to maintain the flavour of the original. Murder. I'm as mystified as everyone else as to why such marvy illo's by Jozef graced what was really only an exercise in linguistics.

Sticks and stones, boys and girls. Sticks and stones. Your hair shirts suit you, though.

I like the full colour covers, Ron. Hope you can arrange for this to be a permanent fixture of the zine.

Yes, John, the weather did give me a hard time. The Beast still lives, tho.

I see Glen Chapman actually had the nerve (gasp shock) to say what he thought of a few stories! Boy, Glen, are you asking for it. Making critical observations designed to enlighten. Look where it's gotten me. Perhaps the hair shirt mob can glom onto you for a change of diet? Variety and all that, as they say. The children are amusing in their own way, you'll find.

I HATE SF POETRY.

Now I think I'll get back to my Sega Megadrive. I have a Grand Prix to win.

(This issue's colour cover is the last - my contact at Pink Panther quit and I got the last two done before he left. And they buggered it up. The photograph must have come loose and when they sticky-taped it back they put it on crooked. - Ron)

JULIE HAWKINS, 26 Third Ave, North Katoomba, NSW 2780

I've just finished TM 70 and I'm impressed. Are these zines getting thicker or is it my imagination? Loved the covers of TM 69 & 70, adds a bit of class.

The artwork in TM 69 was great. Mark McLeod's portfolio was impressive, although I think a future "utopian" world will be a long time coming. Besides, would we really want to live in a perfect world? It would be much nicer to see the art in colour, though.

The stories were good. I enjoyed THE CREW WAITING, although I would have thought that a father and daughter stranded together would have been closer than in this story, no matter how strict the training. The ending was unexpected and well hidden.

SAUCE FOR THE GOOSE was good but familiar. I also wouldn't like to think we've sunk so far we need robots for socialising or conversation, and especially not just for company.

HUMAN ERROR I loved. Although it's not a new idea it was worked well and certainly brought a smile to my face. You better watch yourself, Ron!

BOIL THE WATER and LAST HOPE didn't impress me too much, especially the latter. The writing style in LAST HOPE is a little off putting in my eyes. What did happen to the cameras in BOIL THE WATER?

The articles were interesting and, as usual, the letters amusing. Is Peter Brodie a genuine article or simply a stirrer, he certainly knows how to get a reaction.

Glen thinks my comments about castles were off beam. Perhaps in some ways, but the design of a castle depends on its positioning and it uses. A castle built purely for defensive purposes would be built differently to one built purely for show. A concentric castle is built differently than simple earthenwork around a keep. Also the age of the castle determines its design. The era it was built in would determine whether it had a chapel or a library and how many secret tunnels and passages would be added.

As for broadswords, I'm no expert. I do know how heavy they were, or are, and in true battles two hands were usually used to swing them. Also using their own weight was part of knowing how to use them correctly. And although they were very common there were still several special swords, King Arthur had Excalibur, Sigurd's sword, Branstock, was forged from the preserved pieces of his father's weapon, Roland had Durandal and El Cid had Tizona. Even Theseus was given his father's sword in the legend of the Greeks.

Finally on the piece on FORBIDDEN PLANET. I've seen that movie more than once and hadn't realised there were so many futuristic ideas in it. (14.3.91)

JOHN TIPPER, PO Box 487, Strathfield, NSW 2135

I've said it before and no doubt will say it again: the cover painting (of TM 70) seems to be part of something larger. I feel my eyes drawn to the right hand side of the larger rock. Unfortunately, I'm faced with a white border! Peggy Ranson's illo is more to my liking...

Your own review of recent Oz publications was both useful and entertaining, as I won't be going out to buy any of the publications discussed. Only, I should mention, because I have enough reading material here to last me several lifetimes. I picked up a book the other day to read, only to discover that it had a pre-decimal price shown within. Yet I do remember buying it, all those years ago.

Moving on to the first story, I'll just be repeating myself if I remark that I found it to my taste. But I did enjoy HUMAN ERROR, even though it confused me at one point, as there appeared to be a section missing. Yet, glancing through it as I type these words, I'm unable to prove this point. Does it remind me of what WHAT MAD UNIVERSE? Now there's a book I've devoured many a time. BOIL THE WATER didn't quite knock me over as I saw the writing on the wall a little too early, but I still enjoyed it. On the other hand, THE LAST HOPE had no hope of seeing me past the first page.

RUMINATIONS I proved that there used to be a lot of enjoyment to be had in fandom when SF was something out of the ordinary. I managed to dig out my 2001: A SPACE ODYSSEY ticket butts, still in presentation wallet, and discovered that you viewed it a month before myself. If you enjoyed SECONDS, maybe you could explain it to me. Or am I thinking of ALPHAVILLE? I know one of these was really weird. FAHRENHEIT 451 was much more to my liking.

Not much of note in the letters, but I'll have to borrow a tape of DR STRANGELOVE, Shane, as I haven't seen it for yonks. 7 DAYS IN MAY, similarly, can't be recalled, probably as I always confuse the title, movie wise, with THE TWENTY-SEVENTH DAY, which was a bomb. Another good book destroyed by Hollywood. (15.3.91)

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

THE MENTOR 69 arrived yesterday. Nice to see Jean Young's name in the lettercol. Juanita and I were in FAPA with the Youngs, briefly; I believe that we joined not too long before they left. I disagree with her on 1950s movies; some of them were so bad they were funny, and I recall with pleasure such items as CURUCU, BEAST OF THE AMAZON, NIGHT OF THE LEPUS (though that came a bit later, I think), and other monstrosities, some of which are now considered

"cult classics" and being remade into even more ridiculous films. There were other good early movies, particularly the early Hammer films from England. CURSE OF THE DEMON; ENEMY FROM SPACE; THE CREEPING UNKNOWN; X, THE UNKNOWN, etc. (All of these are US titles; I believe the English titles were different, but I don't recall what they were.)

To answer Sue Thomason; the manual washing machine I mentioned wasn't square, but otherwise her description is pretty close. Front-loading, I believe, or perhaps top-loading, with a cylinder revolved by a hand-crank. It revolved in the vertical plane, rather than today's top-loaders which revolve horizontally. The hotel also had an early electric model, which worked quite similarly except for being attached to a motor and having a wringer attached.

For John Tipper; I don't consider using first names to people I don't know a courtesy, and using "Mr." and "Mrs." and "Ms" in fandom seems silly. So I use last names except for people I know personally or have contacted extensively by correspondence. Using both names is reserved generally for cases where more than one fan has the last name. For that matter, restricting the term "fan" to writers and artists is pretty damned discourteous, not to mention erroneous; the term was originally applied to readers, and that application has never changed. Of course, making up one's own definitions and insisting on them is a long-standing habit of fans, and greatly facilitates arguments and bad feelings, so it's quite popular.

Gary Deindorfer's "social life outside fandom" may be easier in New Jersey than it is in rural Indiana. Anyway, we know too many pleasant fans to have much time for outside social life. Severian agrees with his comment about having to be boarded, though. His opinion is that he should stay here and be taken for long walks every day, rain or shine. Telling him that conventions pay for his dog food just doesn't sink in, and the idea that if he was better behaved around other dogs we might take him along doesn't work, either.

Nice portfolio by McLeod, though his human figures in a picture or two seemed a bit stiff and awkward. I particularly liked the grass-land and the approach of the cloud or tidal wave or Wrath of God or whatever it was. And with that color cover, you might as well start paying contributors; THE MENTOR certainly looks more professional than some promags I've seen.

Fascinating account of the trip. Farthest I ever went on my own was Indiana to California; some 3000 miles. Most of my worldly possessions, including several firearms, were in the trunk of the car, and I got a shock when there was a police roadblock at the Arizona line. Fortunately, all they were looking for was fruit, and they didn't open any of the boxes. They'd have had a shock if they had. I was carrying a double-barrelled .41 Remington Derringer in my coat pocket - the "gambler's gun" you see in western movies, but nobody noticed it. Decided that California wasn't any improvement over

Indiana, so I came home again. Besides, both of my girlfriends (that term was perfectly appropriate in 1953) were back in Indiana. You had a much more fascinating trip than I've ever had, though I'm not sure if I envy you or not. (7.3.91)

Mike misses the point (in TM 70) of my hiding from visitors. It's not the boors that bother me. Them I can refuse to let inside, and back it up as necessary (I do have two revolvers on my desk at the moment, though one has always been sufficient and I really should go put the second one up.) It's the fans who are well-meaning and pleasant in their way but screamingly dull that I'm hiding from. I don't like to hurt the feelings of people like that - they can't help it, after all - so it's easier to make sure that they don't drop by in the first place. Perhaps Australian doesn't have dull fans; the US definitely does.

Why do I have two revolvers on my desk? Well, one - never needed - is in case of burglars and other non-fan intruders; there is some violence in rural areas, though not a lot, and I'm a bit paranoid. (Or indulging in wishful thinking, one or the other.) Maybe I read too many murder mysteries. The other, a .22 Magnum caliber, has been used several times for dispatching groundhogs, possums, and other critters who do damage. The groundhogs dug their tunnels through the barn floor (which is concrete), and the possums ate all the food I'd put out for the barn cats. The gun is there so I can slip it in my pocket when the dog sets up a row, and I go out to see what he's cornered.

No, Steve, it was Europa who got it on with a bull, not Della.

Shag is also a type of rug.

Nah, no yuppies in this part of Indiana. Southern Indiana, now, is full of them. It's the scenic part of the state; farmland isn't much good, so it's mostly hills, streams, national forests and worked-out coal mines, which the state requires the coal companies to turn into more forest.

Glad to know that Alderson resents snide attacks, and if he thinks he's worth the effort of my looking up back issues of THE MENTOR for references, he's mistaken. I couldn't care less what he thinks of me. If his memory can't reach back to the previous issue, tough shit. I'll make a few more snide attacks the next time he writes anything, because all the references in the world are wasted on a twit.

The latest item I've read on the Dogones is that their beliefs about a companion to Sirius can't be traced back any further back than the appearance of white explorers in their area, who could have (but may not have) mentioned the fact to them. I believe some evidence was mentioned pointing to the idea that their beliefs were second-hand, but I read the item a year or so ago in the weekly SCIENCE NEWS and I certainly won't try to find it now. (Take it or leave it, Alderson.)

That was a very fancy mimeograph you depicted. Juanita's first machine, a Sears, Roebuck model, had a drum and a hand crank. One put the typed stencil on the

outside of the drug and poured ink into the inside and cranked. Oh, there was also a lever that fed the paper through as one cranked. She turned out the first 100 or 150 issues of YANDRO on that machine. (12.3.91)
(Yes, I thought that that "duplicator" was interesting. Brian Earl Brown, I think it was, mentioned something like it several issues back. - Ron.)

SHANE DIX, 2/26 Diagonal Rd, Glengowrie, SA 5044.

Another fine piece of artwork from Mark McLeod on the cover of yet another fine issue of TM. Also admired Peggy Ranson's contribution on page 16. Perhaps you could include a portfolio of hers in the near future?

I was very impressed with the fiction in this issue. HUMAN ERROR by the prolific David Tansey was a good story which should definitely be expanded on. An investigative piece such as this requires, I think, a gradual build up, something which the short story format doesn't allow. Also in, say, a novelette form there would be room to play around with that idea of the fiction/reality overlap. The twist in the tail has been done before (with Ballard's ZERO:NOW springing to mind), but then it was a twist which was needed for the story to work effectively. I enjoyed Margaret Pearce's BOIL THE WATER very much. I found it strangely reminiscent of her last story in TM, CREW WAITING, though felt that this one was a lot tighter and consequentially more enjoyable. Then there was THE LAST HOPE, which is simply the best thing to come from Grai Hughes' pen yet, and easily the most outstanding of this issue's fiction. Her command of words was excellent, her sentence structuring superb, and her telling of the story I could not fault. Absorbing stuff. It also produced one of the best lines I've read in a long time: "Soft lives are meaningless."

RUMINATIONS I was another interesting piece from Ron, offering glimpses into Australian fandom from "all those years ago". And while we're on history, perhaps somebody would be able to help me out with my search for a certain zine (pro or fan? I'm not sure) which came out in the late sixties. It was called EXPLODING MADONNA (inspired by Dali, perhaps?). What I'm looking for is the issue in which Samuel Delany wrote a letter. Failing that, a couple of his letters also appeared in a zine called SF COMMENTARY. If there is anyone out there that does happen to have picked up copies and kept them, would it be possible to obtain a photocopy of said letters? Any assistance would be greatly appreciated.

Reading Peter Brodie's (by the way: apologies to Peter for my last letter claiming that he had remarked to David Tansey "What a load of shit". Of course, you didn't. It was John Alderson who copped that one. The one to David was "Perhaps it was a comedy". Anyway, my comments still stand) list of FORBIDDEN PLANET'S innovations makes me realise why I have a soft spot for the movie. I must watch it again someday,

though perhaps more closely this time. My last viewing of it was a Sunday afternoon some twelve years back (perhaps I should subtitle this paragraph Ruminations, Too? Sorry). After the movie I retired to my bedroom (not what you're thinking; it wasn't *that* good), put Robert Fripp's EXPOSURE album on the turn-table and set about writing my magnum opus. After 93 pages I realised I had written instead an *opuscule*. So I salvaged what I could, burned the other 92.5 pages, and began reshaping the idea. That idea is currently 700 pages long, 3/5 finished, and will probably never see the light of day. So those that can't stand my writing, blame the buggers that made FORBIDDEN PLANET.

Finally, whatever happened to Ian Lennie? After THE PEACEABLE KINGDOM I had expected to see a bit more of him in your pages. But nothing; not even a letter to THE R&R DEPT. Is this a common occurrence in fanzines? (21.3.91)

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

Once again I must compliment you on the covers you are using for THE MENTOR. One wonders how a certain local prozine hasn't been able to produce similar quality covers.

I thought the three stories presented this issue produced a good balance between varying styles. Of the three I thought Grain Hughes' story to be the best. Quite a compliment considering I don't usually read material written in his style. Margaret Pearce's story is more towards my liking. However I must point out something that grated as I reached the conclusion. Our hero, forewarned of the dangers seemed unconcerned at the arrival of the girl.

Okay, maybe compassion ruled his heart. But when his cohorts told him they were picking up nothing on the screens I would expect him to be far more cautious during the encounter than he was. Other than that I found it a very worthwhile piece of writing. Judging from Margaret's previous effort, CREW WAITING, I get the impression she is interested in exploring reproduction possibilities on other planets, something I can't recall any other author doing with any great conviction.

The last story I read was David Tansey's piece. While enjoying it I couldn't get away from the thought he was having a light-hearted dig at the fans of Canberra (I thought I recognised a few of them sprinkled around the story. Is this true or just my imagination?

In reply to Mae Strelkov's comment about Sirius, firstly I have not had the pleasure of seeing the mentioned doco. Notwithstanding I did a quick whip through a number of astronomy mags I subscribe to and not one of them has mentioned Sirius in the last two years.

The fact still remains, Sirius B is a white dwarf; it's mass is about .85 of our sun. A white dwarf is formed (or so current theories suggest) when the relevant star has exhausted its supply of hydrogen, in a

matter of moments the star converts to helium. This reduces the star's output of energy allowing gravity to win the fight to contract the star. This contraction releases an enormous amount of energy, causing the star to brighten. Once the star settles down it is usually surrounded by the remnants of its outer shell (often described as planetary nebulas).

If the above had happened in the last two thousand years, then a high proportion of life on Earth would have died from the resulting burst of radiation. Also quite a bit of the star's wreckage would be still visible.

As far as the Dogons go, it's only a very small portion of the estimated half million population that subscribe to the Sirius B theory. Oddly this small portion is contained in two tribes contacted during the thirties by the expedition. For the record the Smithsonian's expedition was an Astronomy one and not an anthropological (as claimed by some authors). The reason for the problem about the Dogons is simple, but would take too long to explain here. I would suggest you look into their creation theory, in particular the symbol they use for their god's birth. Compare it with a drawing of the Sirian system and it will become obvious how the confusion has arisen.

The final point on this subject I would like to raise is a clarification of my statement about finding evidence of alien presence on our planet. Personally I feel that what visitors that might have stopped on Earth did so before recorded history (maybe a million years plus ago). Considering the difficulty historians have identifying landmarks in things like the Arthurian legends I think we have little hope short of finding an intact space craft or proving they ever came here.

The last thing I would like to comment on was Peter Brodie's list of firsts connected with *FORBIDDEN PLANET*. It must be remembered that this film was only the second to deal with a destination outside our solar system. It attracted a budget much higher than most films of the time, and lastly had full support from the studio (M.G.M) also a rarity of its day.

However I would like to offer the following corrections to the list:

ITEMS 4, 7, 33, 34, 40, 43, 48, 50 had all been dealt with in the film *THIS ISLAND EARTH* made the year before.

ITEM 10 was first dealt with in 1953 during the film *WAR OF THE WORLDS* in which the fighting machines use magnetic force beams to move around.

ITEM 10 and 11 are the same thing said differently.

ITEM 18 - what is the identifiable extra-solar landscape?

ITEM 26 - magic eyes had been developed for use as early as the 1920's.

ITEM 27 - what is memory metal?

ITEM 42 - again *THIS ISLAND EARTH* uses this mode of transport. Also subways have been in existence since the turn of the century.

ITEM 44 and 49 are the same thing said slightly differently.

ITEM 53 - swivel mounted, radar controlled gunnery had been in existence since the last few years of WWII.

ITEM 54 - what is innovative about a tractor used in a scrap yard?

ITEMS 56, 67 and 69 are all the same thing again said differently.

ITEM 79 - same as Item 14.

ITEM 85 - the use of space suits is a common occurrence dating back to *DESTINATION MOON* (1950).

ITEM 90 - the first ship I have come across was in *FIRST WOMAN ON THE MOON* (1928), unfortunately I didn't make a note of its name.

ITEM 91 - refer *ROCKETSHIP X.M.* (1950), the X.M. designation referred to the ship being the first expedition to the moon.

ITEM 106 - refer energy weapons fired by Martians in *WAR OF THE WORLDS* (1953).

ITEM 108 - recreation facilities are not seen, only became apparent after a series of plans of the ship were released a number of years later.

There are still a number of items I find questionable, but have given Peter the benefit of the doubt, such as Item 45. I am sure that reflective shielding was used during the early days of the Manhattan project. Also 64 is questionable. The ability to create an uncontrolled nuclear reaction was found during the Manhattan project. (20.3.91)

TERRY JEEVES, 56 Red Scar Drive, Scarborough, North Yorkshire, YO12 5RQ, UK.

Congratulations and superlatives! What a magnificent cover for *THE MENTOR* 69 - and so well produced by (or with) Stewart Widderson. Indeed, its quality is far better than many a so-called prozine. Not a lot of interior art other than the portfolio, but *all* of it was of a very high standard - as indeed was the portfolio. It's a long time since I've received a fanzine with such a high standard of art throughout.

Not that the high quality stops there. *CREW WAITING* was just a trifle amateurish here and there, but otherwise held the interest, developed well and was most definitely better than 90% of the stuff currently appearing in *ANALOG*. Pity the ending was a bit "deus ex machina", but still a rattling good yarn. *SAUCE FOR THE GOOSE* also went very well, but here again, a good story reached a rather weak ending. Both yarns well justified your policy of printing fan fiction.

Your own bus trip was an incredible saga, well worthy of polishing up and turning into a mainstream travel book. Pity you didn't add more amusing or unusual incidents and local colour, if you can do that, you'll have a best seller. One nit-picking quibble - if 50,000 lira = \$83 (page 46) how come 100,000 lira only equal L120 (same page).

Book reviews, I always like these, just the right length and with enough detail to enable readers to decide if the book might interest them - but why *two*

reviews of BUREAU OF LOST SOULS? Don't answer that, having done it in ERG, I know only too well how easy it is.

LOCS as good and comprehensive as ever - I must agree with Jean Young when she says that drawing a space ship is far easier than drawing a dragon - having done plenty of each, I think she's dead right. On the other hand, I can't share her love of that ghastly stuff called "heroic fantasy". Each to his own and all that - which brings me to that stuff which for want of a better (more cruel) word, I'll call "poetry". Have you ever tried typing that non-rhyming stuff out in prose format, i.e. without starting a new line every two or three words. You'd be amazed how trite it sounds - "Why that smile? Descending now through these forests of night in wells of void that absorb all light and the fusion-thrum that trembles the tracks is all that's real..." Taking that bit out of VERTICAL FRONTIERS as a sample. Honest Ron, It's a cartfull of ancient cordwainers (or simply a load of old cobblers). Thank Ghu the rest of the zine is so chock-full of goodies and so *superbly* reproduced. As to its colossal size - smashing, I shudder to think of the work - and cost involved in such a project, but *please* don't get overloaded and Gafiate. I nearly did with a mere 24 page ERG - but withdrawal symptoms led me to resume publishing - you should have received ERG 113 by now. (21.3.91)

SYDNEY J. BOUNDS, 27 Borough Rd, Kingston on Thames, Surrey KT2 68D, UK.

Many thanks for sending THE MENTOR 69, one of the most interesting mags I've seen for a while. A colour cover, art folio, stories, poems and articles and a letter col. Great! Though I wonder why you bother with a review column - too many mags have them, and who reads reviews anyway? The Blue Mountains sounds good too.

(There aren't many zines in Oz that do current release book reviews, and some people do read them. Of course the other reason I do them is I get review copies (can't afford to read sf otherwise) and the publishers like to see reviews of the books they send for review... - Ron.)

I liked the cover (and Andrew must be over the moon; how many poems grab the cover?) It seems to me that Mark needs colour; I didn't find his black and whites as effective. I liked best the one on page 91.

(Mark's portfolio was actually mostly of colour paintings, which is why some of them came out dark. - Ron.)

CREW WAITING wasn't at all bad, though it seemed to me a bit dated; I can imagine this fitting into NEW WORLDS of the fifties. I'm afraid it could only fit into a fanmag today.

Buck Coulson's article was interesting and SAUCE FOR THE GANDER was a better effort at contemporary sf. Your own bus trip was the high point in the issue; fascinating, and the photos came out quite well. Instructive to see the young Brosnan!

Liked Peggy's filler on page 50. And a fold out! Enjoyed BALLOONS OVER MARS; perhaps because it was shorter it was more effective than Andrew's long poem.

The letters are always the most interesting section of any fanmag, and your column is no exception. I agree with you that US prozines are parochial; not many British authors get in either. (I read a Jack Wodhams in ANALOG a while back).

I think Buck is a bit hard on L. Ron; some of his UNKNOWN novels are classics - and of course he wrote so much other stuff beside sf and fantasy that he was indeed "a prolific and successful writer".

It isn't only the Ditmars that cause controversy; most awards do! (24.3.91)

WALT WILLIS, 32 Warren Rd, Donaghadee BT21 OPD, N. Ireland.

Oh my, I have found some startling things in fanzines, but this beats all.

I read it twice, and kept thinking about it. Something about it kept reminding me of something I had read many years ago, but I couldn't remember what. Then early this morning, wakening at dawn, I had it. It was a short story by Eric Linklater in which the narrator describes an encounter with an old sailor. The old man was illiterate, but had an eidetic memory for all the voyages he had undertaken or been told about, some of them stories handed down through generations of mariners. Linklater's narrator describes how all afternoon he listened enthralled to these stories, only to be brought upright in his seat by the realisation that there was something familiar about the voyage the old man was now embarking on. As the story went on it became clear beyond all doubt that what he was listening to was an eye-witness account by a shipmate of Ulysses.

In the circumstances such an account was more impressive than a reproduction of the Homer narrative, and you were right to eschew romanticism and concentrate on the nitty-gritty detail. I am happy to do without the wonder-ment of your journey, which I can supply myself, in return for such fascinating information as that there is a metalised road up the Khyber Pass, followed by 400 miles of dirt road through Iran. I was also much taken with the fact that you kept meeting other buses, and with the fact that wherever you were you seemed to be able to find people obliging and competent enough to fix your bus. It says a lot about human nature, and probably your own character.

I feel a lot of admiration for the younger Ron Clarke, and some envy. For the contemp-orary one, gratitude.

After than account, the rest of the magazine seems less noteworthy, but I had to say how much I liked the cover. I don't pay much attention to covers usually but this one was lovely. (26.3.91)

LORRAINE CORMACK, 15 Gannon Pl, Charnwood, ACT 2616.

I liked HUMAN ERROR (in THE MENTOR 70) from David Tansey. It didn't always flow smoothly - perhaps David didn't intend this to be a final draft? It was a good story, well written, and very enjoyable, I just felt there were a few ragged edges. And, as with absolutely everything I read, I wanted to pick up on some of your choices of where to end a sentence. I *always* want to arrange people's full stops.

I truly loved the illustration on page 16. It is lovely.

RUMINATIONS I didn't really interest me very much. But then, I wasn't there, and I don't know any of the people. I doubt you'd be particularly interested in tales of my university days...

(That depends, Lorraine, if I were just starting to attend University. RUMINATIONS was reminiscing about the early activities of some of those still in Oz fandom and also to give some hint of the makeup of early sf conventions. - Ron.)

Margaret Pearce's BOIL THE WATER was very nicely done. I liked the neat way she tied up all the disappearances, did it under the watcher's noses, explained everything. I'm not entirely sure that the reproductive cycle of the life-form was clearly enough explained for me, but maybe that's just me not paying enough attention. I tend to automatically skim scientific explanations (or anything that looks like it might be one). But that's one paragraph out of a good story.

I didn't like Anne Stewart's poetry a great deal. I can't put my finger on it exactly, but I felt there was something missing. There wasn't really anything wrong with the poems, just that feeling that they weren't quite right.

I hated THE LAST HOPE by Grai Hughes. I'm sorry, I know that's a horrible thing to say without any constructive criticism to back it up. I *have* enjoyed Grai's work before. It's just that for some reason, this really made me go yuk. I had to force myself to finish reading it. In my opinion, Grai can do much, much better. (3.4.91)

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

Derek and I are celebrating his new status of retired person by decorating the living room. Well actually he's decorating but let me tell you it's jolly hard work supervising. For that and other reasons, once again this is liable to be a very brief loc.

Congratulations to Margaret Pearce on CREW WAITING in THE MENTOR 69. A well written, well paced, interest holding yarn. Just the sort of story that got me hooked on SF all those umpety mumble years ago. O.K. there are some loose ends and except at the single cell level two into one won't go but I'm happy to suspend my disbelief for the duration of such a well written story. It's fashionable to sneer at such yarns as escapist space opera but I think they are more than that.

The author gives the reader at least two ideas to ponder on, the development of science on a planet lacking iron and just how well does discipline and training hold up against a life amongst lotus eaters. In any event I enjoy escaping now and then.

I like Mark McLeod's basic concepts and it's plain to see he's a skilled and observant artist. If he ever does plant studies I'd love to own one. Alas though I think his work loses in the translation of your reproduction methods, coming over too dark, losing the light and space of his thoughts.

How interesting to read about fannish meetings in the Blue Mountains. My goodness that was a quite some trip and thank you for the interesting telling of it. Funny creatures human beings, fascinated by and reenacting the passages of history that most find abhorrent. Despite my horror and disgust at any and all forms of war if there was a local Parliamentarian and Royalist (the Societies prefer that to Roundhead and Cavalier) set to I'd go along and watch.

BALLOONS OVER MARS and VERTICAL HORIZONS are nice examples of Andrew's poetry though I felt the latter was straining a bit. SAUCE FOR THE GOOSE was a little too derivative for my tastes but the promise inherent in Maria Louise Stephen's writing makes me look forward to reading more of her work. (30.3.91)

RACHEL KERR, 5/10 Mulgoa Road, Penrith, NSW 2750.

Many thanks for THE MENTOR 69, which I've only just got around to finishing. I'm not normally so slow reading anything to do with science fiction. It's just that things have been rather hectic at school, what with reports, programming, school clubs and a musical all requiring maximum time for anything remotely concerned with leisure.

Nevertheless, the wait was worth it. I had no idea that fanzines like this were being produced in Australia. My ignorance, I guess. I like a combination of fiction, reviews, artwork and comment. I liked Mark McLeod's work. CREW WAITING was good and held my interest. SAUCE FOR THE GOOSE was alright. A rather old theme - I'm sure I've read at least three stories that were very similar. Unfortunately, since I read them back in the mists of time, (or at least five years ago!) I can't remember their names.

Now to the EDITORIAL SLANT, BMSFG and its wandering members. Is there some-thing about a nomadic existence and an appreciation of science fiction and fantasy that means that they should go together? I'm not inferring that all science fiction fans are continually moving from State to State, although I'm an example of this tentative hypothesis. At university and college nearly all the s-f fans I met were frequent house movers. Sure, you might say that that's just because of my age group, but I've also met people who are in their thirties who are still moving house often, and of that group, most of them are s-f fans.

If a fanzine is a magazine for fans, what is the definition of a fan? I've often thought of it as an abbreviation of "fanatic", but if that's so, then I don't qualify as an s-f fan. I'm certainly not fanatical about getting all the books on a certain author, watching many films and videos that are s-f/fantasy, attending cons, etc. I just get a lot of enjoyment from a well-written novel, particularly if it's science fiction, the same way I enjoy a really good film. I have a suspicion that s-f fans are looked upon as variants of fanatical wargamers by some members of the public. Yes, in some cases they may be one and the same thing, but as it has been said, "All generalisations are dangerous, even this one". It could work to our advantage - maybe s-f fans are more enthusiastic and critical readers than the average person. (14.91)

THE MENTOR 70 makes an enjoyable treat for the train ride to work. Since I only go from Penrith to Mt.Druit, the size of TM articles and short stories are just right for the journey. I must be getting picky in my "old age" (or teaching has aged me prematurely), but I can't be bothered picking up a novel unless I can be guaranteed at least half an hour of uninterrupted reading. That way I can be sure of getting at least a quarter of the way through and having an idea of what's going on.

Thanks for THE HUMBLE DUPLICATOR. Memories! We had Gestetners at primary school and high school. Kids often had to help out with the manually operated ones, but it wasn't too bad for the ones who liked the smell of the first copies. At a school where I worked last year, we had one of the first ever Xerox photocopiers - probably sent there to retire - which was as temperamental as any modern photocopier. On the other hand, the Roneo just kept on going on, except when some person forgot to fill up the duplicating spirit reservoir. Don't get me wrong. I'm not about to get sentimental about spirit duplicators. I really appreciate programmable photocopiers which can make a scrappy original look heaps better, and I don't miss the purple stains on my hands and clothes.

Re Peter Brodie's letter in TM 70. I've obviously missed the Standard Australian s-f stereotype at meetings, cons, among my friends, etc. In fact, much to my delight, I can't think of a more diverse group of people. I have a horrible suspicion that among s-f/fantasy detractors there is also a gender bias: only men read or write s-f and only women read or write fantasy. Furthermore, all fantasy readers are frustrated hippies who are revelling in anything to do with New Age, call their children weird names that come out of their favourite fantasy books and dress in strange clothes. A pretty revolting stereotype, but maybe that's in people's minds when they tell me, "Well, you don't look like a fantasy reader". (14.4.91)

(This type of thing does happen - my sister in law named her son after Gene Roddenbury and I know there are others in SF media fandom who do. No doubt there are some in print sf fandom also. - Ron)

CHRIS MASTERS, 13 Leopold St., Glen Iris, Vic 3146.

I just got around to reading THE MENTOR 70. I appreciate you including my ad for EOD Magazine, but I suppose you already know that you forgot to include my address. Never mind. If you could include it in #71 it would be great.

THE MENTOR 70 was my first taste of your magazine, and I must say, I enjoyed it. If I had only known about it sooner. I am relatively new to this fandom thing (whatever that is) and I don't know too much about it - although after taking over EOD Magazine this is rapidly changing.

David Tansey's HUMAN ERROR was an interesting piece, although parts were a bit difficult to follow, thus facilitating the rereading of some passages so I could fully appreciate what he was trying to say. In fact the obtuse-ness of the passages served to heighten the mood and the overall effect. It was also good - from the point of view of an old ORDER OF DAGON NEWSLETTER reader - to see David's Gundalee Valley crop up again. Overall, HUMAN ERROR was well executed and kept me guessing to the end.

Ron Clarke's RUMINATIONS I (does this mean that we will see a RUMINATIONS II and III in coming issues?) was a good historical piece. And for one who knows very little in this area it was very informative.

Margaret Pearce's BOIL THE WATER was well written and constructed. About halfway through when the symbiotic relationship between the frogs and the carnivorous plants was revealed, I guessed that they were tied up with the disappearances. But this only added to my interest and kept me reading to find out how.

I'm afraid that my appreciation of poetry is practically nil, so I won't comment where I have no knowledge or appreciation.

Peter Brodie's list of FORBIDDEN PLANET Innovations was, err... "interesting", although quite pointless. What did he do? Watch the video a few dozen times with a notebook? Strange.

Your R&R DEPT I thought was in many ways the highlight of the mag. I always enjoy reading people's comments. I loved the bickering, although I feel I missed the best part. A few questions: Who's keeping score? Can anybody get involved or is it invitation only? And what did Peter Brodie say that seemed to upset everybody so much? Was it another list?

I'm afraid that Grai Hughes' THE LAST HOPE was totally undecipherable to me. If anybody else out there understood it please explain it to me. Am I too stupid? Or perhaps I'm the only one willing to say that THE EMPEROR is naked? (9.4.91)

SUE THOMASON, 190 Coach Road, Sleights, nr Whitby, North Yorks YO22 5EN, UK.

Thank you for THE MENTOR 69. Even before I opened the mag I was impressed by the full colour cover illo, a striking piece of artwork. I find the way the

vegetation is portrayed by using small blobs of a few colours, yellow/orangy-yellow/deep blue/deep green, very pleasing. Also the rather eerie dusk/false colouring of the placid water, and the suggested intensity of light from the "rocket trail" in upper right-hand corner. It is a piece of artwork that has made me want to look at it closely and try to appreciate how it's been done. It's also a vivid portrayal of a scene with a very strong "feel" to it, a time and place of meditative calm, broken by the rocket take-off? I have two slight dissatisfactions with the painting - that the flying birds suggest pottery ducks to me, rather than creatures alive and in rapid motion; and that the human figure looks "posed" in a rather melodramatic way. However, my overall impression is of a very effective piece of work, made with great care and skill.

Seeing on the contents page that the cover illustrated the poem on page 59, I turned straight to that. I'm equally impressed with it; a strong, direct and hopeful statement. I'll support the power of dream and myth as a (transformative) counter to drabness any day. A good poem, which I copied out into my collection of personal favourites.

CREW WAITING seemed to me to contain some very interesting and original ideas, not always as fully developed as they might be. For example, the implied but unstressed idea that the hermaphrodite Chan/Eeda committed suicide because a bisexual body was an affront to Chan's arrogant masculinity. This made me wonder why so much of the story was told only from male viewpoints. Would women crewmembers having sexual relationships with natives also become hermaphrodite? Would they react in the same way? In some ways I was less fascinated by the biological puzzle than by the picture of how a highly trained but specialised crew might react to a fairly long-term period of survival in an environment where there was no use for their specialised skill.

THE YANKEE PRIVATEER was fun to read. I'm more interested in recreating peace-ful activities than battles, but it's fascinating to get a glimpse into other lifestyles through historical re-creation. And the idea that fans are more tolerant and accepting of people as they actually are is a nice one.

The illustration from Mark McLeod's portfolio which had the strongest impact on me is the wheatfield growing over a roadside kerb, under a huge stormcloud - I'd love to see this in colour. (7.4.91)

PEGGY RANSON, 1420 Valmond St, New Orleans, LA 70115, USA.

I just got THE MENTOR 69. What a lovely cover! The issue really looked great and with that color cover it was very professional looking.

The main reason I'm writing tho' is your article on the bus trip. It brought back so many memories of the sixties. Today I would turn up my nose at the mention of "road trip", but that was another time, eh? Shades of Ken Kesey and his merry pranksters in the

electric kool aid acid trip! Except, I assume your philosophies were somewhat different. What an adventure, and you're right, in light of recent history, how it will be quite some time before it can be accomplished again. The first time I saw one of those Turkish puzzle rings I was 7 years old and it was 1955 or 6 and I was on a Lykes freighter with my immediate family going to visit my Father's family in England for the first time. The ship's captain would pull it out and put it behind his back and magically show it to us in pieces and redo it again. He had to do *something* to keep my twin brother and I entertained because the ship carried fewer than 20 passengers and we were all sorts of trouble whenever we weren't kept amused. We were the darlings of the crew and I still have vivid memories of it in spite of being so young.

But back to the sixties - of which the early seventies were most certainly a part. I remember many a road trip but not the adventure you wrote of. Unfortunately I was never one of those young adventurers who made it backpacking through Europe and Asia. I felt at the time I wanted to see my own country which is so vast and varied. I can't say I regret it either 'cept it would be nice to go back and see all my aunts, uncles and cousins in England (and now other parts of Europe) before I get too old to get *really* brave about it. I would also like to take one more freighter trip. They still take passengers at reasonable rates, tho you have to book quite a bit in advance these days. It's a wonderful way to experience the ocean. And the sky - inland it's puny compared to the unbelievable shower of stars at sea!

I loved your article - it brought back so many wonderful memories. It is the stuff of legends, no matter how hard the trip may have seemed at the time. When you're younger that sort of thing usually doesn't even make you pause. Ah me... (14.4.91)

BRIAN EARL BROWN, 1165 Beaconsfield, Detroit, MI 48224, USA.

THE MENTOR 69 was certainly of Laskowskian proportions, but much more interesting. The color cover was quite a surprise. It's hard to believe the prices that color xeroxing has fallen to. For all that the prices have gone down, it still must have cost you a bundle to print up this cover.

The Historical re-creations that Buck Coulson writes about is one hobby I can't see. But then I was never much for Boy Scouts, camping out in the ground, charring food over a fire and so on. At least the creation convention Buck visited seems pretty insistent about staying in period, unlike the Renaissance Faire near Detroit which doesn't even bother to require their concession-stand help to wear "peasant blouses" instead of t-shirts. Buck mentions some of the misinformation people have about historical people and places (a straight article on common historical misconceptions would have been a lot of fun) reminds me of Chief Hentry Running Shorts, who we met in Cherokee, N.

Carol. That wasn't his real name but we called him that because under his embroidered loincloth he was wearing an ordinary pair of jogging shorts. We knew that wasn't authentic. In fact it turns out that nothing he wore was authentic. He wore the floor-length feathered headdress of a plains indian, and stood next to a teepee (Cherokee were farmers and lived in wattle and daub lodges). Chief Harry claimed to be the world's most photographed indian but only because he looked like what people expected an indian to look like.

I'm not sure if it was a fan or a brochure which suggested that the reason the Cherokee were deported from their homes near the Smokey Mountains to Oklahoma was because they were competing too well with Europeans. Existing pictures (early 19 Cent.) show them wearing European dress. They devised their own alphabet after seeing the European one and so on. That would make for an interesting alternate history story, in which the Old South secedes from the Union - as a slave owning indian nation.

Your account of your bus trip across Asia to the Heicon was fascinating and could easily have been twice as long, if your memory was up to that amount of detail. This trip more than a lot of DUFF or TAFF trips deserves being written up in a 40 page report. "The Asian Campaign", in particular, seemed sadly lacking in local color and incident. I say this because it is, for me, the more interesting part of your journey, Europe by comparison being passe. I'm curious how the land looked to a bunch of young, reasonably affluent Australians, what sort of cultural shock was felt and so on. This is not meant to be a criticism, just that this taste of your trip makes me want to read more about it. But it all happened more than 20 years ago and that does place a heavy veil over events and memories. The photographs were a great addition, just looking at the Kabul Gorge in Afghanistan makes its crossing look to have been an adventure. That's a long ways up and a long ways down. And as you say, something like that could not be duplicated today because of the changed political situation. T'sa pity, that. (15.4.91)

PETER BOOTH, PO Box 44, Woodridge, Qld 4114

I liked the cover this time, a sort of suggestive still-life piece... very good. And it is good to see that Ron also carries the VolgaCon ad, especially in the light that SYZYGY is soon to parody it. None of the fiction appealed to me much... I've had magnanimous promptings by certain Tanseys and Dixs to stop being a writee and be a writer instead. There are too many writees now... more critics than story-writers, so Booth has joined the ranks of the writers and submitted to Chris Masters superb EOD magazine. Seen it? Go and get it; SYZYGY, THE MENTOR, METALUNA and one other zine all carried ads for it. Best little A5 digest about.

I digress, per usual... this letter column is purportedly for feedlack on fiction, although Ron has decamped from that policy and allowed megamouths

like me and Peter Brodie to have their ten cents worth of shit printed. I'm surprised, knowing what the column is for, that my last acerbic letter actually made it past Ron's garbo... I'll put it to Ron why he wants unwanted controversy in his pages... Ron?

(As every reader of TM knows, if I don't want it, it doesn't go in. I don't think there is such a thing as "unwanted controversy". The R&R Dept is for comments on all the contents of the issue, as well as other comments from the writer than I think other readers of the zine may be interested in seeing, if only to shed some light on the LoC writer's personality. - Ron.

I'll also end one of the funniest deceptions about. Grai Hughes is a man, folks. Indubitably. His name is Craig... he uses Grai, (said 'grey'), because of the volume of colours in his address. Very clever, Craig, although one could accuse you of effeminacy doing it. Peta Booth, perhaps?

Comments on #70's LoColumn. Marc Ortlieb now has a copy of SYZYGY, so he cannot say Vic zines outnumber the rest he gets... and he's got something interesting to read now. I agree with my old sparring bureaucratic mate, Tansey... after this fannish cat bullshit, the Ditmars should be nixed... it endorses the nerd accusations, doesn't it? No, says most of yu...

Julie Vaux is in for a shock... the republic of Maritania criminalised slavery only in 1980, and it has a fair Tuareg and Berber population... but what the fuck has it got to do with SF? Or fools talking about the Dogon tribe of Mali... there is as much evidence to say they learnt their Sirius B mythos from French missionaries as there is saying LGM told them. The Turkish people, linguistically, extend from Asia Minor to about Sinkiang anyway, and have done since the days of Republican Rome... the Mongol lingo is a distant cousin of the Turkish family of tongues, and not much impact was made. ... Cats aren't born in litters, Mr. Harry Warner?

Dogon, Mae Strelkov, Dogon... has no "e" in it... doggone, eh? Well, the usually fecund Booth has run out of comments. One question, Ron, how do you go about obtaining review copies of books? Or do you buy them. I would not mind knowing, as an acquaintance I have is planning a book review zine, or would have done the time this missive sees the baleful eyes of THE MENTOR readers. (27.4.91)

I would have thought by now, Peter, that you would have noticed from other zines that SF is not one of the contents in most fanzines. There are some zines that have it - SF COMMENTARY, SCIENCE FICTION, SYZYGY and THE MENTOR, but the vast majority don't. There is a big difference between SF readers and sf fans - the fans have usually lost that "Sense of Wonder" with SF and no longer read it. - Ron.

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

Starting with its colour cover, THE MENTOR 69 is very impressive. Mark McLeod seems to be a fine

artist. The portfolio you have reproduced here is first rate. My favourite is the fourth picture, which resembles scenes of Yosemite National Park that I've seen in photographs. Nice fold-out by Jozel Sevekeres, also.

Your travelogue is quite entertaining. It's not my style of travel but interesting, nevertheless.

Mike Deckinger's memory is correct. I can also remember two mail deliveries and even deliveries on Sunday during the Xman season. Actually, it seems that this sort of thing still occasionally happens. A friend of mine was commenting that he received more than one delivery on at least one day during the holidays. When he asked the mail carrier why this was happening, he was told that his neighbourhood PO were backed up in their mail sorting. I guess they just had to clear the mail out to make room for more coming in. This doesn't happen with every PO. For instance, I wouldn't expect my own PO to do it. I wouldn't be surprised if they just threw out anything they couldn't handle. I know I have failed to receive more than one piece of mail that I was supposed to have gotten. (16.4.91)

GARY DEINDORFER, 447 Bellevue Ave, #9-B, Trenton, NJ 08618, USA.

THE MENTOR 69 is beautiful. What a lovely cover, as though the young man is in tune with the felicities of the weather on some future ecologically correct world. Obviously it couldn't be earth what with the galaxy or at least some kind of starmass in the sky. I notice, though, that with his upturned head and the position of his hands and feet that he is in exactly the same pose as The Fool in the standard Waite-edition Tarot deck. This young man somehow doesn't strike me as the figure of a fool, however. Rather than The Fool walking unconcernedly off the cliff, maybe the young man here is about to as unconcernedly walk on water, not being aware in his abstracted bliss that it can't be done, and therefore maybe it can. One thing I suspect is that it must have cost you plenty to have this color cover reproduced. I think, all things considered, that it gets the issue off to an auspicious beginning, because somehow the young man looks like he has high hopes.

Margaret Pearce with CREW WAITING has written a story that does not seem merely to be an outline, as I accused her before of doing. Lo and behold, this is an actual, fully fleshed-out story. Margaret has already shown one of her strengths in previous stories to be an abundance of ideas. But now with this story in a more leisurely manner -- not trying to rush to the conclusion of it as with the Eloï story she had in a previous issue.

The portrait of the irascible Captain is amusing, especially when he's portrayed as lurking in the humiliating native garb. How that must have rankled someone as hard-nosed and tight-assed as the Captain! Margaret has brought this character alive as a real, living, breathing human being.

To sum up: I am struck by Margaret's ability to create vivid characters, by the originality of her imagination, and the savvy to write a real story,

something not merely perfunctory in nature, as some of her stories struck me in the past. If Margaret gets the pacing of her stories right and doesn't try to rush through them, and keeps coming up with those clever ideas and inventing someone as lively and memorable as the Captain, then she ought to go far as a professional science fiction writer. I just hope she won't look down on me snidely from her future high literary eminence, amateur critic and writer that I am. I hope in spite of that that she finds what I have said to have had some sort of credibility.

The illos for the story were very nice too.

Nice down-to-earth, no bull article from Buck Coulson. What I have come to expect from His Outspoken Majesty. A real character in his own right; reminds me a little of Margaret Pearce's Captain.

I certainly don't want to set myself up as a poetry critic after the lit crit exercise just written on CREW WAITING. I will merely say, hoping to retain my amateur status, that Andrew Darlington's poem seems really well done. Well crafted, and succeeds in throwing a light on this particular sad future possible situation. Nice poem.

SAUCE FOR THE GOOSE -- hmm, it seems to me that this idea has been used before. Namely: man gets girly robot bimbo to have fun with so wife tops him by getting a male robot toy-boy. I may be wrong. It seems to me that Robert Sheckley used that idea once in a short story. Anyway, the story is well told, for its lack of originality.

Sexy drawing at the foot of the story.

Gee, Ron, I am in awe of you. I who have seen a fair number of the USA's states (if many of them count only as passing throughs) and Canada, part of it, and nowhere else, in the face of such extreme travelling prowess. All the more so in that it could not be repeated now, what with tension between India and Pakistan and then there's the situation in Afghanistan, and of course Iran goes without saying, etc. You blokes did it when it was possible to have done it all, and more power to you for that. Pegasus must have seemed an unbelievable apparition to have appeared in one's little Third World village -- and apparently, on occasion, as a provocation, what with the stones being thrown at it. Fans are such world orientated people, or at least I am, but here, Ron, is an achievement of real distinction -- a Good Deed, if you will. Fascinating article. And thanks for the pictures too.

I really like the Beardsley-ish drawing at the end of your fantastic article, Ron.

Nice fold-out right after that, of course.

Andrew Darlington's BALLOONS OVER MARS poem is really fine. For personal reasons, it says more to me than the other poem already commented upon. And keep in mind that sf and fantasy orientated poetry doesn't reach me at all.

Nice to see a loc from Jean Young. Are you aware that back in the 50s she and then hubby Andrew Young (then called "Andy Young, boy astronomer") were

already on their way towards becoming fan legends? Of course, this was before my time, but I was able to chance upon a number of old fanzines that they were featured in and thus I got a glimpse of the hilarity and brilliance that were Jean and Andy Young in those days.

Thank you for having the perspicacity to print a loc from Sue Thomason, who has got to be one of the best letter writers in fandom.

Mike Deckinger. Now there is a name for me to reckon with from out of my fannish past, especially when he and I were appearing in the same fanzines in the early 60s.

John Tipper writes an amusing stick. He seems to be trying to get Mike Glicksohn's goat a little too much, and maybe overdoing the outback ranger persona a little bit much, but he has one saving grace: he's funny.

I wonder if I'm going to get dissed by Mr. Tipper for the previous paragraph? Have to wait and see... which could be quite a wait, considering the distances and times involved vis a vis USA and America.

Buck Coulson's assessment of Hubbard as a writer is right on, and in the way it punctures this particular shibboleth is funny as hell. Though Hubbard's FEAR and TYPEWRITER IN THE SKY are favourites of mine, I have little admiration for the demagogue and mind control prophet he subsequently became. I would rather that he'd remained just a very clever eseffier and fantasist without succumbing to the temptation to become power drunk.

Ed Burbee is turning out to be a fine, funny, perceptive writer in his own right. Like father, like son. Though I realize that there will be readers of your fanzine who don't know who Ed's father is.

Dorfheimer seems pretty good at slinging around the old bullshit, as well as giving a record store a free advertisement.

Some nice work from Mark McLeod. But I'm not going to try to make like an art critic this time around!

I faunch to get a hold of the complete collected stories of Phillip K. Dick. I didn't realize he's written so many of them that I haven't read. If I could get a hold of everything A. E. van Vogt, Barrington Bayley, Phillip K. Dick, and Cordwainer Smith had ever written I would be content. Which indicates that I like brilliant idea writers and damn literary style. Right. Because at the moment I am on a Dostoevsky kick and I think you'll find the consensus among readers of Russian is that he was a great writer indeed, but no great shakes as a literary stylist. (16.5.91)

NOLA FRAME-GRAY, PO Box 465, Inglewood, CA 90306-0465, USA.

Louis and I finally broke down and rented ourselves a post office box. Hence the change from the street address. We prefer getting our mail at the PO box so that we have something to catch our mail should we be in transit. (We have to move because our apartment rent has more than doubled in less than two years, plus Louis retired from helicopter assembly last September.)

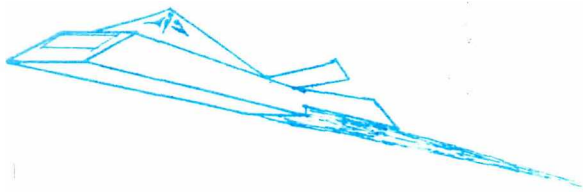
You made a comment in a report of a con which happened way back in 1966. "...there was an author panel, with Brian Aldiss and Ted Carnell speaking on tape." This reminds me of LOSCON (the SF con that is held every year by the Los Angeles Science Fantasy Society) and the time we invited the author of SF/fantasy children's books, Daniel Manis Pinkwater as pro guest of honor. At the last minute he couldn't make it, due to health reasons, so he sent a video tape of himself instead. I wish that I could have given you a report of how it went, but I didn't attend. The art of showing video tapes wasn't then what it is now, plus, I was afraid that the room would be packed. (Well, he *was* the guest of honor.) So I didn't go. If I can't set at or near the front row, it's a Forget It, because I have piss-poo vision. Turned out I was wrong, there wasn't that many people.

One of the things I do now is that I'm one of the assistant librarians at LASFS. (Well, we *do* have this nice huge collection of SF & Fantasy books...) The main librarian does a lot of other work on the library computer, like designing convention progress report layouts. She's been keeping the paper for me because it's just perfect for me drawing my toons with a fountain pen. Well, some of this last batch was just toon nice for toon drawing, so I'm using it for stationery instead.

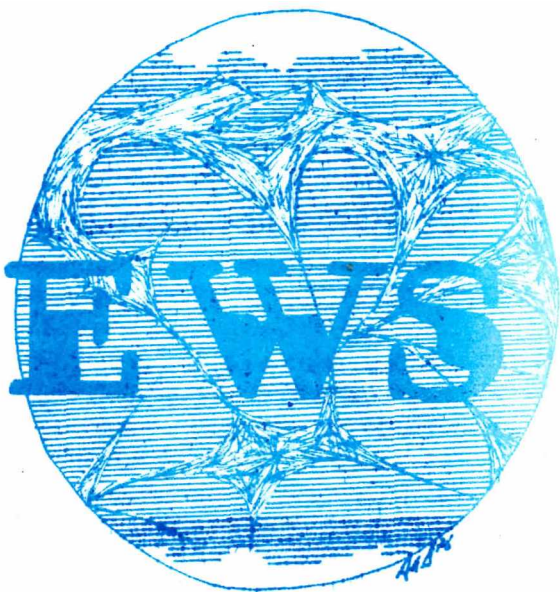
WE ALSO HEARD FROM: Mae Strelkov, Blair Hunt, Shane Dix, Brent Lillie, Julie Vaux, Tom Sadler, Joy Buchanan, Maria-Louise Stephens and Grai Hughes, who said "The title of my story in THE MENTOR 69, EXPERIMENTALISM was altered to THE LAST HOPE. Also the ultimate line of EXPERIMENTALISM was altered from "No more dreams at last I sleep." to "No more dreams at least I sleep." which has an entirely more humorous and less appropriate meaning. Other than these small *errata*, THE MENTOR 60 was a zine of superlative quality, to which any award would only be *quantum meruit*.

Sorry about that, Grai, but that was definitely a type on my part, not a deliberate editorial change. - Ron.





REVIEWS



CHUNG KUO: THE BROKEN WHEEL by David Wingrove. NEL trade pb, dist in Aust by Hodder & Stoughton. (C) 1990. 425pp. A\$19.95 (h/c \$34.95). On sale now.

There are some books that you look forward to reading; **THE BROKEN WHEEL** is one of them. It is the second volume of the seven volume series titled Chung Kuo - the Mandarin world for the Earth. The first volume was **THE MIDDLE KINGDOM** and was reviewed in TM 68.

This volume continued the plot five years after the events in that volume, as the Dispersionalists are decimated by the Seven. The year is 2206 and the power of the ruling Han is getting more precarious, though it does not show on the surface. The older members of the Seven are mostly dead and the remainder are young blades who are still learning the ropes and not quite following the rules of their elders. The rebel DeVore is still hatching his plots - he has nearly completed fortresses scattered about the Wilderness in Europe and he is still sowing dissension in the lower levels.

Wingrove has several plot lines going at once and some of them come together. The writing is fresh and the setting well sketched. This series is going to be a classic when it is finished and is destined to be one of the best and longest pure sf series around, if the author can keep up the high level of the first two novels. *Highly recommended*.

FLINT, THE KING by Mary Kirchoff & Douglas Niles. Penguin pb, dist in Aust by Penguin

Books. (C) 1990. 308pp. A\$10.99. On sale now.

Volume 2 of the series Preludes II. Volume 1 was **RIVERWIND, THE PLAINSMAN**.

The story starts before the Dragonlance Chronicles Trilogy and tells how Flint Fireforge, one of the members of the Heroes of the Lance, returns to his dwarf village to find that, instead of villains of the piece and Flint soon found himself wondering just what they were planning on doing. He did find some interesting things - quantities of swords being conveyed to them, and gained the impression they were planning something wicked.

When the wizard Pitrick found that Flint had escaped his doom in the pit of the worm, he descended to begin his own investigation. And he found the escaped Flint and the other hill that made TSR its name.

THE FATHER-THING by Philip K. Dick. Grafton pb, dist in Aust by Collins/A&R. (C) 1953-59. 471pp. A\$12.99. On sale now.

Grafton continues the task of publishing volumes of all Dick's short fiction. **THE FATHER-THING** is volume 3. It is interesting reading through these volumes and noticing how close the stories are in temperament. Many are concerned with the results of the Cold War - nuclear war, or rather, with the world after the war, covered with kibble.

The stories included are: **FAIR GAME**; **THE HANGING STRANGER**; **THE EYES HAVE IT**; **THE GOLDEN MAN**; **THE TURNING WHEEL**; **THE LAST OF THE MASTERS**; **THE FATHER-THING**; **STRANGE EDEN**; **TONY AND THE BEETLES**;

NULL-O; TO SERVE THE MASTER; EXHIBIT PIECE; THE CRAWLERS; SALES PITCH; SHELL GAME; UPON THE DULL EARTH; FOSTER, YOU'RE DEAD; PAY FOR THE PRINTER; WAR VETERAN; THE CHROMIUM FENCE; MISADJUSTMENT; A WORLD OF TALENT; PSI-MAN HEAL MY CHILD! and Notes. Some of the above which struck my funny bone while reading them were NULL-O and TO SERVE THE MASTER. The former was a skit on storyline, but Dick's unique style saves them from being stereotyped. A welcome addition to anyone's library.

MOVING PICTURES by Terry Pratchett. Gollancz h/c, dist in Aust by Houghton Mifflin. (C) 1990.279pp. A\$29.95. On sale now.

Terry Pratchett's latest offering. He is definitely getting better and better. And this is his best yet. There are one liners throughout and none fall flat.

This time Holy Wood gets his attention. There was an ancient city that subsided below the waves, and a sand covered spit of land that no-one lives on - no-one except for one old man, wonder dog... or two and the magic of flicks. There is Holy Wood magic, the magic of moving pictures, said pictures

One thing I like about these novels is that the cover artist has obviously read the whole novel and the cover painting illustrates scenes from most the novel, from the scantily clad heroine, to the two dogs, the madly weaving chair-with-wizards and the Oswald. If you want to spend several hours chuckling to yourself, get this novel, now. You won't regret it.

TIME FOR THE STARS by Robert A. Heinlein. VGSF pb, dist in Aust by Houghton Mifflin. (C) 1956. 244pp. A\$11.95. On sale now.

One of the classics from the "golden age" of the fifties. I must have read this some time ago - I remember some of the plot, and the Long Range Foundation, but the details escaped me. This is one of Heinlein's novels that deals with telepathy - most of them were "hard" science, rather than the "soft" sciences. When twins were born to the Bartletts, they weren't amused. They already had the full quota of three - their daughters Faith, Hope and Charity, so things were pretty crowded. It wasn't till later when the Long Range Foundation (a body that lent money to research things that wouldn't bare fruit for generations) approached their father for Pat and Tom to take some tests (and pay for them) that the family came into some steady income. The idea of the tests for telepathy was that it was found that telepathy was instantaneous and was ideal for communicating with starships. One twin would stay behind on earth and the other went on the ship.

It was still a time of exploration and the expedition fleet was the first of its type. Which one of the twins went was up to Pat - who always had it over Tom. Until Pat broke his leg... Excellent basic sf.

SCHOLARS AND SOLDIERS by Mary Gentle. Orbit pb, dist in Aust by Hodder & Stoughton. (c) 1983-89.192pp. A\$10.95. On sale now.

The stories in this collection were written between 1983 and 1985 and then 1989. They are a mixture of sf and fantasy, but are mostly fantasy. Several of the stories are set in the same series - mainly the fantasy series of Valentine the Soldier/Scholar of the title.

Those stories included are: BEGGARS IN SATIN; THE HARVEST OF WOLVES; THE CRYSTAL SUNLIGHT, THE BRIGHT AIR; THE TAROT DICE; ANUKAZI'S DAUGHTER; A SUN IN THE ATTIC; A SHADOW UNDER THE SEA; THE PITS BENEATH THE WORLD and THE KNOT GARDEN. The first and last are tales of Valentine and the others are fantasy except A SUN IN THE ATTIC and THE PITS BENEATH THE WORLD, which are sf. A HARVEST OF WOLVES could be set in the 21st Century and has a good chance of coming true - Future Fiction. One of the best is ANUKAZI'S DAUGHTER, which shows that people are molded by their past and any changes are apt not to be permanent and that wishes won't change people - only those who understand themselves can.

A good collection. Gentle's style takes a bit of getting used to - I was into the second story before I fell into the correct frame of mind for it - but it is worth getting for your library.

THE FLIES OF MEMORY by Ian Watson. VGSF h/c, dist in Aust by Houghton Mifflin. (C) 1990. 220pp. A\$32.95. On sale now.

I seem to remember reading something of the plot of this novel somewhere - it may be been in a short story collection published earlier.

The cover artist got a bit carried away - the collection of various statues and monuments seems to be on earth or the moon, rather than Mars, where a piece of the city of Munich turned up after been teleported there by alien Flies. When said Flies turned up in their pyramidal ship the intelligence sections of both the USA and USSR were both vying (in a friendly fashion) to get the good oil on the secrets of said insects. When, in a raid on the ship the "juice" of a Gland - a female Fly - was taken and injected into a volunteer, it was found she could see "ghosts" of where people had been in the past. The Flies were going around Earth "remembering" places so they could take them back to their own planet. The theory was that they (and the woman injected with the "juice") were connecting with the basic "Information field" of the Universe and thus could communicate vast distances and teleport also those distances.

This novel is an engrossing read and I recommend it to anyone wanting to give their Sense of Wonder a boost.

HOMELAND by R. A. Salvatore. Penguin pb, dist in Aust by Penguin Books. (C) 1990. 314pp. A\$10.99. On sale now.

R.A. Salvatore has completed one fantasy collection for TSR - The Icewind Dales Trilogy, the last book of which was reviewed in TM 68. **HOMELAND** is the first novel in The Dark Elf Trilogy, and is set in the Underdark - the underground world under the land of the Forgotten Realms. There are vast caverns under the aboveworld, and in one of those caverns is Menzoberranzan, where the Dark Elves work. The Dark Elves refer to those of not-to-good personality and the population, with the exception of one Drizzt Do'Urden, is like that.

Drizzt is not like them - he is a clean willed person but he finds it hard going when all his neighbours are rubbing him the wrong way. The other elves weren't so much Evil as evil and not well brought up. The novel follows the adventures of Drizzt as he tries to keep his integrity in a city that, to say the least, thinks such behaviour suspect. TSR followers will find this novel much to their liking - it's better written than much from that frontier.

KEEPERS OF THE PEACE by Keith Brooke. Gollancz SF h/c, dist in Aust by Houghton Mifflin. (C) 1990. 216pp. A\$29.95. On sale now.

Keith Brooke is a British writer and this is his first novel. If his second novel, **EXPATRIA**, to be published by Gollancz this year, is as good as this one, we may have an emerging talent.

The **Keepers of the Peace** were soldiers from the habitats, which ranged from near Earth orbit out to the asteroids. They were mostly young and were much like the colonialists of pre WWI in their attitudes to war. They went off, if not singing, at least looking forward to busting some Frags. Said Frags referred to a fragmented USA, now independent warring states. Two of the larger ones, the Grand Union and CalTex were waging a guerilla war against each other. The EP (spacers) were brought down to help the Grand Union.

The novel follows the career of one small band of four soldiers as they are given the assignment of kidnapping a CalTex senator and getting him to Grand Union territory. They kidnap him but then things go wrong and the plane crashes in the desert. An interesting study of war and the pressures on young women and men molded by the army to fit their units. Well worth reading for that, at least.

SEVENTH SON; RED PROPHET and **PRENTICE ALVIN** by Orson Scott Card. Legend pb, dist in Aust by Random Century. (C) 1987/9. 316,396, pp. A\$10.95 ea. On sale now.

I received the three of these books in one packet. They make an excellent read and I recommend them to anyone who likes well-written fantasy.

The world Alvin lives in is a version of early America where certain magic (hexes) work. There are

people who have the power to call upon the powers lingering within themselves that can manipulate events and persons. Some are called "torches" - these are people who can foretell the future of others by looking into their "heartfire". Others are dowers (who can find water) and doodlebugs, who can send their soul outside their bodies and can even start fires if they want it enough.

Alvin is born the seven son of a seventh son. His birth is a strange event. His brother is mortally wounded in crossing a river but is able to hold onto life long enough for Alvin to be born and so to have six living siblings. Alvin is seen by a five-year old torch at his birthing to be a Maker - the first such for two thousand or so years. Like his predecessor he takes up a trade - in Alvin's case blacksmithing. Throughout his life he is pursued by the Unmaker - the forces of entropy given form and aided by water - the fourth state of matter that is bent on wearing and tearing things down. These three books are fantasy that is a pleasure to read.

TALOS THE ASSASSIN by Steven Brust. Pan pb, dist in Aust by Pan Books. (C) 1983/7. 214pp. A\$17.99. On sale now.

This novel is a compendium of three others that were published over three years in the USA. They are **JHEREG**; **YENDI** and **TECKLA**. There are several others in the Vlad Talos series, the last being **TALTOS**.

Vlad Talos grew up the son of a restaurant owner. His father wanted him to learn sorcery, but he wasn't too good at it. His grandfather had a witchcraft business and taught the young man a little witchcraft and how to move quickly and quietly in crowds. When his father died Talos sold the restaurant and took up a job at a Dragaeran bar. Along the way he called up a jhereg and persuaded her to give him one of her eggs to bring up. The young reptile, when hatched, grew swiftly and Talos trained the intelligent bird to help him in his job. This series looks to be good fantasy and this three-novel volume is a good place to start it.

GREENMANTLE by Charles de Lint. Pan trade pb, dist in Aust by Pan Books. (C) 1988. 321pp. A\$19.99. On sale now.

GREENMANTLE is the sequel to **MOONHEART**, which was reviewed in TM 70.

The novel opens with a hit man for the mafia visiting a friend of his and being told that the last man he had killed had been found. His boss and his girlfriend had also been found dead, and he had been framed to appear as if he had killed them. As he and his friend were leaving the house the hit men of his previous quarry opened fire but in the ensuing melee the two escaped. Their goal was Canada where Valeti had set up a refuge against the time he might have to "disappear". The woods the house they arrived at was in were not all they seemed. At times a strange piping sounded which strongly effected people hearing it.

MOONHEART was well crafted, and GREENMANTLE is also. For those who like a good fantasy, without the blood and gore.

AND ETERNITY by Piers Anthony. Grafton pb, dist in Aust by Collins/A&R. (C) 1990. 411pp. A\$10.95. On sale now.

This is part of another series - it is book seven of The Incarnations of Immortality.

The book continued in the same vein as the others. In this volume Anthony deals with both God and the Devil. Jolie was in France when she felt an old friend of hers, Orlene, dying. Jolie managed to get to the woman just as she died and her soul was visible. However the soul wouldn't depart and when Thanatos arrived to take the soul an argument ensued. It ended with Thanatos departing and Jolie promising to take the soul of Orlene to Purgatory to find her baby.

There follows an adventure through various forms of reality - they visit Gaea and, after many undertakings they finally appear reach their goal. Along the way they come across many of the other Incarnations.

THE CRYSTAL PALACE by Phyllis Eisenstein. Grafton h/c, dist in Aust by Collins/A&R. (C) 1988. 286pp. A\$29.95.

The doings of Cray Ormoru were detailed in SORCEROR'S SON, which was reviewed in a previous issue. The present novel takes place a little later. Cray and his friend, Feldar Sepwin, had created a magic mirror which showed the viewer their heart's desire. Except for Cray, who saw no reflection when he gazed upon it. Till one day he saw a young girl. Over the years she grew older and more beautiful. Through time Cray endeavoured to find out who she was. At last his enquiries brought results - she was a sorceress. Unfortunately she was not available, but Cray was determined to win her and bent his life to attempt to break the spell that held her in thrall.

Phyllis Eisenstein has written several novels and short stories and she is well into mastering her craft. Her adeptness shows in this latest novel.

LION OF MACEDON by David Gemmell. Legend trade pb, dist in Aust by Random Century. (C) 1990. A\$17.95. On sale now.

David Gemmell has written some excellent books - the book LEGEND is one of them. In LION OF MACEDON Gemmell had gone back, as have other fantasy authors in the past and present, to the historical past to set his fantasy. In this case to the Ancient Greece of around 385 BC. The protagonist is one Pausanius, the general that defeated the Persians after the events at Thermopylae.

The world of that time was filled with subtle magic which was acknowledged by the peoples of that time - seeresses foretold the future and heroes walked the land. But when a boy is a half-cast - not a true

Spartan, there are not many avenues open to him. There are events where he can excel if he is good enough, and Pausanius was determined to do just that at the Final. Unfortunately there were others of his age group who were determined to ensure he did not, even retorting to violence.

A well written and researched book - it kept my interest throughout.

DARKNESS AT NOON by Arthur Koestler. Penguin pb, dist in Aust by Penguin Books. (c) 1940. 211pp. A\$9.99 On sale now.

This is a book that any writer interested in writing sf wherein there is any strong characterisation and tensions in the plot.

The story is set in the 1940, at a time when Germany was rapidly going downhill and Stalin was ruling the Soviet union with an iron fist. The protagonist of the novel is Rubashov, an old Bolshevik, who is does the dirty work for the Leader (or Number 1 as he is known in this novel. At last, though, Rubashov's luck runs out and he is arrested and interrogated. All through the interrogation he finds himself going over the events of the past decade and seeing at last how he had been set up.

This novel handles well the desperation of people living in turbulent times and is well worth reading.

POLAR CITY BLUES by Katharine Kerr. Grafton pb, Dist in Aust by Collins/A&R. (C) 1991. 282pp. A\$10.95. On sale now.

All the Katharine Kerr I've read up till now has been fantasy, so it was a pleasant surprise when I found that she can write good adventure sf also.

The Polar City of the title is on a world that is inimitable to humans, who live under glass most of the time. When a series of murders takes place the police chief is at first not personally involved, until one of his own officers is killed. There are several plots going at once - one is the search for the assassin, the second is the political goings on with the two alien organisations who are trying to take over human worlds, and the last is the search for what is apparently the sole surviving alien who could be a First Contact for this planet; an alien from an apparently star-travelling civilisation who is also carrying some sort of lethal bacterial plague. I found this good sf adventure.

TEHANU by Ursula le Guin. Gollancz h/c, dist in Aust by Houghton Mifflin. (c) 1990. 219 pp. On sale now.

Subtitled The Last Book of Earthsea. I haven't read the other earthsea novels - that I could recall. Ursula le Guin is, of course, a polished author and the prose really flows.

As the book opens Tenar is a widow and she takes in a badly burned young girl named Therru. Therru had been badly beaten and raped by her parents

and one other man she had been with and pushed into a fire and left to die. Tenar had been unable to cure her, but through the time she took in the girl Tenar managed to win some of her confidences. Thus it was when Sparrowhawk, fleeing the remote island where he had lost his magic powers, turned up, Tenar had taken him in and nursed him also. Things were quiet till the King's men turned up and her little family had to split apart. Good fantasy.

EARTH by David Brin. Futura pb, dist in Aust by Hodder & Stoughton. (C) 1990. 751pp incl all sorts of things. A\$12.95. On sale now.

This is one giant of a book. And it's all "hard" sf - the type that I like best.

There are more than several threads running through the novel - one is the search for an elusive black hole lost in the centre of the earth and the attempt to get it back. Another is the adventures of three young men of the (then) present as they go through life and meet up with their destiny; another is the search for information by what one could call a "greenie" of the future, but who almost destroys all humankind.

The society is well thought-out and presented and the plot is at least within the grips of the minds of most sf readers, even if the use of "gravity lasers" of the power to launch mountains is awe-inspiring. *Recommended*.

GOOD NEWS FROM OUTER SPACE by John Kessel. Grafton pb, dist in Aust by Collins/A&R. (C) 1989. 402pp. A\$14.95. On sale now.

GOOD NEWS is a strange book in that it reads as a cross between Philip K. Dick and Cyberpunk in the societies portrayed and the characters drawn.

It is almost the Millenium and the religious zealots in the good old USA are throwing their weight around. The media is, as usual, the bearers of the glad tidings and also of the worst in-fighting. George Eberhard is one of the foremost newshounds - news. that is, that creates headlines, and not necessarily true. He also is one of those brought back to life from the dead by new technology. Naturally the religious zealots aren't too happy about this type of thing and are trying to get said technique banned. George ends up leaving his wife and friend to try to find an alien who he is convinced is going around stirring up things. For once he is right, but no-one will listen to him.

A novel of "interesting times".

WULFSYARN - A Mosaic by Phillip Mann. Gollancz h/c, dist in Aust by Houghton Mifflin. (C)1990. 287pp. A\$29.95. On sale now.

This is Phillip Mann's first novel since he completed the Paxwax sf series. He is currently living in New Zealand.

It is set in an era of star travel, after two interstellar conflicts - the aftermath of which left most human civilizations in ruins. The Gentle Order of St

Francis Dionysus had survived and had, with its fleets of mercy ships, began to gather the strings together. With the fall of Christianity in the 21st Century and the rise again of the old cults and the finding of alien civilizations, culture expanded after the blowup mentioned above.

Mann has created a moral tale with this - a tale of Jon Wilberfoss and his captainage of the starship *Nightingale*, and the tragedy that befell it and all the beings that were on board. It is a novel well worth reading.

THE ASIMOV CHRONICLES by Isaac Asimov. Legend h/c, dist in Aust by Random Century. Edited by Martin Greenberg. On sale now. This is an 836pp collection of Asimov's works. The stories included are: MAROONED OF VESTA; ROBBIE; NIGHTFALL; RUNAROUND; DEATH SENTENCE; CATCH THAT RABBIT; BLIND ALLEY; EVIDENCE; LITTLE LOST ROBOT; NO CONNECTION; THE RED QUEEN'S RACE; GREEN PATCHES; BREEDS THERE A MAN; THE MARTIAN WAY; SALLY; THE FUN THEY HAD; FRANCHISE; THE LAST QUESTION; PROFESSION; THE UGLY LITTLE BOY; UNTO THE FOURTH GENERATION; THIOTIMOLINE AND THE SPACE AGE; THE MACHINE THAT WON THE WAR; MY SON, THE PHYSICIST; T-FORMATION; AUTHOR! AUTHOR!; EYES DO MORE THAN SEE; THE KEY; THE BILLIARD BALL; EXILE TO HELL; FEMININE INTUITION; A PROBLEM WITH NUMBERS; BILL AND I; MIRROR IMAGE; LIGHT VERSE; THAT THOU ART MINDFUL OF HIM; EARTHSET AND EVENING STAR; THE BICENTENNIAL MAN; TRUE LOVE; FOUND; NOTHING FOR NOTHING; FOR THE BIRDS; IGNITION POINT; LEST WE REMEMBER; SAVING HUMANITY; NEITHER BRUTE NOR HUMAN; THE FOURTH HOMONYM; THE EYE OF THE BEHOLDER; THE QUIET PLACE and I LOVE LITTLE PUSSY.

THE MAN IN THE MAZE by Robert Silverberg. VGSF pb, dist in Aust by Houghton Mifflin, A\$10.95. On sale now.

This was first written in 1969, but has stood up to the test of time well.

THE MAN IN THE MAZE is one of Silverberg's new series novels - it is an adventure-type novel, but has deep psychological overtones for those who look a little deeper than the surface. The hero of the plot goes to visit the first aliens contacted and is changed by them - they give him a mental "stink" that forces other humans away and eventually makes him withdraw into an ancient alien city constructed in a maze. Some six years later his old boss is after him - another group of aliens, far superior to humans, are found and the government wants the old hero to again place himself at the alien's mercy. Naturally the man does not want to go... Excellent sf.

SHORT MENTIONS:

CLARKE COUNTRY, SPACE by Allen Steele. Legend pb, dist in Aust by Random Century. A\$12.95. On sale now. Clarke Country is an enormous satellite, in orbit around Earth. It is a colony of the USA and events are seemingly about to create a situation that will make it independent of that country. The novel is a space opera, with a sheriff about to take into custody an escaping mobster's woman and the FBI and the sheriff are intent to ensure that she is safe. The woman herself has her own views about all this. Adventure in space - teens will love it.

THE RENEGADES OF PERN by Anne McCaffrey. Cofgi pb, dist in Aust by Transworld Pubs. A\$10.95. On sale now. This novel plot is set in the same time period as *THE WHITE DRAGON* and tells of the groups of people that were brought together by Thella the Lady Holder of Telgar. It was the time of Threadfall and she was creating another Hold in the south. The people she had taken were thieves, murderers and other vermin, but she was determined to have her way with them. For Pern fans.

ORBITAL DECAY by Allan Steele. Legend pb, dist in Aust by Random Century. A\$14.95. On sale now. This novel by Allan Steel is also about a orbital station - in this case Olympus Station. It is smaller than Clarke Station, but non-the-less it has still a secret that must be rooted out and exposed. Good for several hours interesting reading.

KING'S TEST by Margaret Weis Bantam pb, dist in Aust by Transworld Pubs. A\$9.95. On sale now. When I first saw the cover of this volume, I thought it was one of the King's Quest books - there is a man who looks much like a Roman soldier with a brass coloured breastplate, holding a sword, with an iron-braced fair-maiden lying unconscious in front of him. The novel is actually about a galactic conspiracy and a doomsday weapon. Space opera.

DINGBIG OF KHIMMUR by Philip G. Williamson. Grafton h/c, dist in Aust by Collins/A&R. A\$32.95. On sale now. Labelled The Firstworld Chronicles, this is a fantasy series that is full of intrigue, murders, and skirmishes. It is set in a sort of medieval world on another planet (the cover painting is of a band of armoured men on horse, coming from a walled city). Good characterisation and easy to follow plot. For fantasy fans.

MAX LAKEMAN AND THE BEAUTIFUL STRANGER by Joh Cohen. Gollancz h/c, dist in Aust by Houghton Mifflin. A\$29.95. On sale now. A fantasy by a mainstream writer. A vision of a lovely woman who appears in his garden really changes Max Lakeman from a peaceful gardener to one who slowly loses his senses. Both love and time are shown to be of some import and somewhere therein the ghost of JFK comments that heaven hasn't been the same since Walt Disney was let in.

THOMAS THE RHYMER by Ellen Kushner. Gollancz h/c, dist in Aust by Houghton Mifflin. A\$32.95. On sale now. A fantasy of Faerie, a telling of the tale of the True Thomas legend from the First person. It is a very well constructed novel and the writing flows smoothly and is polished. Ellen Kushner is a writer to watch and this novel is a pleasure to read.

BLACK TRILLIUM by Marion Bradley, Julian May & Andre Norton. Grafton pb, dist in Aust by Collins/A&R. A\$10.95. A story of three princesses, each of who are given a gift by a wise magician. They are each given a pendant holding a piece of Black Trillium. This is a substance of power and later the three women - the blonde, redhead and midnight-tressed one, would find that their very lives depended on the pendants. This is a long book at 492 pages, and the three authors have woven their web well.

THE KING OF THE HILL by Paul McAuley. Gollancz h/c, dist in Aust by Houghton Mifflin. A\$29.95. On sale now. A collection of McAuley's short stories: *THE KING OF THE HILL*; *KARL AND THE OGRE*; *THE TEMPORARY KING*; *EXILES*; *LITTLE ILLYA AND SPIDER AND BOX*; *THE AIRS OF EARTH* and *THE HEIRS OF EARTH*. The sources range from *Interzone*, to *Amazing* and *F&SF*. The stories are mixed fantasy and sf and are well worth the reading.

BILL, THE GALACTIC HERO - ON THE PLANET OF ROBOT SLAVES by Harry Harrison. VGSF pb, dist in Aust by Houghton Mifflin. A\$11.95. On sale now. Another novel of poor old Bill, he of the two right arms and artificial foot. This time Bill is after another Chinger plot - one that is creating havoc for the human of his galaxy. As usual, Harry H has written a farce that fans will love reading and if you are one of his loyal fans then this latest tale of Bill will have you howling with laughter.

THE BONE FOREST by Robert Holdstock. Grafton pb, dist in Aust by Collins/A&R. A\$32.95. On sale now. This is a collection of eight novellas by Holdstock. They are *THE BONE FOREST*; *THORN*; *THE SHAPECHANGER*; *THE BOY WHO JUMPED THE RAPIDS*; *TIME OF THE TREE*; *MAGIC MAN*; *SCARROWFELL* and *THE TIME BEYOND AGE*. They were individually published between 1976 and 1991 and are from a variety of sources. *THE BONE FOREST* is a Mythago Wood story and throws new light on that series. The other stories also delve into English history and fantasy and are all of interest to those who found the mythago novels such unique fare.

PBS PREVIOUSLY REVIEWED:

SORCERER'S SON by Phyllis Eisenstein. Grafton pb, Dist in Aust by Collins/A&R. A\$10.95. One sale now. The prequel to *THE CRYSTAL PALACE*, reviewed above. Tells of the search by Cray for his long missing

father which takes him to the fortress of bronze and the evil wizard. Reviewed in TM 67.

RUBY KNIGHT by David Eddings. Grafton pb, dist in Aust by Collins/A&R. A\$10.95. On sale now. The hardcover edition of this was reviewed in TM 69, so this is excellent timing for the paperback release. The second vol. of the Ellenium, where fans of one of the best fantasy writers in the world will find that Eddings is still as good a writer as ever.

THE BARSOOM PROJECT by Larry Niven & Steven Barnes. Pan pb, dist in Aust by Pan Books. A\$11.99. On sale now. One of the better sf adventures set in the not-so-far future. Fans of D&D will love it. I found it good rip roaring adventure. Reviewed in TM 68. Niven and Barnes make a good team.

MOONHEART by Charles de Lint. Pan pb, dist in Aust by Pan Books. A\$12.99. On sale now. Another sequel, this time to GREENMANTLE, reviewed above. A good buy at \$12.99. For readers who want a relaxing but fulfilling read and who enjoy good fantasy. De Lint has also delved into the past for the beings and beasts that walk through the ancient wood in the heart of present day Canada. Reviewed in TM 69.

SHADOWFANE by Janny Wurts. Grafton pb, dist in Aust by Collins/A&R. A\$10.95. On sale now. This is the paperback of the hardcover reviewed in TM 70. It is the story of Jaric, who attempts to free the Stormwarder from his ice prison and try to stop the invasion of the army of demons that Lord Scait is throwing at the human lands.

THE ANIMAL WIFE by Elizabeth Thomas. Collins h/c, dist in Aust by Collins/A&R. A\$32.95. On sale now. Thomas's previous novel was REINDEER MOON, which was received well by the readers. Animal wife is set in Siberia 20,000 years ago. It is how a man falls in love with a woman who is from outside the tribe. Whether she is an animal which changed into a woman or is a woman who was separated from her wandering tribe is not really the question - the moral is humankind's ability to take strangers in and treat them as one would treat oneself.

AT WINTER'S END by Robert Silverberg. Legend pb, dist in Aust by Random Century. A\$12.95. On sale. I reviewed this latest of Silverberg's sf in THE MENTOR 66. As he did in LORD VALENTINE'S CASTLE, Silverberg has created another world that is well-fleshed out. The world could be a far planet with the inhabitants in underground cocoons, waiting for the climate outside to change so they can emerge. Eventually they do and they face a strange and, to them, alien landscape.

MORE CURRENT RELEASES:

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The Queen of Springtime by Robert Silverberg

Myth-ing Persons by Robert Asprin

HOUGHTON MIFFIN:

The Jonah Kit by Ian Watson

Queen of Angels by Greg Bear

Beyond the Fall of Night by Gregory Benford
HODDER & STOUGHTON:

Use of Weapons by Ian M. Banks

PAN:

Nightfall by Asimov and Silverberg

PENGUIN:

Dragonwall by Troy Denning

JULY RELEASES:

HODDER & STOUGHTON:

The Fall of Hyperon by Dan Simmons

PENGUIN:

The Gates of Thorbardin by Dan Parkinson

Great Sci-Fi stories V.33 ed Isaac Asimov

Man-Kzin Wars V.2 by Larry Niven

Gypsies by Robert Wilson

Secret Harmonies by Paul McAuley

HOUGHTON MIFFIN:

The Shadow of Heaven by Bob Shaw

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