

RATAPLAN FOUR

'The Magazine of the Arts'

This is the cover of, as it says up there, RATAPLAN. It doesn't look like a cover but it is, yes it is, it's true, yes it is. The reason for this literary cover - a picture in words as it were - is that I don't have a suitable visual picture to put on and because I decided that there wasn't going to be enough room on the inside index so that there was only one place left and here it is. There are other and far subtler reasons too. John Foyster said something at the Convention... Well, actually he had quite a deal of something to say but, and it is a big butt, the thing which has direct relationship to this wordy cover was his pronouncement that he had tried to produce his fanzines without either covers or indexes. From time to time this seems like a fun thing to do and now is the time. But enough of this clumsy attempt to excuse myself from lack of a cover, really I am too lazy to pester somebody until they did their artistic fannish duty. But really you people out there are lucky because just in these last few months I've been having ideas of me as a fan artist.

And now for a glimpse of the treasures which are about to feast your eyes and which abound on just the other side of this sheet of paper. However a kindly word of caution comes first. The rest of this issue (I mean all but this cover) was typed up and run off about two months ago. And if you think that's bad then let me tell you that some of it was transcribed from stencils which I cut last December, really. All the contents of this issue come from a forty-eight page issue which I had typed up as long as three months ago but which I madly decided was too big and so pruned to this standard size of 24 cram-packed pages.

Why I wanted to say that this issue is two months old even before I put it in the letter box is that I've had a chance to read through it and, boy, in places is it ever grim. It isn't a fanzine which is easy for the eyes to digest, it isn't fun light stuff, but on the other hand it isn't something which rewards much more than a half hearted study (which is the case with most fanzines anyhow). When I get started do I ever get started but my trouble is that I can only put down the facts, that is my style of writing and I have a hell of a time doing anything different; unfortunately the writing style I can't stand is when somebody just puts down the facts there like they are. Perhaps I am too close. When I come down to it, my editorial is the only thing which I really can't stand. So it goes.

RATAPLAN FOUR starts out to a lively start on page one with an INVITATION TO THE ISSUE; by me and also an index, which is where you are now. On the other side of this sheet, page two, you will find GEORGE; again by me - the title is a play on words because John Bangsund thinks that it is low (obscure) to call it a pun. Though GEORGE continues to page five, there is a Rotsler drawing on page three, this is the only Rotsler drawing I've ever had and so even though it doesn't match the text, I'm not going to waste it. On page six Diane writes TSENZIG, though this is not in the same vein as what she wrote in the two earlier issues. Bernie has a very short burst on page seven, DOUBLE BUBBLE is one of the more humorous things that happened to him when he was in the US last December. And then we have just about the highlight of the issue, our very own columnist all the way from Forny Gulch, John Bangsund. Now flick through quickly to page eight and there it is called INNUENDO AND OUT THE OTHER and it even has John Bangsund pictures as well. The Bruce Gillespie review of BELLE DE JOUR on page ten is a good thing, Bruce socks out a good film review you know, and he has a Dimitri drawing keeping him company. Now, if you turn over the page which is, sad to say, upside down, you will find a short story (back page baby.)

GEORGE

- Leigh

This is our special "five-months-late" issue!

The CONVENTION THING:

Feelings about the recent 9th Australian SF Convention are pretty mixed and while most fans agree that the people who were there made the whole thing worth attending, some things about the program and the actual running of the convention have come under fire from a few members of local fandom. Oddly enough, the fans who have been most vocal in their criticism of the convention seem to have been those who had a part in the running of it. This seems to me to be a very strange state of affairs and I have spent some little time in pondering on this.

The answer seems to be that the convention was indeed badly organised and those who were close to it were those most easily able to see all these failings. This convention was the third to be held on the same pattern and I cannot be surprised when the old thing is dressed up in new clothes with padding all over and given a facelift, just in time to have it collapse from being overloaded. The trouble is that we all enjoyed the 1966 convention so much that we tried to recapture the past, a fatal thing to do, and we tried it twice.

With little doubt, a fan will enjoy his first convention more than any other, simply because this is the first chance that he (or she) has had to really meet others who are like him (or her) and really talk about all the things that matter, to him (or her) at any rate. Though it may sound a bit corny as I write it, at a convention a person who is attending for the first time and is submerged in this completely happy (and maybe bewildering) atmosphere is able to meet real SCIENCE FICTION WRITERS; and swapping half a dozen words with Lee Harding can be a staggering experience if you've not done it before. Attending your first convention is something akin to the "Sense of Wonder" which is so strong that I doubt that it can be achieved in any other way. How many of you reading this do not remember your first convention with strong nostalgia and how many of you don't try to capture that same "Sense of Wonder" Nostalgia feeling at every convention you have attended since?

Melbourne (and later the rest of Australia) fandom was brought back to life by the 1966 convention and for a very large percentage of local fans, there is nothing before it. In 1968 there was the Melbourne SF Conference, which was an attempt to call back the atmosphere of two years earlier which we longed for so desperately. To some extent it was a success, and we felt happy despite that disquietening feeling hidden away in the background.

Things were all roses when it came to organising the 9th Australian SF Convention, and the committee started out with so much enthusiasm and energy that we (the members of the committee) thought that this convention was most certainly going to be the best one ever. But, it was too good to be true and soon all the enthusiasm had gone and the elaborate and exciting plans which we had formulated all fell by the wayside; the only one to come into existence at the convention was the Ditmar (SF Achievement) Awards. Even though the 9th Australian SF

Convention had been announced well before Easter, it was not until a mere five weeks before the con that any plans were really decided upon and it was only then that the program was finalized. With that ammount of planning, is there any real suprise possible at the way things turned out.

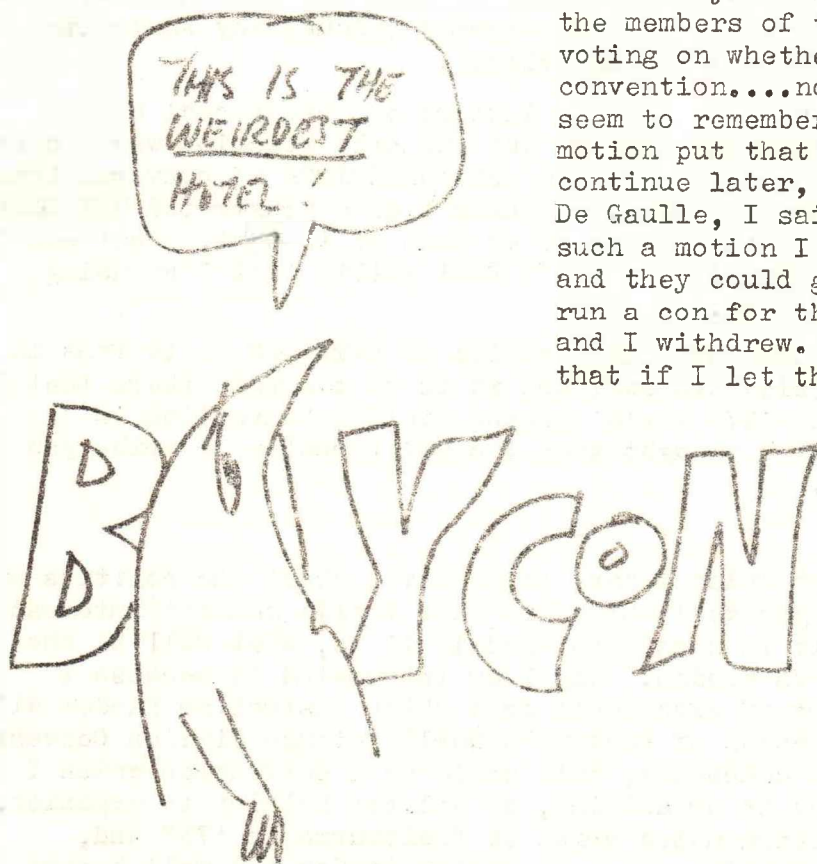
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Somebody played a foul trick on me! During the bussiness session of the convention they unexpectedly (well, they gave me about ten minutes notice) asked to get up and say things about how I was going to run the convention in '70. I had talked to several friends (sic) about how a convention should be run and I'd mentioned that I might perhaps even run the one in '70, but I had not thought for a minute that I would have to get up and make statments about the thing. So there I was standing in front of the assmebled fans and trying to collect, assmeble, organize and speak ideas as fast as they came into my mind. In all modesty I must admit that some of those ideas were not at all bad, but unfortunately at the time I probably conveyed to the fans an impression that any convention I ran would be a slap-up thing. Really I can't blame them for as I stood there, almost incoherent, I got much the same idea.

After I had spoken there were some funny kinds of motions passed in which the members of the convention ended up in voting on whether or not I should hold the convention....no, that can't be right. I seem to remember now that there was a motion put that the discussion would continue later, and , much like Charles De Gaulle, I said that if they passed such a motion I would withdraw my offer and they could get whoever they liked to run a con for them. They passed the motion and I withdrew. At the time I had the fear that if I let them tell me that I could run the convention they would soon be telling me how I could run it.

One of the things I said when I was speaking was that if I was allowed to run the Con, I retained the right to opt out of it at any time that I felt like. Later somebody pointed out to me that this may have upset a few people. Do you ever

get the feeling that you should not plan to do things in such-and-such a way in a years time because you really can't be sure of what your attitudes will be by then?



By the time this issue of RATAPLAN gets to you things may have changed, but as I understand things at the moment, Mervyn Binns is going to be in charge of the Melbourne in '70. He has printed a proposed program and I see in it a couple of my ideas (though you are quite welcome Merv) which we and a couple of others had talked over later. I'm not sure yet if I will get involved in this next convention because I am more than a bit afraid that we will see another repeat performance and because I will be interested to see how Mervyn and his associates make out. I wish them a lot of luck, for certain they will need it.

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Sometime in the middle of last year Manfred Kage contacted me to see if I was interested in being the Australian agent for the Heidelberg in '70 World Science Fiction Convention, and I, overcome with glee with the fact that a fan in Germany knew that I existed and that he thought enough of me to perform such a task for him, (later it occurred to me that perhaps I was the only fan here, not counting John Bangsund who is known by everyone, who he had heard of and so it was no wonder that he contacted me - sometimes my mind does these terrible things to me) wrote back, saying that certainly I would be most pleased to perform the task for him. Since then I have done very little (much to my shame) but this is due, to some extent, to the fact that not very many Australian fans seem to think about overseas fandom. I would just like to know how many Australian fans know of the existence of other fans in Germany (though any Australian fan who got RATAPLAN would not be in that class).

So what am I to do? I wrote letters on the special HEICON paper which the committee had sent me, but the only reaction was a sort of "big deal" thing. Sometimes I would mention HEICON in conversations but the reaction was much the same. So here I am a frustrated HEIDELBERG in '70 agent, with nobody to convert to my mode of thought. What can I do? I continue to feel frustrated and I feel guilty that I am doing nothing to further the cause.

About one hundred and fifty copies of RATAPLAN go to fans in the US and the United (sic) Kingdom, and it is to the fans there that I appeal, vote to hold the 1970 World Science Fiction Convention in Heidelberg, Germany. If I thought that I could threaten or bribe you into doing so, I would.

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One more point which I have to mention about the politics of convention running (if you don't mind) is that I will be most interested to see if the German bid is successful and if it is, what will be the actual attendance from US fandom. Why I am interested is because I regard this as some sort of experiment from which Australian fandom will be able to judge its chances of hosting a World Science Fiction Convention in '75. As far as I am concerned, this would be a convention which I would be very interested in organising, or at least helping to organise. Most of you will have heard muted cries of "Melbourne in '75" and, depending on how the GermanCon goes, an AustralianCon may well become a fact.

THE DAY I WAS ALMOST EMBARRASSED TO DEATH:

I was sure almost from the start that my foolish brainwave, the "Fan Panel" should have been abandoned. But the plans had been made and it was going to take place and that was that. I protested rather weakly and hoped that it would all be alright.

It wasn't. Somehow I felt a little helpless sitting up there behind the table-tennis table with all those faces looking on, waiting to be entertained and/or perhaps wanting to hear some interesting discussion about fans and fandom. The trouble was that I didn't know what they expected and on their part I am sure that they were just as confused as to what they were expected to expect.

John Foyster had been the Fan GoH for the convention (and had made a pretty good speech, though not in the least fannish, Lee Harding, the Pro GoH had done that) and somehow he had been convinced to sit on the panel, which was nice. Ron Clarke had been a flash of inspiration which I lived to regret. Both he and Gary Mason, who was also there, didn't seem to get the idea that we were there to entertain the people; perhaps if I had told them this they might have been a little more appreciative of my attitude.

On the other side of me, the right side, sat two notable members of Melbourne fandom. The first was Paul Stevens who has gained some sort of reputation by having promised us the imminent publication of the second issue of his fanzine for something like fifteen months, and the other was Bernie Bernhouse, well known fanhead with a wealth of experience in co-editing RATAPLAN. And Bernie was STONED, out of his mind, on grass.

Somebody had left a small travelling clock on the table and I said to myself that a nice round half hour would be ample time to conduct the panel; and we started. Only five minutes had passed and things were starting to get hard. The audience sat there and looked at us, waiting for something to happen while we, all (except Bernie) squirmed. There was nothing that I said which seemed to have any effect, not a thing, and I was starting to worry for I was supposed to be running this thing.

From somewhere came slight salvation in the forms of Lee Harding and David Boutland.

"Tell me Leigh," asked Lee, "What do you think of the proposition that fandom is only a substitute for sex?" BLUSH... By now Lee should have known that that is one of my favourite hang-ups.

A question was addressed to Bernie which was, sort of, "Why do you read SF?" After several moments of what seemed like deep consideration he answered. "Because I want to stop dropping acid and because I want to become an introvert." Later he told me that he really didn't really mean what he had said but that he had just said the first thing to come into his mind and he must have been more stoned than he had thought. I suppose that the answer could be considered as funny but the trouble with it was that after it I just couldn't think of a decent thing to say.

Later, Peter Darling (whom I like immensely) asked me if I really minded making a fool of myself in public like that. "No," I replied, "Not if it entertains people." But somehow I don't feel that we even did that though I have the feeling that I tried.

The reason that I did not make the last sentence emphatic is because I can't remember too much about the whole thing. There is a lot in books I have read about repressions.

BEG, BEG, PLEAD.

Once I used to distrust any fan who would write in his editorial that he needed contributions and art. I'm not really sure why I had this distrust, but there it is and here I am now, about to ask you out there if you would like to contribute something to RATAPLAN. We have on (cont. on P.7)

TSENZIG

Diane

Moving through the tumult of this city I am sometimes tempted to ask myself, if I am in a philosophical mood, just where and how the human race of this earth will all end.

I always seem to get into philosophical moods on my journeys to and from the bank each Friday. What causes this I do not know but perhaps someday somebody will be able to tell me. I find on these journey's that I am often at my destination without realizing that I have come such a distance. I am transfixed by the myriad of faces, dark, light, young, old, young, worn or contented, that stream through my line of vision.

There is, on one corner of the city, an old chinese man selling newspapers. He has about him a puppet like appearance with his jerking movements and his hunched back. But no puppet ever had such a world weary look about him.

Then also there is the "bard", a man who has not aged a day to look at in the fifteen years that I have seen him. A tall powerful looking man, strong of build and proud in stature, a magnificent flowing beard adorning an alert face. For all that time in which I have seen him he has worn the same suit and he seems to be writing his poetry and stories, for that is what I'm told he writes, in the same book, year after year. He will stand in a doorway writing, or in any bookshop avidly reading through a magnifying glass oblivious to the staring, passing crowds.

Up until a couple of years ago there was a little old lady, I've forgotten her name now, who used to sit on the steps of the Town Hall and sell her oranges, violets and matches. Everybody knew her, but, like me, ask any Melbournian now and I doubt if they will remember her name. They found her dead one morning in a Salvation Army Hostel and for a while a few mourned and felt guilty.

There was also the "Colonel". I called him that because he always reminded me of a retired British Army Colonel gone on safari. If one is to believe Hollywood movies, he was dressed as if he were on safari in the heart of Africa, right up to his white pith helmet. Strange how he was always to be heard shouting commands at one and all as he stood there on the steps of the railway station.

These are but a few, every face and every person has a story which he could tell. Every one person is a live, participating being. Most of them have children, brothers, sisters or relatives who will probably bring more human beings into this world. Human beings who will take up where we leave off.

And where will these future generations take the world? Where will the identities of this and every other city go to? Will mankind continue with stupid wars like the one in Vietnam? When will so-called civilized men go on fighting with each other just because one can't stand to have the other one believing in something different? Will man continue to fight his brother simply because his brother has dark skin or slanting eyes? Why is it like this and where will it all end, when

will mankind grow up? For until mankind does grow up a few of us will weep. Until I die or until I find an answer to any of my questions I shall weep. If mankind does grow up, we will all weep.

Double Bubble

Bernie

I was at the San Fransisco Airport, standing by the Information Counter -for all those perplexed poeple who cowered under the shadow of the great metal bird - seeking information. There were two others beside me and I recognised them as having been on the same flight as I, from LA. They both looked about sixteen, had denim jackets (it seems that to sing with soul you have to wear a denim jacket), sneakers and longish hair. They looked at me... like... well I wore the image of the true bohemian youth, WOW!

Then, the one with the Japanese camera came over, looked around suspiciously and asked, "Hey man, you doing a gig in 'Frisco?"

"Ah, er, (I paused for effect) no man, strictly tourism."

They looked dissapointed.

Then I noticed that they both wore the same T-shirts. I gestured - "The Rock and Roll, Double Bubble, Bubble Gum Trading Card Company of Philadelphia, 1914," they said in unison. *

I was impressed.....

Then one of them delved into the mysterious depths of his denim jeans and said, "Here!". I held out my hand and then I looked down. There before my eyes in the palm of my hand lay two neatly wrapped sticks of bubble gum.

I was deeply touched, and to show them that I was (and appreciated their generous gift) I proceeded to ask searching questions about them.

"Say, are you fellows in a group or something?"

Yes, they were, and yes again, they were doing a gig in 'Frisco, and yes, they had a record released and, yes once more, would you believe that the title of their record was "Bubble Gum Music"?

I commented on their originality, and left.

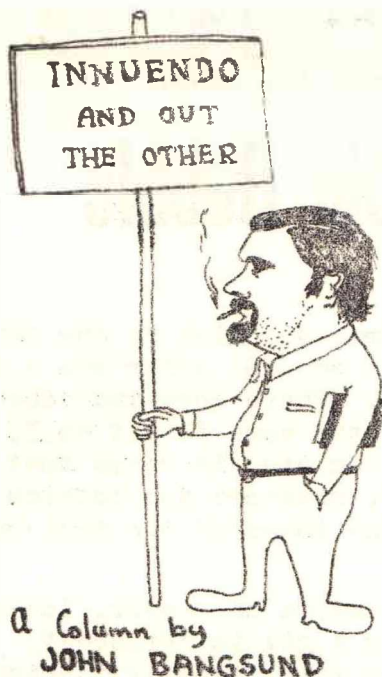
* Atleast that is what I seem to remember them saying.

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GEORGE continued from Page 5.

hand enough material for the next issue, articles by Bob Toomey Jr. and Chris Jay, but after that comes our Annish and in accordance with tradition we want to put out something big and we will need your help for that. I hope that by now you will have some idea of the kind of thing we would like but really we are not at all fussy, as long as the contribution is of a readable standard we will be happy. There is very little art in this issue because I have very little art on hand which I can use.

Letters of comment are always welcome and if they keep coming at this rate.....help!



I guess I wasn't really cut out for the academic life. From January to April this year I worked in the Students' Records section of the University of Melbourne, and, honestly, it wasn't much different from any other clerical job I've had. I don't recall reading that Socrates had his students filling out applications in quintuplicate, but I suppose that things have changed since then.

The Council of Adult Education quotes someone proudly in their handbook as saying that Socrates never handed out degrees or diplomas. Oddly enough, when I applied for a job at the CAE once, I was knocked back because I hadn't the correct qualifications. That's life, people.

But somehow, while at the University, I became inspired and started writing like never before. The ideas! I used to wonder where they came from, and I'm still not sure, but for a while there they kept coming, flowing in and out of the subconscious, day in day out, and unfortunately all the time I had for writing was in my tea breaks.

"Is it true, Mr Bangsund," my boss asked me one day, "that you have a part-time job during your tea-breaks?" I had to confess, but pointed out that it was just a spare-time freelance sort of thing really, nothing that would affect my filing, just writing novels and so on. And I mentioned that I hadn't noticed Sir Robert Menzies, the Chancellor of the University, being criticized at all for doing other things in his free time; and my boss said that, after all, Sir Robert is in a rather different position from yourself, Mr Bangsund, he doesn't have the heavy responsibility that you have, like remembering how the english alphabet goes, so his work for the University doesn't take as much out of him as it should you, and consequently he is entitled to use up his surplus energy doing other things.

Well, I couldn't afford to lose the job, so I had to work out some way of writing during my tea break that the boss wouldn't notice, and I found that by holding my cup of tea in my right hand, while talking to the bloke next to me about the football or the telly or those nasty students who seem to think they have nothing better to do than hold protest marches and so on, I could pretend to be fumbling with my left hand in the drawer for something, and what I was really doing with my left hand in that drawer was writing novels. Later in the day I would lock myself in the toilet and try to work out what I'd written.

This worked very well for a few weeks, but one day tragedy struck. The pencil I picked up in the drawer with my left hand was broken, but I didn't realize it, not being able to see it, and later in the day when I looked at my note pad there was nothing there but scratches. This really upset me, and I haven't attempted any fiction since.

Possibly my disappointment was reflected in my work, because in the third week of April, my boss called me into his office and

apologetically asked me if I would mind looking for another position. I felt like asking him if he had exhausted the Karma Sutra already, the book only having been available in Australia for six months or so, but I refrained. I was naturally interested to know why I was unsuited, in his opinion, for the filing job, and he confessed that he couldn't quite put his finger on it. His words.

So I looked around - the boss was very nice about it all and let me take time off for interviews - and, for once, fickle old Dame Fortuna smiled at me. On May Day I started work for the Union.

Well, not a Union exactly - it's a bit too classy for that description - but the Association of Professional Engineers, Australia. APEA for short. And they have taken me on as Industrial Records Officer and Assistant Editor. Their apeazine (forgive me) is called THE PROFESSIONAL ENGINEER; it appears ten times a year, and it's a very nice fanzine indeed, not only as Union journals go (most of them are ghastly) but also by comparison with quite respectable prozines in the industrial field.

As I write I've been working for APEA for eight days. Already I feel so much at home that I can't quite believe that two weeks ago I was filing cards. I have my own office, where a nice smiling lady brings me coffee twice a day, and everyone knocks before entering. Great. (And by eating sandwiches at my desk I can write articles for Leigh during lunchtime.)

So far I've visited the Arbitration Court three times, once to watch a colleague argue pay increases for a couple of engineering gentlemen in Darwin, and twice to watch bits of the Equal Pay Case (important, but the bits I saw were deadly boring: I missed Jeff Hawke, unfortunately - he's the Trades Hall man and a sort of intellectual fireball). I've called in at the Herald offices to meet some blokes who do work for the PE which I'll be taking over, if I'm any good, eventually. And this morning I've been out at the US Embassy in South Yarra to do some research. (I had intended to take a Molotov-fanzine to lob through their windows as I left, but I'm glad I didn't, because they're not bad people, what I saw of them.)

I've written articles on Victoria's new superannuation scheme and the Hay System of job evaluation, I've researched and will start writing after lunch a piece about Australians being the most highly-taxed people on Earth (which I don't believe, and I intend to say so), and I've done a brace of fillers about computers, American Unionism, welding in space, USFAA reports that America needs 800-odd more airports by 1974 and plans to construct off-shore airports, and - you name it. I've read every issue of the PE for the last three years, and I have a fair idea of what's required; though, frankly, I'm surprised how interesting I'm finding all this rather alien stuff. (continued on P. 14)



BELLE DE JOUR : REVIEWED

Bruce Gillespie

Luis Bunuel's BELLE DE JOUR reviewed (Stars: Catherine Deneuve
Jean Sorel
Michel Piccoli
Pierre Clementi)

The famous first sequence of Luis Bunuel's latest film quickly sorts out those who will walk out and those who will love the film. The credits flash by to the accompaniment of a horse-drawn coach approaching the camera down a country road surrounded by deliciously-photographed autumn greenery. The coach contains Catherine Deneuve and Jean Sorel, quickly established as man and wife. "Severine, why are you so cold toward towards me?" No, answer. The coach bells jingle on. "Stop the coach!" orders rejected husband to the coachmen. Wife is dragged from the coach, tied to a tree, whipped, and handed over to the coachmen to be raped.

Cut - to the same couple in their Paris apartment, preparing for the day's work. It was one of those dreams "with a coach in them" that She has been having lately.

The filming of this extraordinary sequence (the censor cannot delete the whole scene as it contains the credits, so he has left it intact) is swift, economical, and above all, beautiful. This is a film from which the essence of sordidness, as it would be defined by 99.9% of the population, has been extracted, refined, observed meticulously, and then converted into the essence of beauty. On the surface, what is there to object to? The camera rests on no violence (restraint is the main feature of the first scene, and we are not even shown the whip marks), nudity is only hinted at, and there are no Mephistophelian polemics on the Inadequacy of Bourgeois Morality.

How then, does one explain the contradictions of BELLE DE JOUR? The faultless skill of this film, reported to be the last of an aging man, guides every shot. Unlike the New Wavers, who have elevated idiosyncrasy into both a precise science and still the most promising artform of the last twenty years. Bunuel's work expresses strict control of every aspect of the film. He is reported to have left the colour work to comeraman Sacha Vierny, but the thoughts of these two seem to have run congruently. Bunul has assembled three of Europe's best known actors, and rounded out the quartet with the extraordinary swaggering newcomer, Pierre Clementi. Therefore, in a film in which everything is done to please the eye, there is the added emphasis on purposeful, interpretive acting that is usual in much of the modern cinema. Catherine Deneuve's trademark of reserved underacting, glaringly emphasized by the occasional amorous gestures, is chillingly effective. She is obviously the actress for which Hitchcock had been searching for years - the epitome of "Nordic" external control that hides an inner world operating at an intensity far beyond the capacity of supposedly more "passionate" actresses. In fact, Deneuve is only one of the many similarities between this picture and Hitchcock's best work. Sorel is seen to be more ineffectual than American "heroes" but no more emasculated than Rod Taylor in THE BIRDS or Tony Perkins in PSYCHO. Also, THE BIRDS and NORTH BY NORTHWEST stand among the few films as good-looking as BELLE DE JOUR.



However, it is with Bunuel's "villians" (Michel Piccoli, Peirre Clementi, and the actress who plays Mne. Anais) that he steps far beyond the American experience, for Bunuel takes for granted a premise that could never be entertained by an Englishman or American: that Mephistopheles, the madame, and the gangster do not inhabit a netherworld, but are really the arbiters of basic morality. Their edicts and attitudes alone are certain and solidly "good". Look at Severine for instance (an invitation one would not pass up): before entering the "maison" of Mne. Anais, she dreams of being tortured by her husband, the world and its normal morality only leer visions of guilt at her, and she approaches the place itself in a pique of masochism, wearing a black coat and dark glasses. However, Mne. Anais' establishment, though not of the haut-bourgeois style of Severine's own home, presents a bright world, quite domestic. We're all old friends; the customers are here only for fun. As Severine unbends, her private life is

transformed - she becomes reconciled to her husband's advances, she "works well" in the afternoons instead of running away, as during her first encounter with the candy-manufacturer (a magnificent cameo performance by Jean Gabin). She delights in her professional name, Belle de Jour (she only works by day). Her dreams change too, although it is within this fantasy context that the "real" stroy of the film takes place. Australians are conveniently spared the trouble of seperating the fantasy from reality, as the former has been subtitled in italics. Dubbed, the film would have been quite mysterious.

The film has the shape of a conventional morality-play - in reverse. It seems Belle de Jour is "saved" from frigidity and spiritual anaesthesia by her new environment. And yet even this statment places too rigid a cast on the immensely subtle and flexible movement of the film. The truth of the film, again if you can nail down a series of impressions under such an unresponsive label, is that the whole crew are not "strange" or grotesque or surreal. They are the people next door, and they are ourselves. Severine's psychological problems, and the unusual solution she seeks for them, are not so very far away from the problems of the "lonely housewife". Her husband is doomed because he is not even awake enough to the most petty jealousies. If he had been, he would have easily penetrated his wife's thin disguise. Underneath the breathtaking beauty of the film's surface, its real attraction is its solid, unswerving perception of universal reactions of ordinary people to the basic problems ox existence. Therefore any viewer with any honesty at all must sympathize with every character in the film for such a viewer will recognize only some parts of himself in each of them.

Thus the real grotesqueries of the film are generated in the fantasy sequences. A second viewing showed that much of their effective-ness results from their surprise value, and so I do not want to discuss them in detail here. Suffice to say that the progression in these sequences slips one's smugness out of gear even more effectively than does the rest of the film. In the first of these scenes, Severine's husband is a monster whom she loves and upon whom she is completely dependant (in

every sequence except the last she is rope-bound). However, she progressively becomes freed of her husband, and some of the later sequences hint at her subjugation to Men in general. The logic of these sequences, and the outcome of the rest of the film coincide only at the end, in one of the best film endings I have ever seen (THE BIRDS and "2001" excepted, of course). The effect here can only be called Hitchcockian. Like the best of The Master's moralities, it is quite open-ended. Like all of our other traditional notions, the doctrine of "learning by experience" when applied to Severine has some of the ghoulish overtones of a DR. STRANGELOVE. Severine emerges from neuroticism through Belle de Jour's eroticism to... what? Happiness and beauty remain for her at the end, but at what cost to everything else in her world? We retain our sanity in a world we choose to call mad, but at what cost to that world?

FOOTNOTE:

Overseas fans probably saw this film years ago, but at the time of writing Victorians could still see the film commercially at the Australia Cinema in Melbourne.

Acknowledgements to Colin Bennett's interesting snippets on Bunuel, and to Peter Carmody's pre-release review in ANNOTATIONS ON FILM, Term I, 1968.

THE BIG HOLE

Peter Kemp

When grandad and his mates were working on the Ballarat gold-fields they reckoned this digginr racket was hard yakka. So they caught some underground mutton (rabbits to the illiterate) and decided that since as how bunnies are natural born diggers they ought to earn their fare out from England since all rab had originally been pommy migrants too.

This scheme worked well, grandad and his offsidiers ensconced themselves comfortably at the head of their shaft and every couple of hours or so one of them would whistle up one of the bunnies. When he arrived they would investigate his paws for any sign of gold and if there was any they would raise themselves and go down to supervise the digging out of same. They weren't lazy though mind you, they did lug the gold back themselves, those diggers wouldn't trust rabbits with the gold. Why, they might take it into their heads to shoot through and buy themselves a comfortable warren somewhere.

Life went on pleasantly like this for grandad and his mates, but the rabbits though were getting a bit fed up.. One time one of the rabbits, sneaking up saw the diggers asleep belted back to tell the others that it was safe to knock off for a while. With the aid of some guicy grubs they persuaded a couple of cockatoos to alert them if the diggers woke. This is how all future nit-keeps came to be called cockatoos.

Meanwhile gold was turning up all over Australia. In Cape York though the diggers were having a spot of trouble with the original locals. It seemed that these boys thought long pig to be an even better dish than kangaroo and as yet they didn't have the benefits of Chinese Chicken Chow Mien. But the average Aussie digger, by the time he reached Cape York, was rangy, tough and didn't cook very well.

One day an abo lad was out tracking some poor creature when he thought he heard voices below his feet. The tribe called together its best yam-diggers (women naturally, men have better things to do) and they got stuck into it. Digging down for some respectable length of time they finally reached the big hole. They discovered that the noise was caused by a stream of Chinese belting south and the abo's had no trouble catching them because if you had walked all the way from China to Cape York you would be as tired out as the Chinese. The abo's found them delicious and stopped bothering with the Aussie diggers.

One enterprising abo came up with an idea. He didn't actually scalp them mind you, he just cut off their pigtails and sold them to the local bullockies and squatters for stockwhips.

It didn't take long for the food supply to oops. I mean, the Chinese had to realise that something odd was happening so they blocked the tunnel and said to themselves that Australia wasn't worth going to anyway. So the abo's, even though they couldn't stop the white invasion, did stop the yellow one. In 1942 or so the Yanks had to help instead. Since then our politicians have had something to threaten us with every time they have wanted to increase military spending. As if the Chinese wanted to come back now that all the gold is gone.

Actually though we can thank the Chinese for the development of the Australian inland because when they blocked the tunnel they also broke through to the ocean and flooded all the deserted mines across the Northern Territory and Queensland. Now when graziers are looking for water they just sink a few wells and they can strike water in what they now call the Australian Artesian Basin.

In true tradition, did my grandad and his mates get any credit for this contribution to Australian prosperity as well as indirectly stopping the second wave of Chinese gold diggers, not to mention watering the deserts? Naturally not. On the contrary they were unfairly (I think, as did they) blamed for starting the wave of Chinese migrants and so they decided Ballarat was worked out and so they headed for Kalgoorlie, Coolgardie and all the points as far west as possible.

+ + + + + + + +

INNUENDO AND OUT THE OTHER - continued from page 9

I wonder if it's the sf background that helps me leap into these unfamiliar areas and enjoy myself? Certainly the fanzine background is an immense help. There's an absence of humor from the PE, but, within limits, I am allowed to change that. A couple of my pieces have introduced an element of humor, and they have been approved. Currently under consideration is my aviation piece; the text is quite straightforward but I've headed it "There's a Boeing at the Bottom of my Garden."

The small Industrial Records Library here is a soda after the Railways Institute Library (with its 100,000 books and 25 branches), so it won't give me any headaches. Hidden away somewhere I haven't been yet there is a Multilith, also a Roneo, a Gestetner, a photo-copier and an Adressograph.

On the whole I think I'm going to like it here.

With the coast clear the rabbits promptly held a stop-work-meeting, these bunnies had been in Australia long enough to have their heads screwed on straight. They all agreed that they were doing far too much work for far too little pay and they argued about what they could do. They didn't want to strike incase grandad remembered that they weren't called underground mutton for nothing and that there wasn't much variety in the tucker around Ballarat and the diggings.

One of the older rabbits remembered the tales told by his great-great-grandad who had been one of the first rabbits to land in Australia. This ancestor was always talking about the old-counrty and he had reckoned that with enough incentive you could dig your way back. When they had asked him why he didn't have enough incentive he muttered something about a small disagreement with a farmer over the ownership rights to a carrot crop.

The rabbits decided that they had enough incentive and so they started digging towards their ancestral home (where the soil is soft and the carrots are big) where no gold diggers were going to exploit them. Unfortunately, being only dumb bunnies, their sense of direction was not too good and so they headed up through New South Wales, Queensland and the whole length of Cape York Penninsula and then kept on going in a straight line instead of veering to the left.

After going for what seemed like an eternity they decided to start digging their way up, presuming that by this time they were under "Old Dart." "Ahh So," greeted the rabbits as they dug their way out and they couldn't make any sense out of it. Who were these grinning, yellow slanty-eyed people staring at them.

Then one of the bunnies remembered that he had seen faces like these on the gold diggings, they were called Chinese. He spoke to them saying that he had come from Australia and he wanted to know which way it was to England. But his question was ignored as soon as the Chinese realised that the burrow led all the way to the "land of the great gold nugget." Beside the high cost of transport to the diggings, some of the colonies had already started the White Australia Policy even though Australia had not come into being (no racial troubles in Australia, keep 'em out and you can't have any).

Yells of Chinese joy rent the air and, grabbing their picks, mattocks and sluicing dishes, the yellow hoards from the north (our politicians famous "yellow peril") headed south. Being appreciative fellows they took the bunnies back as guides. Poor bunnies, for them it was out of the frying pan and into the fire. When the Chinese arrived at Ballarat they swiftly spread out across the countryside and started digging. After the first frantic dig a few realised that gold was not as easy to come by as they had hoped and so they looked around for a more profitable, less hard type of business.

Viewing the brilliant variety of food the diggers had, such as those Australian gourmet delights, damper, corned beef and billy tea, one smart Chinese cook thought perhaps a little change of diet might not go amis. But how to change it?

"Ahh So, the rabbit guides." A new dish appeared on the diggings. Using a little poetic licence our first Chinese restraunt owner opened his cafe with , as he called it, "Chicken Chow." Chow being pidgen English for tucker. Mien was atted to the title as a result of a discussion (!) between an Aussie digger and a German digger over the first plate sold. "Ya! Chicken Chow Mein!" emphasised the German.



Mervyn Barret
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ENGLAND

I guessed I missed something by not seeing the issue of ASFR that had all that stuff about 2001 in it - missed something I can do without. I've got a whole lot of clippings of reviews of the film that I cut out at the time it appeared here. I've been looking for someone to unload them on to. I may send them to you, not because they are likely to be of any use to you but because I've got to get rid of the darned things somehow. 2001 was often reviewed with a local film made at the time - and by local I mean financed, etc. with English bread - called HEROSTRATUS. This is all about a poet who sells his suicide to an advertising agency. I don't know if its been shown in Australia though.

I'm sure by now lots of people will have rushed in and clued up Bernie about Tom Paine. I saw a play about him put on by a New York company called The MAMMA TROUPE. The author left bits free for the cast to sit around and comment about Tom Paine. This was a disaster since none of them could think up anything in the way of a profound insight or even, for that matter, anything particularly interesting at all. I liked it though. My kind of theatre in a general sort of way. It was about a year ago I saw it - pre "Hair" - which means that the nude sequence shown in the November PLAYBOY has been blue-pencilled out (curses). Saw Jules Feifer's new play a couple of weeks back. It's called GOD BLESS and it is very good indeed. On his 110th birthday a grand old liberal of American politics is being interviewed in the parlour of his Washington home by the editor of the liberal Roman Catholic weekly when a revolution breaks out.

. To Dept. 85. There seems to be some sort of feud going on between you lot and some Sydney fans. Ho hum. You know I find that type face and the two column thing makes it hard to read the letters. I get the impression that Ron Graham isn't too mad about NEW Worlds. Thinks it contains pornography or something. Well if what I hear about the 'zine being banned is true then he must be right. I mean, Her Majesty's Customs wouldn't ban something unless it was pretty dirty now, would they? (I see they've banned the collection of Barry McKenzie strips from PRIVATE EYE). Hey, I just noticed Leigh, you agree that NEW WORLDS publishes pornography. Maybe I'm getting old or jaded or something. A thing which stood out for me in BUG JACK BARRON, which is what started the hassle, was how unerotic the descriptions of all that sex action was. My own simple minded view of something like this is that is its untitilating and unstimulating and non-arousing, then it ain't pornography. And if a description doesn't get one a bit involved then its failed writing. And this is at the core of my gripe with NEW WORLDS (so far) I've found that, by and large, the stories they've published have been tedious and/or pretentious. The best stories have been those that have been written in the more conventional form. Tom Disch's CAMP CONCENTRATION for instance. What I do dig though is the idea of NEW WORLDS even if the realisation has so far fallen pretty short of that. I'm quite surprised with Fred Patten for saying, "I wish someone with my tastes had Moorcocks

opportunity with format and slick paper reproduction." It reads as if the thing existed in that form and Mike just walked in and took over. And this just ain't so. It's the opposite in fact. It's in this shape because Mike hustled like mad and because of his own personal talent and dedication and energy. He supports NEW WORLDS - it doesn't keep him.

A lot of people liked John Baxter's article which is as it should be but some of them seem to have the idea that John has seen all those movies he wrote about and referred to. Mind you, he never said he had but if he has then things sure as hell are looking up in Australia or maybe he has his own library of rare prints. I mean, to have seen, for instance, a 1915 (not 1913 as you had, but that was probably a misprint) DIE GOLEM would be really something. I've had to rub along with only having seen the 1920 version that Wegner made. (Curiously, the story used for the 1920 film is set before the story in the 1915 film and is concerned with the Rabbi Low's creation of the monster.)

\$\$\$ L.E. Pornography has, as far as I can see, the unfortunate drawback of usually being used in regard to sexual degradation and filth, if you see what I mean. Even though this is not the real meaning you just can't escape that feeling when somebody says the word.

If you take the word in its larger sense, the one which does not imply filth in the normal sense, then NEW WORLDS certainly does print pornography, though some would rather call it erotica and seemingly you Mervyn would rather refer to it as badly written sex.

B.B. The only way to cancel out a feud is to ignore it. The more people publicizing it, discussing it, etc, the more hypersensitive each party will become towards the others and the interactions that occur between them, and as I realise now that I'm publicizing it and discussing it, etc, ho hum. \$\$\$

Bruce Gillespie
PO Box 30
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Victoria 3340

Psychoanalysts Digest (alias RATAPLAN 3) arrived on the 27th of December - what a hell of a way to spend Christmas. The Bangsund household is put under the microscope, through the wringer, up the spout - and comes out a dirty shade of off-white. Edmonds' immorality exposed, or the idiocy of Melbourne Typing Pools, I'm not sure which. Bernhouse's confused, but uncomfortably correct sketch of life as it is Degenerated in Ripponlea. Diane on an earlier and happier stage of Bangsund existence (the hanky box is coming out for the next issue). I'm waiting for the second and third episodes of all this stuff - Back at Ferny Gully, banners waving, mountain air refreshing growing boys, wilting wives and layabouts all. So much for the sinful life at St. Kilda and Ripponlea. Back amongst the Foyster and Harding vegetation, the old enterprise should explode once more.

RATAPLAN 3, apart from having minimal interest for anyone but devotees of the Bangsund Saga (but who doesn't fall into that category, especially irate ASFR subscribers), gives the main impression of being crowded. Gillespie back to back with Symons - I'm the one who stands complimented. A pity Don didn't have the divining rod out on Boxing Day - it would have pointed straight upwards, and he would have been the first man to fly without mechanical means. At least Don treats the subject with the levity it deserves. It's surely only Campbell who

would devote
a ten page
editorial to
the subject.

Again,
the letter-
col is the
best feature
of the
magazine.

No
wonder Jack
Wodams sells
only to

Cambbell: "Beautiful elegance" is not simply an expansion of a sentence like "He was a bum" or any other sentence quoted. Beautiful rolling prose is still beautiful, and it does roll off the tongue of the mind. "It was his third day in the desert without water. He knew he was finished!" arouses about as much stimulation in the intellectual pleasure-centres (or whatever else you use to appreciate prose as...as... a Campbell editorial. Certainly the words convey a message of sorts. The words themselves have little resonance and the picture conveyed (ie of the desert) does not come from the author, but from our own stock images of deserts. A really good writer not only "uses" language to do something else, but recreates it into quite new configurations at the same time.

I'm not sure that Bangsund achieves that level of achievement, but at least the device of using Victorian syntax and vocabulary as a foil for quite a few universal jokes, makes us appreciate and think about the language itself. The Campbell formula uses only a few of the possible languages - information dispensing, crude story-telling. (To be fair to Jack, his stories always rise above the basic patterns, but often not very high above). To make it worse, the utility of the language used in ANALOG stories is not the slickness of 1970's journalese, but the watered down remains of 1950's sf stories. Besides, if Jack wants to reduce language to the bare bones, then he makes it far less effective and sophisticated than even the crudest of the mass media. Even the worst of today's B-Grade movies have achieved, against the competition of television, an ornateness and width of reference that completely transcends anything Campbell has published in years.

And as far as your remarks on "2001", Jack, no I won't start again - I might even become sick of the film, and I would not want that ever to happen.

George Turner
14 Tennyson Street
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Victoria 3182

Dear Cerberus,

Caeser sends a growl of doggy devotion to Aspect Diane, but doesn't feel up to writing anything until he gets over his Christmas bone hangover. He poked his head out of the kennel long enough to say the other two heads also merit a cheery sniff and a friendly lick but that he might make a toothsome hors d'oeuvre of Jack Wodams because he thinks 'bum' and 'hobo' are interchangeable terms,

he talks about deserts as if he's actually seen one and obviously he hasn't, he has never read Dickens or Thackeray, or he has read them both without understanding a word of either, he would like to reduce the Banger style to dreary conformity, he doesn't know that every piece of fiction written (including his own, whether he likes it or not) is a mass of symbols, mostly common ones which we take in our stride and he would prefer making money to doing good work.

Well, that last bit's a matter of personal preference, of course, but the uncomfortable fact of literary life is that in general the good workmen who don't despise all they don't understand make more money than those blokes who do. Dickens and Thackeray are still with us and selling very well, year after year, with their first centuries behind them. Why, I wonder? It can't be because they're unreadable.

The piece of printed paper enclosed is Caesar's substitute for a personal note.

\$\$\$ D.B. As usual Geroge, your letter of comment was most interesting and appreciated. Oh, and Cerberus sincerly thanks Caesar for his generosity and in return, Aspect Diane just might serve Jack Wodams up to him on a silver platter. \$\$\$

John Bangsund
PO Box 109
Ferntree Gully
Victoria 3156

Here is my typically long drawn out and excessively wordy reply to Jack Wodams, who has criticized my prediliction for long drawn out and excessively wordy literature.

+ + + + +

As the manager of the Performance sits before the curtain on the boards, and looks into the Fair, a feeling of profound melancholy comes over him in his survey of the bustling place. There is a great quantity of eating and drinking, making love and jilting, laughing and the contrary, smoking, cheating, fighting, dancing, and fiddling; there are bullies pushing around, bucks ogling women, knaves picking pockets, policemen on the lookout, quacks (other quacks, plague take them) bawling in front of their booths, and.... SLASH! SLASH!

"Deuce take you, villian!" cried the whiskery Victorian gentleman, "What the devil are you doing?"

The blue-caped figure of SuperWod, masked destroyer of excess verbiage, paused in his blue-pencilling and regarded Thackeray with a cold glance. "You," he said, pointing the pencil at him, "are trying to say that the world is like a fair, right?"

"That is my intention," agreed Thackeray.

"Well, why go on with all this stuff about quacks and bullies and making love? Just say 'The world is like a fair' and you've saved half a page!"

Thackeray escaped from the room. SuperWod continued his work until all that remained of VANITY FAIR was a sixteen-page phamplet, then he leapt to the window and soared off into space. His next assignment - that age of swaggering verbosity - the reign of Elizabeth.

+ + + + + + +
The actor stood alone on the stage, in the dim light. He looked up and addressed an imaginary other self somewhere above the heads of the audience.

"The question is whether to live or not," he said.

The narrator poked his head through a curtain, crying "And now... back to Polonius!"

The audience hissed. They had seen six minutes of Master Shaksper's new play, and it looked like only lasting another four.

SuperWod, square-jawed saver of printer's ink, could not stay to see what happened to Shaksper. Through time and space he blasted, to holy Russia.

+ + + + + + +
"From now on," said Tolstoy to his publisher, "I intend to write short stroies. I dreamt I had a visitation from Above, in the form of a blue-clad bushwhacker, and he convinced me I should never again write long-winded stories like WAR AND PEACE."

"But, Lev...." began the publisher.

"No, Boris, do not stop me. I have some great story ideas, and here is my first. I have called it ANNA KARENINA."

"How can I make three volumes out of this?" wailed the publisher, but Lev Tolstoy had left the room and was attempting to convert a drozhky-driver to Christianity out in the street, without using adjectives.

+ + + + + + +
"I agree," said the elderly gentleman with flowing beard, "It is indeed a very large book."

SuperWod respectfully pointed out how easy it would be, for a start, to cut out all the long genealogical passages.

"I agree already, " said the old gentleman, "but at five cents a word, vot I want to do that for?"

SuperWod argued on, but a small gleam of doubt had appeared in his eyes.

The blue devil, SuperWod, agreed to this compromise and leapt again into space.

Below him, on Sinai, the old gentleman muttered "Ah well, business is business" and went on dictating the Old Testament.

Jack Wodhams
PO Box 48
Caboolture
Queensland 4510

Rat 3 was not all that bad. Further installments on the SAGA OF FERNTREE GULLY are awaited. If B.B. was Brigitte and not Bernie, to support D.B., it could almost be turned into a TV series - PEYTON GULLY, or FOREVER FERNTREE.

Like Bruce Gillespie's WAR GAME review - must catch this flick if it comes around again. And good old Symo in support of Dowsing - he is a solid, upright citizen of un-doubted sobriety and

and probity, a man of noble character and indisputable honesty totally incapable of prevarication. His word should be good enough for anybody.

Liked George Foster's droll troll illos, and Gary Woodman's en passant reference to me as being a 'Big Name'. Ho-hum, Gary was cockeyed about the rest, too, the meathead. Nobody can explain psi, yet - it, at the moment, remains a speculative subject with enough curious examples to its credit to warrant more serious investigation, the more rigidly controlled under scientific conditions, the better.

In reply to Diane's question, it is not at all wrong to seek after the slower pleasures of yesteryear - but, when dealing with the outside world lately, it should be well realised that the pedestrian is kaput - and it just doesn't sell baby. It means leading something of a double life, which, in fact, many writers do, sic, relate the bloodthirsty creations of that nice little old lady, Agatha Christie.

Writing for pleasure is one thing, writing for a living is entirely another. Music has changed and developed radically in this last century and, oh sure, Beethoven still has Linus and his fans, but it is jazz and folk-rock which is reaching the most people. Art, also, has grown, and now embraces a wider range of experience than ever before, with Picasso becoming evident in the pattern on curtain materials, (something Renoir never accomplished) and with other painters and sculptors bringing their work right into our lives by influencing design from arm chairs to architecture. Artists may learn something from Rembrandt or Gauguin - but they don't try to paint like them any more.

The poor writer though, still has Shakespear and Dickens for his criteria. With a few forgotten exceptions, the writer plods the same weary track, burdened rather than inspired by, the old masters. What the scene needs is the literary counterpart to the Beatles. And what better field for such to emerge than in SF? Do not tell me that you have no wish to see vitality and vigour in print, something that sets your mental toes tapping with freshness and life. Perhaps it is an achievement impossible to the limited power of words, but it is something to aim for beyond the prosaic.

Don't mind me. Keep up the good work.

\$\$\$ D.B. I'll agree with you on one point, you are right in saying that music has changed in the last century. Have you ever stopped to ask yourself why? Well, it is obvious to even the blindest of the human race that the pace of living in this century is at its peak in the history of the human race. Few of us therefore have had the time to digest and savor the subtleties and beauty of Beethoven and the other masters. Whilst on the point of masters, I am doubtful that Renoir would relish the dubious honor of being reproduced on curtain material.

As for present day artists not painting like Rembrandt or Gauguin, well, once again the days of serenity that allowed man the time for complete concentration and devotion of body and mind to his purpose, have gone, so therefore present day artists cannot be expected to produce such masterpieces as their fathers.

Don't get me wrong please, I have nothing against this century that we live in, but there is a hell of a lot to be said for the experience given to us from the people of past centuries. By the way Jack, you say, "What is needed on the scene is the literary

counterpart to the Beatles." Okay, what about Samuel R. Delany, Tom Disch, Brian Aldiss and Roger Zelazny, just to name a few SF authors. And whilst on the subject mate, for powerful, fast and gripping writing, try reading John Fowles triumph, "The Magus".

L.E. So you want to compare music with writing, which is okay by me because I like doing it too.

You seem to have the impression that there is some kind of link between the Beatles and Beethoven and yet there is none, in tradition that is. If you want to find the group of musicians who are the descendants of the great classical, romantic and baroque composers, have a hunt around and you might find some people doing odd and pointless things with tempo, rhythm and discords. This is where contemporary classical (if I might use that term) is at, and its nowhere. If you want to know where the Beatles come from follow the chain back through rock and roll, blues, and african tribal stuff. What the Beatles and Beethoven have in common is that they both start with B and that they are both the greatest in their respective fields of music.

Looking at the latest NEW WORLDS I get the feeling that literature is headed in the same direction, obscurity beyond reason. If you want to know where the future of the printed word is, then take a look at a MARVEL Group comic. I don't think that there is any link between comics and literature but comics are the coming thing

If you are interested, I class ANALOG with musical comedy, light classical and jazz; they all make me feel sick. \$\$\$

John Berry
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NORTHERN IRELAND

Thank you for the last two issues of RATAPLAN, which I read and enjoyed, except that, if I remember correctly, the previous issue featured a few cuss words of the more obscene type.. I make this point with some degree of annoyance, because my young daughter, now aged fourteen, was writing a thesis for school on fanzines, and she did her research browsing through my immense collection. I had previously craftily withdrawn a copy of MANA, from the early sixties, which also featured this four letter word. However RATAPLAN had arrived in the morning, before she went to school, and she had scanned it for fresh ideas for her thesis, when I heard a strangled sod of girlish shock. I thought for a moment she'd suddenly spotted my Y-fronts dangling in front of the fire, but then I recalled it couldn't be that because the previous morning I had castigated her for her utter laziness in not bringing them upstairs for me to get dressed. It so happened that my wife, whilst bringing my breakfast up to me, saw her blushing profusely, and picking up RATAPLAN, she saw this crude invective: By the time she had read the entire issue (the first fanzine she's ever read thoroughly) looking for kicks, my breakfast was cold.

At least, I think it was the previous RATAPLAN...

It's nice to see a fanzine from Australia...Australian fanzines are always so different...so outspoken and fresh...trying very hard to inject a new atmosphere into fandom...and invariably succeeding.

I begin to think I'm ready for a pension and bathchair, apropos your review of AMPHIPOX... "coming as I do well after his time of most

furious fanac." My period of "most furious fanac" covered a period of over ten years, and only finished in 1963 or thereabouts, so you couldn't be that young, could you...or, I couldn't be that old, could I...? Anyway, I've had a new lease of life, and am currently appearing regularly in CRY and WRR, both Seattlezines, as you know...

There is something utterly poignant about a married couple named John and Diane... actually, that also happens to be the names of my wife and myself... your children now.... if you call the boy Colin and the girl Kathleen, and sort of change your name by deed poll to Berry, weeeell, that would take some sorting out.... Of course, if you're willing, Diane, to have two children to support my theory, the least I can do is to change my family's surname to Bangsund.

Dear RATAPLANs, please keep up this high standard of fresh material and keep, as they say all the time now... keep socking the issues to me.

Gary Grady
222 Forest Hills Drive
Wilmington
NC 28401
US of A

RATAPLAN 3 was most interesting, especially Diane's little essay on slanshacking. I'd like to try something like that. Got room? No? Oh well...

It never ceases to amaze me how interested you Aussies are in immigration. I have a magazine here which, in its HELP WANTED section in the classified ads. begs; "BOOMING AUSTRALIA wants you! Government assisted passage. Unlimited opportunity! Latest government information and forms \$1. Austco., Box 3623-P, Long Beach, California." Another one says, "AUSTRALIA Wants you! Good jobs. Adventure. Forms and Australian Handbook (1969) describing Australian assisted passage, passport-visa, advantages, opportunities \$1. Buckey, Box 1032KG Fariborn, Ohio."

Note that these two companies are both in the US. Hmmm... Could this be a Census bureau plot?

Since dowsing is trained at US military bases, I had never really doubted the likelihood of its existence. But I had always assumed that the stick acted as some sort of indicator; it being the person that actually did the dowsing, since clothes hangers and virtually anything else can be used. But Symons' remarks that the stick twists in his hands prevents so simple an explanation from being acceptable. Why doesn't someone do a rational on the phenomenon?

In reply to Jack Wodhams and others, "The Beheading of Basil Pott" struck me as very well written. The style was highly suited to that type of story. I enjoyed it immensely, and nintey percent because of that style.

\$\$\$ L.E. Those ads were probably quite genuine. Perhaps you don't know Gary, but the US owns about 50% of Australia, the UK owns about 25% and the rest is split up between countries like Japan, Germany and France. What are we natives to do I ask you? \$\$\$

Robert Willingham
21934 Millpoint Avenue
Torrance
California 90502
US of A

A fanzine from Australia. This is going to be interesting, I thought as I ripped the staples from their positions so that I could open up this novelty. I began reading the "George" editorial, soon finding myself immersed in something far beyond the comprehension of a mortal non-aussie (is that right? saw it in a story once) fan. I thought, oh heck, an in fanzine where I'm not in. How am I supposed to loc this thing if I can't understand it? And then it struck me; what the hell is postage to Australia?

I read on.

The fanzine reviews in "Cheap Chippy Chopper" said something bad about every (all four) fanzine reviewed. Couldn't you find anything good to review, something about which you didn't have something uncomplimentary to say? I wondered. Also, couldn't you review something I had heard about? I recognized one out of the four.

With trepidation, I turned to "Rex" and Bernie. Ah, now here is something I can understand! "2001". Humor. "...nymphomaniac" and "Fuck..." Acid and that plant containing tetrahydrocarbons, or some damn obscure drug. Queers. And; horse shit. Gee, so they are human down there.

What is "Tsenzig"? I scratched my head until I remembered the old stand-by of all cryptographers, the art of spelling a baffling word backwards. Giznest? Hey - Quickly flinging that thought from my head, I read another How I Got Into Fandom Story. And repeated to myself, gee, well, what do you know, there are indeed homo saps elsewhere, outside the boundaries of the country which calls itself, in order to excuse certain atrocities, ~~the~~ policeman of the world, that is, there are people outside the U.S.A.!

The bit by John Bangsund entertained. The letters of comment were generally praise-praise-praise or in-in-in, with not much controversy in between. I inquired of my schizophrenic self, what am I supposed to loc on? No controversy, hardly anything I can understand, and...

Why not?

\$\$\$ L.E. You, Robert, are a dirty rotten cynic. You probably make a living from it. \$\$\$

+ + + + +

WE ALSO HEARD FROM: so many people it's no longer true.

Andy PORTER, Chester MALON Jr., Ron CLARKE, Mary REED, Paul NOVITSKI, Michael FERON, Brian RICHARDS, Harry WARNER Jr., Peter SINGLETON, Jerry LAPIDUS, Peter DARLING, Stan NICHOLLS, Harry WARNER Jr. (again), Gary WOODMAN, Roy TACKETT, John FOYSTER, Peter SINGLETON (again), Peter GILL, Michael O'BRIEN, Paul STEVENS, Gary MASON, Robert GERSMAN, Gene KLEIN, Joanne BURGER, and several others. Thank you all very much, some of these might be appearing in the next issue of RATAPLAN if there is room. Thanks also to all the people who have traded. Ta also to the person who sent a two dollar subscription but has hand writing which I just can't translate. Whoever you are out there, if you don't see this, I'm sorry.

RATAPLAN FOUR
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PRINTED MATTER ONLY

by Peter Kemp, THE BIG HOLE. Then we come to the letter column, the part which I always enjoy the most (in any fanzine). The all-star cast is headed by none other than Mervyn Barret, still living all those miles away in London and probably enjoying every moment. Bruce Gillespie who comes next is also in exile in the Victorian country town of Ararat but I have it from his very own mouth that he is not enjoying it one bit. Next comes George Turner with a cheery christmas letter (which shows you how long ago we got so many of these letters. The star of the issue, quite unintentionally I assure you, John Bangsund comes next with a sort of non-letter, much fun even so. There are other letters from Jack Wodhams, John Berry (without the D.), Gary Grady and Robert Willingham. The issue is finished off nicely with our big-name-fan We Also Hear From list, twenty-four names in all and I just can't help but boast about that.

That's all there is.

The next issue of RATAPLAN will be out just as soon as I can manage it, which could be quite soon because I feel the fannish energy seeping back into my poor old semi-gafrated bones. No promises all the same.

Look out Bruce Gillespie, here we come to challenge your throne.

RATAPLAN FOUR KAPUT.