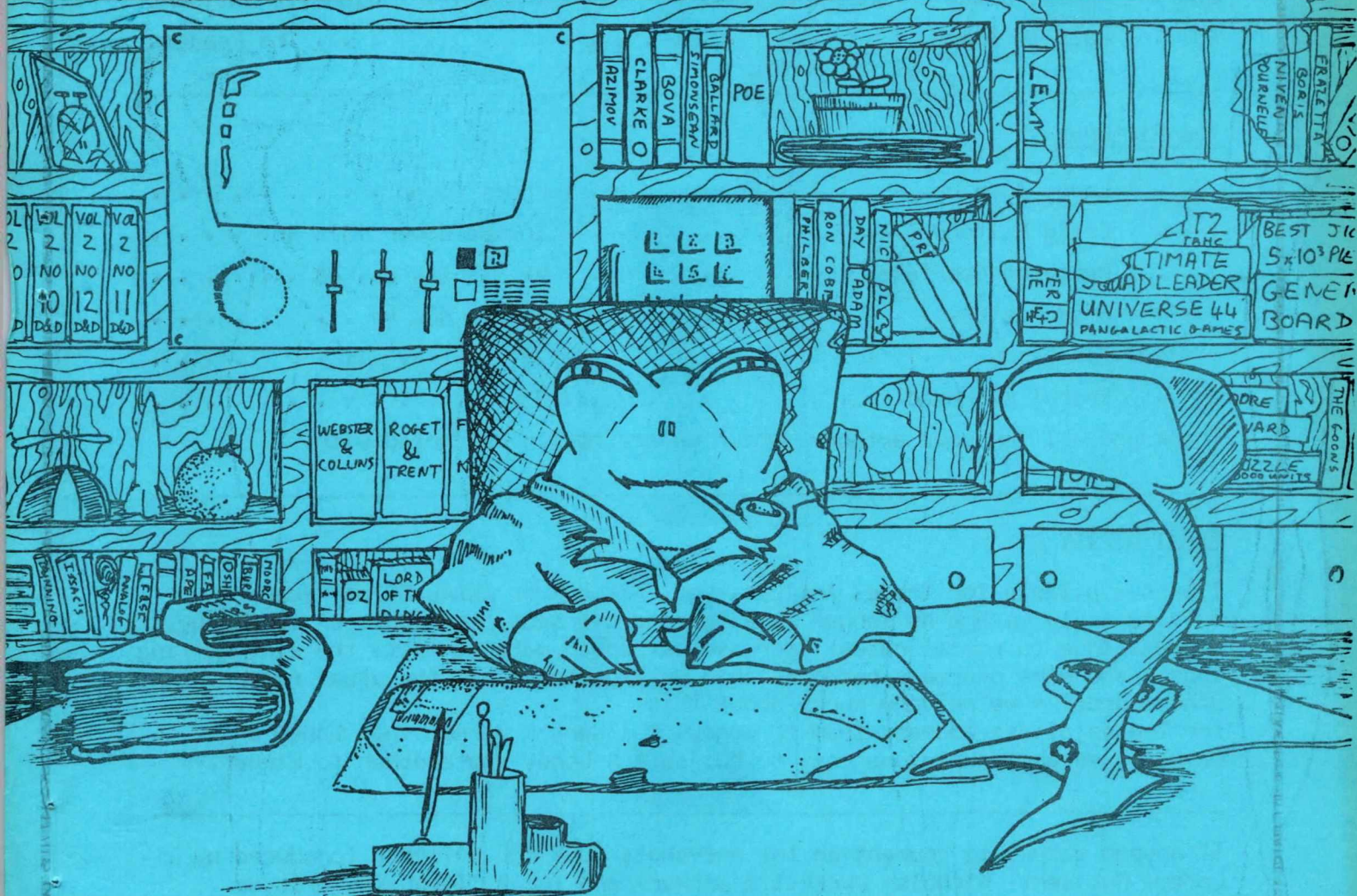


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TSW GOES SERCON : Can Silliness Survive?

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TSW Goes SERCON!





genre: science fiction

The field of science fiction criticism is littered with attempts at defining the genre. Even a casual examination of the academic literature(1) will discover a score of definitions of science fiction that are characterised by the heated and critical responses they engender. Before attempting to again examine the notion of science fiction as genre, it is worthwhile to review a sample of previous efforts. Dowling(2) identifies two categories into which definitions of science fiction fall. They are the exclusive and the inclusive. He sees exclusive definitions as being "technical and narrow"(3), while the writers of inclusive definitions have remembered "that fantasy and mankind's expression of it has always been with us"(4). More simply put, Dowling sees a conflict between those who seek to separate science fiction out as a genre in its own right and those who see a relationship between science fiction and fantasy. Dowling offers his own inclusive definition of science fiction as:

A reflection and an application of the imagination response working with reason that is fundamental to our humanity; a manifestation of the fantasy faculty existing in a pro-rational form. (5)

Amis(6), in a work that broke new critical ground as far as academic discussion of science fiction was concerned, defined the genre in what Dowling sees as exclusivist terms.

Science fiction is that class of prose narrative treating of a situation that could not arise in the world we know, but which is hypothesised on the basis of some innovation in science or technology, or pseudo-science or pseudo-technology, whether human or extra-terrestrial in origin. (7)

Dowling also criticises Amis for restricting science fiction to prose narrative but is himself open to the criticism that his definition makes no reference to narrative literature in any form. A weakness of these definitions and others is that they are based on implicit assumptions about the nature of narrative and genre that should be explicit. In the words of Aldiss:

What is science fiction? Many definitions have been hammered out. Most of them fail because they have regard to content only, and not to form. (8)

He then goes on to define science fiction as:

The search for a definition of man and his status in the universe which will stand in our advanced but confused state of knowledge (science), and is characteristically cast in the Gothic or post-Gothic mould. (9)

But even Aldiss offers no definition of genre. Possibly this is a sensible attitude to take; the field of genre studies being littered with attempts at definition of genre in much the same fashion as the field of science fiction criticism is littered with attempts at defining science fiction. But any definition of science fiction as a genre of narrative literature must be based on some conception of genre. A definition of genre will supply the parameters within which the defining characteristics of science fiction can be identified. Genre can be seen as a method of grouping individual texts of narrative literature within a continuum that encompasses all narrative literature(10), where the defining characteristics are the icons, types of discourse and types of narrative and philosophical attitude to reality that typify individual genres. Within these parameters it can be seen that an important characteristic of science fiction is the type of discourse, realism, that it typically utilises.

Aristotle's 'On the Art of Poetry'(11) was the work that began the field of genre studies. Aristotle saw that narrative literature imitated reality and that those imitations could be grouped in genres that were defined by the media of imitation, the object of imitation and the manner of imitation. Media of imitation referred to the different ways, painting, sculpture, music, language and literature, that artists could represent the objects of imitation. The objects of imitation could run from good to bad men and the manner in which they were interpreted resulted from different narrative points of view. If Aristotle were alive today, he would distinguish between prose, poetry, film and drama as different genres. But the sole reliance on the medium of a text as a defining characteristic of the genre it belongs to is unworkable in our society. Two millenia after Aristotle we have far more imitations to deal with than the tragedy, the comedy, the epic and the history. People can read science fiction books, watch science fiction movies, own science fiction paintings and sculpture and listen to science fiction music. Genre in the modern world must be able to group texts together that come from a wide range of mediums of representation. Scholes and Kellogg(12) have examined the nature of narrative and their results give a basis from which a modern definition of genre can be built. They see narrative undergoing an evolutionary process as the oral narrative of the epic gives way to the written narrative that today is dominated by the novel.

In the course of this evolutionary process narrative literature tends to develop in two antithetical directions. The two antithetical types of narrative which emerge from the epic synthesis may be labelled the empirical and fictional. Empirical narrative replaces allegiance to the mythos with allegiance to reality. The fictional branch of narrative replaces allegiance to the mythos with allegiance to the ideal. (13)

Scholes & Kellogg see both fictional and empirical narrative as capable of division into further components. The empirical is comprised of the historical and the mimetic.

The historical component owes its allegiance specifically to truth of fact and to the actual past rather than to a traditional version of the past. The mimetic component owes its allegiance not to truth of fact but to truth of sensation and environment, depending on observation of the present rather than investigation of the past. (14)

The fictional similarly has two components. They are the romantic and the didactic.

The world of romance is the ideal world, in which poetic justice prevails and all the arts and adornments of language are used to embellish the narrative. The didactic subdivision of fiction we may call fable, a form which is ruled by an intellectual and moral impulse as romance is ruled by an esthetic one. (15)

It is from these basic components of narrative that a modern theory of genre can be developed.

"The novel is not the opposite of romance, as is usually maintained, but a product of the reunion of the empirical and fictional elements in narrative literature."(16) Scholes & Kellogg see the novel as the synthesis that exists today of the elements of narrative literature that appeared with the breakdown of the epic. That synthesis "is capable of greater extremes than other forms

of literary art, but pays the price for this capability in its capacity for imperfection. The least formal of disciplines, it offers a domain too broad for any single work to conquer."(17) It is from consideration of the domain that any single work does attempt to conquer that we can construct a base from which to determine genre. Any novel, as well as any other example of narrative literature, must be constructed from some basic mix of the historical, the mimetic, the romantic and the didactic. Determining the dominant component or components of the text allows a preliminary grouping of texts. The detective novel is based in the mimetic and the historical, owing its allegiance to observation of the present and investigation of the past. The romance novel is based in the ideal world of the romantic as well as the truth of sensation and environment that characterises the mimetic. The historical novel comes from actual past of the historical element of narrative while science fiction narrative is characterised by the romantic and the didactic - as well as being able to fictionalise its own historical and mimetic elements.

Once this preliminary step has been taken, texts can be further grouped by the icons they make use of. The sense of the word icon that is being used for this essay is not the Peirce definition of an icon as "a sign whose form reflects or is determined by its object"(18), but rather the sense used by Wolfe in The Known & The Unknown.(19)

Like a stereotype or a convention, an icon is something we are willing to accept because of our familiarity with the genre, but unlike ordinary conventions, an icon often retains its power even when isolated from the context of conventional narrative structures.(20)

Wolfe identifies the major icons of science fiction as being the barrier, the spaceship, the city, the wasteland, the robot and the monster. Icons in other genres can be similarly identified. War narratives obviously have as their over-riding icon that of war itself as well as icons such as combatants, weapons, battlefields and so on. The detective narrative is characterised by the detective, the city, official representatives of law and order and, of course, the criminal(s). Obviously the icons in any particular genre develop and change over time but at any given point there will be a body of icons for a genre that has historical continuity with its predecessors and followers.

The third element that can be used to define genre is the type of discourse that a text utilises. The dominant discourse of modern narrative is that of realism although, as Scholes and Kellogg suggest, "the grand dialectic is about to begin again"(21), and it may be in the process of being supplanted. The rise of realism accompanied the rise of the novel and is characterised by particularity of place, a psychological understanding of the actions of individuals within a space and time in which cause and effect operated(22). This mode of discourse is so pervasive that it is perhaps necessary to look at a novel such as 100 Years of Solitude(23) to see that it is not the only way of presenting narrative. 100 Years of Solitude uses a discourse that has been described as magic realism(24). Magic realism retains the particularity of place and character of realism but pays far less attention to cause and effect and psychological understanding of characters. The majority of modern narrative uses realism as a way of representing the real. This is closely related to the philosophical attitude to reality that is the fourth determining element of genre.

Realism as a type of discourse is based in empiricism as a method of discovering truth. The relationship between the rise of science and the rise of realism is well understood(25). But where the detective uses empiricism to bring about a resolution to a moral problem, a science fiction protagonist is far more likely to be using empiricism to understand all the universe around him or her. Different genres bring different philosophies to bear upon their

worlds. Where science fiction tends to see the universe as an understandable problematic where the key to understanding is an empirically based scientific approach, the romance narrative is more likely to see the key to understanding its world as true love. It is differences such as these that are the final determining element of genre.

From the above, genre can be seen to be determined by the four elements of narrative type, discourse type, icons and philosophical attitude to reality. Texts that have these four elements in common are of the same genre. It is also possible to deal with closely related genres by identifying the common elements and the differing elements. Science fiction and fantasy can be seen to share the same narrative and discourse types but have differing icons and philosophical attitudes to reality. The conflict that Dowling identifies in previous attempts to define science fiction can be seen as the conflict between those who wish to give pre-eminence to the narrative and discourse types shared by fantasy and science fiction and those who wish to demonstrate the different philosophical attitudes between the genres. And from that sentence the skeleton of a definition of science fiction can be discerned. Science fiction is that form of narrative literature that is characterised by: narrative type that is dominated by the romantic and the didactic in conjunction with an imagined historical and mimetic world, where the imagined world is "that which is neither impossible nor verifiably possible"(26); discourse that is typically realist; icons such as the barrier, the spaceship, the city, the wasteland, the robot and the monster as identified by Wolfe(27); and philosophical attitude to reality that is best described as a rationally ordered and empirically based scientific exploration of the unknown.

An exploration of the ramifications of the second defining characteristic of science fiction, its adoption of a realist discourse, allows a better understanding of the conservative and even reactionary ideological positions that the genre tends to adopt. Realism is characterised by particularity of place and a psychological understanding of individual characters within a space and time in which cause and effect operate. The consequences of this are what Williams(28) sees as the three features of realism.

First there is a conscious movement towards social extension. This movement of social extension - 'let not your equals move your pity less' - is a key factor in what we can now identify as a realist intention. Then, second, there is a movement towards the siting of actions in the present, to make actions contemporary. And the third is that there is an emphasis on secular action, in the quite precise sense that elements of a metaphysical or a religious order directly or indirectly frame, or in the stronger cases determine, the human actions within the earlier plays. This dimension is dropped, and in its place a human drama is played through in specifically human terms, exclusively human terms. (29)

McCabe(30) argues that this functions to place the reader in a position of dominant specularly, a position in which the reader is given certainty, insight and understanding, and that this position is a reactionary one. Form is seen as able to determine the meaning of content and narratives that use a realist discourse must end up supporting the status quo. Not that there is much attempt to question the status quo in science fiction. The societies depicted are generally patriarchal to the extent that the modern world of growing acceptance of equal opportunities of participation for men and women seems distinctly futuristic. Shaw(31) writes of the adventures of a survey ship and its crew as they expand the bubble that is the universe known to man. The crew is male and the discovery by the main character, Dave Surgenor, "that

Marc's place would be taken by a woman,"(32) triggers his concern "with the way in which random factors affecting Survey 837 LM 4002a had begun to combine."(33) The other random factors are a computer malfunction and the initial departure of Marc. This is typical of the over-whelming majority of science fiction narrative and could best be described as an example of the patriarchal view of art that film director Federico Fellini recently articulated as:

Woman is in fact that part of yourself which you do not know, and thus you project upon her while you are waiting to reveal yourself to yourself. The creative process is the same thing. (35)

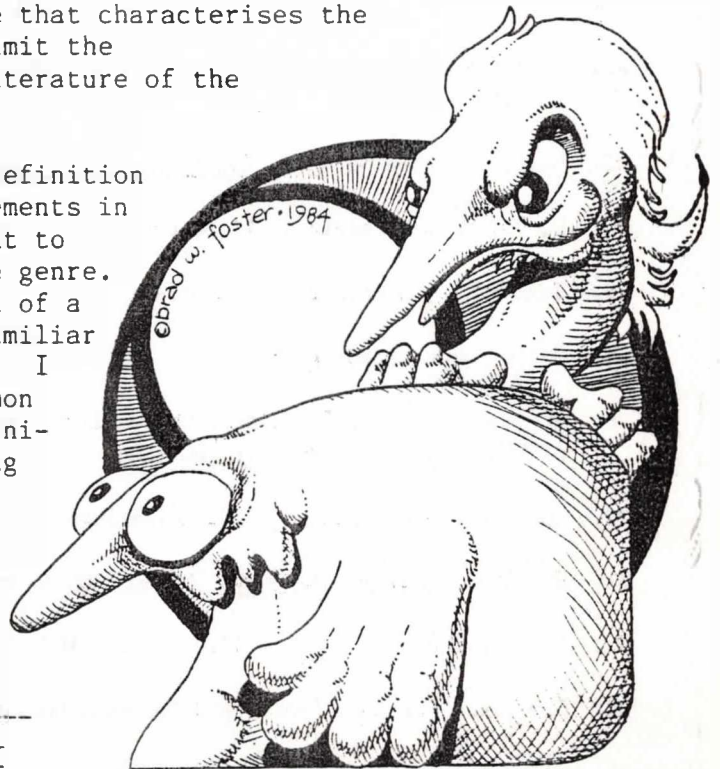
I think that creativity itself, that creative expression in all its forms, be it painting or sculpture or film or music, always has this relation to the feminine, obscure part of yourself. (36)

Science fiction sees little struggle between its realistic form and its patriarchal, socially reactionary content. While it can claim some measure of success in examining the possibilities of the future, it must also concede to having blinkered those examinations.

Some writers will look at our world and find it acceptable, even good, the highest achievement Homo sap sap can possibly accomplish. They are usually male, just incidentally. Many readers are constantly reassured by this affirmation. But there are other writers who will look at the world and cry out, but it's absurd, tragic, unjust, arbitrary. (37)

Kate Wilhelm sees herself as one of the 'other writers'. Along with many other woman writers and some male writers, she seeks to expand the borders of the genre of science fiction so that it can deal with social changes that are more than just superficial. In order to do so they will have to utilise a type of discourse different to that currently in vogue in the genre. The use of realism as the type of discourse that characterises the science fiction genre serves only to limit the possibilities of the self-proclaimed literature of the possible.

When originally thinking through this definition of genre, I imagined that any three elements in common between texts would be sufficient to demonstrate their belonging to the same genre. Later I realised that I could not think of a science fiction text with which I am familiar that did not satisfy all four criteria. I still intuitively think that three common elements is sufficient for a genre definition; this has the advantage of allowing a change in discourse type and the text remaining in the science fiction genre - as I argue above, but I think it needs more theoretical and empirical justification before being bandied around.



IRWIN HIRSH FOR GUFF

1. By academic literature I mean all writing about science fiction whether its origin be academia, the genre or its associated fandom or even a curious hybrid of the two. (As opposed to the literature in question, which is science fiction.)
2. Terry Dowling, 'What is Science Fiction', Science Fiction, 4 (May 1979), 4-19
3. *ibid.* p.5 4. *ibid.* p.6 5. *ibid.* p.4
6. Kingsley Amis, New Maps of Hell (New York: Arno Press, 1975 Orig.Ed. 1960)
7. *ibid.* p.18
8. Brian Aldiss, Billion Year Spree (London: Corgi Books, 1975), p.8
9. *ibid.* p.8
10. I would just like to make clear that the "continuum that encompasses all narrative literature" is not seen as a straight line. The number of axes required can be estimated from the number of defining characteristics that determine genre.
11. Aristotle, 'On The Art Of Poetry', in Classical Literary Criticism, trans. by T.S. Dorsch (Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1965)
12. Robert Scholes and Robert Kellogg, The Nature of Narrative (New York: Oxford U. Press, 1968)
13. *ibid.* p.12-13 abridged 14. *ibid.* p.13 abridged 15. *ibid.* p.13-14 abridged
16. *ibid.* p.15 17. *ibid.* p.16
18. Barbara Milech, ed., Literature, Language & Culture 111 Handbook (Perth: WAIT Press, 1983), p.20
19. Gary K. Wolfe, The Known and The Unknown (Kent, Ohio: The Kent State University Press, 1979)
20. *ibid.* p.16 21. Scholes & Kellogg, opus cited. p.15
22. John Fiske, Realism, Radicalism & Feminism lectures and tutorials, School of English, WAIT, Semester Two 1984
23. Gabriel Garcia Marquez, 100 Years of Solitude (London: Pan Books, 1978)
24. Ron Blaber, Literature 212 lectures and tutorials, School of English, WAIT, Semester Two 1985
25. John Fiske, lectures and tutorials cited.
26. Wolfe, opus cited. p.18 27. Wolfe, opus cited.
28. Raymond Williams, 'A Lecture On Realism', in Realism, Radicalism & Feminism handout. School of English, WAIT, Semester Two 1984
29. *ibid.* p.63-64 abridged 30. From John Fiske, lectures and tutorials cited.
31. Bob Shaw, Ship of Strangers (Newton Abbot, Devon: Readers Union, 1978)
32. *ibid.* p.103 33. *ibid.* p.103 34. There is no end-note #34!
35. Frederico Fellini, 'And His Ship Sails On', Film Comment, Vol 21 # 3 (May-June 1985), p.26
36. *ibid.* p.27
37. Kate Wilhelm, 'The Uncertain Edge of Reality', in Listen, Listen (New York: Berkley Books, 1984) p.262

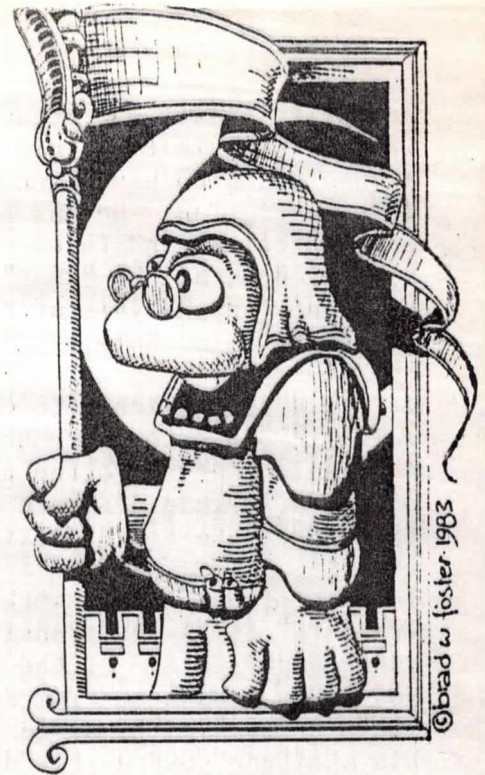
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---An Essay by Ian Nichols-----

Science Fiction, as a literary sub-genre, is undoubtedly the most recent of the distinct sub-genres, excepting, perhaps, the modern detective story. Even that, however, has its roots in Wilkie Collins, Arthur Conan Doyle and Edgar Allen Poe. While there are texts which superficially resemble Science Fiction, such as Lucien of Samosata's "Journey to the Moon", which date back to Greek and Roman times, these are, in fact, more along the lines of fables or moral satires, much the same as "Gulliver's Travels". A body of Literature which depicts the effect of scientific knowledge upon society and individuals cannot come into being before a coherent body of scientific knowledge and, more importantly, before the scientific knowledge has begun to be felt by its impact upon industry. Thus, Science Fiction is a child of the Industrial Revolution, and the late Industrial Revolution, at that.

The early practitioners of Science Fiction, Verne and Wells, were more often writing of change within their own societies than to postulate future societies, although Wells, in "The Sleeper Wakes", indulges in a vision of the future. The creation of visionary worlds en masse, the true beginning of SF as a fiction sub-genre, rather than a literary curiosity, lies in the late twenties and early thirties in the USA. Much has been written about the early history of SF, so I need only indicate, for the purposes of this discussion, that there was a rapid increase in the number of magazines and the number of writers within the field, an increase which continued until the shortage of pulp for cheap paper in the late forties and early fifties caused the demise of many of the Science Fiction magazines.

By its dependence upon an industrial base dedicated to mass production, SF became part of the domain of "popular" literature, with very few of the major works or major writers being accepted in any "serious" literary canon. The exceptions would be, of course, Aldous Huxley and George Orwell's dystopias and William Golding's "Lord of the Flies". However, there seems to be a dearth of serious criticism of the "pulp" authors and their inheritors. This is an important neglect, since it could be argued that, through the very fact of being a popular literature, SF could exert more effect upon the super-structure of society, and consequently, upon the base by its effect upon ideals and ideology within society, than any number of works in a classical literary canon.

Robert Heinlein, who began writing in the late thirties and who is still writing at this time (his latest novel, "Job" was published last year) is acknowledged to have been one of the forces which have helped to shape modern Science Fiction. He has published over twenty-five novels and collections of short stories, and received every major award in the field. He has been acknowledged as the "dean" of Science Fiction and the "Grand Master" of Science Fiction. An analysis of his works is almost certain to produce insight into the field as a whole.

It would be difficult to encompass the entire range of Robert Heinlein's works in one essay without degenerating into facile praise or condemnation, nor would that serve the purpose of this essay. Instead, I will concentrate on one of Heinlein's more contentious works, "Starship Troopers", and attempt to demonstrate how a Marxist reading of the book may produce valuable insights.

In much of Heinlein's work, there is a theme of transition, and in "Starship Troopers" it is the transition of a boy, Juan Rico, into a man, in the ideological terms of the book. Very briefly, the plot of the book is that a young man graduates from school and decides, against his father's wishes, to serve a term in the armed forces of his time. During his time in these forces, his attitude towards his duty to society changes due to his experiences in the war, and he decides to make a career in the service. However, it is the narrative structure which surrounds the plot, and the ideological superstructure in which the plot is embedded, which give rise to its interest for a Marxist reading.

Firstly, the language of the book is deformed, in formalist terms, in order to allow the author to construct an imaginary milieu. The very first lines in the story; "I always get the shakes before a drop. I've had the injections, of course, and the hypnotic preparation, and it stands to reason that I can't really be afraid." call into question our normal way of interpreting those words. As the narrative develops, there are more words and phrases used in an unfamiliar way, and words and phrases used which are specific to the sub-genre. In this, Science Fiction is a realm unto itself, the word "ship" has a similar significance in most other fields of fiction, that of a water borne vessel, whether it be barque or submarine. But, in SF the word has a signification which is so far removed along the paradigmatic axis from other uses of the word that it becomes part of an almost totally new syntagm. It is a spaceship, and has a paradigmatic set all its own. Indeed, this construction of new syntagms from already existing ones is so prevalent in SF that at one point in this story a character finds it necessary to re-define the word "a major ship --- wet navy, of course."

The narrative structure of the book is also deformed, in that it does not follow the plot structure, rather working from an initial point which is partway into the plot, then returning to the plot beginning to fill in the background of the character for the reader. In doing this it also begins to create the ideological structure against which the action is played out, and it is this ideological structure which creates the interest for a Marxist reader.

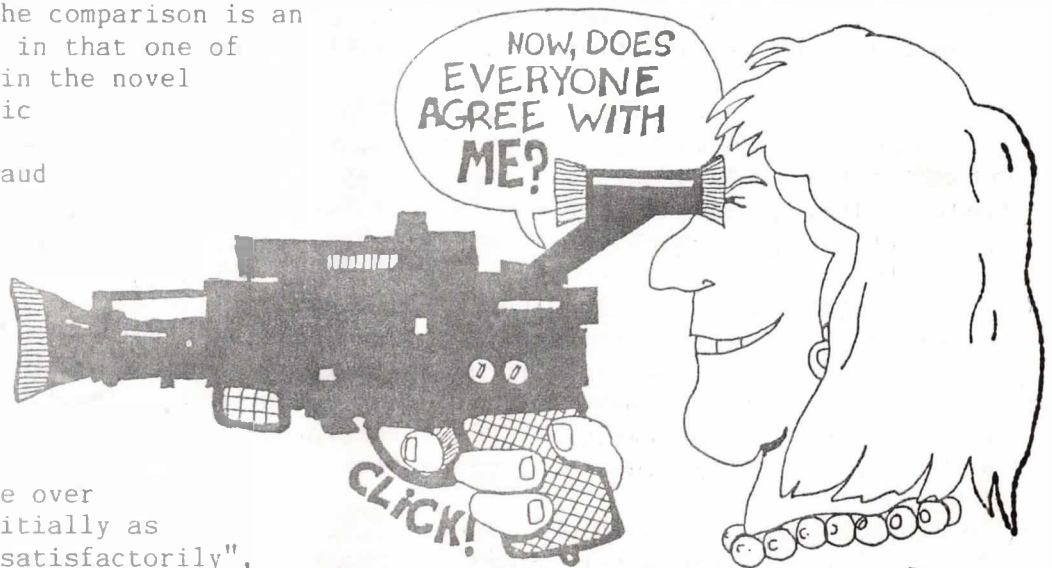
If, in Lukacs's terms, a literary work is controlled by "specific, objective laws of its genre", then a literary work within a sub-genre of literature may also be said to have certain laws governing its structure. Within SF, this is certainly true, at least for the majority of work within the Genre. In accordance with what could be said to be "rules", "Starship Troopers" is set in some unspecified future, wherein the society, even if not a direct inheritor, is based upon the structure of Current USA society. Indeed, the cultural mores, the "a man's gotta do what a man's gotta do" philosophy which abounds

within the novel are, indeed, reflections of those found in the Western sub-genre, a purely American field. (Heinlein's equivalent aphorism is "If it has to be done, a man - a real man - shoots his own dog.")

That the work is designed around an ideology which is acceptable within the USA as it is today is hardly surprising when it is considered that the economic structure of the industry is such that paperback, or hardback sales in the USA are the major revenue source for popular fiction, and SF in particular. In this fashion, the social and industrial bases of the author's country exert a controlling influence upon his creative work, although this is in no way a condemnation of the text, for Lukacs, again, suggests that "accurate reflections are a sign of an author's greatness".

What then are the bases of the ideology expressed within the novel? Firstly, there is the system of government. Briefly, in order to vote, hold political office or any other of certain reserved jobs, a person must be a "full" citizen, i.e. possess the right to vote. This may be earned by "a usually short and not too arduous term of service" in the armed forces, in a combatant or non-combatant capacity. Notice that this means that this creates a system wherein all public office holders are ex-military, voted into office by an electorate which is also composed, exclusively, of the ex-military. The reasons given for this system coming into existence are that after the "disorders" at the end of the 20th century, whilst governments were in a state of collapse, veterans banded together to "fill the vacuum". And "what started as an emergency measure became constitutional practice... in a generation or two." (Interestingly enough, a comparison is made between the assumption of power of the repatriated veterans in the novel and the assumption of power of the Bolsheviks in Russia in 1917. The comparison is a specious one, since the Russian army was actively involved in the overthrow of the government of the time, and the people who eventually took over the reins of government had been working toward that end for many years prior to the collapse of the government. Still, the comparison is an interesting one, in that one of the characters in the novel mounts a specific attack on the "magnificent fraud of communism." More on this Later.)

The reason given for the maintenance of the system after the "disorders" were over is delivered initially as that "it works satisfactorily", and later in more abstract terms, in an attempt to justify it: "The period is almost over and we have yet to determine moral reason for our success in governing ourselves. --- To vote is to wield authority; it is the supreme authority from which all other authority derives --- Force, if you will! - the franchise is force, naked and raw --- Whether it is exerted by ten men or ten billion, political authority is force." (My italics.) This episode occurs during part of Juan Rico's training as an officer, in a course called "History and Moral Philosophy"; a course which every officer candidate must pass, by gaining the "instructors opinion that you were worthy of commission."



If the officer candidate failed, "a board sat on you, questioning not merely whether you could be an officer, but whether you belonged in the army at any rank --- deciding whether to give you extra instruction, or just kick you out and let you be a civilian." (My italics.) Despite a superficial resemblance to the Maoist doctrine that "power grows out of the barrel of a gun", the milieu is hardly revolutionary. In the same episode it is stated that "revolution is impossible --- because revolution - armed uprising - requires not only dissatisfaction, but aggressiveness. A revolutionist has to be willing to fight and die - or he's just a parlor pink. If you separate out the aggressive ones and make them the sheep dogs, the sheep will never give you trouble."

Thus we see that the system of government is militaristic, and supported by the military, both during their time of service and after, while they are in reserved jobs. The more able people who enlist are encouraged to undergo officer's training, where they receive further indoctrination in the preferred and historic oligarchic ethics and morals; effectively indoctrinated into the ruling class. While entry into the armed services is open to all, indeed, cannot be denied to any, the system ensures that any leaders, the able and aggressive, will wind up separated from their class and assimilated into the existing political structure.

The second point of ideology expressed in the book which I wish to discuss is the economic structure and the class structure which is based upon it. Essentially, the economic structure is capitalism, quite undisguised. The protagonist's father is a wealthy industrialist, who possesses an Olympic length swimming pool in his backyard and buys his son a "Rolls copter" for his sixteenth birthday. His plans for his son include study at Harvard and further study at the Sorbonne, before a rapid, planned rise (regardless of talent or ability, because he is, after all, the boss's son) within his business. He, the father, disparages Federal Service as a "decidedly expensive way for inferior people to live at public expense for a term of years, and then give themselves airs for the rest of their lives." The concept, of course, being that those who are inferior are those without property.

Thirdly, there is the legal system within the novel. It is based upon a system of corporal punishment for minor crimes, and capital punishment for major crimes. The protagonist is himself whipped for disobeying an order whilst in basic training, and another man is hung for murder. Flogging would seem to be the right of any member of society who has more power than any other member; it can be ordered by the courts, performed by teachers, or by parents. The justification for it is too lengthy to enter into in this essay, but it is based upon the concept that the way to housebreak a dog is to "rub his nose in it and paddle him." It is further justified by claiming that it makes the streets safe, however dangerous it makes the schools. Once again, it rests upon the exercise of force. It is force, essentially, which maintains both the government in office and the legal system.

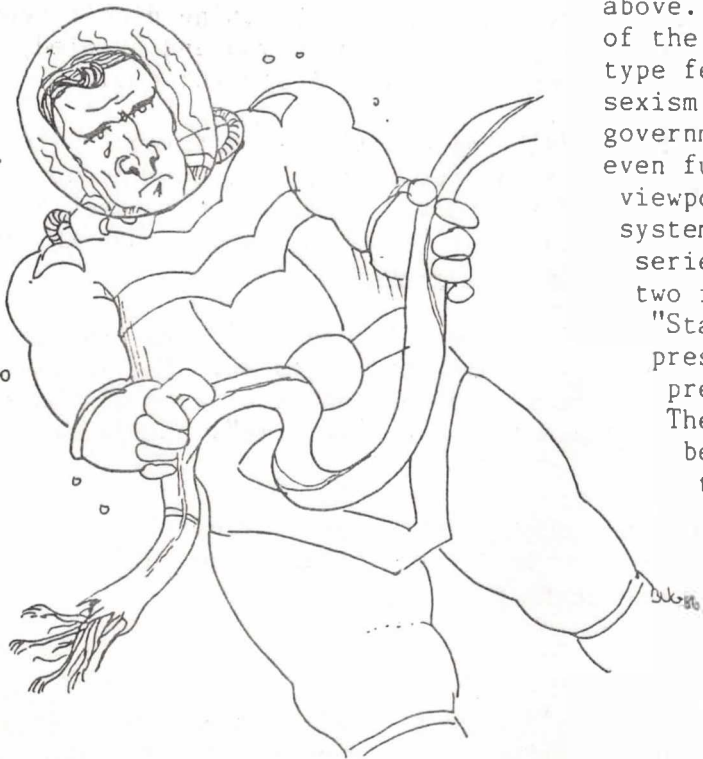
The fourth point in the book's ideology is the roles of males and females. The ideology is, explicitly, sexist. Women are seen as weaker than men, both physically and morally. Juan's mother is portrayed as a stereotype of the possessive mother; she attempts, by the most blatant emotional blackmail, to dissuade Juan from joining the armed forces and, when he has joined, to resign from them. Women cannot join the infantry, who participate in the "real" fighting ("and all the others are just along to hand us the saw"). The ostensible reason for this is that their reflexes are faster than men's, thereby making women more fitted for piloting starships and transports. There are two fallacies in this logic; the first is that it assumes that all women have faster reflexes than all men, and the second is that it is made quite explicit in the novel that the infantry is highly mechanised, and that very little real

strength is needed for the actual fighting, since the warrior is clothed in an armoured suit which is powered and responds to his every move. It is seen to be necessary to protect women; it is implied that they are incapable of protecting themselves. "You need to have (stood) with your ears cocked for just the sound of a female voice. It's good to know the ultimate reason you are fighting actually exists." (My italics.) Women are seen as sex objects. The protagonist almost drools at one stage, simply because he is on a planet where half the population are female. A female character gains a pass for Juan while he is on officer's training by either hypnosis or "her secret may be older than that, and not usable by the M.I. (mobile infantry) in any case". Later Juan describes her as "an officer and a fighting man - as well as a very pretty girl". The role for women is, however, quite virginal; "I got back to barracks with stars in my eyes --- Carmen had kissed me goodbye."

The role of men is quite simply defined: a man is courageous and fulfills his duty, and fights. When it is time to settle a difference in status between Juan and another corporal, they settle it by fighting it out, in a toilet. The concept is repeated throughout the book; "an M.I. fights because he is M.I."; "The boy has got to be knocked cold, and the instructor must do so without ever being touched himself --- (or) I will personally take him way out on the prairie and give him lumps."; "we've had a miserable day and --- if you and I --- swap a few bumps, maybe we'll both be able to sleep tonight." The reason for fighting, on the military scale, is given as protection of the species; "Greater love hath no man than a mother cat dying to defend her kittens."

aliens who are
red skin,
being

I WISH JIM
WOULD CHANGE
HIS SOCKS BEFORE
HE PUTS MY SUIT
ON!!!



It is interesting to note that the first involved in conflict happen to have and the main enemies are portrayed as similar to "Plato's ant-like communism."

Within the ideology of the book there are also heavy reliances upon tradition, religion (there are many quotes from the bible) and the sanctity of the home. But the main points are those listed above. How does this bear on the rest of the field? Many novels of a similar type feature the same economic base and sexism, even if they have a different governmental system; indeed, many go even further towards a conservative viewpoint, in postulating a monarchic system of government. (The "Dune" series and much of H. Beam Piper are two immediate examples, as are the "Star Wars" books.) The imperialism present in Starship Troopers is also present within many other works. There are enough similarities between the book and the rest of the sub-genre to believe it is representative.

How much, then, of the field is determined by the predominance of American writers and publishers? I feel that it is fairly easy to see, reflected within the texts, the mores of American culture.

Particularly interesting, in this context, is Macherey's observation on Jules Verne that his project "was to show how industry and science conquer nature and transform it". Effectively, the Heinlein style of SF is still working at this project, but have transferred the conquest of new lands by industrial power into the conquest of new worlds by the same industrial power, still a form of colonial imperialism, but this time the imperialism of the USA, rather than 19th century France. In *Starship Troopers*, the narrative is "faulty", as it is in Macherey's reference to Verne's *Mysterious Island*. The faultiness of Heinlein's narrative lies in his use of the ruling conventions of the sub-genre to attempt to provide a scientific and industrial solution to a political and human problem. He attempts to reduce morality and ethics to a science, and base his system of government upon this science. However, this is really a deification of the culture within which he, as a writer, is embedded, and he transforms this culture into the ruling one of his hypothetical future society. In order to do so, he must set up conditions within the text which will bring about the correct environment for his future to occur, for his narrative to take place, in much the same way that Verne provides a box of tools for his castaways. One can only conjecture at the part SF literature has played in re-shaping the ideals of American culture as part of a literary superstructure which can effect the base in its popularity. Perhaps, without SF, there would be less approval for President Reagan's current "Star Wars" weapon plan.

ANOTHER OF INNOCENCE

Julian Warner

Parked outside was a low-slung, black and white American monster that was so long that it was only just framed by the shopfront. This thing didn't need any cutesy bumper stickers to tell you - it just glowered at you and growled, "Don'ta Toucha! Or da boys'll bend ya head." Cool. Nasty but cool.

That one car killed any notion that Papa Luigi might be some friendly old local market-gardener who had turned his savings into a cafe that he could pass on to da Bambinos. No, this was definitely a cafe, and the hoarding proclaimed through years of dust that this was Papa Luigi's cafe but this was no 'Happy Days' milk bar, it was a place of business.

Although the door was open, you couldn't see much inside. It was one of those places that was still dark even with all the lights on. The windows just reflected the street, that mean mama of a car, and the faces of those who walked past.... or in. The doormat didn't say "welcome", but Jules could've sworn that it sneered at him.

Any other day, it would have been any other much safer looking place, however Jules was with his family and they were desperate for a coffee, and Papa Luigi's was the only cafe in Fremantle that was open.

So.... in.

Inside was a bar, just like the bar you'd expect to find in any pub. At it stood a few old Italian men, sipping coffee and talking quietly to each other. Nobody actually turned to look at Jules and his family as they walked in but

Jules could tell they were staring; glancing at the strangers sidewise in the mirror behind the bar. Invisible stilettos drilled through the air and stuck into Jules. He felt like a hedgehog in a balloon factory.

Jules desperately wished he was a Beretta .38; black, Italian, cool, lightly oiled and worthy of respect. No, here he was with what must have been one of the squarest families ever to grow up together.

They sat down at the empty table that just happened to be in the middle of the cafe. No walls to sit with your back to. Father bravely fronted up to the bar to order coffee but he looked nervous as he waited, sandwiched between two grim-faced pillars of deep ethnicity.

Jules had time to look around whilst his family's platitudinous chatter sailed past his inattentive ears. Tucked around one corner of the cafe was a small room with pinball tables in it. You could hear the multiple pings and the hammering of hands on flipper buttons. Occasionally, evil-looking youths with Marlboro packets stuck up their rolled-up sleeves, and faces like rusty razor-blades, stepped out for long enough to buy a coke and disappeared again.

Sitting at the next table were two women. It seemed a bit strange that they were alone together in this place. They were good looking but hard, smoking comfortably - happy as clown-fish in an anemone patch. Then it dawned on Jules and when he looked at his parents, he knew they knew too. These women were prostitutes! To Jules at thirteen years old this knowledge was a great revelation, a mite embarrassing but a definite step up to man-of-the-world status.

To sit so close to two women who dealt in the dark mysteries of sex, and in the presence of his ever-so-conservative parents.... and his grotty younger brother and catty younger sister.

Jules wanted to be excited, but he and his family were overpowered by the sheer, brooding presence of Papa Luigi's. They sipped their coffees quickly without much conversation and escaped hastily to the safety of the family car.

Jules is now twenty-five and Papa Luigi's has been "modernised" in preparation for the America's Cup. Jules has almost totally lost that sense of wonder he had at thirteen and Papa Luigi's character has been replaced with concrete, aluminium and glass.

Not all of Jules wanted to grow up. Not all of him did. Some of him still remembers.

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by Dave Luckett

The Female Characters in Two Series by Jack Vance.

This is an attempt to appreciate the ideas behind some of the characters in two of Jack Vance's most important series - the 'Demon Princes' series of five novels (Star King, The Killing Machine, The Palace of Love, The Face and The Book of Dreams) and the 'Tschai' series (City of the Chasch, Servants of the Wankh, The Dirdir and The Pnume). The remarks made here may not apply to other works of Vance, or elucidate about the author himself (an important disclaimer, as a revered editor of this revered publication found to his cost).

The first thing that should be noted is that, as I implied in an earlier article on Vance, the author is not dealing in character, as the word is meant in the usual sense, at all; and this applies to the male protagonists and other males who appear as much as to the women. These are types rather than personalities, propelled from outside themselves, rather than by their own characters, and the force which drives them is the most important thing about them.

Thus Gersen, in the 'Demon Princes', is an automaton at the beginning of the series, raised by a grandfather to take revenge upon the criminals who killed his (Gersen's) parents. Despite his occasional, and ineffectual, struggles against that role, Gersen is still a killing machine at the end of the series, and with his final sentence he indicates that his life is finished, the use gone out of him, like a toy which has wound down.

On Tschai, Adam Reith is even more simply motivated; he wants to get off the planet and to return home with the utmost despatch. The fact that he causes huge changes to the social system of Tschai on the way is incidental, though it subsumes most of the action. In neither case can one imagine what they would do after their goal has been achieved; nor is it of much interest, anyway.

Both of them are very close to the Ideal Western Warrior-Hero. Both are awesomely physically competent, especially in combat, resolute, honourable, ingenious, undemonstrative and brave. With very minor changes of detail, such as Gersen's occasional self-doubt or Reith's slight degree of greater comfort with women, they are interchangeable. In fact, they are stereotypes.

The same applies to the female characters, with one interesting exception, which will be considered after the patterns have been laid down.

The women of these books - and there is usually, but not always, one major female character in each one - fall into two categories. Either they are young, beautiful, desirable, incompetent, dependent, gentle and endangered, or else they are old, ugly, powerful, surly, aggressive, competent, and independent. Those in the first category are in the majority. They include Pallis Atwrode (Star King), Alusz Iphegenia (The Killing Machine), Zan Zu (The Palace of Love), Jerdian Chanseth (The Face) and Alice Wroke (The Book of Dreams). In the 'Tschai' series the pattern is not so clear - in fact there is a dearth of female characters - but Ylin Ylan is clearly a representative of

this class, as is Zap 210. Of the second category the best representatives are Madame Tintle, from The Face, Tuty Cleadhoe, from The Book of Dreams, and the Priestesses of the Female Mystery in City of the Chasch.

All of the women of the first class are dominated. That is, their lives are controlled and directed by men (although in Zap 210's case the 'men' are, in the first instance, aliens). All of them change their situation only in that they come to be dominated by the male protagonist, rather than by a more evil character. All of them are rescued from hideous danger by the efforts of the protagonist; none of them do anything to help themselves, except to run away and hide, as Alusz Iphegenia does; most do not do as much. All of them are desirable, not in spite of their dependence, but apparently because of it. All of them can be thought of, by the protagonists and by the reader, as prizes to be won. They have different personalities, in detail, but their most important quality is that dependence and attractiveness.

The second class is less stereotyped, and its members are more individually interesting. One can admire them, to some extent. Madame Tintle is the only character in all the books who bests Gersen in physical combat; Tuty Cleadhoe, no less uniquely, outwits him. But they are unattractive, unsympathetic, and undesirable. And, most importantly, they are independent. Madame Tintle dominates and reviles her unfortunate and feckless husband; in fact she even financially supports him. Tuty Cleadhoe concerts with her unaggressive husband to capture the last of the 'Demon Princes'. Hers is the plan, the energy, the cool valour, and the naked, driving hate.

Of course, the physically competent, aggressive male and the incompetent, dependent women are types of ancient provenance in Western folktale (and, for that matter, novels). So is the ugly old woman. But Vance takes the stereotype a step further here, and that step is sinister.

Two of the books contain concepts of societies in which men and women do not relate in the fashion of client and protector, generally. One of these is fairly closely realised: Dar Sai, Madame Tintle's planet. Here is a place where marriage is an economic partnership, rather than a sexual bond. Men and women are equals, with perhaps a slight bias toward feminine domination. But Dar Sai is a society founded upon a profoundly perverted sexuality: the entire population, male and female, regard rape as the sexual ideal, and paedophilic sado-masochism as light entertainment, suitable for taverns. No less perverted are the Priestesses of the Female Mystery in City - and, interestingly enough for a female cult, their rites also involve sado-masochism and rape of other women. In other words, there is a strong correlation in these books, not only between female competence and extreme unattractiveness, but between that competence and extreme sexualperversion, as well.

As an exception to this pattern, in all the books there is only one female character who is at once physically attractive, sympathetic, and independent - Lully Inklestaff, who makes clear her pleasure in Gersen's company, and her intention to pursue the relationship further. Gersen, however, is both dismayed and frightened by her, and thus he confirms for us what it is that attracts him, because he prefers the wretched Jerdian Chaseth, a woman so dominated by her father that she is unable even to exchange his overlordship for Gersen's. He makes this clear to Lully - in fact, he gracelessly insults her - and she, with admirable celerity, cuts him dead, and then, far from bemoaning her lot, celebrates her regained good taste by dancing the night away. (The Face.)

The implication is clear. In these books, for these protagonists, even youth, charm and physical attractiveness are no compensation for independence of mind

GRAPE SHOT

Taste? by Ian Nichols---

How, I ask, does it happen to me? I write a perfectly innocent article on a rather fine wine, and all of a sudden I'm threatening our national pride, or at least Victorian pride, which is not quite the same thing, being subjected to weighty comments about alcohol problems, and simultaneously mumbled at by people seeking to demonstrate their own lack of anything vaguely resembling taste buds. I cannot, for the life of me, fathom why it becomes an article of pride that one can't taste the difference between LaFitte Rothschild '56 and Horlicks, as Brian Earl Brown makes all too clear in his LoC in the last issue.

With regard to Harry Warner and Alcoholics Anonymous, I'm more sympathetic to the idea that drinking too much causes problems, having served my time (as a nurse, I might add, to those sniggering in the corner) in the D.T.s ward of a Psychiatric Hospital. However, the argument which is too often used is similar to that about marijuana or masturbation; start out on the soft stuff and you'll wind up drooling into your petfood tin in a back alley before you know what's hit you. Alcohol isn't the problem; the conditions that cause people to bomb their brains out to get away from the world for a while are. People kill themselves by eating too much, exercising too much, screwing too much, working too much. What differentiates alcohol is that it's an addictive drug in large quantities. Too much, or inappropriate behaviour after drinking, is what kills. But, hell, it's your decision.

As for Rob Gerrand, it's always nice to hear from one of nature's innocents, but I suggest that he sink a bottle or two of Chateau d'Yquem before he compares the Victorian Botrytic whites to it. Either that or read the National Times survey of Australian whites, in which the comment was, to paraphrase, that Australian sticky whites were bloody good, but Yquem was in a class of its own. As for Victorian stickies, not a single one of them made it into the finals of the National Times tasting, which says volumes for their quality. The best wine of the tasting was a DeBortoli Botrytis Semillon Sauternes 1982, at \$28.90 the bottle. My personal Australian favourite is the Heggies Botrytis Rhine Reisling, at about \$8.00 the half bottle.

Just to clear up a bit of confusion, whilst I'm on the subject of stickies, there are a lot of sweet wines around, with various things on the label. Auslese, spaetlese, beerenauslese, trockenbeerenauslese are all words which say the same thing; late-picked. To be a bit more precise, it means that the grapes involved have been left on the vine until they are overripe. The terms are supposed to indicate how long the grapes have been left on the vine, but there's a lot of overlap. Eiswein, which you can't get in Australia, is supposed to be the latest-picked of the lot, since the grapes are left on the vine until the first snow, and picked while the snow is still on the ground. However, no matter how late the grape is picked, that doesn't indicate that it will have any botrytis character. And Mr Warner, Julian that is, can stick his honey and toast covered tonsils right up his chardonnay. Victorian stickies indeed!

To get back to something relatively sane, I'll talk about Armagnac. Like Cognac, this too is a region in France and, again like Cognac, it produces a distilled grape spirit named after the region; Armagnac. I actually prefer it

to most Cognacs, and I'll tell you for why.

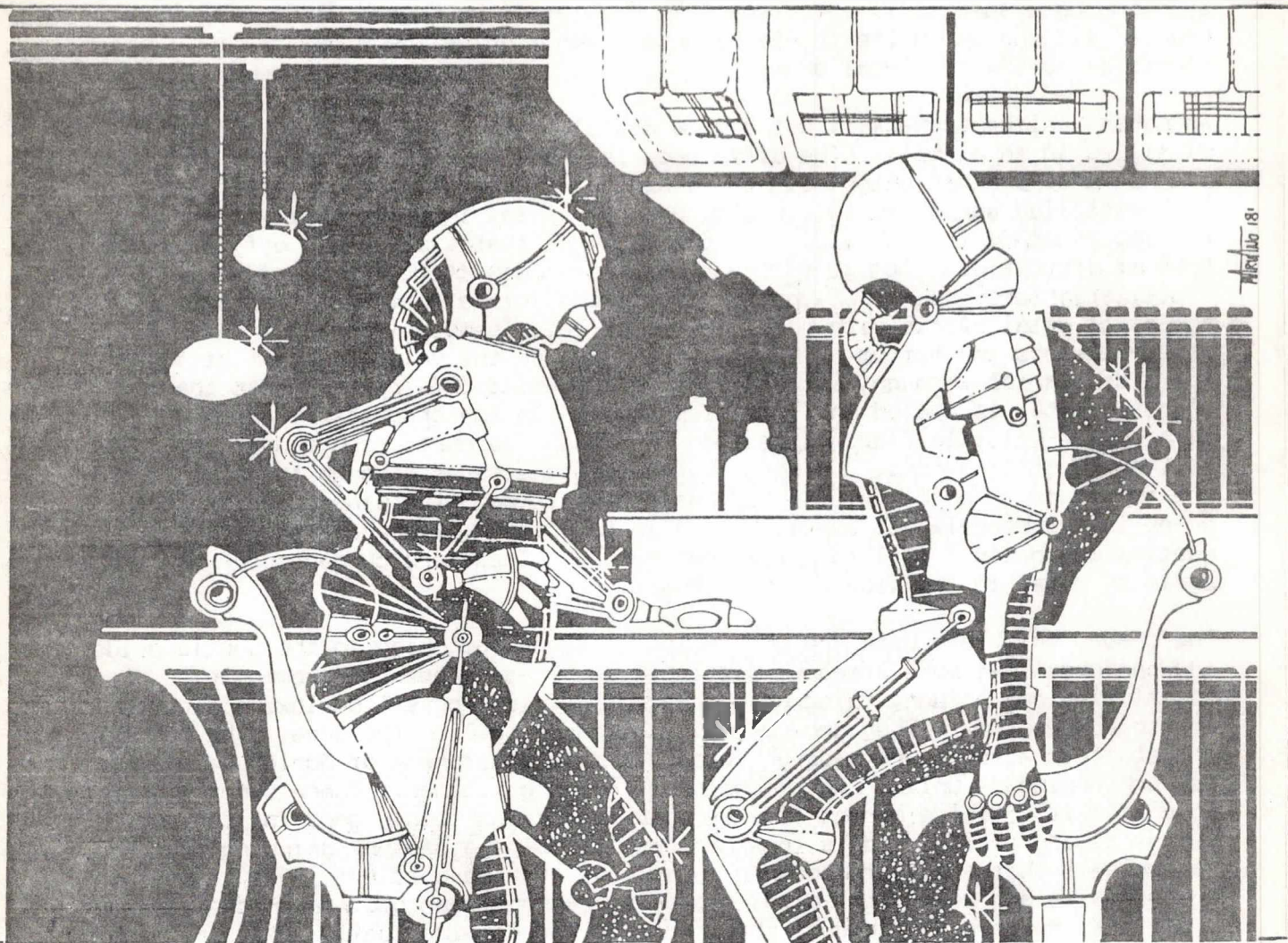
Way on down South in Gascony, where d'Artagnon came from, lies Armagnac, which has become, in modern times, the Department of Gers. Not quite as romantic, somehow. The capital is Auch, and other major distilling centres are Eauze, and the interestingly named Condom. It's rural, peaceful, and a terrific place for a person to retire. {By the way, the real name of d'Artagnon was Charles de Batz, but you'd better smile when you say that, stranger.} It's warm - stinking hot, some would say - sparsely populated, by French standards, and you can sit and watch the mountains grow. Don't drink the wine. It's terrible. Drink the local brandy.

Armagnac, unlike Cognac, is not double distilled in a pot still, but single distilled in an alembic. The difference is that, in a pot still, you wind up with a final product which has been drawn off after a single distillation, then distilled again, so it's pretty potent. Also, in a pot still, the cooling pipes run through water, so the alcohol that's distilled off is pretty free of impurities. Not so with alembic. In this, there is a continuous distillation process, in which the wine passes into a chamber filled with a series of metal plates with holes in them. This chamber is heated, and it's warmer towards the bottom. There's an outlet for the volatile stuff at the top. Wine drips through, is heated, alcohol boils off, rises, meets the incoming wine, is cooled and liquifies again. In the process, it picks up more of the volatile flavourings from the wine, flavours which tend to be lost in the pot still method. Eventually the stuff escapes through the hole in the top, runs through a pipe which leads back through the wine, condenses and drips into a barrel. It leaves behind in the bottom of the alembic all the nasties which won't boil at a low temperature. These are purged every now and again by a tap in the side of the alembic.

The grapes which are used are pretty low in sugar, but high in the subtle acids and perfumes that make Armagnac distinctive. These grapes are commonly St Emillion and a funny thing called Bacco 22A. {By christ, phyloxera's got a lot to answer for.} They grow well in the sandy soil of the area. The barrels the stuff is aged in are made of local oak from the forest of Monlezun, which is dark resinous, unlike the Limousin oak used for Cognac. There's not a drop sold till it's twelve months old, by which time it's fairly good for curing warts, gluing plastic models together or, if you're a Gascon, drinking. It's no accident that a lot of Armagnac is sold in frosted bottles. But, if you're in Australia and your right mind, nobody drinks one year old Armagnac. You can tell it's one year old because the things on the label actually mean something in the case of Armagnac. Three stars means it's one year old, VSOP means it's four years old, which is younger than Cognac with the same appellation, usually. 'Hors d'Age' means that it's five years old, and that it's good. Very good. Dry, flavourful, delicate, with none of the burnt-sugar taste that comes through in some Cognacs, especially the cheap ones. I love it, and have been known to offer it to a few select friends in order to prove to them the difference between this and Cognac. I tend to say, "y'see, y'see," a lot at these times. {Don't think I carry a flask of the stuff around with me at the moment. A student's life is an impoverished one, and good Armagnac is just as expensive as good Cognac.}

Okay, now for the esoterica. The very best Armagnac will carry, on the label, the words 'Haut Armagnac' and 'Hors d'Age'. It will also carry the number of years in the cask. It will be at least five years old, but the number of years in the cask, up to thirty, will make it better. Forget about when it was made, because no brandy ages in the bottle. Don't bother to lay it down in your cellar. It will be clear, dark and viscous. Swirl it around the glass

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HOLLAND IN 1990

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and it will leave long tears which slowly drip down, and a film on the glass. You can warm the spirit by cupping your hands around the glass, but if you want to really impress your friends, or prove to them what a ponce you are, you can pour a little into the palms of your hands and rub them together, then take a whiff. Cles de Duks is a good brand that I've seen around the shops in Perth, but there are others available, probably with a greater range in other capitals. If you're really lucky, you'll find something from one of the chateaux, like Chateau de Tariquet. If you do, invite me around.

Look, just to salve my guilty conscience about all you people out there who are going to rush out and lay into a bottle of \$40.00 Armagnac on an empty stomach, something which could lead, at the least, to a terminal hangover and at worst to the happy acquaintance of a mortuary slab, here's something to eat. It's a traditional Gascon dish and, made properly, it will cure all your anorexia problems. It's called Cassoulet, and I believe the word means 'scent-box'. {Yeah, I know, it reminds you of....}

You need:

1k. dried haricot beans	500g. salt belly pork, boned
250g. pork fillet	1/2 chicken cut into pieces
250g. garlic sausage, cubed {this means hard garlic sausage, not fritz}	
250g. piece of streaky bacon, preferably smoked, cut into pieces	
stock bones {get a mixture of pork, beef, lamb}	
1 large onion stuck with 2 cloves	1 carrot
1 bouquet garni	4 whole cloves garlic
3 chopped onions	2 tablespoons tomato paste
1 glass red wine {not rosé}	freshly ground black pepper
250ml. good stock {that stuff you get in little jars from Maggi is good}	
fresh breadcrumbs	

Soak the dried beans overnight, then drain them and put them into a pan with the bones. You can add the skin of the salt pork and the rind of the bacon, if you like. Add the whole onion, carrot, bouquet garni and garlic. Bring to the boil and cook slowly until the beans are tender, but not split, about one to one-and-a-half hours. When the beans are cooked, drain and reserve the liquid, throw away everything but the beans. Chop all the meats into medium sized pieces, then fry them together with the chopped onions, a chopped carrot and 3 crushed cloves of garlic in olive oil. Add a little water at the end to deglaze the pan and moisten the mixture. Get a very large casserole with a lid. Put in a layer of beans, then a layer of meat until all the meat is used up, then finish with a layer of beans. Mix the bean liquid with the wine, black pepper and tomato paste. Don't add salt, there's lots in this thing already. Mix in the stock. Pour the liquid into the casserole until it comes to about a couple of centimetres below the top of the beans. Hang on to the rest of the liquid for later. Sprinkle the top of the casserole with the breadcrumbs, cover tightly with foil and the casserole lid. Cook slowly, like for 4 to 6 hours. The longer, the better. This is a good time to leave the thing on top of a wood stove and go out to find the Armagnac. Add more liquid as necessary. DON'T allow the casserole to cook dry. Stir in the breadcrumbs every 2 hours and sprinkle on a fresh lot. They tell you to take off the top for the last hour, to let the final lot of breadcrumbs brown, but you can't do that on top of a wood stove. Pour a glass of Armagnac. Sit. Eat. You can thank me later.

Love'n'Kisses, Ian.

NOW is the time for REVOLUTION!

write-in tim jones

editorial

-----Michelle Muijsert-----

Last time, Mark explained some things about TSW's aims. This issue I'm going to explain a bit about the way the zine works. We have had a number of letters expressing confusion and distaste at the Editorial Committee concept. Since you're basically stuck with it, I thought I'd tell you a bit about each of our roles. Perhaps then it'll be easier for you to figure out who you're dealing with, if TSW's multiple persona bothers you.

Jules first. Mr Warner is the Committee Eccentric. Although he has been involved with fandom socially for a number of years, Julian is really more of a music person with an anal fixation {I'll let him tell you more about that himself some time }. Jules peruses the incoming mail, makes the odd comment - some few of which he writes down - then appears again in time to help Mark print the beast and assist in collatio. Mr Warner often appears bemused by the whole process of zine creation, but mention something bizarre and you'll discover a mind like ~~steel/underwear~~ a steel trap.

Mr Loney is our SerCon partner. He takes charge of anything concerning science or criticism. He does a lot of the editing of the written word {well, except that we don't edit our contribs much anyway}, exercises some editorial prerogative in the areas of layout and locs, and does a bit of the typing. As the printing equipment we use is through the Astronautical Society of W.A., of which Mark is a member, he ends up being in charge of printing and posting. And does most of the worrying about the cost thereof.

Most importantly though, Mark is our mail-person. So although I file your letters, Mark's are normally the first eyes to assault them.

Also active are Ian Nichols and Dave Lockett, altho we don't credit them. They write for us with little or no prompting {an invaluable service}, are interested to see what has come in for the zine each week and - particularly in Ian's case - help us to remain enthused even in the darkest moments of despair over particularly patronising reviews! Every zine should have its own Ian & Dave. ~~Send/#B/99/and/SKE/Ld/dor/P/Q/BdX~~

Then there's me; I seem to be responsible for getting the zine to printable stage. I harrass Mark and Julian for their writing, do the typing, layout and letraset and make sure the locs get looked at, edited and commented on. I'm the one who relentlessly insists that deadline must be met; something I feel very strongly about. By now you have no doubt guessed my dark secret. Yes, it's true. I'm the Committee Nag. I'm also the faanish member of the committee but I'm sure this doesn't make up for the nagging so far as the guys are concerned.

In addition to the above the mailing list is My Baby. I compile it from the incoming fanzines, decide if any fen listed therein sound like the sort of people we should send TSW to, and try to keep the addresses up to date. Since I have this illogical maternal feeling about the mailing list, I feel personally vindicated whenever one of you writes to us. I'm a success - I sent the zine to the right person! Now that you know I'm so easy to keep happy, I'm sure we'll hear from you RSN, huh?

So; all clear now? Reconciled to the Editorial Committee idea? Well, I guess I didn't really think it would be that easy. It'll have to do though - I've run out of space.

a mail revue

Fanzine Reviews by Michelle

Canada-----

NEW CANADIAN FANDOM 8. Ed. Robert Runté & Garth Spencer, P O Box 4655, P.S.S.E. Edmonton, AB, T6E 5G5.

I am told that NEW CANADIAN FANDOM used to look slicker than this ish, however number 8 looked fine to me; clearly printed, plenty of art, obvious attention paid to layout and some unusual headings. The contents of NCF are varied, interesting and extremely Canadian. I particularly enjoyed the lead article by Allan Brockman and was interested by the Canadian fanzine reviews. Lotsa clubzines, comix and drek. Not much ordinary fanzine activity. A good deal of concern about being truly Canadian, rather than America's little sibling. In fact it seemed to border on paranoia. NCF8 would definitely have benefited by the editing out of some of this stuff; on the other hand I sympathise. Aotearoa (my home) is in much the same position with regard to Australia and it's not much fun if you let it get to you. My advice: if you can't beat 'em, ignore 'em... After all that, Recommended.

NEOLOGY Vol 11 Number 2. ESFACAS, P O Box 4071, Edmonton, AB, T6E 4S8. The usual or join ESFACAS for \$8.00. Regular {quarterly?}. Ed. Kathleen Moore. Lotsa nice artwork and plenty of variety in typefaces(!?). Good variety of contents too except that some of the articles seemed rather... well, SHORT. After reading the first page of 2 or 3 items we turned the page with baited breath to find... nothing! Or at least a new article. Hmm... good otherwise. Recommended.

The U.K.-----

WALLBANGER 12, March 1986. Eve Harvey, 43 Harrow Road, Carshalton, Surrey, SM5 3QH. Probably the usual.

WALLBANGER 12 has a narrative style consisting of some very laidback and enjoyable writing from Eve, punctuated by an excellent article from Judith Hanna, a reprint of Ted White's FanGoH speech from AussieCon 86 and some musings from correspondents. If you know Eve and can hear her as you read, WALLBANGER is delightful. If not, well it's still some of the most entertaining fan writing around. Highly Recommended.

ERG Quarterly Number 94, April 1986, 27th Anniversary Issue. Terry Jeeves, 230 Bannerdale Road, Sheffield S11 9FE. Available in a variety of ways which come down to money. 50p an issue or 6 for \$5.00.

How did ERG get this far? Bad repro, some rather flat if technical writing from Terry, perfunctory reviews of a varied but uninspiring selection of SF novels. Perhaps the non-Anniversary issues are better? Definitely Not For Money.

SOUNDING THE RITUAL ECHO 3. Steve Green, 11 Fox Green Crescent, Acocks Green, Birmingham, B27 7SD. The usual. So far irregular but you never know...

Doesn't look the best but once you get into it, it's good stuff. Great article by Lesley Ward about sex/sexism/sexual aggression/violence written on behalf of women everywhere. Recommended.

The U.S.A.-----

RUNE 74. Volume 11 Number 3, February 1986. Minnesota SF Society Inc., P O Box 2128, Loop Station, Minneapolis, Minnesota, 55402. Ed. {outgoing} M K Digré {4629 Columbus Ave., Minneapolis, 55407} and Erik Biever {1731 Eustis Street, Lauderdale, Minnesota, 55113}. The usual or join MinnStf.

RUNE is an extremely faanish zine which (for the moment anyway) doesn't take itself at all seriously. A large proportion of the contents are authored by the editors; exactly how much, only they could tell you. RUNE is about to undergo a change of editorial staff so I feel unable to comment on the ongoing desirability of the zine (tho probably); its current editors however are Highly Recommended.

'UKELELE 2. Daniel Farr, 403/1750 Kalakua Ave., Honolulu, Hawaii, 96826.

'UKELELE is a (hopefully) monthly perzine from a resident of Hawaii - though he's not new to fandom - who claims to be its only publishing fan. 'UKELELE 2 has a number of interesting grammatical lapses, a few fanzine reviews and locs & some comments from Daniel on NASA and his intentions for the zine. Definite potential. Give it a go (mate), as the Aussies say.

MAINSTREAM 11. Suzle Tompkins & Jerry Kaufman, 4326 Winslow Place N., Seattle, Washington, 98103. The usual or \$1.00 per ish.

Ah! MAINTREAM:- it wafts in on a gentle breeze redolent of trufandom... To say that its contents are amusing, well written and very refreshingly faanish would be superfluous. Highly Recommended.

CONVENTION GIRLS DIGEST 2. L Huntzinger, S Carton, A Cadogan. C/- Lucy Huntzinger, 2215R Market Street, San Francisco, California, 94114. The usual {for trades, one for each editor}.

Pretty as a picture, frivolous, facetious and totally fun. It's so nice to know SOMEONE is having a good time (three someones, even). Highly Recommended.

CRI DE LOON 7. T Kevin Atherton, 3021 N. Southport, Chicago, Illinois, 60657. Perzine. The usual perhaps.

Interesting, intelligent and loony. Dyn-o-mite combination. Best if you're not at either political extreme but then this in line with our own tastes. Highly Recommended.

SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW 59. Richard E Geis, P O Box 11408, Portland, OR, 97211. Semi-pro. This ish \$2.50. 12 month sub for 1987 will be \$15 {12 issues}.

Cleanly laid out and easy to read with lots'n'lots reviews (I guess that's why it gets called science fiction review). Our favourite though was John Brunner's column and the resultant political debate in the loccol. An interesting, informative zine which succeeds in doing what it sets out to do, well. Value for money. Highly Recommended.

HOLIER THAN THOU 22 & 23. Marty & Robbie Cantor, 11565 Archwood Street, North Hollywood, Ca, 91606-1703. The usual or \$2.00 per ish.

I'm not really sure that I have the fannish stature to comment on HOLIER THAN THOU, which seems to have etched out its own very definite niche in fannish folklore. And why not indeed? It's regular, it has great contributing writers, it looks good, it's controversial and often political; above all it has heft. I think HTT is a rare example of a fanzine that is exactly what its editor wants it to be. Personally I don't think it's at all gross, but then you can't have everything. Highly Recommended.

Aotearoa {New Zealand}-----

PHLOGISTON 8, 9 & 10. Alex Heatley, P O Box 11-708, Manners Street, Wellington. Quarterly on the dot. NZ subs \$4.00 for 4, overseas by arrangement.

PHLOGISTON is beautifully produced, regular as clockwork and of a high standard, but there just isn't enough of it. Despite his strenuous efforts, Alex gets very little feedback and only slightly more material; largely I think because of his editorial policy of subs only. It's a pity as PHLOG deserves a far wider readership. Issue Ten in particular carries an excellent con-report by Alex - most amusing! Recommended.

TIMBRE 3. Various publishing dates and 2 different versions around. Tim {write-in} Jones, 20 Gillespie Street, Dunedin. The usual. Extremely infrequent.

Ideologically correct, Green and pacifistic from cover to cover - not to mention amusing and interesting - Timbre is in many ways the best fanzine currently (sort of currently, anyway) being produced in Aotearoa and a very good zine by general standards. All the writing, apart from the lettercol (don't laugh! It does Happen), is from Tim's own pen, and is consistently literate and enjoyable, as well as intermittently being pleasantly warped. Highly Recommended.



LYN McCONCHIE for FFANZ

DUM VIVIMUS VIVAMUS! 19. Lyn McConchie, C/- P O Box 279, Wellington. Perzine, irregular but not necessarily infrequent.

Eclectic. It's the only way to describe DVV. Newspaper clippings, musings, reviews, conservation and wildlife, Yugoslavian camping ground rules, wildly variant grammar; it's all here. And it's funny! Variety is the spice of life and DVV will flavour your day. Recommended.

Australia-----

LARRIKIN 1, June 1986. Perry Middlemiss, GPO Box 2708X, Melbourne, Vic, 3001 & Irwin Hirsh, 2/416 Dandenong Road, Caulfield, Vic, 3161. Pluperzine, the usual, projected monthly.

LARRIKIN's first issue was rather lightweight in content in both senses however its editors are experienced, well-seasoned persons and it is my guess that if the proposed monthly schedule (a highly laudable intention) is kept up, its standard will increase rapidly. Wait and See.

LARRIKIN 2.

Yup, a big improvement. I thoroughly enjoyed John Foyster's Nova Mob review. It seems that LARRIKIN could be destined for pretty good things. Recommended.

CATHSEYE 6, December 1985. Cathy Kerrigan, P O Box 437, Camberwell, Vic, 3124. Perzine, available for the usual.

Cathseye looks nice but unfortunately is light on written material. Reviews, an article on ESP and a too-travelogue-like overseas holiday report. The highlight of the issue is the lettercol which is exclusively Australian (a rare sight) and quite lively. The wrap:- enjoyable if you know Cathy but needs more Crunch.

TIGGER. Marc Ortlieb, P O Box 215, Forrest Hill, Vic, 3131. The usual or \$2.00 to a Fan fund and a 0.50c Australian stamp.

TIGGER has a Sense of Humour, something that in my opinion is all too rare in Aus fanzines. The February 1986 issue reprints an amusing program item from AussieCon 86, the Australian GUFF newsletter and a lettercol which threatens to engulf TIGGER and start on the Empire State Building. April 86 is more article-oriented and features a fascinating piece by Dave Cropp on the ecological economy of the Hospital Clipboard. Damien raves on a bit in the June 86 issue but don't let this bother you - no one else does. All in all, Highly Recommended.

CRUX 6. Michael Hailstone, P O Box 193, Woden, ACT, 2606. Semi-pro fiction zine of which this is the last issue.

Haven't read it but it certainly looks lovely.

WAHF FULL 16, February 1986. Jack R Herman, P O Box 272, Wentworth Building, University of Sydney, NSW, 2006. The usual. Bit irregular these days.

This is the first issue of WAHFFULL in quite a while and it does look a bit rusty. Its contents however are good; of particular interest are the Editorial and a reprint of half a talk from Dave Langford. The desire to see the second half of this talk and more of Jack's forthright but too-little-seen-of-late writing is enough to make me hope it won't be 18 months til the next WF. (Did you hear that, Jack?) Recommended.

THYME 50 - 54. Peter Burns & Roger Weddall, P O Box 273, Fitzroy, Vic, 3065. Semi-regular newszine, \$10 for 10 issues.

THYME covers a wide variety of news, a convention calendar for Australia, reviews and other germane odds'n'ends. It's main setback as a newszine is its irregularity (not to be confused with infrequency) but it still remains by far the best newszine hereabouts. Recommended.

AUSTRALIAN SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW 1, March 1986. The SF Collective, C/- Ebony Books, GPO Box 1294L, Melbourne, Vic, 3001.

ASFR is the new critical zine which is supposed to set the Aussie SerCon scene alight and has the opposition quaking in their boots. Personally, I don't much like SerCon zines and find this prediction hard to comment on one way or the other, however I found this issue a little long on wind and low on verve. Recommended if you take it dry.

LIVING IN THE LIMELIGHT 9. Stewart M Jackson, in the UK at the mo. Perzine. Ideologically incorrect and unattractively presented. Definitely Not Welcome At Our Place.

FUCK THE TORIES 2, February 1986. Valma Brown & Leigh Edmonds, P O Box 433, Civic Square, ACT, 2608. Terry Hughes, 6205 Wilson Blvd, Apt 102, Falls Church, Virginia 22044, USA. Judith Hanna & Joseph Nicholas, 22 Denbigh Street, Pimlico, London SW1V 2ER, uk. Available per Editorial Whim or perhaps the usual.

FUCK THE TORIES is a self-styled ideologically-correct fanzine, according to its Editors. More importantly, it's the first Tri-Continental zine (so why do I have it listed under Australia, I wonder) and deserves success for this reason if no other. Issue 2 contained some interesting writing and a definite asset in the form of Judith Hanna. Recommended centre to far ~~left~~ left.

THE MATALAN RAVE. Michael Hailstone, P O Box 193, Woden, ACT, 2606. The usual. *Sigh* I'd like to say something nice about THE MATALAN RAVE as I'm sure its Editor's intentions are honourable. The kindest thing I could really say, tho, is that The Rave's failings are obviously due to the fact that Michael's on a different wave length to the rest of us. A truly unusual perzine with rather low production values. Not Recommended. Well, maybe if you'd like a little something to read as you toke...

THE METAPHYSICAL REVIEW 5/6, October 1985. Bruce Gillespie, GPO Box 5195AA, Melbourne, Vic, 3001. The usual or \$25.00 for 5.

I have difficulty reviewing TMR since, as I have already said, I'm not really into SerCon. Still for an individual such as I am, TMR is the most accessible of the Aussie SerCon zines and probably the most enjoyable. Certainly at 93pp it's the largest and the best value! I know Bruce is worried about losing his audience to ASFR; my reaction is that he is overly pessimistic. TMR is, and will remain, a very good zine. Highly Recommended.

THE METAPHYSICAL REVIEW 7/8.

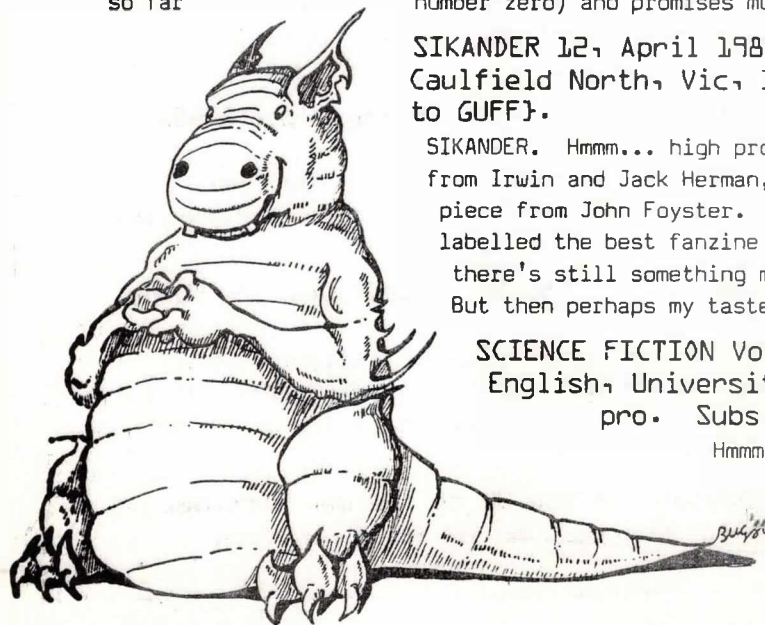
Really good stuff! I guess Bruce wants another Ditmar and he's certainly going the right way about attracting my vote. If you enjoy good writing (and listening) outside the SF field, then this is the one for you. Highly Recommended.

SF TRUTH 2, Christmas 85. Rod Kearins & Terry Frost, 3 Vincent Street, Canterbury, NSW. Newszine, appears to be defunct.

Sigh Again I wish I could say something more complimentary. The Editors are both friends and I know their intentions were sterling... but. Poor repro and layout and a lack of news not already available elsewhere render SF TRUTH at best uncompetitive. I find Terry's rather ebullient writing style enjoyable, but can't Recommend the zine (if it still lives) on this alone.

aphelion SF Magazine, 1 & 2. P O box 421, Stirling, SA, 5152. Semi-prozine edited by Peter McNamara and available in Australia for \$16.00 per 4 issues. Solicits Mss and pays 0.03c a word.

aphelion looks fairly professional and carries some reasonable fiction, though not enough of it. Poor interior artwork and some shakey columns are its main problems at present. Still the zine is off to a good start in a notoriously difficult field (successful Australian pro and semiprozines so far number zero) and promises much. Recommended.



SIKANDER 12, April 1986. Irwin Hirsh, 2/416 Dandenong Road, Caulfield North, Vic, 3161. The usual or \$2.00 per ish {\$1 to GUFF}.

SIKANDER. Hmm... high production values, more than competent writing from Irwin and Jack Herman, some good locs, tho a sadly somniferous piece from John Foyster. Yes SIKANDER is good and has in fact been labelled the best fanzine in Australia quite a bit of late, but to me there's still something missing. It seems to take itself so SERIOUSLY. But then perhaps my tastes are just too frivolous. Recommended.

SCIENCE FICTION Vol 7 Number 2. Van Ikin, Dept of English, University of WA, Nedlands, WA, 6009. Semi-pro. Subs \$10.00 for 3 issues.

Hmmm... this is the only issue of SCIENCE FICTION I've actually read altho we do have lots of old issues lying round the house. Unfortunately this one doesn't inspire me to read any of them. Case deferred til next time.

THE MENTOR 59. Ron & Sue Clarke, 6 Bellevue Road, Faulconbridge, NSW, 2776. Bi-monthly. The usual or \$2.00 per issue.

Well it certainly looks nice and there's lots of it, but... to be honest, I never read amateur SF. If you are interested in aspiring Australasian writers, though, THE MENTOR is the zine for you - it's printing more amateur fiction than anyone else in Australia.

TAU CETI PHOENIX/APOCRYPHA. Summer 86. A double zine from Larry Dunning, P O Box 111, Midland, WA, 6056. The usual.

One half of this zine is dedicated to gaming and the other half mainly to media and reviews. Unfortunately the zine is A4 size, photo-reduced and suffers from very average repro. ~~Fixed/McGarr.~~ On the positive side Larry prints the zine reasonably frequently, has plenty of material and a number of regular correspondents and is a more than competent artist himself. Definitely Recommended for those with interests in gaming and media.

THE NOTIONAL. Leigh Edmonds & Valma Brown, P O Box 433, Civic Square, ACT, 2608. Newszine. \$15 for a theoretical 12 issues within a twelve month period, which is getting further away all the time.

THE NOTIONAL should make up its mind whether it's covering publishing in Australia or fannish news as it's not really doing either adequately. Either that or they should stop criticising others for failing to live up to Leigh- and Valma-imposed standards which they fail to meet themselves. At \$15.00 a year it's not our idea of value for money.

THE MOTIONAL 16, August 1986. Actually a one-shot dig at - you guessed it - The Notional. Name and address undisclosed.

We think it's sad that the Editor has chosen to remain anonymous - we'd like to shout him/her a drink. I mean, like, this is REALLY FUNNY. And MEAN. But SO FUNNY.....

FUCK THE NOTIONAL. The In-House Committee of Western Australian Fandom Inquiring Into Un-Fannish Activities On The Eastern Seaboard of Australia, C/- P O Box 545, South Perth, WA, 6151. One-shot dig at - you guessed it - The Notional.

We'd like to give this one-shot a rave review but, unlike certain other parties we could name (who could it be?), we realise that it's in bad taste to praise your own productions. We do hope that Leigh and Valma will find it acceptable as their platform for the next MAFF race tho.

LOCT IN SPACE

It's letter time again and there are rather a lot of them this time. For this reason we have had to {a} edit them rather more severely than we would have liked to and {b} arrange them in order of subject matter {in the order that it was printed in the zine} to make the column a bit more coherent. The column was edited by Michelle, so you know where to direct your complaints if we cut your favourite sentence out of your LoC. Commentary, unless prefaced by the initials ML for Mark Loney or JW for Julian Warner, is by MM for Michelle Muijsert. Despite the fact that we didn't enjoy chopping bits out of people's letters, we did enjoy getting lots of locs and we would be quite happy to receive this many {or more} next issue. We might have more space then anyway.

Mr Loney here: A number of the letters you are about to read {in edited and re-arranged form} arrived at P O Box 545 with opening paragraphs that puzzled over who to address the loc to. While this can, in itself, be interesting to read - and let those who wish to open their locs with ruminative thoughts on who they are addressing not be discouraged by the following - there were several plaintive cries for guidance that cannot be allowed to go unanswered. And the answer is: {do I see a fannish etiquette manual on the horizon?}

Dear Space Wastrels,

Now we've got the messages from our sponsors out of the way, on with the LoCs. First up is a comment on the comments on the SDI article that we ran in TSW 2/1.

---Bev Clark---

I almost wish I had seen your last issue - the comments about the article on the SDI are intriguing. I was struck by how much Uncle Ronnie has managed to set the terms of debate on the whole subject. Of course I am making these comments without having seen the article, so maybe some of these points were addressed in it. That is: all the discussions focus on the technical feasibility of the SDI. Very seldom are any other aspects of it even mentioned. The implication is that the only reason to oppose it would be if it were technically unfeasible; that is, everyone seems to assume that it would be a Good Thing in and of itself if only it worked. The perfect defense shield. Why, we could do all sorts of things if we had a perfect defense in place, and never worry about the consequences. Ronnie Raygun can graduate to intimidating the big boys instead of sticking to relatively small countries, and not have to worry that the big boys might hit back.

..... No one considers whether the SDI is desirable from a political point of view, though some people occasionally opine that economically it might be ruinous. My own opinion is that it's destabilizing, especially if it's something the Russians themselves are working on and aren't as advanced in, and more especially if it is technically feasible. The problem is not that the Russians will undoubtedly step up efforts on their own system if indeed they have one, or even that they are going to be frantically looking for ways to defeat a space-based defense (overwhelming it with missiles, for instance, or throwing lots of confusing decoys at it - not to mention relying more on bombers, cruise missiles, and submarine-launched missiles, none of which the SDI will defend against). The problem is that if we get far enough ahead of them, and it looks like the system will work, the balance of power is going to be thrown way out of kilter.

Oh wow! An alien life form!
Hey, I'm from the planet Earth, and we find that although our society grants its individuals the right to choose within certain limits what course of action will best serve their interests as a whole, the reality as perceived by an intellectually privileged minority and borne out by repeated experience is that these actions often do not greatly serve the majority's general long-term well being, do you find you have that problem too?



Craig Hilton '86

No sovereign government is likely to stand for that - we certainly wouldn't; why should we assume that the Soviets will let us establish a significant superiority over them, let alone cry uncle {which I think is the Reagan administration's secret hope with the SDI}? The temptation is going to be awfully great to try a pre-emptive attack while there's still a chance of its succeeding, before the US puts in place a defense that would allow it to attack the USSR more or less with impunity. I think my government would be tempted in that situation. A government with a history of paranoia, pre- as well as post-Revolution is even more likely to take desperate measures.

This is not to mention that the SDI almost certainly violates the ABM treaty, or that the cost is staggering even at the lower figures and will affect government expenditures to the great detriment of domestic programs for decades, or that an SDI will make arms-control negotiations seem less necessary and may do nothing to stop the increase of nuclear weapons, or that by drawing off many of the best and the brightest in engineering and the sciences with the lure of big grants and high salaries the SDI could result in a lessening of non-military R&D (e.g., in consumer-oriented electronics), exacerbating {from the American point of view} a situation that has allowed other countries to take over that whole area. And so on.

Do you get the feeling that I don't support the SDI or even Ronald Reagan?

ML: Yes, I do get the feeling. Technical considerations aside, SDI is a political, strategic and economic morass. Arthur C Clarke opined in Analog that the USSR may have suckered the USA into the SDI (basically by having lots of 'secret research stations' to spook the CIA) - thinking even a little bit about the consequences of the SDI make me suspect that Arthur is nobody's fool. Either that or the USA has neatly chosen its own historical cul-de-sac. (Incidentally, while we can't supply you with a copy of TSW 2/1, my SDI article is reprinted in the Phlogiston reviewed this issue.)

MM: Mark refers to Phlogiston 10 - August 1986.

We got quite a lot of comment on the ResCon article that we ran in TSW 2/2, which demonstrated a couple of things very clearly. The first was that there is a certain amount of dissatisfaction with the Status Quo; in particular the size of North American WorldCons, although at the same time there was a definite feeling that it would be nice if more of the people who wanted to could join in at least the spirit of the thing.

---John DeChancie--- I think your {Michelle's} idea of a ResCon is fine. I'd be only too happy to have somebody drain off a few thousand sweaty fen from the USA WorldCons.

---Jeanne Mealy--- I'll bet there'll be increasing numbers agreeing with it - many have already been complaining that WorldCons and NASFiCs are too big.

---T Kevin Atherton--- The idea of a 'ResCon' - a sort of NASFiC for the world - seemed really exciting to me even though I could never attend - but then, after all, the idea of a WorldCon right here in the United States seems really exciting even though I never go.

It does seem a shame doesn't it? That the girth of a single planet should be so formidable a barrier to the congregation of SF fans in the pre-transport-booth age - and I'm afraid that I, who have decided to attend only those cons within walking distance, can offer no solution better than ResCon except, perhaps, a Non-Con which could be an SF gathering held at various sites around the world yearly but to which all SF fans {and everyone else} were absolutely forbidden admittance. It would be equitable at least.

---Sheryl Birkhead---

Some time ago I asked {knowing it wasn't really possible} about the chances of having conventions in countries other than the WorldCon host country which would occur at the same time and be connected by satellite links. I wondered then if this might help soothe the ruffled feathers of any and all who couldn't afford to make the trip {regardless of the host country - i.e. NOT just the US}, but still allow for contacts.

Most people, though, didn't see the ResCon idea as solving any problems, particularly not a basic inequity in the current system which I hadn't touched on in my article.

---Skel---

I am not in favour of a 'Rest of the World' con. Hell, once you start something like this, what happens to the countries that don't get it? Do you have a 'Rest of the Rest of the World' con, and a 'Rest of the Rest of the Rest of the World' con and so on ad infinitum? It just doesn't make any kind of sense. You can't define the rest of the world in terms of its not being part of America. If the Americans tried to do this they'd be laughed at from all sides - but here you are trying to do it from the other viewpoint. It doesn't make sense, because there isn't another single viewpoint. We are not USA or Rest of the World. I am British. To me the rest of the world in The Rest of the World, and that includes the USA. That is the same whether we are talking mundane or fannish. The WorldCon is the WorldCon - period. It defines itself as belonging to the World. You can't have a rest-of-the-world as distinct and separate from the world. If you define a 'Rest of the World' convention as being the non-USA, then you equate the world with the USA, except what you are really doing is defining the rest of the world as nothing - how else can you have a 'world' and a 'rest of the world'? The WorldCon belongs to the world. It is predominantly held in the USA because the bulk of fans are there, but it is essential that they let it out from time to time otherwise it would cease to be a WorldCon. If they didn't they would be demeaning the WorldCon to the same sort of status as 'The World Series' in baseball. If they didn't it go abroad from time to time, then all they would be holding would be a NASFiC under another name.

Anyway, my comments on WorldCons, etc., are strictly hypothetical. I have my opinions, yes, but nobody should pay attention. After all, there's going to be a WorldCon here in '87, and I won't be going. If I can't be bothered to attend a WorldCon that's just a couple of hundred miles from where I live, what right have I got to sound off on the subject?

---Buck Coulson---

Your rest-of-the-world con doesn't seem too feasible, for the same reason that you point out about the chances of some countries getting a WorldCon. Quite possibly New Zealand could bid successfully for a ResCon, but how many fans would show up? Though I suppose if you're just after status, it wouldn't matter; you'd have the name if not the game, to quote an old English expression.

---Cy Chauvin---

I didn't go to the NASFiC last year in large part because I think it is insulting to hold a convention in North America when we don't have a WorldCon here that year. But maybe the right thing to do would be to hold a NASFiC here every year, so that it didn't seem like an artificially staged event that detracts from WorldCon. After all, the USA and Canada are the only countries with a large fan population that don't have their own national conventions, or 'continental' conventions {e.g. Eurocon}. Actually the only other possible objection I can think of to 'ResCon' {get a better name} is that countries might spend so much time getting ready for and bidding for it that they wouldn't bid for the WorldCon {because it might be more difficult to win, and financially dangerous to lose}. That

would be a shame. Maybe prior WorldCons should donate to a general campaign fund, such as they have for political candidates here. Each legitimate bid could get money for bid parties, posters, ads in program books. Determining 'legitimate' would be a major problem, however...

---Irwin Hirsh---

The comments on Michelle's ResCon idea were interesting, though all of you {except for maybe James Styles} seem to be coming from the wrong direction. In her article Michelle says that it was the NASFiC which spored her idea for a ResCon, and that is the problem. The NASFiC is a North American con which is constituted within the rules of the World Science Fiction Society, and I would like to know why a World body concerns itself with a regional con. Likewise, why should a World body concern itself with a con which leaves out a continent? And why does the NASFiC only occur when the WorldCon leaves the North American continent?

When non-North Americans complain about the NASFiC they are usually countered by {a} other countries have their national cons, and {b} other countries have cons at WorldCon time. These are true but those natcons aren't tied into a scheme which says they are only held when the WorldCon isn't in the country, and the WSFS doesn't sanction any of those other conventions, whether they are held in August/September or not.

If the fans of the USA wish to have a national convention, and/or the fans of the North American continent want to have a continental con, let them go ahead and constitute the things {I understand that Canada has its national con}. And why not? If they want such a con, why should an Aussie object?



Perhaps it is time the USA had its own NatCon each year, irrespective of whether it has WorldCon or not. Possibly this would have positive effects: reducing the size of WorldCon to something more manageable, taking the pressure off cities bidding for WorldCon and perhaps reducing the necessity for such major financial outlays. WorldCon might also, then, spend more time outside the USA. I do think that an annual USA NatCon would devalue WorldCon to some degree, but that mightn't be such a terrible thing. At least it would be equitable. Perhaps the Conspiracy business meeting should be looking at removing NASFiC from WSFS rules, rather than attempting to change the rotation, as I understand they may be going to try to do.

---Mike Glicksohn---

As for changing the rotation, forget it. Not only wouldn't there be enough viable bids to merit including any out-of-US area on a regular basis but {a} the US-dominated business meeting would never accept such a change, and {b} there's no need for it since non-US bids can run whenever they want. Sorry, kids, but it's our ball and you can't play in the game unless you accept that.

Actually I think a UK- and European-dominated business meeting might just accept a change in rotation but I guess it would get voted back again in fairly short order. Anyway, Mike is right, it's a lot easier the way it is at the moment when any country can bid at any time.

The last letter in the ResCon section is actually in reply to one of the LoCs printed on it in the last issue. Frank Macskasy levelled a charge of parochialism at US fans - rather an unfair charge I thought - which is repudiated below.

---Harry Warner, Jr---

I'm not sure if Frank Macskasy is accurate when he defines American fans as parochial in the sense they think the world ends "at the eastern and western seaboard". I don't know if statistics on the point exist, but I'm pretty sure attendance by United States residents at WorldCons staged outside the USA has been much greater than the number of residents of other nations who show up at WorldCons in the United States. I can't think of any United States fanzine publisher who has refused to

distribute his publication to fans in other English speaking nations who are willing to trade or write locs on it, while there have been eras in Australia's fan history when almost none of its fanzines reached the United States and several fanzine publishers in the United Kingdom in recent years have restricted overseas circulation of their publications to perhaps three or four friends. TAFF and DUFF have received a great deal of their financial and publicity support from the United States segment of fandom. Yes, I know that income problems and smaller fan populations have tended to keep the number of Australians and Britons down at United States fan events, and I don't mean that they are true parochials. It's just that I hate to see national jealousies bob up in fanzines; there is enough phony patriotism and distrust of foreigners among mundanes.

In TSW 2/2 we published a piece by Mr Warner on some of his rather interesting musical tastes. Last issue we had criticism of the - rather individual - writing style that he used. This issue we have praise for his prose (sorry, couldn't resist that) but not for his musical tastes...

---Mike Glicksohn--- There's some really clever writing in this issue and some of it is with regard to material I'm actually interested in. {This is actually a ~~very/cleverly/disguised~~ compliment to Julian since he managed to get me to read perhaps the first fanzine article on records/music I've perused in the last fifteen years. Since I'm one of the two fans with absolutely no interest in music - the other died, destitute and unknown, before the invention of the mimeo - I usually skip over anything in a fanzine that deals with the subject. The quality of the writing in Julian's column was so high, however, that I actually read most of it. Don't know a single artist he was talking about and couldn't relate to anything he was saying but the man sure do write good. If he ever does a column on the Kingston Trio I promise I'll read it in its entirety.}

JW: Don't joke... an article on the Kingston Trio is quite possible. I've been a closet folkie for years, although I'll admit I originally only went to folk clubs so that I could inflict my putative poetry on their poor folkie ears.

---DeathWish Drang--- It's interesting to note the letters column is full of 'flames' {a flame is a term I learned from reading the computer networks. Essentially it's a critical comment, generally written in anger, hacking at someone else. A flame is inherently not constructive criticism}. The worst flames are the spelling or style flames: Where the writer is not criticising the content but the manner in which it is presented. I personally don't give a damn whether the words somatizing or micturition are used {provided they are used correctly - a matter more of content than form}. As for de-parenthesising prose - fie on thee, Rob Gerrand. The use of parentheses comes into its own in 'stream of consciousness' writing and lends a certain freshness to the reading of said prose. Used properly parentheses are just as useful as any other form of punctuation. Your worst error in my eyes is attributing motives and feelings to Mr Warner that he may not embrace. Not everyone feels that the use of parentheses is 'self-indulgent' {alert readers may have guessed that this is a flame itself - one of the problems with flames is that they tend to produce multiple flames or fires}.

JW: There's always some bright spark...

---John DeChancie--- As for Mr Warner's tastes, they are not mine. I don't listen to avant-garde rock or reggae or jazz or anything modern. For me, Mozart is right on the cutting edge of musical development. My friends think I'm a hopeless fuddy-duddy, of course. Here's what I say: I'm no longer interested in listening to a series of monotonous rhythmic pulses that carry along a few melodic and harmonic ideas, more or less as an

afterthought. I'm interested in music. {I can hear the groans.} I say this after a lifetime of listening to and even enjoying pop, rock, jazz and everything else.

I found this quite interesting since it expresses almost exactly what I feel about writing. When I was a teenager I read science fiction and found it satisfying. Now I mostly find it rather hollow and I tend to turn to the great writers of the end of last century and the first half of this one. My Maugham is the equivalent of your Mozart. Fortunately my friends don't condemn me as a fuddy-duddy for this (great literature is on a number of levels quite acceptable) but I sometimes think some of them consider it pretension when I tell them what I read instead of SF these days.

On to the Bob Shaw forum.

---Roger Weddall---

In the case of the Bob Shaw forum, there's a lively unboring discussion of some science fiction with the sense about it that you're listening to a couple of people talking {at a pub, of course, one of the people involved being Bob Shaw}, rather than reading some pretentious hogwash that amounts to nothing. Why, I might even go out and buy some Bob Shaw sf to see what's going on.

---Walt Willis---

As the editor who gave Bob Shaw his start {I crept up behind him with a blown-up paper bag} I feel bound to defend his female characterisations. We are not discussing here one of those interminable chronicles of middle-class adulteries that pass today as novels, but science fiction, the literature of ideas. In SF characters are merely for presenting the ideas in forms assimilable to the reader and propelling the narrative from one idea to another; subtlety of characterisation would be as much out of place as a time machine in 'A Dance To The Music Of Time'.

{{From later postcard.}}

I'd certainly not intended to imply that I accepted the criticisms of Bob's characterisation. I'd merely jumped to another subject, namely the intrinsic importance of characterisation to the SF I like. At the back of my mind were stories like Asimov's Nightfall, Blish's Surface Tension and Clarke's Rescue Party: I don't remember anything about the characters in any of them, and I don't think anyone else does. However I would never question the right of others to like SF in which characterisation is important and would be interested in examples.

---Cy Chauvin---

What Mr Loney's article brings out is something I often struggle with in a novel - to what extent should you judge a novel by the opinion the author has of their characters? Aren't characters individuals, and shouldn't authors be free to write about individual characters as they see fit? I think they should. But if a critic such as Mr Loney can point out a consistent attitude toward a type of character in novel after novel, then there is a basis {perhaps} for an objection. I think it's pretty sad when authors have a stereotyped reflex when it comes to the portrayal of women. Fiction is the last refuge of the individual: why then should all women act alike? {Not that I'm sure all Shaw's women do.} However, I do think I prefer Shaw's women to Orson Scott Card's sadistic children. If Mr Loney really wants to let some blood, he should read Ender's Game and The Fringe {both nominated for awards this year} and then write a review. I don't care much for children, but such sadism is repelling.

---Diane Fox---

Women in Bob Shaw's SF - wouldn't agree with this entirely, but there does seem to be a fair number of bitchy, irrationally suddenly hostile women, and unhappy bitter relationships in these books. {Of course, there's a great number of unhappy relationships in real life - what's the percentage of marriages that survive - I've heard it's three

out of four as a rule, and I'd say that two out of three may survive because the alternatives are even less pleasant than an imperfect relationship.} However, in a Bob Shaw book a female character usually is merely cardboard and decoration until she says or does something ill-tempered, whereupon she suddenly comes into focus as a character. Maybe the problem is not sexism but something far simpler - Bob Shaw may simply have trouble creating a strong, positive, good female character! As many authors have trouble creating positively good characters of any sex, this isn't an overwhelming fault.

{{Commenting on Issue Three.}} Another Bob Shaw article - full of fascinating details, such as why his heroes often have names beginning with G. This sort of insight into the process of writing is always interesting and valuable.

The fiendish Elizabeth actually based on a real-life person - whew! I certainly thought she was a bit over-the-top for a fictional person, but as a real one she certainly is believable! Reminds me of a couple of characters I've met. I can't agree with Mark Loney's comment that "a real-life model of Elizabeth Lindstrom wasn't the president of anything except perhaps her local sewing club". Thoroughly loathsome individuals often achieve great wealth and power. I need not give examples.

---Harry Warner, Jr--- All the commentary on that article about alleged Shavinism was quite interesting. Even if you riled Bob, one good thing resulted: it got into print some information on his sources and purposes as a writer that might never have been preserved without your instigation. Just think how much better off we'd be if someone had written nasty things in a fanzine about Shakespeare and that playwright had responded with the sort of background information scholars have been trying to delve out for the past three and a half centuries.

---Skel--- I think Mark Loney was unfair to Bob Shaw. Let me explain - I'm talking about fairness, courtesy and ethics. I know TSW is your zine, and therefore it is quite right for you to have your say in it, but the ethics of discourse and debate require an evenhanded policy. Mark had his say in the previous issue, and if he didn't properly take that opportunity, then tough shit. Then you let Bob make his reply, and that's fine. Then Mark comes in again and has to have the last word. This means of course that Mark has had the last word twice, which privilege was never granted to Bob. Of course Bob can write again, but then so could Mark... and Bob cannot be expected to spend every waking moment for the rest of his life writing to Mark.

I am fairly sure that Bob didn't expect to make Mark change his mind, but simply wanted to have his say and set the record straight as he saw it. If you aren't going to play fair in this regard, then it is hardly likely to encourage anyone else to do the same thing. Nobody is going to take the trouble if they know they are only going to get sniped at for their pains. "Oh, it's just that asshole in TSW... best to ignore him." The thing is in your own fanzine, if you insist upon always having the final word, then it is like shooting fish in a barrel. You can never lose any argument or debate in the eyes of your readership, the judges... so what's the point? They will always have your rebuttal firmest in their minds. I also note that when it came to the other letter-writers in the forum, Mark's compulsive Last Words were always at greater length than the comments themselves. It seems to me that if you start something off in a zine like this, you should always do so with the consideration that you'll be letting the 'opposition' finish it, so the onus is on you to get it right the first time.

Getting to content, too much of Mark's Last Words was the semantic equivalent of "Nyargh, you're wrong, so there!" When he does remember to switch his braincell on it is too little and too late. When he enlarges upon the background for that partial sentence from 'Orbitsville Departue' it seems to me that he is so blinkered by his thesis, and the need to view everything in a light which supports it, that he fails to realise his analysis precisely supports Bob's intent for the remark. Yes, of course he was objecting to her being strong-willed, but it was, as Bob said, an objection to her being strong-willed in this instance. Christ Mark, take a look out of the window. There's a world out there and it's full of people. PEOPLE, fully realised, not cardboard cutouts designed to strike philosophical poses. Of course nobody wants to be married to a mental blancmange, well no self-respecting person at any rate, and yet it is inevitable that in the real world this will lead to conflicts of will, and that equally inevitably you will lose some of them. At such times it is natural to bemoan the fact and, when you don't get your own way, to wish it wasn't so. It's a thing called Ego and Selfishness. It's there in all of us to a greater and lesser degree. When you get married they don't put you through a magic machine that turns you into a perfect human being, fully capable of behaving like a Saint. Hah! Growing towards emotional maturity does not mean all the petty emotions disappear, it simply means that one learns to face them, accept them for what they are and not be ruled by them.

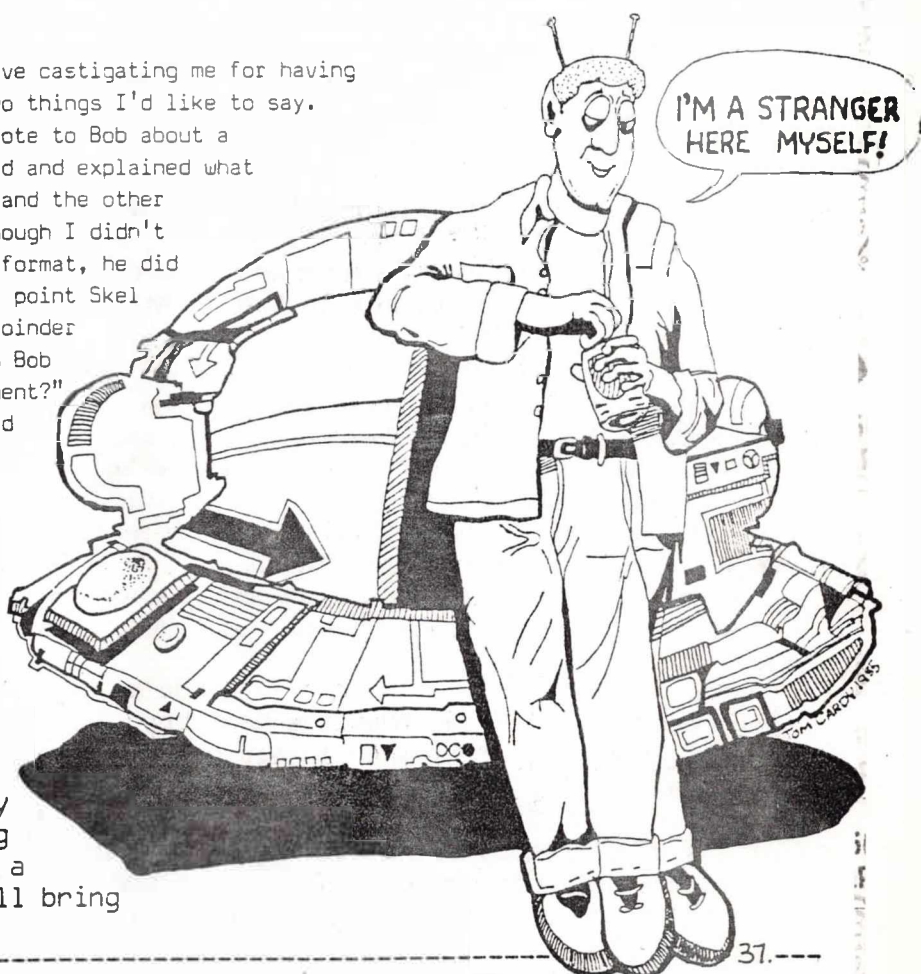
Yes, Cas can sometimes be a right pain in the arse (when her will is stronger than mine), but I wouldn't change that if doing so meant changing her, and neither I suspect would Garry Dallen feel differently. But this doesn't stop either of us, faulty, defective human beings that we are, from wishing that, just in this instance it didn't have to be so.

Put the text books, the creeds, and the polemics away Mark, and live.

ML: At the risk of a second missive castigating me for having the last word yet again, there two things I'd like to say. The first is in my defence. I wrote to Bob about a month before TSW 2/3 was published and explained what I intended to do with his letter and the other responses that had come in. Although I didn't ask Bob for his approval of that format, he did have the opportunity to raise the point Skel has. As an obvious, possible rejoinder to that is, "So what? Why should Bob have to ask for evenhanded treatment?" - the second thing is that, should he choose to take up the offer, Bob can have the guaranteed last words on this subject in the next issue of TSW. Over to him.

MM: And so on to TSW 2/3 and our lead article wherein Dave Lockett explained the reason for his unhappy countenance.

---Harry Warner, Jr---
Dave Lockett isn't the only one who goes around looking gloomy. Every so often in a restaurant the waitress will bring



my order and will look at my face and will snap out: "Whassamatter, don't ya want it?" She doesn't want to believe the brutal truth that the meal looks fine and that's just the way I look. However, nothing happened to me when I went to see Raintree Country that I can blame my glowering visage on; I looked that way long before that film was released.

JW: Now look, it's not that bad, Dave's face just looks kinda comfy - it reminds me of one of my favourite old shoes...

---Gina Goddard---

I too have been subject to the 'Lockett Look' and also conceived that he held a deep dislike for me. Thank goodness I decided to ignore the possibility that I was right. It was a great pity that one event can colour one's life for so long. Undoubtedly, however, it can. I went through an experience that had a similar effect on my life as Dave's did on his. I can only admire Dave's strength of character in being able to write about his. I will never do the same with mine.

---Marc Orlieb---

Foolish, foolish people. Publishing Dave Lockett's tale of steamy sex in an aged Valiant sedan. You've really opened a can of worms there. Next thing you'll have Joseph Nicholas writing about his first ideologically sound sexual experience on Marx's tomb (or was that Norman Stanley Fletcher?), Jack Herman describing in lascivious detail his first intimate experience with a hat, Lewis Morley on rubber reveries, and Jerry Pournelle describing the trouble he had fitting into a 155mm anti-tank gun. {What, you mean Dave's article was about more than just sex? What an anti-climax. I'll have to start reading TSW using both hands.}

I will admit that being a non-driver probably destroyed any possibility of my developing a normal sex life in the far outer suburbs of Adelaide. Not only is making love on the backseat of a motorcycle rather exposed, it's also most precarious. {Mind you, I have heard of some interesting things being done under cover of those lap-rugs that used to be popular with motor scooter riders. A gust of wind has been known to reveal pillion passengers using a most unusual security strap.}

The best indecent proposition I ever received was when I was an ecologically sound bicycle rider. I somehow couldn't see myself dinkying the lady in question off home on the crossbar. {Before you ask, it was a gentleman's bike.} I was forced to refuse the offer.

Marc goes on to discuss the bheer panel and offers some significant insights. At this point we would have liked to bring you some comments from a LoC Jack Herman sent us but we have had a most embarrassing Logistical Problem. Our apologies to Jack. Should this Logistical Problem correct itself (though we don't think it will - we've hunted high and low), we will bring you Jack's comments next ish. The gist of them was that Toohey's is the only decent bheer in Australia and Jack is worried that, now that Tooheys has been bought by a Western Australian Brewing Magnate, its quality might deteriorate. We can't share Jack's worry since we don't agree with him in the first place but we guess he's entitled to his opinion even if he is wrong. (People get very parochial about bheers - why should we be any exception?)

---Marc Orlieb---

Who is your beer panel trying to fool? Any beer drinker knows that the best beer in the world is the first one on Friday afternoon, followed closely by the second beer on Friday afternoon. Saturday evening beers pale into insignificance, though the beer after setting stage on a hot Saturday afternoon comes close to the superlative qualities of the first Friday beer. {There is a genre of beer, commonly described as "Fred's Shout" beer, Fred being anyone bar the first person singular, that is reputed to be pretty bloody alright too.}

---LoCs/Party Throwing-----

Amelia's party tossing article aroused feelings of nostalgia for some, thoughts of having a good time for others, and certain allegations about both Amelia's and my behaviour at parties. We suspect that the parties involved must be confusing us with someone else...

---John Newman---

{{Darling Amelia}} It was marvelous to read your recent party tips in 'The Space Wastrel'. All the parties here have been dreadfully flat since your departure, and at last I understand why!

SO many reasons! SUCH a silly me not to realise! I made ALL the mistakes you mentioned last time I had a party. No wonder it has never been reported in the right press.

The occasion was the FAREWELL TO THORNBURY affair at the old Thornbury abode. You remember it, I'm sure. The place that Cliff Wind was so effusive over the 'Edwardian Features' of. We had a couple of good get togethers there, and created some small bits of fannish history, didn't we?

Well it was time to leave. I had ALMOST finished the renovating {that had driven out Gerald Smith when HE tried to live with me}, and it seemed sensible to have the fen in before the cracks in the wall were fixed. I wanted EVERYBODY to come, but was only blessed with about half those I personally spoke to.

THEN, because so few fen arrived, they were FAR outnumbered by the odds and sods of old friends, work people and family I invited {and who, of course, came}. Tsk, tsk. It was bizarre enough to see my Marxist brother chatting amicably with our Sydney branch computer salesman wizz, but when Roger Weddall and Mark Linneman discovered, hidden amongst my OWN programming staff, a man who used to be a fan, and can tell tales about Leigh Edmonds and Paul Stevens way back before AussieCon One, it was all TOO much!

Some of the people from the FIRST party I ever had at Thornbury were there. I wish that I had known to TELL them to enjoy it! They seemed to have forgotten that bit. Well, to be honest, that first party wasn't too good either. Only FIVE people came to it!

That was before your time, of course.

ONE problem I didn't have was breakables. Fortunately I had moved most of the stuff to the new place beforehand. Some partygoers felt the place was a bit empty, tho.

The major mistake I made, however, was that I tried to zip around and MAKE people have a good time. It never works. Even my life-long buddy Rod wanted to talk INTEREST RATES and stuff with Lia's friend Len. The end of the evening arrived all too soon, and I didn't seem to have seen enough of anyone. But they all left. {Except of course for JAN, which was rather important!}

At least my boss, Colin, was so busy rapping about ZEN to people as he left that he forgot his SCOTCH! That was a big improvement, as the crowd in the lounge room had the TV on, and watched all of 'Hercules' {or the 'Ten Commandments', I forget which} with the sound down so they could make their own INANE dialog! I started to drink a bit more then.

Anyway, that was the end of the home I had in Thornbury. This new place we are renting in East St Kilda is obviously temporary, and does not feel like a home at all. We will aim to have a real home next year some time. That's life, darling, back a little, and then forward again.

Thanks for you tips, I'll try and remember them come the next party, when we have a real home again.

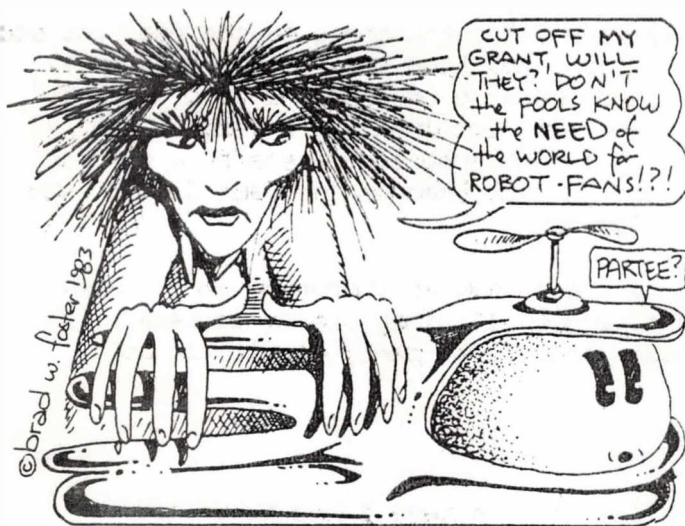
---Deathwish Drang---

Having attended several of Amelia Underwood's parties in my far distant youth I can vouch for her ability to throw a good party. There is only one small correction I would like to make, Amelia did not mention her fondness for continuing parties into the small hours of the morning until the numbers had dwindled to the point that the party could be continued in her bed! Only a cad would suggest that I mention this as a matter of sour grapes - even given that I was never invited to take part.

JW: Any talk about parties immediately brings to mind the legendary bad taste party at the Loney/Muijsert/Warner slanshack in Norfolk Street in South Perth. That party overcame a few minor disasters to become one of the best I remember - and funnily enough it ended with all of the remaining guests (six? seven?) in a certain person's bed... playing scrabble of course.

---Roger Weddall---

Reading Amelia's party advice it amused me to find how often during it I would nod my head in silent agreement with what advice she had to give. There are a couple of points on which we differ, and a couple of spots where we arrive at identical solutions by different means, but I guess this is to be expected. I quite liked the bit about the offering of everything but bed space - a neat idea indeed.



---Harry Warner, Jr---

Even if Amelia Underwood doesn't exist the party tossing tips seem reasonable. In fact, some of them seem to have been practised by the hosts and hostesses of the children's parties which I attended in my extreme youth. I do wonder about the advice to put an assortment of reading matter where guests can get the books and periodicals. Some fans are such ardent collectors that there might be less reading matter in the house when the party ends than when it started. Of course, this might be the perfect solution to the problem of what to do with the magazines dumped on you by evangelizing

religious visitors, fanzines whose sole content involves this or that big feud, and copies of Dhalgren.

---Gina Goddard---

Whilst "Amelia Underwood's" article on fannish party throwing was interesting I feel that she missed one vital area of fannish parties that provides even more problems for the organiser than getting fen and non-fen to mix. That is getting two different groups of fen to mix. When fans meet total strangers then at least they have the advantage of not having any preconceived ideas about each other. Two different groups of fans, however, often have very strong ideas about what the others are like and, unfortunately, these are very, very hard to overcome. I was at a party recently where two different groups of people who had very strong interests in SF sat in opposite corners of the room all night, with NO mixing taking place whatever. A few people, who could claim close kinship with one group and fringe friendship with the other spent the evening trying to promote relations between the two. This turned out to be relatively unsuccessful, though I live in hope of improvements.

If groups of fen who see themselves as "incompatible" and who say that the others are always to blame could just come to some sort of friendly arrangement

---LoCs/Party Throwing/Killing People/Odds'n'Ends-----

then the Perth SF community would be a lot happier place to live. This probably applies to other fannish communities as well. Come on people, give each other a chance. All you are doing is ripping apart the hope of a continued successful community. {I do use the word community a lot, don't I?}

JW: Much as I hate to say it, you're right kid. Amongst the established Australian fan mafia I feel like a little boy whilst in the company of the "new" fen I feel like some crusty old uncle.

MM: Well, if anyone has any constructive ideas about solving this generations-old fannish problem, just yell it from the closest mountain top. It seems we have one correspondent who might well adopt that good old fascist stance 'kill them all and let Ghu sort them out'.

---DeathWish Drang--- The article on 'How to Wipe Out 85% of the Population' was interesting, but why stop with 85%? My favourite means of killing people off is a technique that I stole from a William Bains article in either 'Tanjent' or 'Noumenon'. The method is extremely simple: place an impenetrable force screen around the sun at a distance of 1000 km. Allow to cook for a while. Remove the screen. If you let the sun cook for long enough most of it will be raw energy by the time you cancel the screen. So what does that mean? Well if you were on Alpha Centauri - four years after the event the temperature would suddenly climb to well over 6000C - effectively vaporising anything you happened to be standing on at the time.

Fellow readers may amuse themselves by computing just how much of the galaxy would be destroyed if 70% of the sun's mass was converted into energy and released in a split second. But exploding the sun is merely the start! How about enclosing the whole galaxy and allowing it to cook for a while?

Well now you know how he got his name.

The odds'n'ends are a complaint, some compliments (which tell a story all by themselves) and a very odd letter that we don't quite know what to think... do... ah, gurgle.

---Harry Andruschak--- As for the zine itself, all that talk about alcohol is a bore to me... I am still a recovering alcoholic, two and a half years sober, and a member of the "We Agnostics" A.A. group.

---Brad Foster--- Strange, strange mixture of topics in these two issues, which makes them all the more interesting to read - if you don't like this topic, just wait a bit, a new one will be along any moment now!

---Roger Weddall--- I found TSW an intriguing mixture of the personal, the spiffy, the humorous and the odd bit of useful advice - sometimes all four at the same time.

---Lyn McConchie--- ...you have a sort of Black Humour format which I like...

---Betty de Gabriele--- I really did enjoy your zine and have heard only rumours about the alcoholic and sexual propensities of W.A. fen {which of course extends to the rest of Australia} but those wonderfully enjoyable articles on booze and of course the opening article by Dave Luckett were great!

JW: Ask Dave Luckett sometime about the night when he enjoyed the hot, steamy company of six naked women.

MM: You can talk Jules! What about those two women and all those chains and the arab? Or was that just the way he was dressed?

---LoCs/Odds'n'Ends-----

---Tom Cardy--- The fanzine is lively, with a good balance of humour and serious writing. In fact, it has an almost New Zealand air about it. {Undoubtedly your {{Michelle's}} influence and Perth's isolation from the rest of Australia!}

It's nice of you to say so, Tom, and we appreciate that your intentions are the best, but have you thought through what you have insinuated about the rest of Australian fandom there!!?

Tom is right about one thing for sure and that's that New Zealand is a lively place. As evidence we bring you a letter we received recently from Mark Turner of the WindyCon committee explaining why the 1987 NatCon has been shifted two months.

Problems. The Academy {{the original hotel}} changed the rules and we decided on the Hotel St George and they discovered a double booking {{two months later}}. So - as Auckland was having a con at Easter - Labor Weekend {{October}} looked like the new date. That would mean no Joe {{Haldeman}} and no Frank Andrews so nearly no con. Auckland however admitted that the Easter Weekend con was a hoax. So the story now is that WindyCon 87 is to be held in Wellington at the Hotel St George over Easter Weekend April 17th to April 20th 1987.

Everything else is as per my previous letter. We have decided to remain with the St George because they've bent over backwards to help and acceded to our demands. Rates are \$65 + GST for a single room and \$75 + GST for a double/twin. Any further queries, new address {{for concom}} is top of the letter. {{As per the ad elsewhere in the zine.}}

May you live in interesting times, indeed!

Back to TSW and what the readers liked about it.

---Roger Weddall--- Please keep Ian Nichols writing for you - he's good dammit!

JW: Look Roger, I'd suggest you go into prostitution rather than complimenting Ian Nichols if you're that desperate for money.

MM: And if you think that was unkind, cop this....

---Katherine Chopin--- I recently had a chance to read The Space Wastrel for the first time and was pleasantly surprised at the quality of some of the articles. I was especially taken with Dave Luckett's article 'Paradise Lost - By The Dashboard Light'. David, I found your modest sophistication very pleasant reading indeed. I imagined you a tall, soft featured gentleman speaking with a well modulated accent... but I digress. My real purpose for writing this letter was to unburden some of my ire. I don't usually make a fuss over mediocrity, but in this case I will make an exception.

Who is the pontifical prick who wrote 'Something Else To Do With Grapes'? I asked my friends and they don't seem to know much about him. When I told them I wished to write a letter airing my contumely their advice was something along the lines of 'Don't bother, Ian Nichols sounds like the sort of jerk who would be thrilled at the prospect of someone taking the time to criticize him. He's probably a very lonely little man.' But perhaps, just perhaps, some of what I have to say will filter through the rather large swelling that surrounds Mr Nichols' tiny mind.

My first thought after reading your boring article was 'Who fucking cares?'

"Like all alcoholic drinks, it is made by yeasts
converting sugar into alcohol."

REALLY? Gee, what imagination! What style! Mr Nichols you sound like an unemployed school teacher looking for a juvenile audience to impress. How did you get Loney et.al. to print it? But it is not simply that your article is boring, it is the infuriating subtext that really pisses me off. How can a person who is obviously very limited have the gall to write with a tone which automatically assumes the reader's ignorance? Do you like making enemies? Did you deliberately set about to earn the contempt of every fan who reads your article. I can't conceive of an intellect {I use the term loosely} which automatically assumes its superiority to everyone else. Perhaps if your article was explaining the theory of relativity or the mathematics behind a thermo-nuclear device you would have an excuse. But beer?

"Beer is made, and aged, in great big vats."

Now gather round boys and girls. Who can tell me what a 'vat' is? Isn't that a funny word! And then there's,

"...{yes, best beloved, stout is a form of beer.}"

Jesus Christ. You obviously imagine yourself as an authority on all things. The joke is that your tacky style betrays the fact that you surrounded yourself with poorly written wine guides for the beginner before putting pen to paper.

As can be seen in the first paragraph of my letter, I like to imagine what the person holding the pen looks like --- David, if you're ever in Sydney.... In the case of 'Something Else To Do With Grapes' I pictured a small, fat, balding man with a huge ego problem; the sort of man who has to list his accomplishments at dinner parties; the sort of man who has to hint at his vast sexual prowess and the women he has had to beat off with a stick; in short, a pompous male pig of the worst kind; a male with an ego swollen with his own imagined importance, but eggshell thin. Your last line Mr Nichols was

"...next issue I might tell you the difference between cognac and all the rest.

Love n kisses - Ian"

Well Ian, don't bother. Life's too short, and unless I miss my guess so is your dick.

Don't ask us! We don't know who Ms Chopin is - only that she has supplied a Sydney address. This letter came in very late - it only just made it into this ish - and as a result Ian hasn't had a chance to see it before we go to print. He will have right of reply in Issue 5.

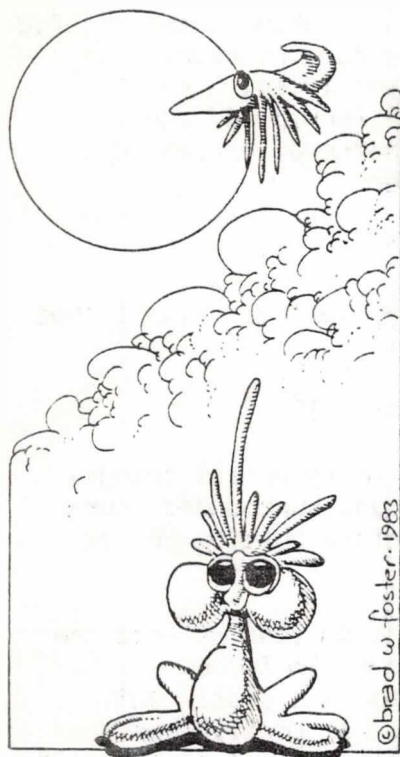
Jack Vance: Rescuer of Maidens

and competence in women, even on those very rare occasions when they are all found together. In fact, in nearly all cases, competence and independence are found only in unattractive and unsympathetic women, and may be symptoms of profoundly perverted sexuality. The proper deportment for an attractive woman, for them, is dependence and helplessness - to be property, in fact.

This, I hasten to add, before the Ideological Enforcers arrive, is not my view, and I do not imply that it is Vance's either. In fact, I don't doubt that Vance is having a quiet laugh at the maiden-rescue school of fiction, altogether.

Who was it said that satire is taking a subject and pushing it up just one more notch?

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WHY YOU GOT THIS*WHY YOU GOT THIS*WHY YOU GOT THIS*WHY YOU GOT THIS*WHY YOU GOT THIS

- ☐ You contributed/you locced/your name is mentioned/you paid{!}
- ☐ We can still remember the last time you contributed/locced
- ☐ We like you and we're going to send it to you anyway
- ☐ We think your name looks good on our mailing list {you must be a BNF/Pro}
- ☐ We trade/would like to trade for:
- ☐ We live in hope/you've got something we want:
- ☒ We'd like to add you to our mailing list and will send two {2} issues
- ☐ This is goodbye, not au revoir, unless something mutually satisfying happens
- ☐ Persons having three or more of the above ticked may claim a prize on application to our residence, P O Box 545, South Perth, Western Australia

AU REVOIR*AUF WIEDERSEHEN*AU REVOIR*AUF WIEDERSEHEN*AU REVOIR*AUF WIEDERSEHEN*

Thank you for the terrific response to TSWs 2 and 3. Hope you liked this one too, although we realise the subject matter was a lot less diverse and catered to a much narrower range of tastes. Back to eclectic superficiality next ish.

Speaking of response, one that would be welcome would be for someone to send us some European addresses. We'd like to send the zine particularly to more Scandinavians and Benelux people. If you know anyone who reads English and might respond, let us know. Reward for such info: more copies of The Space Wastrel. {Well, you didn't think it'd be something you wanted, did you?}