

thyme

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ADVERTISING costs \$50 for a full page and \$25 for half a page. Thyme exists to report, comment on and review the latest in sf and related interests in Australia, and other places too (but not Seth Efrica). Contributions are always welcome...nay, they are positively encouraged. A telephone number to contact us on is (03) 376 8391. Overseas Agents for Thyme are:

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The 1985 NEBULA AWARDS

Voted upon annually by the Science Fiction Writers of America (SFWA), widely referred to, along with the Hugos, as one of the two major sf awards, at least the creatures are pretty - swirls of crystalline stuff set in a block of lucite: they look good on the mantelpiece.

Best Novel

No Award

Best Novella

No Award

Best Novelette

No Award

Best Short Story

No Award

Best Dramatic Presentation

No Award

Yes - you can believe the evidence of your eyes. As we go to press we have the shocking news that no award has been given in every category of Nebula Award. There has to be an explanation for this, but this is practically a Stop Press, and you'll have to wait for the next issue of Thyme for the background to this startling story. Have the SFWA developed a sense of taste? Surely not.

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DUFF and assorted GUFF - the Fan Funds

Fan funds, fan funds everywhere. Undoubtedly worthy causes but they all somehow seem to fall due around the same time, at least in Australia. Faced with a slew of fan fund administrators, have you ever wondered how the whole kit & caboodle started up? The very first fan fund was a one-off affair, the Big Pond Fund, designed to bring British fan John Carnell over to America. Big thing, travelling overseas in those days. Freddie Laker was just a young business executive, and so on.

The idea caught on, and there were a couple of 'Willis' funds to do pretty much the same thing, but with Walt. Eventually - fans being the disorganised mob that they are, it took a while - the Trans Atlantic Fan Fund (TAFF) was named, and is to this day a yearly occurrence, and alternates between sending a Brit (or European) to America, and sending an American to (Europe).

DUFF - the Down Under Fan Fund - started up in 1972 as a USA-Aus exchange, a la TAFF; the Get Up From Under Fan Fund (GUFF) was started off in '79, and was a U.K.-Aus swap, and in '83 we saw the birth of FFANZ - Fan Fund of Aus & New Zealand.



Tom Sawyer in Trouble with London Censors - by Joseph Grigg (Cox News Service)

London, 8th April - *Tom Sawyer*, the Mark Twain classic on which tens of thousands of American children have been raised, is in hot water.

A century or more after it was written, left-wing education officials in London have ruled it "racist" and "sexist" and ordered it removed from school libraries under their control.

Muckleberry Finn, banned by some local school authorities in the United States, so far has escaped this fate in London - possibly because the officials here have not heard of it.

The Inner London Education Authority (ILEA) has also banned many other classics for similar reasons. They include:--

- * Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*, dubbed "racist, sexist and imperialist";
- * Charlotte Bronte's *Jane Eyre*, condemned as sexist;
- * Beatrix Potter's *Peter Rabbit* and Benjamin Bunny children's books because they were about "middle-class rabbits".

Mr John Colinene, until recently Headmaster of St Charles Primary School in the Kensington district of West London, said: "I was flabbergasted when my staff were ordered to check each book in our small library for classism, sexism, racism and ageism."

He quoted Mrs Pamela Pullen, an ILFA schools inspector, as ordering all books written more than ten years ago to be thrown out of the library and replaced by others approved by the authority. Mr Colinene quit.

But a spokesman for the authority said: "This is a genuine attempt to counter racism and sexism in books and to produce books that give a broader, fairer view." The Inner London Education Authority is an elected local government body responsible for all State Schools in London. It is dominated by extreme left-wing Labourites, called by more conservative-minded Britons "the looney left". Its boss is Mrs Frances Morrell, prominent left-wing activist and one-time close associate of "hard left" Labourite member of parliament, Mr Anthony (Tony) Benn. She has ruled that all "sexist, racist and classist stereotypes" are to be avoided and eliminated from education of children in London. Mr Coline said that he first knew of the new leftist policy twist when Mrs Fullen, an aide to Mrs Morrell, showed up unannounced one day at St Charles school and demanded to see its library and teaching books.

"Only then," he said, "did I learn about the bans on so many children's classics." He said the school library was ordered closed down and any books written more than ten years ago destroyed. He said rather than destroy books, he sold them off to eager parents at 10c a copy. Then he quit and took a less risky job working on Church of England archives. Other books that he said aroused the ire of ILEA officials included Charles Dickens' *Oliver Twist*, denounced as "anti-semitic", Shakespeare's *King Lear*, rejected as sexist, and a commentary on the Bible by the Reverend Ronald Knox, simply because it was written more than ten years ago.

A set of illustrated books much-used to teach reading to five-year-olds was disapproved of because it showed well-dressed little girls helping their mothers in the kitchen and little boys helping their fathers in the garage.

"That," ILEA inspector Mrs Pullen was quoted as saying, "is sexist and classist." Mr Colin-ene said: They were ordered replaced by a reader showing little girls in overalls working in a garage and little boys in a kitchen."

Other schools reported their libraries and teaching books also were subjected to a thorough purge. They said this was based on the new ILEA policy directives banning "racism" and "sexism", and promoting "equal opportunities". They said discarded books have been replaced by others of "multi-ethnic character" approved by the ILEA.

Mr Ron Letheren, ILEA senior staff inspector for schools, said that "in a multi-racial society it's very important that children should be given books which don't diminish their view of themselves."

Some London schools also have been ordered to stop teaching Latin because it is "elitist".

[illegible]

Comments, anyone? Suggested topics for discussion:

- * What does Mr Anthony (Tony) Benn think of Shakespeare?
- * When does a language become "elitist", and how?
- * Examine the use and intended effect of words such as 'subjected', 'denounced' and 'demanded'.
- * What is a "middle-class rabbit"?

And then there's SEFF, operating between Scandinavia and the Rest of Europe - running its second race this year - but things are quite confusing enough without this one. Theoretically people could keep on inventing Fan Funds until they ran out of countries or regions to swap fans between. It's bad enough having three administrators after your pocket money at the same time, in Australia.

However, if people chasing you up at conventions and asking for money is bothersome, there is the fact that you get to see all manner of strange (and usually nice) people who are brought over by these funds and, who knows, maybe one day you'll get to go over there with the help of one of these things. Suffice to say that the practical effects and benefits outweigh the bother, and this year we have three people coming to Australia as Fan Fund Winners.

The FFANZ winner was decided a short while ago - congratulations Nigel Rowe.

The GUFF winner is about to be decided - watch next issue for the results.

That leaves DUFF

This year 193 people total voted in the DUFF race (to select the most popular candidate for the trip to Aussiecon Two, in August in Melbourne); here is a full list of the results:

candidate	votes	plus write-ins	plus holdover	plus rich	plus joni	
Rich Brown	35.....	36.....	37 xxx			brown stopa
Marty & Robbie Cantor	71...72.....		74.....	85.....	97...	declared elected.
Mike Glicksohn	42.....	42.....	43.....	58.....	87 xxx	
Joni Stopa	37.....	38.....	38.....	43 xxx		
"hold-over" (no-one)	4.....	5 xxx				
No Preference	-.....	-.....	1.....	7.....	9	
"write-in" votes*	4 xxx					

*whosoever you wish to name °+ , < > , 0 2 4 6 8 10 12 14 16 18 20 22 24 26 28 30 32 34 36 38 40 42 44 46 48 50 52 54 56 58 60 62 64 66 68 70 72 74 76 78 80 82 84 86 88 90 92 94 96 98 100 which, translated from 'Symbol II' means 39 people in Australia voted. And so did 154 in America.

Congrats, then to Marty & Robbie Cantor, best known in fandom for the fanzine *Holier Than Thou* - see this year's Hugo ballot, *Thyme* #43. They'll be out for the World Convention, but if you'd like to get in touch with them before they arrive, their address in America is 11565 Archwood Street, North Hollywood CA 91606, U.S.A.

DUFF 1986: DUFF 1986 will be paying for an Australian delegate to Confederation, the 1986 WorldCon, to be held in Atlanta, Georgia. To qualify as a candidate the fan needs the nomination of two American and three Australian nominators. They also need to post a bond and submit a 100-word policy statement. Nominations for DUFF 1986 will close (most likely) during Aussiecon Two. Meanwhile, as Jack says, consider.

Speaking of Jack Herman, 1984 DUFF winner and current Australian Administrator, he's been doing a sterling job as an Administrator, with raffles and other sales to help promote Duff. Not only has he done that, however; he has produced a...

DUFF TRIP REPORT. One of the conditions of standing for DUFF is the general understanding that the winning candidate will undertake to produce a Trip Report, ie. a written report chronicling the overseas adventures of said winning candidate. It has been one of the minor scandals of the Fan Fund business that so few Trip Reports have ever seen the light of day. DUFF has produced three fully-accredited Trip reports in the 13 years it has been running. Yes, after Lesleigh Luttrell's in '72 and Leigh Edmonds's excellent *Emu Tracks Over America*, Jack Herman's *Wahfful Tracks* is the first DUFF Trip Report to appear in Ten Years.

If that were not enough, LA Con II, this year's World SF Convention did what was considered by many a sensible move - they threatened not to give any money to the funds unless someone *did* start producing these Reports. At the close of LA Con II two parcels of \$500 each were set aside for GUFF, TAFF and DUFF, one to be presented to the fund as soon as a report was produced. Jack is the first to collect, and on behalf of DUFF. Let's hope (however unrealistic this may be) that others are motivated to follow his example. In the meantime, speaking of fundraising, if you want to find out what sort of goodies Jack has for DUFF sale, he's at Box 272 Wentworth Bldg, Sydney Uni., 2006 - ask for a copy of the DUFF Newsletter

DITMAR COMMENT

Following the announcement of this year's Australian SF Achievement Awards (Ditmars) in the last issue of *Thyme*, Damien Broderick - one of this year's Special Award winners - has the following to say.

'Thyme's thoughts on the Ditmars are more cordial than some that I've heard (and had run through my brainstem). Last year's apparent shambles ought to have alerted all concerned. Gloom.

'Not that good things and true failed to occur. Merv Binns has earned his Ditmar ((best fanzine)) long since, and even if (sadly) his ship seems just about to sink with the few hands left aboard I heartily endorse his getting, belatedly, a medal for Long Service & A Job Well Done.

'Bruce's candidature for Editor of the year is, admittedly, mysterious, though a point which people have overlooked is his important role as chief lit'r'y taster for Norstrilia. This is an on-going role, and his failure to be seen actually editing SF in public during 1984 should not, perhaps, be paraded.

'You mention, of course, the notorious "special awards" ((aka the 'I'm Jeff Harris and I Like...' awards)), pointing out that "Damien isn't complaining." Listen, cobber, I'm always complaining. When they give me the Nobel Prize for Lotto Studies I probably won't go. Yes, I like getting the dear wee monoliths as much as the next person -- and the next person, as it happens, is very likely to have got one this year. But I don't relish consolation prizes. 'I have to tread gently. It might easily have been the case that if Transmitters had been on the Oz SF list of candidates, it would've checked in last. Fine. No sweat. But the Ditmars' usefulness - as a measure of what's happening in Australain speculative writing - is weakened (snigger) by the committee's somewhat random criteria for entry.

'This is a curious problem, really. If we accept that SF is a marketing term and nothing more, then Bug Brains of Alpha Nerd must necessarily beat Anthony Burgess's The End of the World News, say, let alone John Batchelor's The Further Adventures of Halley's Comet or Ted Mooney's Easy Travel to Other Planets. If it isn't called SF by the packagers, zip, Ollie.

'But even if we flush out the constipation, the cringing cowardice, which this kind of definition-by-default enforces on SF, the real difficulties start to show up. We might accept Doris Lessing's lumbering *Canopus-in-Argos* allegories as SF, but what about *The Four-Gated City*, which closes (after about a telephone book's worth of contemporary social realism) with a bite of apocalyptic futurism? Out? All right, what about her *Memoirs of A Survivor*?

'More to the point, do we let in works of metafiction which disrupt the narrative surface so severely that material from dream, phantasy and symbolist art burst into the "reality plane" of the work? This strategy is a cutting edge of today's major writing, from Booker Prize candidates like David Lodge's Small World and Martin Amis's Money through to (less conspicuously) Julian Barnes' Flaubert's Parrot. I've gulped down these books during the last few months, smacking my lips, wiping the rich juices and spilled wines away on my stained sleeve, and let me tell ya, buster, you won't be happy with ciphers climbing down integral trees and silly bigots going to methodist heaven after you've done a few lines of these jollies.

'Not (god forbid, oh no, not I) that I'm drawing any major league parallels with my own modest work. Still, I think the aperture of the field would have conveniently cranked open a tad if Transmitters were there up against Kelleher ((author of Beast of Heaven, winner of this year's Ditmar for Best Australian Novel)) and the others.

'(I note with pleasure, though, that the inclusion of the English writer Randolph Stow's The Suburbs of Hell was a big jump in the direction I'm suggesting. Here's a summary from the publisher's blurb: "When a succession of murders shatters the tranquility of an East Anglian town, irrational suspicion spreads like a contagious plague.... [Stow] transforms a murder mystery into a profound exploration of human behaviour -- and of death itself.")

'Is Transmitters SF even by these distended criteria? Hmmm. One view was expressed in Van Ikin's *Science Fiction* by that Ditmar-winning editor, Bruce Gillespie: "I could argue that it is an extended metaphor, or even that Broderick intends it as a science fiction novel ... close to the central proposition of... *The Dreaming Dragons*."

'My intentions, according to current literary theory, are pretty thoroughly irrelevant; the point to note is that an SF reading is presented as tenable. It would be tedious to show just why this is -- suffice to remind the novel's readers of the central role played by the theory of tachyons, the consequent possibility of altering the past, the reiterated meditations on causality and chance, and the ambiguously indeterminate multiple endings. If SF is fiction informed by the centrality of the scientific view of reality (conjecture, hypothesis, test), then Karl Popper might well find Transmitters an SF novel -- even though (indeed, because) the tachyon-hypothesis seems to be falsified.

'To wrap up this diatribe, let's return to the marketplace for our final test. When a 90-minute radio version of Transmitters was broadcast, the Age "Green Guide" listed it as one of 'two Australain stereo sci-fi plays', and its programme listing gave it more couthly as 'a science fiction play'. I'd have been happier if they'd left the label off, as it might have scared away listeners with irrational phobias... but the ABC called it SF, and They can't be wrong, can They?

'In short -- I think the Ditmar gang got their balls in a knot again (further evidence being their inclusion of my story Resurrection on the short story ballot, though it had been published in 1981 in Omega for gawdsake). While I welcome -- through gritted teeth -- the presence of Stow's fantasy, I regret that my own book wasn't also regarded as an authentic bid at widening the crack between the two worlds of imaginative writing. The truth is, I'd much rather have lost a Ditmar in honest contest than gained one as a booby prize.'

Damien Broderick

And the controversy over the Ditmar awards rages on as ever before. The real surprise this year is the fact that any awards were able to be given; under a ruling laid down after last year's National Convention it became necessary for a quarter of the convention membership to vote in the awards, for them to be presented. This year, only a small membership list enabled this feat (voting for the awards remains generally consistent at the level of 15 - 25 voters, no matter the size of the con itself). Speaking of conventions...

ADVENTION '85 - a convention report .

This year's National Australian SF Convention was held in Adelaide, but only just. In a series of extraordinary events starting in 1983, this year's NatCon was awarded to a bid from Overseas - Seattle, Washington state, U.S.A., in fact. How can this be, you ask, but it did, and it was - until a year later, equally strangely, when the bid's license was "revoked" and the Natcon for '85 was awarded to people in Adelaide.

Normality apparently restored, all concerned stop worrying (most of them hadn't been), until it was almost time for the convention, and nothing or almost nothing had been heard about this mysterious Adelaide con, which people had wanted so badly to hold.

Stories were heard to the effect that it was in financial trouble, and there were hints of other irregularities. All this was happening in the shadow of the impending Aussiecon Two, this year's World SF Convention which is to be held, *o fortunati sumus*, in Melbourne, and in the light of scant information, not much of it good, many people opted not to attend, rather save the pennies for the WorldCon in August.

As it turned out, Adventicon was a small but enjoyable convention for those who did attend, reminiscent of those held long ago when a crowd of eighty was considered large. Lee Harding, as Guest of Honour, did an excellent job; his Guest of Honour interview by John Baxter was one of the highlights of the programme. The appearance of John Baxter himself was something of an event, and when he could be separated from the enthusiastic CoH he had much of interest to say. John spoke on the 'fun' of trying to have an sf film produced in Australia, and with luck he'll be there at Aussiecon Two in August to regale enthusiastic audiences (hint to the Programming Subcommittee?).

The Ditmar awards (see which) contained the almost traditional elements of farce that are commonly associated with them - nothing special, really, except for the awards committee that is that year mishandling them - but this and carping over the horrendous publicity (or lack thereof) aside, it was in the end by most reports an extremely enjoyable, small convention. It is a general observation that the success of any convention depends upon the people attending it, and this year's NatCon did nothing to dispell that notion. Roll on Aussiecon Two.

AUSSIECON TWO (43rd World Science Fiction Convention)

The 1985 World SF Convention is being held in Melbourne, starting from Friday the 22nd of August and finishing on Monday the 26th of August. It is being held over three main venues, with the Southern Cross Hotel serving as the main hotel and programme items venue, the Victoria Hotel being occupied by the Art Show and Fannish programming, and the Sheraton Hotel being used mainly for media programming. All three hotels are being used by the convention for accommodation.

With Guest of Honour Gene Wolfe and Fan Guest of Honour Ted White, the convention will certainly be the biggest ever held in Australia, with perhaps over two thousand members. The current membership list stands at over seventeen hundred members and grows daily. If you haven't paid to become a member yet, it will cost \$60 to become an Attending member, \$30 for a Supporting (non-attending) membership, and \$5 for children under 12 years of age. It will probably be more expensive to pay to become a member at the door, so joining beforehand is advised.

Closing date for pre-convention memberships is the 1st of August.

If you are a member, you should just have received your Progress Report #4. This booklet contains, amongst other things, the final 1985 Hugo Ballot (see last issue for list in full), a form for booking a place at the Convention Banquet, a Site Selection Ballot form and a leaflet advertising the marvels of the 1985 ANZAAS 'Festival of Science', being held also in Melbourne on and after the convention. If you have not received your Progress Report #4 or you would like to contact the convention for any reason...

The general mailing address of Aussiecon Two is: G.P.O.Box 22530, Melbourne 3001, Australia.

"Why a WorldCon?" The short answers "I don't know," and "Why not?" don't tell you much about what Aussiecon Two will be like, but if you have not been to a convention before, or for that matter if you have not been to a WorldCon before, the chances are there's no way of properly explaining what it's going to be like for you.

The Programming SubCommittee have been working some of their guts out to ensure that if it's Programme Items you want, it is Programme Items you will get. Authors, scientists, critics and fans will be speaking, shouting and musing on about every possible aspect of science fiction there is. There will be old films, new films; probably too many films. And videos. Lucasfilms® will be presenting for the first time in Australia the Star Wars trilogy, all in one go. There will be the Hugo Awards, the Guest of Honour Speeches. There will be famous authors: Anne McCaffrey, Fred Pohl, Hal Clement, Gene Wolfe, Frank Herbert, Robert Silverberg and many many more.

Can you believe that the main reason many people are coming to Aussiecon Two has nothing to do with any of this?

They will be coming to celebrate, catch up with friends, have fun. Ah, have fun. That, of course, is the whole point of the exercise and the reason that these conventions are held - a thing that is sometimes lost sight of by the people too involved with it, but the main reason nevertheless. The party starts on Thursday, finishes a long time after that and everybody is invited. The Famous Authors and the Fantastic Films are there as a drawcard to help you not feel guilty about spending \$60 to have all this fun. If you've never been to a science fiction convention, as crazy a way of spending four days in August as it may seem, do it. Start saving the money now. You'll be glad you did.

Dates: 22-26 August.
Venue: Southern Cross Hotel/Victoria Hotel/
Sheraton Hotel, Melbourne, Australia
GoH: Gene Wolfe
Fan GoH: Ted White
Masquerade: entry closes 2nd August; write
to Paul Stokes, P.O.Box 130,
Marden 5070, Australia.

Rates: Attending=\$60/Supporting=\$30/Child=\$5
until 1st of August.

At-the-door-rates: higher.

Accommodation: book through the Committee; form
in PR#3; write to the General Address.
Hugo Ballots (only members of Aussiecon Two are
eligible to vote): Roy Ferguson,
P.O.Box 427, Abbotsford 3067, Australia

General Correspondence: Aussiecon Two, G.P.O.Box 22530, Melbourne 3001, AUSTRALIA



Capcon is planned to be a convention with something for everyone. There will be wargaming (RL is big on these things), and there will be stuff for the SCA-inclined; there will be panels/items for media sf as well... and of course Robert L. Asprin will be there and talking as well.... Um, Canberra has a solidly established reputation for holding good conventions.

1957 ... 1965 ... 1970 ... 1979
It's time for another Worldcon in Europe!



Help us celebrate our Golden Anniversary—support
BRITAIN IN '87!

BRITAIN IN 87!

Britain was Fine in Seventy-Nine...

We think the time is right for another British Worldcon. Seacon 79, the last World SF Convention in this country, was tremendously successful and popular. Now we're bidding for 1987, armed with the experience of Seacon plus great gobs of fresh talent, ready to make this a more superbly wonderful convention than any previously held in Britain.

Britain's Heaven in Eighty-Seven

What has this bid got going for it? We're better-prepared than ever to handle a Worldcon, with lots of people now experienced in running the British cons which have grown hugely in size and number since 1979. We're not merely a local group of fans: we have the whole country's talent and expertise to draw on. We've been encouraged by noises of support from America, Australia, continental Europe and the professional SF world. (You don't need to look beyond, say, number 1 on our pre-supporters' list to find such names as Gene Wolfe.) And for British fans 1987 is a special year, a golden year. In 1937, eleven fans—including Arthur C. Clarke and Eric Frank Russell—gathered at the Theosophical Hall in Leeds for the world's first organized SF convention. Fifty years later, at a 1987 British Worldcon, would seem the right time and place for all of us to celebrate a sort of Golden Jubilee.

Where and When?

Provisionally we've rejected the Theosophical Hall in Leeds as our venue. As yet, spies are still checking out the best possible sites in the country. The choice may seem restricted, but we still hope to surprise and delight you all. Watch this space! The date will be on and around the Bank Holiday weekend near the end of August 1987. This normally falls the week before America's Labour Day—so intrepid con-goers would again be able to hurtle straight from the British Worldcon to North America's substitute event the NASFIC.

We Name the Guilty Ones

The present bidding-committee nucleus, small but frighteningly efficient, is poised to expand fungus-like and engulf vast sectors of British fandom. The spores, as it were, are Chris Atkinson, Malcolm Edwards in the chair, Colin fine, Dave Langford, Hugh Mascetti and Martin Tudor. Between us we can boast experience on countless past and present con committees (including Seacon 79 itself, various national cons and the imminent Eastercon/Eurocon, Seacon 84), plus assorted Hugo nominations, professional SF writing, editing and publishing achievements, fanzine publications, fan-poll and TAFF victories, and general fannish know-how. Also we are modest, incredibly modest.

A Word from our Treasurer: 'Money'

The day of judgement comes in 1985 at Aussiecon II, Melbourne, whose members will select the 1987 site—join Aussiecon now! To win our Worldcon against stiff opposition from two North American bids, we need to advertise all over the place, to convince waverers of Britain's true worth and open-handed generosity, to hold con parties promoting the bid, and much more. This costs money. Donations from fans, organizations and cons are always highly welcome; further ingenious schemes to separate you from your money will be unveiled throughout 1984. Our leading bargain offer is Pre-Supporting Membership: for a mere £1.00 or \$2.00 (US or Aussie) we will put your name on a list and publish it ruthlessly. The cost is ultimately deductible from the cost of full con membership, assuming we win, which of course we shall. Send money quickly, before we come to our senses and raise the amount—to your nearest Britain in 87 agent if his/her address is somewhere on this sheet. Otherwise, direct to our permanent address:

BRITAIN IN 87, 28 DUCKETT ROAD, LONDON, N4 1BN, GREAT BRITAIN.

AUSTRALIAN AGENT: Roger Weddall, 79 Bell St, Fitzroy, V3065

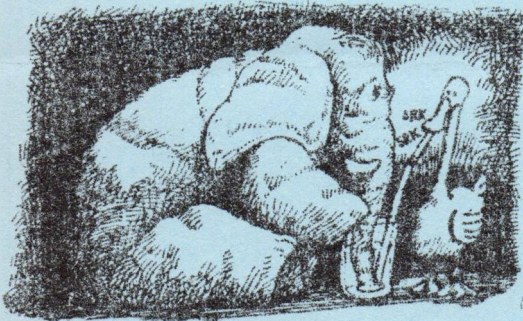
A Skewed Imagination....

Landscape With Landscape by Gerald Murnane
(Norstrilia Press; \$16.95; 267 pp.; 1985)

reviewed by Richard Bishop

'An eccentric, alcoholic dreamer' says the blurb about the main character of these six stories. Maybe not an alcoholic... maybe he just drinks a bit. (The book's subtitle could be 'Thirst'.) And eccentric he is, although often it is hard to guess why. And a dreamer? Maybe, like the hero of a Philip Dick Book, he believes himself heading away from the dream towards the reality. Is there even one main character in these stories, or six different ones? It's hard to tell, since they all speak much alike, and bits of their biographies overlap; but not entirely. In several stories the main character is married, and in others he isn't. Sometimes children and sometimes not. But in each story he is heading towards the same distant horizon, one which we never can quite glimpse ourselves.

The casual reader of Landscape with Landscape could be annoyed by the lack of a table of contents. I presume that you are supposed to read the stories in order, and not pick and choose. The first piece, Landscape with Freckled Woman, is a kind of preface to the rest of the book; it is, for instance, the only story in which the main character becomes a published author, and so talks about his aims in writing. He is a peculiar chap, moving from suburb to suburb, puzzling the neighbours and his friends, searching for some kind of 'landscape'. Sipping the Essence takes us back to a legendary era, the passing of the 1950s into the 1960s. This main character is also a little eccentric: quite petrified by girlfriends and possible girlfriends, despite the 'help' given by his bluff friend, Kelvin Durkin. Durkin walks off with Carolyn, the girl they both meet on New Year's Eve, 1960, but Carloyn keeps writing to the main character, whose own life disappears down a sinkhole of Kerouac-like dreams of travelling the roads. In The Battle of Acosta Nu... I'll come back to that. It is quite different from the other stories. In A Quieter Place Than Clun, the main character strives to imitate the austere life-style and artistic aims of A.E.Housman, only to discover, after reading the latest biography, that Housman's life was not as austere as he had led people to believe. In Charlie Alcock's Cock, the main character tells of the days of his youth, when he was a teenage sex-maniac (in imagination only, of course). His cousin, however, is a wimp, the sort of Catholic boy who always wanted to become a priest. The story-teller tries to put his cousin on the right track only to find, years later, that his priest cousin was quite capable of finding the right track all by himself. We don't meet Charlie Alcock or his cock, but they are important to the story. The book finishes with Landscape with Artist, which tells of the main character's various drunken forays into the country around Harp Gully (somewhere East of Eltham). This is the most ambitiously told story in the book, with its overlapping narratives from 1960, 1970 and 1980. Two different drunken parties are described, each leading to momentary epiphanies, wild moments of insight that cast their light back along the events of the book.



These are alternative autobiographies of the same person - someone always looking for 'landscapes' - viewpoints not available to other people, viewpoints perhaps never quite available to the main character himself. Insights dazzle him on cold nights; at the bottom of glasses of beer; in peculiar, fumbling relationships with women. He never sees a true picture - indeed, the point of most stories is the author's awareness of the stubborn mistakenness of his main character. The stories are very funny, as you would expect of the author of Tamarisk Row, A Lifetime On Clouds

and The Plains. Murnane's character is a simpleton who sees the world in an arcanelly complex way. How can one bloke get things so wrong/ we ask, laughing, even while wondering whether he didn't get things right after all.

Only in The Battle of Acosta Nu do we find a character to whom The Truth has been given. He is terrifyingly unlike the viewpoint character in the other stories. He is dour, paranoid, mistaken in a horrifying way, yet somehow lives in the landscape that is forever denied to the other main characters. He believes that he is a descendant of the Australians who travelled to Paraguay in the late 1900s in order to found a socialist Utopia at New Australia.

The Australian colony had disappeared by 1910, leaving the descendants of some settlers half in one world and half in another. But is this main character in Paraguay? He lives in a city called Melbourne, every detail of which seems like that of our Melbourne. So is he really in Australia? So why does he always think of himself as Australian and of everybody around him as Paraguayans, another race? The answers to these questions matter when the main character's young son becomes very ill. He won't let his son go to hospital - it's a Paraguayan hospital, run along Paraguayan lines. Finally his desperate wife takes action, but the cruel processes of the story roll on. This is one of the best short stories ever written in Australia.

At first sight it might seem that Landscape With Landscape has little to specifically offer the sf fan except a good read. However, *The Battle of Acosta Nu* reminds me of those sf stories in which an alien lives among us; and Landscape With Artist uses many of the folded-time story-telling methods that have become familiar to sf readers. Murnane has a refreshingly skewed mind - although not as skewed as that of his main character - the kind of mind that says: 'No matter how you see the world, it's possible to see it the opposite way as well.' Good sf says much the same thing. You'll probably like this book, especially as its prose is much more approachable than that in *The Plains*.

In The Heart Or In The Head: An Essay In Time Travel by George Turner
(Norstrilia Press; \$16.95; 239pp., index)

reviewed by Yvonne Rousseau

'Why, in his sixties, should a staidly respectable writer with half a dozen "mainstream" novels behind him... turn to science fiction, that most suspect of escapist genres?'

In The Heart Or In The Head is George Turner's explanation of this apparent inconsistency, and his revelation of a further paradox.

In the romantic colonial tradition of Willoughby in Such Is Life or Gentleman Craig in From Squire to Squatter, here is a man with a Wykehamist accent who works in overwhelmingly menial jobs - eleven years on the factory floor in a Wangaratta textile mill, for example. Here is a self-confessed 'staidly respectable writer' who admits he has had 'the Devil's own luck not to finish in a dole queue, in an asylum or on skid row', and who became in Wangaratta (which is the 'Treelake' of his fiction) 'one of the town drunks'.

The Wykehamist accent (which Turner finally congratulates himself on having shed) was imparted by the legendary A.E.Floyd, at the Choir School of St Paul's Cathedral in Melbourne, where two dozen 'cherubic louts' had their diction amended to make their singing intelligible. They also imbibed an anomalous quantity of French and Latin.

Floyd's teaching was the closest thing young Turner came to the kind of education he would have obtained if his family had not broken up. His elder brother had been expensively educated at Melbourne Grammar, 1800 miles from the family home on the Kalgoorlie goldfields. But when George Turner came to live in Melbourne at the age of six, in 1922, his sole financial support derived from the labours of his mother - the angry, lonely, puritanical ex-chorus girl whose ghost he ruthlessly drubbed to rest with the 'mad matriarch' figure in his seventh novel, *Beloved Son*.

Youthfully apportioning blame, Turner almost honoured his father for abandoning every parental responsibility - the blame was shifted to his all-too present mother, because she seemed a woman impossible to live with. Sixty years later, Turner vividly conveys both the desolation and tragedy of his mother's life and how, because of her violence towards him, his later comprehension creates only a poignant awareness of complexity, and not a revulsion of feeling.

The first fifty years of Turner's 'growing up' keep chronological pace, in alternating chapters, with the growing up of science fiction. For example, the chapter dealing with the War and Turner's six years in the army (the Middle East, Greece, New Guinea) is followed by a chapter about the effect of wartime austerities on science fiction, and how writers' first-hand experience of battle failed to tarnish their later descriptions of interplanetary battles.

In the second part of the book, Turner's own life converges with the world of science fiction; he publishes criticism and then science fiction novels; he is introduced to the bizarre spectrum of international fandom, which is 'a social phenomenon, cemented by unusually intimate communication between comparative strangers'. There are encounters with the mega-stars of science fiction; and there is also his second near-fatal haemorrhage from stomach ulcers, which involves a splendid instance of the knockabout slapstick so often attendant on human tragedy.

Turner's experiences have left him ruefully conscious of fallibility, in relation to behaviour emotions and recollection. By contrast, his intellectual judgements of science fiction are sometimes seen as unduly opinionated; and his disparagement of widely esteemed works arouses continual controversy in fandom. He is, nevertheless, a respected authority; Australian fandom has three times awarded him its annual prize for the best criticism (one of these being for In The Heart Or In The Head), and has twice voted his novels the best of the year.

Turner ends with an impassioned plea for science fiction to take up the 'socially meaningful role' which he sees as the only constructive value now left to it; to present believable human beings responding to the radical changes which high technology and high population are forcing upon us; to tackle the 'too-hard basket' and so supply 'mental buffers' for ordinary people, instead of disporting itself in 'the Never-Never land of Problems Solved'.

This short, engrossing book offers the pleasures for which autobiographies are read - evocation (in spare yet idiosyncratic prose) of unfamiliar times and places; anecdotes of famous people; recognition of unexpected parallels between the reader's and the writer's experience - at the very least, many fan-ish readers will have encountered, in surrounding adults, a similarly unencouraging reaction to their youthful addiction to science fiction. One trusts, however, that Turner's particular experiences are unparalleled: he has already suffered in childhood for his felonious acquisition of *Amazing Stories* magazines; in his teens, his mother discovered how much time and money he squandered on science fiction, and gave him such a savage hiding that the elderly ladies with whom he boarded rushed out into the street to reassure passers-by that they were innocent of the audible slaughter going on inside their house. (These same ladies ran the second-hand book exchange where Turner did the omnivorous reading that so many writers report from their childhoods - although it is more traditional for them to receive a parental pat on the head and be left among walls of privately-owned calf-bound volumes winking in the firelight.....)

In The Heart Or In The Head also offers thought-provoking reading to people who belong among the 'they' of Kingsley Amis's famous couplet:

SF's no good they bellow till we're deaf,
And if it's good why then it's not SF...

□ □

As we slide inexorably from hard news and informed commentary to baseless rumour and libellous scandal, it might be mentioned that there is talk of a convention being held over the Queens Birthday weekend, 1986, in Adelaide. Tanith Lee is rumoured to be the GoH, and there's talk that, it being (supposedly) run by one of the thriving student sf clubs, it will become the start of the revival of the once-annual Unicons. (In case anyone was wondering, we are both still members of MUSFA - speaking of which....)

Melbourne University Science Fiction Association (MUSFA)

is alive and well, as it has been for the last fourteen years or so. Wednesday the 22nd of April was the scene of this year's Annual General Meeting, at which the following key positions were filled: President - Clive Newall Vice President (pro tem) - Peter Maher

Secretary - Koren Mitchell Treasurer (pro tem) - Roger Weddall

as well as others of, surely, great importance. More important, all agreed, was the outing that evening at one of the many superb but cheap eating places in Carlton, this time it being the Pancake Place. Wine, women, pancakes and song were seen, drunk, eaten and heard. The next wild fling is being held on Friday the 17th of May at around 7:30pm at Johnny's Green Room - welcome one and all.

If you're interested in finding out more about the club, the address to contact is MUSFA, Box 106, Melbourne University, Parkville 3052.

Nova Mob - Melbourne SF Discussion Group

The Nova Mob has been going, on and off, for longer than most can remember. In its current incarnation it meets monthly, at Jenny & Russell Blackford's place, 198 Nott St., Port Melbourne. Held at around 8pm on the first Wednesday of every month, it is a discussion meeting open to one and all. Once people warm to the topic the discussions can end up just about anywhere but they usually start with a talk given by someone on a particular subject; recent examples would include 'Samuel Delany's works', 'a discussion of Australian sf anthologies' or 'Three critics of sf: Blish, Knight & Lowndes'. People meet for a meal beforehand at the Rose & Crown, 309 Bay Street Port Melbourne, and that starts around 6pm.

Melbourne S F Publishers Alive and Kicking

Elbony Books (speaking of publishers Russell & Jenny Blackford) announce that their projected anthology of Australian sf, Urban Fantasies, is still on schedule for release at Aussiecon Two. Meanwhile, Russell is commencing work, with Van Ikin, on a history of Australian SF, which is to be published in the USA by Greenwood Press..

Norstrilia Press announces the publication of author Gerald Murnane's Landscape With Landscape (see review this issue), out just in time for the Premier's Literary Prize - eligible to any new book out by the end of April this year. The prize is worth \$15,000, and would be a boon to the publishers, long the underdog champions of quality Australian sf. Norstrilia Press also deny the thrust of a report carried in the first issue of The Notional, which hinted at the possible collapse of the small press concern. "It's all lies," said third-owner Carey Handfield with a grin (well, they say there's no such thing as bad publicity). Gerald Murnane's previous book The Plains, contender for 'The Age' Book of the Year Award last year, has almost sold out in its Australian edition, and has recently been sold to George Braziller in the USA. Landscape With Landscape a more 'accessible' book that should hopefully do just as well as The Plains, if not better. Norstrilia Press is also the publisher of In The Heart Or In The Head, the Ditmar-award-winning, Hugo nominated George Turner autobiography, published last year.

Koren Mitchell moves to 81 Bell Street, Fitzroy 3065, from just around the corner. Roger Weddall moves from place to place, from just around the corner. Adrienne Losin moves to 16 Beach Street, Dromana 3936, from the opposite side of the state, Mildura. Angus Caffrey moved a long time ago to 11 Dickman Street, Richmond 3121, but he never tells us anything. Steve and Doug are living in 32 Moor Street, Fitzroy 3065. Roy Ferguson & Terry Stroud's telephone number at home is (03) 417 1117, but woe betide anyone trying to find out the Hugo results a day early - Terry had lots of practise with the Yanquis and now he's ready for anything. David McDonnell has a new home - 13/45 Decarie Street, Brunswick 3056. He's sharing with a General Smuts. R.I.P. Wilde, late of 77 Railway Place West, home of the infamous Oscat (who misses you but is being kept busy by new arrivals/ bundles of trouble Tooth, and Claw. They live up to their names.

Taswegia.

The Dr Who Fan Club of Tasmania, of P.O.Box 90, Beaconsfield 7251, has regular meetings, the next of which is on the 19th of May, 12:30-5:30pm at 4 Francis Street, West Riverside. Meanwhile, in sunny Hobart, Robyn & Torbjörn von Strokirch decide to cut all links with "the Mainland" by selling their Melbourne house; not that I suppose they'll miss it much, what with the two they have down there at the moment. Meanwhile, Michael Denholm is writing a book on the history of small press publishing in Australia in the 1970s. If you can contribute information, you could write to him at P.O.Box 207, Sandy Bay 7005, Tas., and he'd be grateful. (Tigger)

Brisbane: Lorrie Boen now resides at 5/9 Flora Street, Stones Corner 4120. Lorrie is one of the people to ask embarrassing questions about Con Amore. Tim Reddan is back after a stay in Canberra, presumably to 20 Flynn Street, Holland Park West 4121. The rumour that four Queensland fans have disappeared after thinking bad thoughts about Joh is not at present possible to confirm. Our correspondent was last seen walking into a police station.

CANBERRA - PUBLIC SERVANT MAKES HEADLINES!

Leigh Edmonds, Hugo-nominated fanwriter and editor of *Rataplan*, also nominated this year for a Hugo, has now (or, perhaps, once again) turned his hand to publishing a newszine, *The Notional*, the first issue of which was first seen at the recent NatCon, Advention. Voicing dissatisfaction at the current state of newszine affairs, Leigh has turned out a tidy piece of work, and has promised a monthly schedule of twenty pages of news and reviews. Sure enough, the first issue contains just that, and done very nicely as well. Leigh, does this mean that we are now rival newspaper barons? Hey, can we have a ratings war? You call yours Bingo and we'll call ours Lotto, or something like that - are we having fun, yet? Seriously, folks, Leigh didn't gain those Hugo nominations by luck; *the Notional* follows on in the grand tradition of Leigh's late-seventies newszine, *Fanewsletter* - at a dollar a copy across the counter, or \$10.00 per year if you subscribe (unless you're not Australian, in which case it's \$15.00 per issue) it's worth having a look at. Write to Leigh %P.O.Box 433, Civic Square, A.C.T. 2608.

CANBERRA - PUBLIC SERVANTS HAVE FUN (sometimes)

Dear Roger,

life is wonderful in canberra. i go to parties every saturday night and they all have clowns and balloons and cheese dip. there are so many great plays and films on that i just can't see all of them and the concerts and operas. every lunchtime at work, we have a famous speaker, like john cleese and the ayatolla khomeiny and i spend most dinnertimes at yet another sumptuous but ridiculously cheap, exotic restaurant. the weather on the weekends has been perfect for windsurfing but sometimes i go skiing in new zealand anyway. i have been promoted 3 times in the last month and i'm now getting nearly as much money as the prime minister. i've moved into a luxurious mansion in a select neighbourhood (but you can still address letters to the old place and they'll get to me) and i had to buy the house next door too, since most of the servants wanted to live close by. i've made some friends at the arab embassy who delight in showering me with jewels, but i had to tell them to stop because i couldn't fit them all in my rolls to take home with me.

how are things in melbourne?

love, ((name withheld to avoid the tax department))

On the subject of the idle rich, Nikki White would like to threaten with death anyone thinking of writing her between the 27th of June and the 10th of August, when she will be overseas.... "The reason I intend to be in the same country as Ronnie Rayguns is Scorpio III and August Party." Anything you say, boss.

Canberra Capers

Canberra Capers
Public servants do have fun! In Canberra they meet every second week and, alternately, dine at some of those cheap, exotic restaurants you've been hearing about, and the other times they assemble at someone's place to watch videos and carry on in fine fannish ways (more of this 'having fun' business). 14 Hannam Place, Mawson is a like place to find fans these days, with a population of transients from five to seventeen, if the stories are to be believed (that's people, not their ages). Permanent residents Mark Denbow and Kim Lambert-Huett have recently bought a property - a couple of thousand acres - halfway between Canberra and Cooma - where they plan eventually to build their own house, raise long-haired goats and generally live the good life. At the same time as buying the property, Kim & Mark found that the house they were renting in Canberra was being sold from out under them. Being incredibly resourceful as they are, in more ways than one, they did what most people only dream of doing - they just bought the house, as well as their country property. Now, of course, they are incredibly poor, but in the pleasant position of owning two pieces of land. And so it goes. MD & KL, just back from a Stateside business trip, did manage to catch up on just a few people in America, two of them being the DUFF winners Robbie & Marty Cantor, of whom they speak in glowing terms. Robbie & Marty will be out here in August, as DUFF winners, for the World SF Convention.

In Search of the Perfect Fanzine or Fun With Your New Stencil

Ta da! That's it fo this issue, but we'd like to thank Jack, Richard, Yvonne, Elizabeth, Carey, Damien, Jean, Sally, Mark and (it's been too long) VICTOR!!!!!! Oh yeah, thanks Bruce, too. 2300/29/4/85

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