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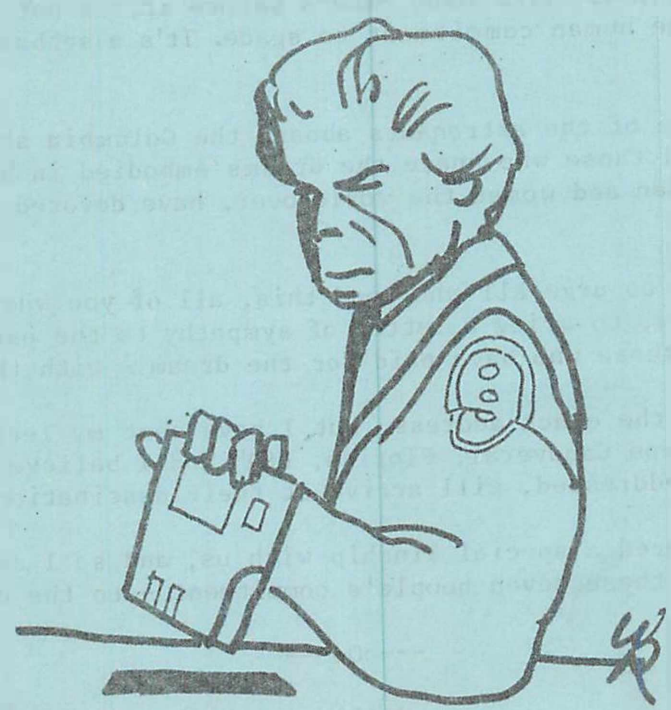
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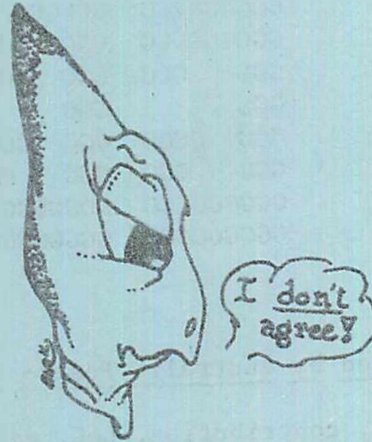
Tigger is the official organ of the Australian National Science Fiction Association.

EDITORIAL ADDRESS Marc Ortlieb P.O. Box 215, Forest Hill, Vict 3131 AUSTRALIA. (Material addressed to GPO Box 2708X will still reach me eventually, for a while.)

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NEED ANOTHER SEVEN ASTRONAUTS

I guess the explosion of the Columbia hit me as hard as it hit many people. I woke that morning to the news that the shuttle had exploded. My numbed brain went "Shit!" I started thinking in terms of gloom and despondency. Later in the day, having seen the ghoulish coverage of the incident from every possible angle the news cameras could muster, I started evaluating the incident and my feelings about it.

The first point is that seven people can die on Victorian roads with scarcely more than a brief mention on page five of The Age. The tragedy is no less real than that of the friends and family of the shuttle crew. Okay, so Columbia cost a lot more than your average family car. I guess that the United States Treasury has more to mourn. Still, elevating the loss of seven astronauts over the loss of any human life reveals a set of values that I do not share. A letter from Mike Bourke gave me some insight into the reason for the fuss.

---oOo---

Not long ago, seven people died trying to make one of the most fundamental dreams of SF - Civilians in Space - a reality. It's gratifying to note that this loss, like many others before it, is not going to be allowed to end the human commitment to space. It's a setback, not a mortal wound.

The sacrifice of the astronauts aboard the Columbia should be an inspiration to all those who share the dreams embodied in SF; for they, like many other men and women the world over, have devoted their lives to those dreams.

I would like to urge all who read this, all of you who share the dreams of tomorrow, to write a letter of sympathy to the parents, friends and relatives of those who have paid for the dream - with their lives.

I don't know the exact address, but I have sent my letter to "The Director, NASA, Cape Canaveral, Florida, USA" and I believe it, and any others similarly addressed, will arrive at their destination.

They have shared a special kinship with us, and so I ask this of every SF fan, to honour these seven people's commitment - to the dream.

---oOo---

The reason Mike wants these people honoured, it would seem to me, is that they represented his dreams. It has little to do with their intrinsic value. Perhaps this explains the furore caused whenever a national figure is killed. It is well and good, except when the symbols aren't shared. I'm afraid that, having considered the matter, I don't see that space travel is a dream shared by all science fiction fans, and, even if it were, the shuttle is not the be-all and the end-all of space travel. I don't recall a fuss of this magnitude when the Soviet astronauts died. (True that wasn't as spectacular, and the Soviet Union probably wouldn't have broadcast the failure so widely.)

I'm interested in space travel, and I think that it's a valuable part of the continuing process of scientific discovery. It's not one of my dreams though. It's not even closely related to science fiction. I'd happily continue to read the stuff even if the space programme went down the tube. I've been accused of confusing science fiction with science, in my analysis of the evolution stories (See Damien Broderick's letter in the next TIGGER), and it's true that I value reasonable science in my skiffy. I do not see though that one has to applaud every scientific project just because one is a skiffy fan.

Science fiction is a form of literature. Skiffy fans are no more obliged to support space exploration than mystery fans are supposed to donate money to forensic science research.

While I'm sure that the seven people killed in the shuttle explosion were worthwhile people, their deaths mean no more or less than any one of the innocent people killed on the road, or in stupid wars on that very same day. I can't write to all of those people's families. To single out the families of the shuttle victims would be hypocritical.

\$

This issue of TIGGER still doesn't cover everything I wanted it to. I have not yet gotten around to my article on punctuated equilibrium, which was to have included an analysis of John Wyndham's THE CRYALIDS and Isaac Asimov's FOUNDATION, along with reviews of the Sheldrake, Hitching and Gribbin & Cherfas books. I don't have room for a letter from Damien Broderick in which he abandons his subtle approach and explains what he really thought of my article on his story, or a nice piece by Gail Neville, on the joys of getting published. John Alderson's autobiographical piece is still languishing in the wilderness on my desktop. Oh well, I hope to find room for the former items in TIGGER 20.

My apologies to the overseas readers of TIGGER. You will be getting TIGGERS 18 and 19 together, and in quite a while. I'm afraid that the money tree is sparsely foliated this year.

\$

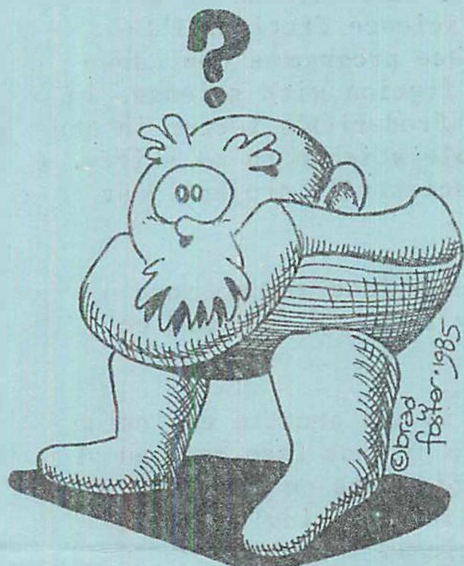
ON THE ECOLOGICAL ECONOMY OF THE HOSPITAL CLIPBOARD

An illustration of the adaptive strategy of symbiosis.

by David Cropp

[David Cropp is a New Zealander who, as the parent of the multi-legged larval kiwi that won the Locus Hall Costume Award at AUSSIECON TWO, is well qualified to discuss biological oddities.]

INTRODUCTION



The purpose of this paper is to describe the process by which a remarkable but hitherto little-known species - the common hospital clipboard - adapts efficiently and effectively to its environment. It has done so by developing a complex symbiotic relationship with a much more mobile and generally more aggressive animal - the hospital staff sub-species Homo sapiens. While expending the absolute minimum of effort itself, the common hospital clipboard manages to perform a large number of ecologically and personally useful services for the hospital staff member. In return the hospital staff meet all of the metabolic and reproductive needs of Clipboard species.

At this point it should be stressed that the creature referred to in this paper as the common hospital clipboard is, in fact, the one familiar to most people - i.e. a piece of plywood with a device at one end to which papers may be attached. Some sub-species have developed protective colouration and some have specialized appendages, such as pen-holders. (An alternate hypothesis suggests that the colour and appendages may be some form of sexual display.) Whether these variations are for the benefit of the clipboard itself or for its symbiote hospital staff member has not become clear.

Clipboards are most obvious in hospitals, hence the popular name, but they are also to be found in such diverse habitats as factories and transport despatch offices. A rather primitive sub-species has even found a useful niche with market research, public opinion polling and other similarly disgusting environments.

GETTING IT TOGETHER

The relationship between the common hospital clipboard and hospital staff is a classic case of symbiosis - that is, an arrangement of mutual benefit between two species that are often very different. The benefit may be on the individual level, as in the association between termites and their intestinal fauna or it may work on the reproductive level as it does with flowers and humming birds or bees. The symbiotic relationship between common hospital clipboards and hospital staff is special in that all the metabolic and reproductive functions of the clipboard are met by the hospital staff. In return, the clipboard performs a great many services which, while less comprehensive, are just as vital to the staff member's functioning in its chosen niche.

The strategy of symbiosis may be considered more viable than the more primitive strategy of parasitism. Since the parasite does nothing for its host in return for the benefits it receives, it is eventually inimicable to the well-being of the host, and, if the host suffers or dies, so too does the parasite. Unfortunately no completely parasitic sub-species of clipboard now remains in existence to show this evolutionary relationship, although some - those associated with customs officials for example - come very close to it.

YOU SCRATCH MY BACK

Superficially the services offered by the clipboard in exchange for reproductive and metabolic benefits it receives do not seem particularly important - the clipboard simply allows itself to be carried around within the home territory of the human hospital staff. However a deeper analysis will reveal just how vital this seemingly trivial action is to the functioning of its symbiote. To date the following benefits have been isolated:-

- 1) The clipboard provides its partner with protective colouration in an environment where few other forms of protective colouration occur. [For a brief examination of the other major form of protective colouration in this habitat - the lab coat - see F.E. Warburton's 1960 article on the lab coat as a status symbol, quoted in INDIVIDUAL IN SOCIETY Krech, Crutchfield and Ballachey (1962, McGraw-Hill) page 418.] In this instance it takes the form of a carefully graded status symbol, sometimes explicit in the different colours of clipboard that different staff members carry but sometimes implicit in more subtle signs, such as where the clipboard is carried.

Field observations show that, of those allowed access to clipboards, the lowest ranking - the nurses - are only allowed to touch them briefly. Low-middle rankers - junior doctors - carry them clutched protectively to their chests, while more senior physicians hold them negligently to their sides. Those individuals seemingly of the highest ranking - the surgeons - curiously mirror nurse-like behaviour, only briefly touching the clipboard from time to time. Although no satisfactory explanation of this phenomenon has been forthcoming, one hypothesis suggests that we are mistaken in assigning high status to surgeons and that they are really only nurses in different uniforms. An alternative hypothesis is that the clipboard's life cycle relates to the age of its symbiote and that clipboards recognise that in reverting to nurse-like behaviour, surgeons are passing through their second childhoods.

The status recognition signal, whether it be colour or method of carrying, has the function of helping distance those who are privileged to carry clipboards from those lower life-forms who are not so privileged. This absolute status differentiation has many implications for the feeding and the mating behaviour of those individuals favoured by symbiotes.

(It should be mentioned that the symbiotic clipboards do get in the way of the actual mating process and so are usually left to their own devices during the sexual act. No observations have yet been made of their behaviour at such times as their symbiotes are thus occupied.)

- 2) Observations suggest that the clipboard is a most important source of comfort for those who carry them. It allows its carrier to make regular, almost obsessive, records of minute items of information on the piece of paper attached to it. Significantly such recordings are always made by the high-status carriers - be they nurses or doctors - about those of the lowest status - the patients - who are never seen to enter a symbiotic relationship with a clipboard. From observations of facial expression, stance and demeanour it would seem that the staff symbiotes gain the pathetic but comforting illusion that their random movements about their hospital home range are purposeful and meaningful.
- 3) Finally, the common hospital clipboard does contribute in a real and meaningful fashion towards the well-being of those wretched low-status humans - or patients - who are not permitted to enter into the symbiotic relationship. The clipboards give the doctors something to do with their hands and their time and so they are not tempted to interfere with the actual recuperation of the patient. In this way there is some positive hope that nature may be allowed to take its course and the patient then has a chance of leaving the hospital alive.

CONCLUSIONS

It is an interesting exercise to consider the eventual fate of a doctor who has the misfortune to have most of his or her patients die prematurely. After the administrative wheels have ground extremely finely and all the possible excuses have been worked through, he or she would cease to be a doctor. In certain places and times he or she might also cease to be alive.

Now consider a clipboard in exactly the same situation - having all of the patients that have been entrusted to its care die. What is its fate? It will continue happily being a common hospital clipboard for just as long as it likes.

This is the best evidence for the remarkable ecological success of the clipboard's chosen strategy. All the evidence points to the fact that it is so successful because of its contributions to the true and proper function of the hospital. It contributes so much to the physical and mental well being of the doctors that they simply could not function without them and the mental and physical well being of the doctors is, after all, the principle function of a hospital.

---oOo---

There is clearly room for further research in this area. Rumour has it that clipboards are also to be found in profusion in universities, schools and colleges of advanced education, but, since such environments are highly inimical to research and intelligent life forms, further studies will have to wait for better long-range scanning techniques.

Also interesting is the matter of the piece of paper, carried by all public servants when they are further than three metres from their lairs. For all intents and purposes this serves the same function as the common hospital clipboard. Are they degenerate clipboards that have lost all bar the rudimentary remnants of their formerly firm form - said remnants reflecting their origin in their names, paperclips? Are they living fossils from the age before the evolution of the clipboard? Are they merely examples of convergent evolution?

HOW DOCTORS EVOLVED

by Craig Hilton

[Craig is a doctor, and the following is more or less the natter he presented as part of the AUSSIECON TWO panel on biomedical ethics, entitled "Buddy, can you spare me a leg?"]

In the beginning there was a proverb which said "A penny saved is a penny gained." Roughly translated this meant "It is worth putting something away for a rainy day." I think even nut-gathering squirrels would agree with that - the principle is flawless. Yet our furry friends don't have the capacity to carry it any further than their own nuts. There are no squirrel doctors.

Doctors? Perhaps I've lost you.
Let's start again.

We humans were sentient enough to be able to foresee what may befall us and thus move to prevent it. So we agreed that it was worth paying some concession to socialisation in order to reap benefits at any time, should they be needed. So fundamental was this concept, chipping into a metaphorical kitty, that it seemed to be a basic human virtue - call it benevolence, caring, civility, co-operation, tolerance or pity - "doing unto others what we would have done unto ourselves." By this we call ourselves human and set ourselves above the fuzzy squirrels and other animals.

Now this attitude is not of the type that any self-respecting self-centred Selfish Gene would ever be caught espousing, but we humans are well and truly through with Selfish Genes.* Pure Darwinian "Survival of the fittest" is no longer the selectional influence on any species intelligent enough to have an inkling of where the hell it's going in an evolutionary sense.

We hate Selfish Genes. They are abhorrent to our basic principles of humanity. Medicine is a war between the Selfish Gene and the Altruistic Brain, and we humans want the unfit to survive.



P

Give some sophistication to this principle and we have a person designated to do the caring. As a doctor, my sole occupation is to look after Jack. The community system is also involved in this process. You pay me to look after Jack. And this is only at the primary level. Behind the scenes is the influence of our standard of living on illness. You, you and you pay you, you and you to set up the conditions to ensure that I don't need to look after Jack.

The story so far: Ever since the dawn of time, when man first crawled out of the primordial slime, there's been little real question regarding how to recognise a sick person. If someone who fell out of a tree was found to have a leg which was now painful and bent, then he was sick - sometimes he got better; sometimes he didn't. If someone became exhausted, listless, delirious, sweating, shivering and began coughing up blood and pus, then she was sick - sometimes she got better; sometimes she did not. If someone who was getting on in years was becoming blind, deaf, weak, immobile and batty, she obviously needed care and attention until the inevitable claimed her. If an awaited infant was born dead, this was, without dispute, an undesirable event.

We knew sickness when we saw it because we didn't need to look very far to find it, and it was obvious when we did. We couldn't do much about it, but we knew how to recognise it. We recognised it because we couldn't do much about it.

I once learned a classical doctors' prayer which ran:

"Oh grant me Lord a proper sense of therapeutic impotence."

It's true. We doctors used to be impotent, even until quite recently. But now we are potent - very potent indeed.¶

In the 1830s and 1840s, cholera was slaying the inhabitants of Britain by the thousands and it was rife in the crowded streets of London. This was despite improved sanitation and plumbing, and was, perhaps, aggravated by general ignorance of how exactly the disease was spread - polluted air was implicated.

It was an English physician, Dr John Snow, who took on the problem, ultimately saving more lives through epidemiology than through his later work in anaesthetics. Snow looked into the particularly nasty epidemic of 1849 when, in one section of London - Golden Square - three hundred and forty four people died in the space of four days. Although it had not been proved, Snow firmly believed that cholera was spread by a water-borne microbiological factor and noted that, of the eighty nine fatalities he studied, all but ten of the victims had regularly drawn their water from a pump well on Broad Street, and that even those ten could be associated with the pump. Further investigation showed this well to be directly over a sewer line. The transmission path was complete. Snow followed the logical path and halted this portion of the epidemic by going up to the pump and removing the handle.

This was not the end of Snow's efforts in the fight against cholera but, considering that it would be another decade before Pasteur would announce his revolutionary germ theory of disease, and that it would not be until 1883 that Robert Koch would actually isolate Vibrio cholerae, the causative organism, the story of Dr John Snow and the Broad Street pump deservedly lives in the memories of generations of doctors and medical students.§

In this fashion, there was a massive decrease in the death-rate at the turn of the century - attributable more to public health measures than to the curative efforts of all the doctors combined. It was only in the 1930s that we gained the sulphonamides and in the 1940s that penicillin added to our anti-bacteriological arsenal.

And now we doctors are very potent.¶ There still remain those few tough cases that modern medicine is working on curing, but, by and large, things are under control and, in addition, we have power over bringing into the world those who would not otherwise enter, over stopping from entering the world those who otherwise might, of all but guaranteeing that people live their full allotment, and, if we cannot cure, we can usually minimize disabilities. Instead of dying of a heart attack at sixty, a person can die of cancer at seventy.

This is the problem. Everything used to be simple. "Preserve life at all costs," we cried, because, in our impotence, we could really do anything about it anyway, short of giving it a damn good try, to the limit of what a "damn good try" cost in those days. Now we can preserve, create, repair, refurbish. But at all costs? That's like a science fiction convention opening the bar and offering all its attendees free drinks until they've had enough. There's just no limit.

Today we can transplant organs from one person to another - hearts are commonplace. Livers are now possible. A baby born without bile ducts to drain the liver would, until recently, invariably die. He can now be cured. We can graft one part to another with ease. The Coronary Artery Bypass Graft - CABG, pronounced "cabbage" - was performed perhaps twice a year in Western Australia ten years ago. Now hundreds a year are performed. While limited initially to the unquestionably sick, they are now performed routinely for minor indications. While the technique and safety of the procedure have improved, the benefit is increasingly less dramatic for the average recipient.

We can put in artificial parts - a huge array, ranging from synthetic joints to eye lenses and covering heart valves, blood components, electric cochleae, false teeth and wooden legs. I can even see a pancreas looming on the horizon.

We can diagnose. You may have heard of a wonderful new device called a Nuclear Magnetic Resonance scan - NMR, pronounced "enema" - which can predict what we would see if we decided to saw the patient in half. And the Pet scan (Positron Emission Tomography) will lie down beside the CAT scan (Computerised Axial Tomography). I'm eagerly awaiting the DOG or BUDGIE scan.

We can treat cancers with elegant surgery, poisonous drugs, frying radiation and a few new goodies in store. We can cure, or at least postpone the sickness, and the refinements in the armoury now render the cures progressively less lethal to the patient.

The advances in medicine have provided benefits for more people for more marginal indications through cheaper, more convenient and easier access to the fruits of knowledge. Such benefits serve to push Humankind ever closer to a graffiti-strewn maze of tortuous questions, the only evasive course being to do a 180° turn and to emulate the squirrels.

Amongst the graffiti in the maze I can read the following: Where do we draw the line? Whom do we keep alive, the young, the sick or the old? If we refuse to keep people alive, are we killing them? Should we deliberately

kill people, and if we do, should we kill the young, the sick or the old? How can the patient have a say in this when there is so much information involved in informed consent? For those unable to decide, how do we play advocate?

Medical potency is outreaching the current boundaries of medical ethics. We are still guided by the moral code of our former days of impotence through situations where that impotence does not exist.

Where does science fiction fit into this? Sf is a useful tool for examining these issues. As it examined questions such as those posed by the atomic bomb, it can now pose questions for biotechnology. Perhaps it might suggest an answer or two as well.

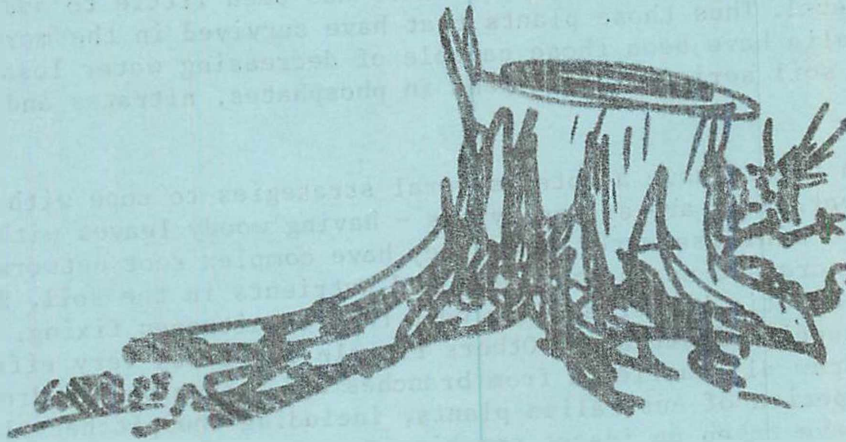
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*This is not a reference to the esteemed Mr Wolfe.

¶Oh Dr Freud, I think we've got another one for your casebook.

§But not in the memories of scientists. Dr Snow doesn't get a guernsey in Asimov's Biographical Encyclopedia of Science and Technology or in the World Book Encyclopedia.





THE DUNNAKIN TREE

Marc Ortlieb

While Art Widner was in Australia for Aussiecon Two, he told the story of a friend of his who used to take city kids out into the bush for hiking trips. It appears that, on one of these hikes, a well mannered child, in obvious discomfort, asked where the bathroom was. The hike leader suggested that the boy use a tree, but this did not satisfy the child, who didn't think that that was a particularly nice thing to do to a tree. The leader finally convinced the child that the tree was in fact a special tree - a bathroom tree - and that the tree was meant to be used in this manner. He thought no more about it, until he found a whole group of kids lined up, waiting to use the tree.

In Australia the story was not as funny as it might have been in the U.S.A.. For a start the term bathroom in Australia refers to the room in which one takes a bath or a shower. It may or may not contain one of Mr Thomas Crapper's wonderful inventions. To understand another reason for the story's diminished impact in Australia requires that one know a little more about Australian bio-geography.

Australia is noted for its evolutionary oddities in the animal kingdom. Such creatures as the platypus - a beaked, egg-laying mammal - and the marsupials are quite well known, even in the United States. Less well known are some of the more bizarre plants.

Over the last 150 million years, Australia's plant life has had to make adaptations to conditions which are, in some areas, highly inimicable to plant life. Fossil evidence suggests that, before continental drift separated Australia from the Gondwanaland super-continent, the climate over what is now Australia ranged from temperate to sub-tropical. Since then though, Australia has been ploughing north at the sorts of speeds that might get it to Japan in time for the five millionth world science fiction convention in Tokyo.

With this northern movement has come an overall increase in temperature, rendering vast tracts of land that were once temperate rainforest dry deserts. Only that flora capable of adapting to the dry conditions has managed to survive. In addition there has been little geological activity directly changing the Australian topography since the split with Gondwanaland. With the exception of some minor volcanism in areas of south eastern Australia during the Quaternary period there has been little to add to the soil mineral level. Thus those plants that have survived in the more arid areas in Australia have been those capable of decreasing water loss and of surviving in a soil seriously deficient in phosphates, nitrates and the like.

Australian plants have adopted several strategies to cope with the harsh environment. Many are sclerophyllous - having woody leaves with small surface areas to minimise water loss. They have complex root networks, in order to gain increased access to water and nutrients in the soil. Several have adopted symbiotic bacteria which help them in nitrogen fixing, thus giving them a supply of nitrates. Others recycle nutrients very efficiently. Eucalypts withdraw all nutrients from branches and leaves before dropping them. Several species of Australian plants, including the pitcher plants and the sundews, have taken up insect catching to supplement the soil nitrate supply. Most survive on far poorer soil than can their richer relatives. Phosphate fertilizers used on food crops actually poison the grasstrees that used to grow in the phosphorus deficient soils of south eastern Australia. Even bushfires play an important role in returning nutrients to the soil, and there are several plants that produce seeds that will not germinate until their outer coats have been weakened by a bushfire.

The most successful plant family in Australia is the Myrtaceae - a family which includes the Northern Hemisphere's myrtles, and a Southern sub-family, the Leptospermoideae which covers the gum trees (genus *Eucalyptus*), their close cousins the teatrees (genus *Leptospermae*) and genus *Melaleuca*, some of which are known as paperbarks. A particularly interesting adaptation to the nutrient-poor conditions is seen first in another member of this family, the lillipilli (genus *Acmena*) which has a particularly attractive fruit. During fruiting season this tree attracts huge flocks of parrots which serve a dual purpose. Not only do they carry the *Acmena* seeds to new germinating spots in their gut, but they provide the tree with a vital source of phosphates in the guano which they leave around the tree as they feed. Several seashore trees which provide attractive nesting sites for ibis and cormorants also benefit from this form of fertilization.

The ultimate though is achieved in the genus *Melaleuca*. Several members of this genus are found in extremely arid areas, and, true to the sclerophyllous way of life, they have small tough leaves. They do though, provide adequate shade in the parched landscape, thus attracting kangaroos which rest under them during the day, providing the tree with the benefit of the manure that the kangaroos deposit.

Humans are also known to make use of the shade of the *Melaleuca*, and, naturally enough, they often treat the tree as a convenience, since the heat of the Australian sun is enough to burn the skin off your bum in a matter of minutes. The tree seems to actively encourage such visits. Although no Australian desert tree can afford the luxury of the broad-bladed leaves that one is led to believe serve the purpose of toilet tissue for European and American hikers, the *Melaleucas* do have remarkable bark, which can be peeled off in sheets. It is fairly soft and absorbent, no doubt acting as a water storage mechanism under normal circumstances. The *Melaleucas* have, in common

with their Leptospermoideae relatives, a well developed system of root hairs to garner every bit of nutrient from the soil. There are several species which serve this need, but bushmen lump them together as Dunnakin Trees or Thunder Boxes.

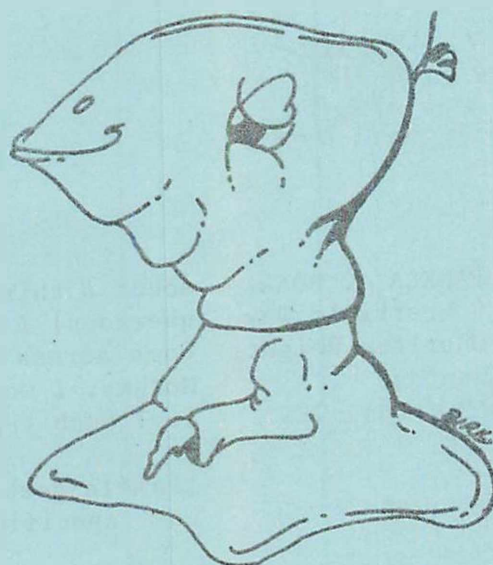
Australia then has a bathroom tree, albeit primitive. Still, with this sort of a start, it is easy to see the potential for further evolutionary development. The Melaleucas are, unfortunately, small shrubby trees that do not really advertise their presence. It would be useful to the tree to develop the size of some of its eucalypt cousins, which often contain ground level niches in their trunks which are the size of an outhouse. The Melaleuca could then take a leaf out of the book of Acmena, and provide a tasty fruit, perhaps with mildly laxative properties, which would help serve the tree's purpose. Finally, for the ultimate in bathroom trees, the Melaleuca could borrow a trick from its eucalypt relative the scribbly gum. The scribbly gum plays host to a species of insect that leaves characteristic patterns on the gum's bark. These patterns are very similar to those of a child's scribbles, hence the name. If Melaleuca could play host to such insects then we would have a tree that provided shelter, toilet tissue, laxatives and reading matter. Such a tree would be more than worthy of the name which I propose - Melaleuca crapousis.

---oOo---

GUFF 1986/7

Australasian recipients of TIGGER will get a GUFF ballot with this issue. Naturally the official TIGGER stance on GUFF is VOTE! I can't resist looking at the possibilities for gossip inherent in the voting form though. You will note, for instance, that Hazel Langford is one of Valma's nominators, while Dave Langford is one of Irwin's nominators. Similarly the name Ortlieb appears twice in the nomination lists, and under different candidates. (Had Tim Jones gotten his another European nominator, the gossip potential would have increased yet further. Judith Hanna had agreed to be one of his European nominators. Joseph Nicholas is one of Valma's nominators.)

Anyway, I'd like to put in a word for Irwin Hirsh. He has consistently produced one of Australia's finest fannish fanzines, and has worked hard for Australian fandom, both by work here, and by improving our fanzine reputation overseas. He is most deserving of the chance to hobnob with British fans, and to con them out of articles to make sure that SIKANDER becomes a more regular event in fannish letterboxes.



LETTERATURE

HARRY WARNER JR
423 Summit Ave
Hagerstown
MD 21740
U.S.A.

13/1/86

I enjoyed reading TIGGER #16, if only for the inadvertent proof it offered to my theory about the future of fanzines. I've found conventions forming the subject of a greater and greater proportion of their entire contents in recent years, and you got right into the swing of things by devoting this entire issue to cons and con-related activities like DUFF, after that opening review of what you've been doing when not engaged in con-going. If I

remember correctly my calculations, cons will occupy all the space in every issue of every fanzine published in 1992, following the appearance in 1991 of two fanzines which will devote a total of seven pages to topics not related in any way to cons. Then, starting in 1993, there will begin a great fanzine renaissance, resulting in the publication of vastly more fanzines and larger fanzines in each succeeding year, because of the need for the growing output of con material to get into print.



For that matter, I could speculate about the changing nature of cons themselves, as a result of your description of the masquerade at AUSSIECON TWO. Isaac Asimov wrote a story some years back about how one individual was chosen to be the voter in the presidential election in the United States.* I suspect that, by the end of this century, if not sooner, fandom will vote to determine who will become the fan for whose benefit each worldcon will be staged. The person who wins this election will relax and have a good time at the con while all the thousands of other fans at the con will spend the entire weekend toiling to run the con. Signs of it are certainly evident in your listing of how many people were needed to realize the masquerade alone at the 1985 Worldcon; approximately the same number of people as were present for the first Worldcon almost half a century ago, I believe.

PAMELA J. BOAL
4 Westfield Way
Charlton Heights
Wantage
OXON OX12 7EW
U.K.

About a third of the way through [your article on masquerades] I had the most odd reaction. It started to come across to me as if spoken by the stereotyped Jewish Mother. I wouldn't have been at all suprised to read "Oy vey! Such troubles you never saw!"

17/1/86

[Pamela goes on to suggest a few variations on Murphy's Law, specifically for Masquerades.]

RULE 1: In the unlikely event of a Con Hotel having a function room suitable for a masquerade, it will not be available.

RULE 2: There will never be changing facilities near the masquerade venue, nor will there be adequate marshalling facilities or room for photographers.

* "Franchise" reprinted in EARTH IS ROOM ENOUGH

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RULE 3: No hotel will give correct or adequate details regarding technical facilities; number and position of power points will be wrong; sound systems will not operate in the fashion stated; screens and projection equipment will be broken or non-existent; the stage will not be visible from the lighting console; lights will differ in number and type from those reported. (As naive fans have never gotten into the habit of doing a physical check for themselves, all equipment brought to supplement the supposed equipment at the hotel will be useless at worst, inadequate at best.)

RULE 4: The Fan who claims to be a lighting or sound expert: (a) isn't or (b) has gone so far beyond his/her makeshift breadboard days that he/she can only operate with the latest [and most expensive] equipment. In either case he/she will talk in jargon intelligible only to other experts.

RULE 5: Con programmes always run so late that the masquerade team only have the opportunity to get in and set up at the last moment.

RULE 6: There is no RULE 6.

RULE 7: No contestant will sacrifice one iota of his/her creation in the interest of such practical considerations as walking, sitting through the inevitable delays, homeothermy - "I can't put a blanket on; my body paint will smear."/"I feel faint, but if I take my head off I'll never get it on again.", or danger to those around them.

RULE 8: Having promised a ramp to wheeled contestants, the organisers will give way to the expressed preference of helpers and other contestants for steps. These steps will be unsafe, too shallow for half the contestants and too narrow for the other half. They will be so situated as to provide less than the minimum necessary working space for the helpers.

RULE 9: Because of the preceeding seven rules, it has become a fannish tradition that masquerades are always late (but try getting a seat in the auditorium if you try to allow for this by running late) with the maximum number of foul-ups.

Corollary:- The contestant who causes the greatest problems and who is given the greatest assistance will complain the most bitterly afterwards.

[Amen to that! Pamela cites her credentials as one who was once foolhardy enough to be a masquerade contestant.]

LLOYD PENNEY
412-22 Riverwood Parkway
Toronto, ONT
M8Y 4E1
CANADA

17/1/86

My wife, Yvonne, has run masquerades for several conventions in Toronto, and even one she asked to run in Ottawa. She has obtained the reputation of being an Army sergeant when it comes to keeping the contestants in line. Many appreciate it, since they're often too nervous to pay too much attention to what they're saying. At Maplecon 7, after literally bullying the contestants into knowing what they were supposed to be doing, where the judges were, where they were supposed to walk to get on and off the stage, and where the photo area was, starting time came around, and she got a round of applause from the contestants just before the first of them went on stage.

Staggered times of arrival to get ready and dressed came in handy at Baltimore [Constellation]. In that masquerade, Yvonne and I were late in the show and by the time we arrived to get ready, the first few entries were already on stage.

[Lloyd also puts in a plug for TAPA, the Toronto apa. If you're interested in a Canadian apa, it's a good one.]

TIM JONES I must say that I agree with Lucy Sussex re the sexist
20 Gillespie St nature of equating balls with vitality (or with rubbish I
Dunedin suppose). God forbid that the term is meant to imply that
NEW ZEALAND more people should write like Hemingway!

26/2/86 Terminological inexactitude aside, does Australian SF
 lack vitality? TRANSMITTERS is one of the best and most
moving books I've read for a long time. It made me think long and hard
about why I became involved in fandom, and what I get out of it. It cracks
along at a great pace, and the departures from conventional narrative form
which Damien Broderick uses are most appropriate to the subject matter.
Definitely no lack of vitality, though, from what I heard at AUSSIECON TWO,
most people appear to lump Damien in with the "Academic" school.

With some of the stories in URBAN FANTASIES, I think I can see what
Lee [Harding] was getting at. "Du", by David Brooks, is a careful if
uninspired pastiche of Borges; such a derivative work seems an odd choice
to open an anthology. I suspect I lacked the right intellectual background
to approach "Flags"; while I'm sure it was about something, I have little
idea what. More traditionally structured stories, such as "The Fittest" and
"The Twist of Fate" were much more interesting. To me, form should be
defined by content, rather than the other way around. I have no objection
to the most experimental of forms, providing it's appropriate to the ideas
it is attempting to convey. For some stories, the form is the content, but
I think the possibilities of this development have long since been
explored.

[Tim goes on to mention GUFF, for which you will find a ballot
enclosed, if you are Australasian. He didn't manage to get his European
nominators together, but he is still interested in standing for the fund,
and so would no doubt appreciate it if you would mark in his name on the
"Write In" section of the ballot form. See how civilized we are here in the
Antipodes? None of this "Vote for Jones because he's a New Zealander and
those lousy Australian bastards used the deadline to keep him off the
ballot paper." Nope. Just a request that he be considered for a "Write In"
vote.

I tend to agree with Tim's evaluation of URBAN FANTASIES. I think that
David Grigg's "A Twist of Fate" is one of the best sf stories I've read in
a goodly while. I hope that he continues to write more.]

DIANE FOX Richard Faulder's evolutionary article [in TIGGER #17] was a
P.O. Box 1194 pleasure to read. I liked his illustrations too. But a
North Sydney creature called Hallucigenia? What's more one that looks
NSW 2060 suspiciously like one of those brush-shaped electronics com-
AUSTRALIA ponents with a head at one end and a tail at the other? The
 mind boggles to the point of causing me to closely examine
19/1/86 the length of my legs, which may just have altered, due to
 having one of them pulled. . .

The triple - or quadruple or more - evolution of arthropods makes me think that the tradition of depicting aliens as large "insects" may not be altogether melodramatic as commonly supposed. Cockroaches are known to be intelligent - partly because they compete with / scavenge from human beings and need all their wits to avoid traps and poisons. They are also rapid breeders and prolific, giving them an increased mutation rate and a large enough number of mutations to increase the chance of the rare favourable mutation. Finally they are continually being bombarded with all manner of loathesome chemical substances, which must considerably alter their genetic nature.



It's a cliché to suggest that the roaches will take over after Atomiggedon, but my dark suspicion is that it's a wonder that the little buggers haven't taken over already. Maybe they have, but they let us think we run the world merely because the roaches are rather lazy and prefer to have someone else to do the work. Finally my darkest thought of all; could the seemingly inevitable march of our species towards nuclear doom be the work of - Gasp! - superintelligent cockroaches controlling our politicians with subliminal telepathic messages?!

The aptly-named Hallucigenia seems to have been constructed on a heptopodic system, which would probably fascinate David Lake. One of Lake's recurring interests is a vertebrate hexopod phylum, including dragons, sphinxes, centaurs and winged humanoids. Imagine a heptopodic phylum developing. I can remember only one example in sf - Fritz Leiber's heptopus in his Mickey Spillane parody "The Night He Cried".

I think that much Australian sf tries too hard to be non-vulgar - to be "literary" - to be the sort of stuff that people with discriminating taste will take seriously. It is probably part of the cultural cringe, but not consciously so.

I don't really agree with Mike Bourke. There are many writers I don't like because they are not to my taste - I can see that they are good writers, but I have to work myself into the right state of mind to read them.

I saw the Damien Broderick story as fantasy: the blurb "Young Keith gives birth to a lobster who is really his mother" made me suspect that Broderick wrote this line first and then wrote a story around it, a story of sufficient ingenuity to make the line a statement of fact, not a line of surrealist poetry - it's not a scientific extrapolation but a logical fantasy. I suspect most sf is logical fantasy rather than genuine scientific extrapolation. At least the ingenuity in the Broderick story is high.

=====

¶No way! Not even the most stupid of cockroaches would author the nonsense that gets spouted by Reagan, Thatcher, Hawke, Gadaffi, Gorbachev et al.

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<p>BUCK COULSON 2677W - 500N Hartford City IN 47348-9575 USA 17/1/86</p>	<p>I don't see many Australian writers in this country, and the British mags that used to feature them have all died. Some of them have died several times. Anyway, I'm currently used to getting my stf books free for review, and Australian publishers rarely send me anything. (Just because a review in AMAZING won't increase their sales by a single copy -- how mundane of them.)</p>
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Eskimos do have some physiological adaptations to cold weather, though they're internal rather than a hairy exterior. They're also minor, compared to the societal changes. The story you're reviewing sounds pretty bad. De Camp had a good one on hairy humans years ago - "Hyperpilosity".

[Has the recent purge in the AMAZING offices hit you, or do you still have the job?]

MIKE BOURKE Especially interesting in TIGGER #18 were Mark Loney's
42 Bogan St comments on the inheritance of acquired characteristics in
Nyngan mice. I'd like to toss out (purely off-the-wall) a theory
N.S.W. 2825 that could account for the "slow" reception this has been
AUSTRALIA given in the various scientific magazines. The key word is
 "acquired". It has been shown quite often that "acquired"
characteristics can be inherited, if the defined characteristic is
sufficiently broad in definition e.g. Expose two humans to hard radiation.
Before they die from radiation poisoning, they produce an offspring. It is
quite likely that an "acquired characteristic" would be inherited -
physical damage by radiation. The parents were so damaged that they died.
The child is also almost certainly badly damaged and probably stillborn.
But, assuming that it produces offspring, its own inherited radiation-
damaged genes will probably pass this on to its children.

Similarly, if the mouse chromosomes are modified by the mechanism by which the mice acquired their tolerance to foreign tissue antigens then you will see an inheritance of acquired characteristics.

[Re the mice, even Mark Loney's source - Francis Hitching's The Neck of the Giraffe admits that results from independent researchers "were less conclusive". It may be that such research will eventually show evidence for the inheritance of acquired characteristics, but it must, for the moment, be left in the draw marked "interesting but inconclusive anomalies". I'm afraid that, having now read the book, I cannot agree with Mark that it has been demonstrated that mice can pass on an acquired characteristic in accordance with Mendelian genetics. It's certainly rash to suggest on the basis of one controversial set of experiments that Darwin is out and Lamarck is in.]

JOHN BERRY I believe that I am the only fan who has made a genuinely
4 Chilterns original evolutionary theory . . . I don't think it's a
Sth Hatfield theory, I think it's a fact . . . the major discovery I
Herts, AL10 8JU have made is that fingerprints were present on our sub-
U.K. primate ancestors at leasy 50,000,000 years ago. I have
 taken the liberty of enclosing herewith a section from my
15/1/86 esoteric one-shot "Ridge Detail in Nature". I can assure
 you, Marc, that this is not an example of exaggerated
Berry-type humour.

[John did indeed include an interesting piece that he published on fingerprints, including the fact that at least one species of New World monkey has distinctive ridge detail on its prehensile tail - detail that varies from one monkey to another. I wonder if it works for other creatures with prehensile tails. Anyone know anything about binturong tail patterns?

"Yes Inspector. We found the characteristic tail prints of a binturong all over the Crown Jewels display cabinet."

Damn! There's the punchline to yet another story I'll never write.]

IAHF

Walt Willis who sent a postcard of the Donaghadee Cricket Club "you remember cricket, the game Australians used to play."
Marilyn Pride who liked Richard Faulders article and artwork in TIGGER 17.
Marty & Robbie Cantor who gush about Australia, promise their DUFF report, and reject the Dunnakin Tree article that I recycle here. (The promised DUFF report will contain Mel White caricatures and will have Brad Foster as art director. My mouth waters.)
Guido Henschel who mentions his gaffiation.
John Dunham of the Space Out Library in Toronto, who sends information about the library. If you're interested, the address is 40 St. George St, Toronto, ONT, M5S 2E4, CANADA. They evidently have a good collection of sf materials and fanzines.
Robert K. Hinton who decides, on the basis of my masquerade article, that he'll get me to run the masquerade at any convention he organises. Fortunately he has no intention of ever running a convention.
Rob Gregg who, on the strength of the TIGGER 17 letter-column has decided that Australian fandom is rather hostile. (Doesn't the man know Joseph Nicholas?)
Harry Andruschak who sends an apazine and some insights on the effects of the Challenger disaster on the J.P.L., where he works. He has promised some stuff on Voyager in trade for TIGGER. That sort of trade I'll happily accept.
Brian Earl Brown who mentions his CoA, to 11675 Beaconsfield, Detroit, MI 48224, U.S.A., and who says, with reference to working on conventions, ". . . the thought of working one's butt off over a weekend so that other people can have fun just sounds so bloody insane." Amen!
Rex Thompson who mentions his CoA to 16 Rona St, Dunedin, NEW ZEALAND, and who gives a plug for the 7th New Zealand National Convention - Halley-con [there are a lot of them around this year] in Dunedin. The dates are May 30th to June 2nd 1986. If you're interested, write to P.O. Box 5516, Dunedin, New Zealand. There is a FFANZ Race running from Australia to New Zealand with George Turner and Roger Weddall as the candidates. Write to John Newman, P.O. Box 1004, Thornbury, Vict 3071 AUSTRALIA for further details. The deadline of April 7th 1986 may well have passed by the time you read this.
Sue B. who makes a few points on breaking into print in Australia which I'll include in TIGGER #20, and who admits that she too has trouble reading Gene Wolfe.
Mike McGann Who sends copies of his SPACED OUT portfolios and who supports the rights of sf fans to read their Holy Bookes. (If you are interested in Mike's portfolios, write to him at 194 Corunna Rd, Petersham NSW 2049)

CONTRIBUTORS' ADDRESSES

Sheryl Birkhead 23629 Woodfield Rd, Gaithersburg, MD 20879. USA
Bill Brown 525 - 85th St South, Birmingham, AL 35206, USA
David Cropp 277 Adelaide Rd, Wellington 2, NEW ZEALAND
Brad Foster 4109 Pleasant Run, Irving, TX 75062, USA
Terry Frost G.P.O. Box 1808, Sydney, NSW 2001, AUSTRALIA
Wade Gilbreath 1610-F Valley Ave, Birmingham, AL 35209, USA
Craig Hilton 72/375 Stirling Highway, Claremont, W.A. 6010
Bill Rotsler 17909 Lull St, Reseda, CA 91335, USA

ARTWORK

Sheryl Birkhead	Page 2 & 13	Terry Frost	Page 14
Bill Brown	Page 11	Wade Gilbreath	Page 17
Brad Foster	Page 4	Craig Hilton	Page 7
Bill Rotsler	Page 1 & 10		

FILK

The AUSSIECON TWO filk tape - The Wail from Down Under is now complete, and is available from:-

Bob Laurent
85 Vernon St #207
Oakland
CA 94610
U.S.A.

It features songs from Lesley Fish, Ann Poore, Dave Luckett, Johnstone (Zebbee, I think) and MacDonald (No idea). Oh yes, and there are some terrible noises from me too. Cost is \$8-00 U.S., plus \$2-00 U.S. for postage, with \$1-00 postage for each additional tape. It runs for about fifty minutes

---oOo---

Thanks to Allan Bray, Peter Burns and John Gardiner for electrostencils and Thunderscan

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