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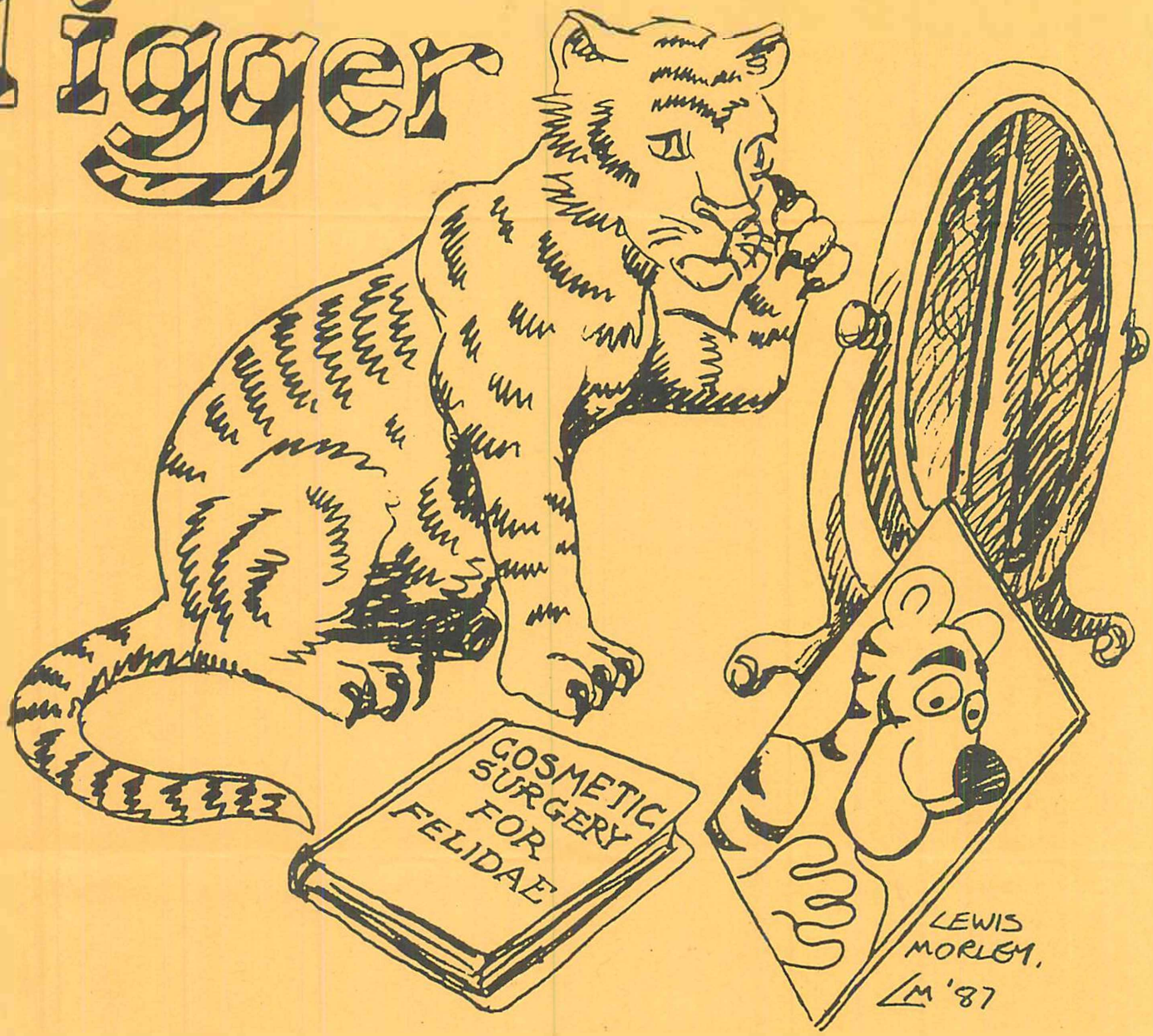
Tigger



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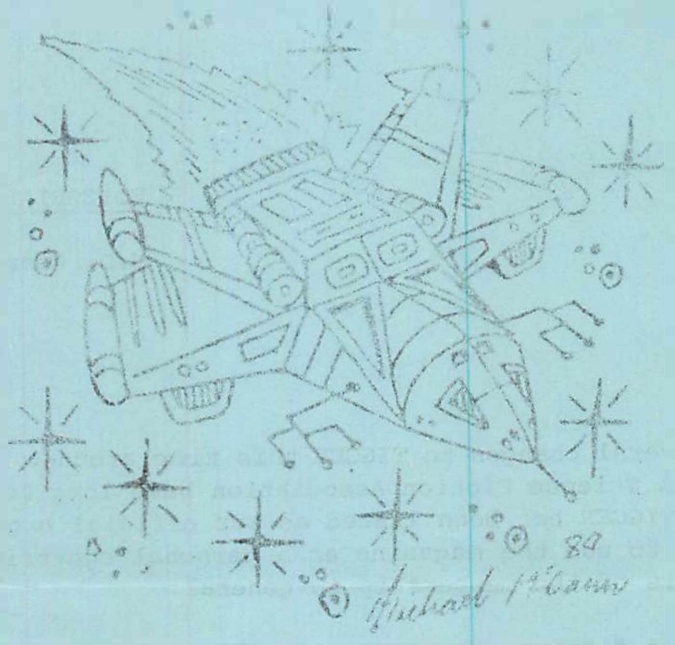

TIGGER

NUMBER TWENTY SIX JUNE 1987

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Thanks to Allan Bray, Jack Herman and Peter Burns for the electrostencils.

EDITORIAL

N.D. Adams

You may notice several changes to TIGGER this time around. Members of the Australian National Science Fiction Association have long felt that, despite the fact that TIGGER has been listed as our official organ, the previous editor tended to use the magazine as a personal ego trip, ignoring the wishes and interests of the membership in general.

Fantasy and science fiction contribute significantly to our appreciation of the world around us and, despite the slightly cynical approach to the role of the genre shown in Roger's article in this issue, the Association has long felt that the previous editor was far too frivolous and fannish in his approach to the editing of the club magazine. In this issue, we have attempted to redress this situation, allowing members of the club more scope to express their opinions and to utilize their creative urges. The situation regarding the publication of science fiction in Australia is not satisfactory. With the folding of APHELION, CRUX, FAR OUT, OMEGA and YGGDRASIL, there is no real forum for the publication of Australian Science Fiction. Thus we take pleasure in presenting John's and Chris's stories.

Unfortunately this will be the last issue of TIGGER published by the Association. The previous editor was rather profligate with the Association's funds and, although we do have adequate materials to publish this issue, we cannot afford another. Speaking of financial matters, it appears that the previous editor was in the habit of exchanging TIGGER for other people's magazines which somehow never reached the club library. Our apologies to any publisher who has not received anything from the club. We have obtained a copy of the full mailing list and will be sending this issue of TIGGER to all those who should receive a copy.

The Australian National Science Fiction Association will, of course, continue to do its bit for the advancement of serious science fiction in Australia. We gather, through the grapevine, that there was an eight thousand dollar profit from AUSSIECON TWO and, as one of the motivating forces behind keeping AUSSIECON TWO as boring as possible, we feel that we should receive a grant in order to maintain this state of events in Australia. We already have a subcommittee preparing to picket cinemas showing so-called science fiction films and our research group is looking into the possibility of using superglue to peacebond costume weapons to the costumers' skins. A.N.S.F.A. will also be continuing its search for the dividing line between Fantasy and Science Fiction.

A.N.S.F.A. meets at predetermined times and at venues known only to its members. If you'd like to join, feel free to send us a letter explaining why we should let you join and we'll do the blackballing from there.

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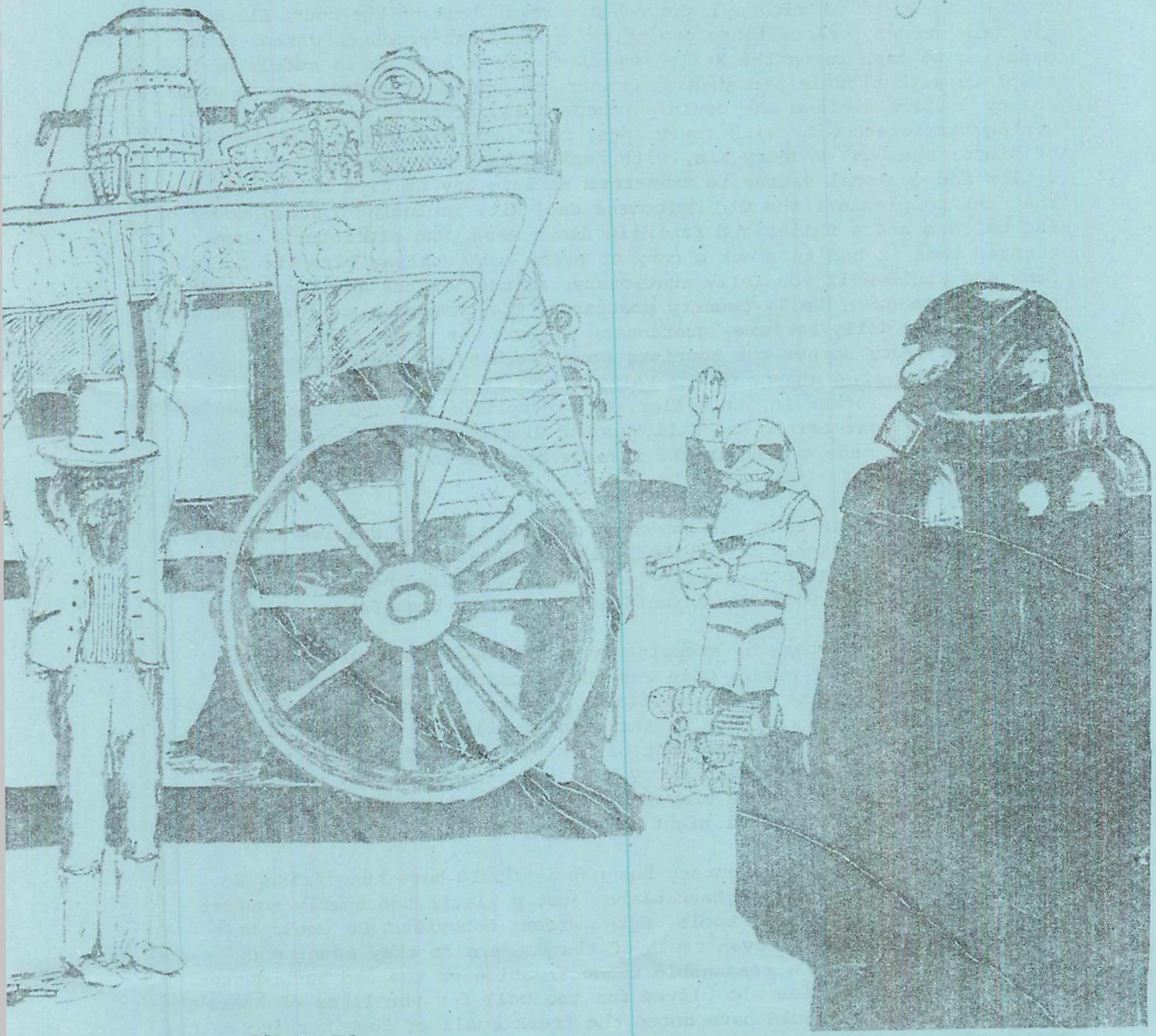


SUCH IS LIFE

John L. Davis

[Jonl submitted this to the Aussiecon Two Short Story Contest and received an honourable mention. The story examines the nature of reality while making pertinent comments on the current state of science fiction associations. This is the first time it has seen print.]

In neon letters the Ned Kelly Hotel at Glenrowan announced its modus operandi. Its brilliant incandescent and fluorescent lighting allowed the establishment to commit daylight robbery regardless of the hour. All along the main street lesser lights proclaimed their mass-produced wares, each managing to cash in on the Kelly legend. Toyshops sold scale models of Ned, complete with plastic ploughshare armour, shotgun and pistol. For an extra thirty dollars a piece one could purchase Kelly scenario kits: the Stringybark Creek Kit, with three logs, four troopers, and a plastic bottle of blood; the Bank Robbery Kit, with replica bank notes, a self-wetting teller and optional extras to transform it into any of five banks; or, for the real completist, the Old Melbourne Gaol Kit, including a scale model of the gallows and a full-sized facimile death mask. The stationer's shop boasted that it had in stock a copy of every book dealing with the Kelly Gang and would sell you Kelly stationery, as used in the Jerilderie Letter, or a wide range of Kelly Country postcards. The chemist's shop had for sale authentic Ned Kelly Perfume, guaranteed to draw the traps from miles around. On every corner the tourists were faced by a brass plaque commemorating some aspect of the Kelly Story. It was even rumoured that the local pub had, locked in its cellar, an old spitoon engraved with the legend "Kelly spat here". Had Kelly robbed Glenrowan a hundred times he would not have made a dent in the revenue brought in by his association with the town.

Just outside of town, in the more subdued light of candles and oil lanterns, another aspect of the Kelly legacy manifested itself. There, in a painstakingly reconstructed replica of Ann Jones' Glenrowan Inn, the Victorian Ned Kelly Society was holding its annual bush dance.

For Charles McPherson, stepping over the rough threshold was like stepping into another world. Gone was the Department of Lands clerical assistant. In his place stood Charlie the ostler, the tasteful suit, shirt and tie of the former replaced by the patched moleskin breeches and faded linen shirt of the latter. In front of him were the fifty odd members of the club, each dressed in such a way that a stranger plunked into their midst would swear that time travel really did exist and that he had been carried back to that fateful night in 1880.

To a real nineteenth century bushman it would have rung false. He would have noted the stringybark slabs, just a little too neatly squared off - tribute to the power tools of the ardent hobbyists. He would have mused upon the clean and even teeth of the dancers as they swung and twirled each other in a reasonable reconstruction of the old bush dances, to the tune of a fiddler who played far too well for the likes of Annie's place. Above all he would have noted the fresh smell of logs burning on the grate, unimpeded by the sickly sweet perfumes, body odours and animal smells of his age. These minor failures did not bother the members of the Kelly Society. They were lost in the charm and simplicity of a bygone age; in its spirit of adventure; and in its cavalier atitude towards the law. They were, they told themselves, recreating the spirit of the times, not its mundane details.

Detail was uppermost in the mind of young historian Steven Hart as he approached Charlie. Steve had been blessed with a name that assured him of a position of responsibility in the Society and, with a wide smile, he proceeded to do his duty.

"Hey there! Ostler! What's your name man?"

"My name's Charlie, Charlie McPherson, if it please you."

"Well Charlie, Charlie McPherson, that be a fine name that you're carrying, and a fine watch likewise."

Charlie cursed under his breath. His digital watch. In his hurry to get to the meeting on time he'd forgotten to remove it.

"But Steve . . . ."

"That's Mr Hart to the likes of you young Charlie me lad. And I think that I might just be taking a liking to that watch Charlie." He drew his revolver in order to emphasise his point. "Yes, I might indeed. Hand it over."

Meekly Charlie did so. There was no real choice. The rules of the Kelly Society clearly stated that the Committee was empowered to confiscate anachronistic items, to be ransomed back to their owners after the meeting, the money going to swell the club coffers. This ensured a continuing healthy bank balance as members were forever forgetting to remove electronic watches, ball-point pens and assorted plastic items. Each time the accounts showed signs of heading into the red, the Committee would step up its surveillance, much to the annoyance of old Dave Reading, who claimed that picking on his hearing aid was unfair. The Committee had even gone to the expense of finding him an old-fashioned hearing trumpet, but Reading had not been impressed.

Since there was no point in brooding, Charlie made for the bar where Mrs Ann Jones - in mundane life a middle-aged housewife named Bailey - was pouring mugs of authentic home-brewed ale. Regular members of the club professed to prefer the thick brew to the refrigerated ales of the modern world. Charlie merely tolerated it, his token sips ensuring that a pint would last him all night. His eyes crossed the hall, taking in and rejecting each of the merry dancers until they lit on the lithe figure of Kate Kelly - known to the C.E.S. as Applicant #F 153-8794: Ms Kathryn Arthurs - swinging from partner to partner. For the third year in succession, Charlie cursed his apathy. Despite his resolutions, he had not gotten around to attending any of the club's fortnightly Celtic Dance Workshops, and he knew that, were he to step out onto the dance floor, this would become painfully obvious. He buried his gaze in the mug of ale before him. If nothing else he might, this year, reach the point at which the alcoholic content of the ale would numb his mind to the taste of the stuff. However, his attempts to drown his tastebuds were curtailed by a voice from behind him.

"Y'know a real ostler wouldn't have been able to afford moleskin trousers."

Charlie cringed further in the direction of his beer. Tonight was not the night he wanted to get caught in a conversation with Bruce - call me Thomas - Burnley. He realised though that ignoring Bruce was not the way to stop him. Bruce had a way of leaning, vulture-like, over a person's shoulder taking silence as tacit consent to his continued talking. A more aggressive tack was needed.

"Why Mr Curnow," Charlie said, placing the burden of characterisation firmly on Burnley, "what mean you by your strange words? I realise that I am but a humble ostler and that you are a school teacher and thereby a learned man, but I do not understand. Might you be implying sir that these breeches that I wear are not mine own?"

Burnley rose to the challenge. "Why no, good ostler. The very thought had never entered my mind, though these are harrowing times in which we live and the morals of this area are far from what I, as a school teacher, would like to foster. Nay, I was simply noting the uncommonly fine quality of the stitching on those breeches. The line of the seam is such that I imagine it to be the work of the very finest of seamstresses. Indeed it hints at an orderliness nigh beyond that of human hands."

Bastard knows I machine stitched them, thought Charlie to himself, but he replied "That well may be school master, yet these breeches are mine own and token of the fact that the lot of the ostler might not have been that that fate cast for me, had circumstances been kinder. These breeches were, 'tis said, left by my mother's bed when the sudden arrival of my grandfather's pitchfork encouraged my father to leave without them. My moter, God rest her soul, gave them to me when she prenticed me as an ostler, in memory, so she said, of the fine ride that begot me. But I beg your pardon good sir, for I see Annie's son, and I needs must have words with him."

Charlie noted with satisfaction the stunned look on Burnley's face and took the opportunity to pick up his beer mug and head towards the other side of the room where Jack Jones was indeed sitting. The effect of his rebuke was not lasting though and, as he crossed the room, he heard Burnley launch into another monologue, this time directed at John Stanistreet, concerning the lack of authenticity in the standardized equipment used by members of the Society. Charlie couldn't help thinking that there was something strange in a character who would deliberately adopt the persona of one of the least liked figures in the Kelly Saga - least liked by the Kelly Clan at any rate and the Society was nothing if not pro-Kelly.

Kate was dancing up a storm as Charlie made his way to Jones' table. He hoped that this part of the evening's programming would go as planned.

"Begging your pardon Master Jones," he said, "but might I be going out to tend the horses. They'll not have been fed nor watered this evening and I'd not be wanting the poor brutes to be getting upset."

"That may well be Charlie," replied Jones, "but you know full well that our honoured guests have made it clear that not a person shall go near the horses this evening, for fear that one of us might be the kind of snivelling toadie that would creep out and alert the traps."

Charlie flung back his chair and Jones cringed at the harsh treatment meted out to his handiwork. This wasn't in the script and certainly hadn't been part of their few rushed rehearsals. "Would any think that I would perform so despicable a deed?" he cried, staring Jones straight in the eye, having first taken a quick sideways glance to assure himself that the other member of their scenario was in position. Right on cue, a heavily set man, whose overcoat seemed to cover more than flesh and bone, approached them.

"What be the trouble Jack?"

"Begging your pardon Mr Kelly but Charlie, my ostler here, is worried about the horses. He says that they'll be running short on feed and water by now."

"Well then," replied Kelly, "let him go and tend the horses, for let it never be said that Edward Kelly caused unnecessary discomfort to man nor

beast. But mark you well Charlie Ostler that you do not think to betray me. This pistol of mine has done for better men than you that have stood in my way and it will do for more yet. I'd not kill you boy. Rather would I keep every cartridge in this belt for them devilish blacks the traps have set on me. But, were I to think that you'd betray me, why then I'd do for you in an instant."

Charlie nodded and backed carefully out of the room. Once out in the cold night air, he breathed easily again. The performance had gone as well as could be expected, despite his last-minute improvisation with the chair and the fact that Ned had insisted on retaining the line about the blacks. Considering that, due to business commitments and the like, he, "Ned" and "Jack" had had little time to practise, he was rather pleased with how smoothly the act had gone.

Authenticity demanded that he didn't return to the inn for at least fifteen minutes, to allow himself time to complete his "task" and so he found himself a comfortable spot, by the hitching rails, and looked out over the town. The harsh glint of the Glenrowan streetlights stood in stark contrast to the comforting yellow glow emanating from the Inn behind him. Besides, Kate was in there, if only she'd deign to look at him.

His train of thought was derailed by the sound of car engines. They were blatantly out of place in the tranquil colonial setting. Charlie was curious. As far as he'd been able to ascertain, all of the Society members who'd registered for the weekend had been there for more than two hours, as he would have been, were it not for the nagging fault in his car's transmission. There was no reason for cars to be heading in their direction. He stretched up from the hitching post and walked across to the stand of trees which hid the carpark from the Inn.

In the parking bay were five new arrivals - cars with the paintwork, chromed fittings and extra-wide tyres that spoke eloquently of their drivers - ten tattooed youths who were gathered in a clump around the most gaudy of the vehicles. Charlie could hear their drunken conversation from across the clearing.

"Hey Jonno! D'ja bring the kero?"

"Oath mate! I got it here." A four gallon can gleamed in the moonlight.

"What about their cars?"

"She's right. We slit the tyres. They won't be going nowhere."

"Beauty. If those wankers want to pretend they're Ned Kelly, we'll show the bastards what Glenrowan really means."

Charlie drew in his breath. The Society had known, through those few members living in the town, that the townsfolk considered the Kelly Society to be rather strange. The older members of the community, who harked back to the days when Glenrowan had tried to live down that particular episode in its history, felt that the Society's activities would give the town a bad name. No one had thought that the meeting would provide the local yobbos with a change from their usual drab weekend's round of eating, drinking, drag-racing and putting it up the town's junior tarts.

Hurriedly but quietly, Charlie made his way back to the Inn. The band had called a beer break and the smiling sweating dancers were slouched around the room, many regretting the authenticity of their costumes which were more suited to the stately Victorian ballroom than to wild bush dancing in a rowdy outback pub. Mrs Jones was doing a roaring trade at the

bar. Charlie toyed with the idea of passing his news straight to Kate, but common sense assured him that alerting the whole group as quickly as possible was of more importance than bring himself to Kate's notice.

"Ned!" he cried out, noticing the Society's President and realizing at the same time that he'd forgotten the man's real name. "Trouble!"

Kelly looked puzzled. This wasn't in the script. At this point in the proceedings the fight between Joe Byrne and Steve Hart over the attentions of Miss Sarah Hartwell was scheduled to begin. Perhaps, Kelly thought, Charlie was ad-libbing, as he had with the chair. He hedged his bets. "Why Charlie me lad, you're back early. Those horses giving you a bit of strife are they?"

"Ned. This is serious. No play acting. There's a mob of larrikins from town. Come up in their cars. They're planning to start a fight and burn down the Inn."

"What?" Kelly interjected. "Dammee if this isn't the work of that scoundrel Barry. Had I known the trouble he'd cause me, I should have done him in when I had His Honour's life within me grasp."

Charlie was flabbergasted. He hadn't gotten through. Ned wasn't noted for his keen perception. Indeed, one of his few claims to fame was his skill with the forge. In mundane life he was a physical education teacher. The Presidency had fallen to him partly because of his size - few others could bear the weight of the armour for an entire evening - and partly because he'd built the armour himself and even the club's official historian had had to admit that it was a marvel of authenticity.

"Ned," Charlie repeated. "This is real. They're out for blood. They've got a can of kero too."

"Don't concern yourself so Charlie me lad. We're ready for the traps. Why do you think we came here to Glenrowan in the first place, were it not to give them government leeches a lesson they'll not be soon forgetting." Kelly beat his iron breastplate. "I'll lay odds that we'll not have to fire so much as a shot once they realize who it is that they seek to attack. Joe, Steve break out the axe handles."

There was a flurry of activity as the members of the society reached for anything that could be used as a club - the promised axe handles being reserved for the inner committee. None drew a firearm though several had, as a central part of their costumes, carefully reconstructed replicas of pistols or fowling pieces of the time. It was not a matter of respect for law and order but more of their respect for the weapons themselves, most of which were so authentic that they were guaranteed to do more damage to the user than to the target.

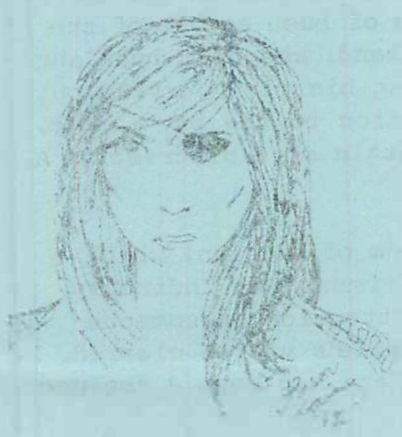
"Right lads," said Ned. "Joe, you take Jack and Thomas, steal around the back, and nobble their horses. We don't want any of them getting away to alert the rest of the traps. Kate, you take Charlie, Bob and four more of the lads and cover the back road. I'll wager that they'll try to sneak out that way once we've tumbled them. Steve, you and I will take the rest and really give them what for. They'll come to rue the day they tried to ambush the likes of the Kelly Gang.

Joe, Kate, get your boys out first, the back way. We'll give you ten minutes to get yourselves set and then we'll rouse them."

Charlie was of two minds. That he was with Kate's group was certainly a plus but their role, as reserves, did not sit comfortably on his shoulders. Having done his duty by the Society, he felt that he should have had the chance to prove himself in battle. The way he saw things going, he'd be stuck on a cold back road until the fight was over. Though he was not fond of fighting, the portion of his mind that believed in happily ever after saw him doing something courageous but painless and proving his worth to Kate. As it was, she'd consider him one of her charges, along with the other academic types she'd removed from the front lines; someone to be looked after.

As they slipped out the back door, Charlie strained for any hint of noise, but all he heard was the sharp clink of glass on rock. The boys from town were downing a little Dutch courage before their assault. In the pub, the band had broken into a varsinova, suggesting that the meeting was going on as usual, and serving to cover the sound of the two parties leaving.

With no real effort, Kate's group made its way to their station. They were familiar with the terrain, having made regular visits to those same bushes on those occasions when the evening's beer intake exceeded the capacity of the Inn's paired one-holers. (Charlie was put in mind of a song he'd heard one of the Perth folkies perform at a club benefit - THE PUB WITH NO DYKE - shamefully ripped off a country song with a similar title. True, the tune was not, strictly speaking, in period but it was a rollicking ditty none the less and one to which many members of the Society could relate.)



Once on the road, they found spots that were as comfortable as possible and which gave them a clear view of the area between them and the Inn without rendering them too conspicuous. Charlie was crouched at the base of a low shrub, hoping that it didn't shelter one of the large bull-ant nests that dotted the local bush. The heavy breathing off to the right told him that Lydia and Rob had found themselves a truly authentic nineteenth century way of keeping warm. He hoped, for their sakes, that their bush didn't shelter an ant nest either. There was a rustle in the bushes ahead of him and he took a firm grip on his makeshift club, only to see Kate emerge from the underbrush with a bottle in her hand. "Figured there was no point in letting good port go to waste," she said, "in the event of those hooligans getting through the boys and setting fire to the Inn."

"Thanks," muttered Charlie, taking a swig from the offered bottle. Kate's closeness set up a slight trembling in his body, which he fought to control as he passed the bottle back.

"Not cold are you Charlie?" whispered Kate.

Charlie bit back his reply, recognising the teasing tone in Kate's voice. "Nope," he said. "Just scared shitless is all."

She stifled a laugh. "Should be hearing something soon. Jees, I wish I could have been in on the good part of the fight. Still, they might let a

couple of the bastards through to us." Kate headed off in the direction of Rob and Lydia's bush, making enough noise to alert them to her approach but not enough to be heard from the Inn. Charlie admired her consideration, her spirit and her body. While not musclebound she had the sort of strength usually associated with women tennis players or ballarinas. Charlie had no doubt that she could hold her own in the fight and would come out of it better than he would.

It was almost as though his thoughts cued the next scene change. From the Inn he heard Neds voice cry out "Right me boyos; let's at 'em!" followed by a series of war whoops.

For the rear-guard, the battle was anti-climactic. All they could hear were the sounds of heavy boots clumping through the undergrowth, punctuated by the occasional dull thud and sharp cry as fist or axe handle met flesh or inconvenient tree. Once Charlie heard the clear clang of crowbar on mouldboard armour, followed by a good Irish oath and a cry of stunned amazement from one of the townsboys as his fingers were stung by the force of the blow vibrating back up the metal shaft.

Kate was busy marshalling her troops, going from bush to bush, warning them that any over-enthusiastic son-of-a-bitch who shot through to join the fight would answer to her. Charlie had no intention of disobeying her. From the cries below, he figured that the situation was under control and, even if it wasn't, he was well out of it. He didn't have to see the injuries. He could imagine all to vividly the split lips, the broken arms and the crushed groins.

He kept a close watch on the ground between them and the Inn. If the yobbos found things too tough, they were likely to make a break for it. He heard the boy before he saw him. There was a crash of bush as one of the townies burst through the scrub, broken bottle in hand, and went hurtling in Kate's direction. Without thinking, Charlie flung his club, crying out "Look out Kate!" In doing so, he revealed his position to the boy's mate, who had been making his way through the scrub a little more discreetly. A tyre iron rendered Charlie instantly unconscious.

Charlie awoke without ceremony in the main room of the Inn, which looked more like someone's attempt to re-create a Crimean War Infirmary than it did a colonial tavern. His groan drew the attention of someone whose hurricane lantern added to the image. As Charlie's vision cleared, he recognised Kate's features and he remembered that Kate had been a trained nurse before dropping out of the hospital system.

"How are you feeling Charlie?"

"Bloody terrible," he replied. "I should never have tried to finish that mug of homebrew. It does nasty things the morning after."

She laughed. "Very well, you go ahead and play the modest hero if you want. You've earned it. Thanks to your warning, we rounded up those two with no real trouble. All piss and wind when it came down to it."

Charlie felt gingerly around the blood encrusted lump at the base of his skull and winced. "No trouble to you perhaps, but I'm feeling lousy. What happened to the rest of those bastards?"

"We've got them tied up in the cellar, except for him," Kate's thumb jerked over her shoulder at the youth in the makeshift cot next to Charlie's, whose roughly splinted leg made it clear that there was no danger of him running away. "They tried to run, once they realised how many of us there were, but they didn't make it. It seems that their cars wouldn't start."

"So, Joe nobbled them did he?"

"No, and there's the really strange thing. Bloody Thomas twisted his ankle in a rabbit hole and, by the time Joe got to the cars, the townies were already there. Joe's mob managed to keep most of them penned up but two got away and they were the ones who got you."

Charlie looked out of the window. Something was bothering him but he couldn't quite place his unease. "Kate," he asked, "what time is it?"

"I don't know. I'll check the watchbox. You had yours confiscated this evening didn't you?"

"Yes."

Kate went across to the bar and drew the blackoak box from beside the till. She looked quickly at Charlie's watch and then turned to him and said "Well, so much for technology. The battery's dead."

"Are you sure? I only replaced it a couple of weeks ago. Any other watches in there?"
"No, only old Dave's hearing aid."

One of the other casualties, whose arm was supported by a sling that had started the evening as a workshirt, looked over from his cot. "I've got a fob watch, if you'd fish it out for me Kate."

She looked at him, grinning, "Anything for a quick feel eh John?" Nevertheless, she pulled the watch from his fob pocket and read off the time. "It's eleven thirty Charlie. Why? Are you on some sort of curfew?"

"No. It's just that I can't see any street lights."

Kate looked out of the window. "Yes. Funny that. There must be some sort of a blackout. I hope it doesn't give the lads any trouble. Ned and Steve went into town to see if they could round up a little police help to take care of our friends here. Still, you know how it is. You can never find a copper when you need one. They were going to take one of the bodgies' cars - the little shits slashed our tyres - but they couldn't start them - couldn't as much as get a glow from the headlights either. So they walked."

Charlie carefully lifted himself from his cot. His head spun and his knees were trembling but the was a picture forming in his mind; a picture that he didn't like. He gazed over, in the direction of the town, where, hours earlier, all the neon of the twentieth century had blazed out its mundane messages. A babble of voices told him that Ned and Steve had returned and, from the chaos, he picked out the information that there wasn't a working car, radio or torch in all of Glenrowan. In his mind he rehearsed all of the disaster novel cliches he'd read as a kid. He turned from the cold blackness of the outside world and faced the cheering warmth of the hearth fire. Kate came up to him, her hurricane lantern in hand.

"All right Mr Charles McPherson. Time you got back into bed. We don't want you catching a chill to add to that concussion."

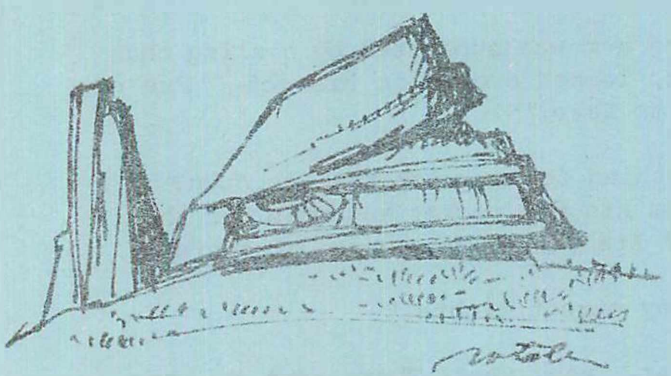
Charlie submitted meekly but, envisaging Bill Mason in DAY OF THE TRIFFIDS said "I'd keep a hold on that lantern Kate. I have a feeling that we might need it."

THE HISTORY OF THE AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL SCIENCE FICTION ASSOCIATION

Nancy Greene

A.N.S.F.A. has never kept a particularly high profile in Australian fandom, prefering to run things behind the scenes. Indeed, were it not for a letter from Fabian Stretton in August 1984, no one would ever have heard of the Association.

A.N.S.F.A. was formed in the early thirties, in response to the pernicious influence of radio plays on the science fiction of the time. It was felt that radio was far too frivolous a medium for what was a very serious and constructive form of fiction. The Association also felt that amateur magazines were too frivolous a medium for the discussion of science fiction and the one attempt to produce a hard cover book of serious science fiction criticism fell by the wayside when the club's printer, Arthur Elron Smith, was crushed by three fonts of type which he'd intended to use in laying out the book.



The Association, quite sensibly, avoided the popularization of science fiction in the late thirties and early forties, choosing rather to meet in each others' houses where members would read from the works of Thomas Hardy, John Milton and William J. McGonnagal. It was felt that expanding one's mind in this way was preferable to the rubbish that was passed off as science fiction in such magazines as Argosy, Astounding and Scientific American. In the March 1938 meeting, Bob Jones attempted to read sections from H.G. Wells' "War and the Future" but was censured for lowering the tone of the meeting. His request to renew his membership in 1939 was rejected.

The Association shunned such membership ploys as placing leaflets in books in secondhand bookshops and so never really attracted a large membership, recruiting from the regular readers in the Melbourne Library Main Reading Room. They avoided the Melbourne/Sydney feuds by refusing to acknowledge the existence of Sydney.

The club went into hibernation during the fifties although it was rumoured that John Foyster was recruited during that time. Foyster, being far too young for the group, was not allowed to attend meetings, but he was given permission to phone during meetings and so got to know meeting proceedure quite well. Several ideas thus gleaned were to be used when Foyster founded the Nova Mob.

The sixties allowed the Association some hope. Although John Bangsund, Lee Harding, John Foyster and Bruce Gillespie were seen as excessively frivolous, it was felt that they showed promise and they were permitted to write letters to the Association (It was made clear that the Association was under no obligation to write back.)

It is not yet known how Fabian Stretton discovered the Association but the accuracy of his information suggests that a member was in contact with him. Stretton's facts included the average age of the membership - 30 - and the fact that the Association had less than three hundred members. [What he missed was that the average age was only maintained through the prospective memberships of the current members' great-grandchildren. He also failed to recognize the scope offered by estimating the membership at less than 300.] His statement "It is highly elitist and very narrow minded. You have to be good enough (translates to 'just as narrow minded and in roughly the same way') to join." was most complimentary and the Association was pleased to achieve the recognition that it so richly deserved.

Following Stretton's revelations, the Association decided that it should make some attempt to attract money to the Association, in order to finish off the book of critical analysis so tragically curtailed in the thirties. The Association agreed to abandon its isolationist stance and commissioned Marc Ortlieb to publish a regular A.N.S.F.A. journal. Unfortunately the Association had so lost touch with the reality of SF & F fandom in Australia that it failed to note the touch of irony in Ortlieb's job submission. It mistook the reference from F.R. Leavis for the real item and assumed that Ortlieb was being serious when he agreed to regularly publish the finest fiction from serious Australian science fiction writers. The Association will not make that mistake again. In order to fulfil our obligations to the Post Master General, this issue of TIGGER is being published. The Association though will devote all its future efforts to publishing the critical tome started in the thirties. Its completion will be advertised in all the best journals.

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SCIENCE FICTION AND PREDICTING THE FUTURE

Roger Dalroy

Isaac Asimov claims that he is fed up of fending off reporters every time a scientific breakthrough is made. As a particularly vociferous and obvious member of the science fiction writing community, he attracts the newshounds every time anything remotely reminiscent of science fiction occurs. He attracts two types of question on such occasions.

"Well, now that we have test tube babies/the space shuttle/robot workers, what is there left for science fiction writers to write about?"

or

"Well, Dr Asimov, when you first wrote about test tube babies/the space shuttle/robot workers, did you imagine that you'd see them in your lifetime?"

Both of these types of question presuppose that science fiction necessarily has something to do with predicting the future. It is my contention that science fiction has very little to do with predicting the future and that it certainly should not be judged on its successes or failures in the prediction stakes.

The expectation that science fiction should predict the future has been reached by several diverse routes. It is partly the fault of science fiction itself. Science fiction has been characterised by Ursula LeGuin as a "ghetto literature". It has been considered very much a lowbrow form of writing. (This opinion of science fiction is still held in many academically orientated English faculties, not, it should be added, without good cause. Sturgeon's Law holds. The fact that 90% of everything is crud does not detract from the fact that 90% of science fiction is crud.) Science fiction, as an independant genre, had its birthplace in the pulp magazines even though works that are now classified as science fiction appeared elsewhere - Wells and Verne coming to mind. Thus, to read science fiction, the early fans were forced to go to the pulps and to read them surreptitiously, lest it become known that they read "That Buck Rogers Stuff". That the covers of the pulp magazines were gaudily illustrated with semi-naked women, bug-eyed monsters and implausible rocketships did not aid science fiction's claim to legitimacy as a form of literature. Readers felt threatened and were quick to adapt the catchcry "It is a proud and lonely thing to be a fan."

To combat the ridicule that the science fiction fan encountered, he (for, in most cases, science fiction was a male domain) evolved an elaborate mythology in which science fiction fans were the technocratic rulers-to-be of the scientific utopia just around the corner. Included in the mythos were the following dogmae:

1) Science fiction writers are trained scientists.

Certainly some science fiction writers were trained scientists but many were hack writers, switching from science fiction to western to mystery as the market and their overdrafts demanded. To the fan though, pointing out writers who were scientists gave some legitimacy to the mythos. Space Opera writer E.E. Smith always had his PhD prominantly figured in his byline, despite the fact that his stories were fantasies embellished with gadgets. (Smith's PhD was in food chemistry - perhaps sub-consciously contributing to the fact that, when parodying Smith in "Star Smashers of the Galaxy Rangers", Harry Harrison has the space drive result from the bombardment of a cheese sandwich.)

2) Science fiction readers are in the top five percent of the population with regards to intelligence.

Leaving aside any question of the definition of intelligence and the reliability of IQ tests on which this claim was usually based, this was more a consolation prize than anything else. The average science fiction fan was certainly an avid reader with an insatiable appetite for any reading material and certainly with a penchant for technical journals as well as science fiction but the concept that fans were the progenitors of the technological master-race was more often than not a sop to the reader who was usually the bespectacled ninety pound weakling at whom the Charles Atlas ads in the pulps were aimed. (It can be no coincidence that Siegel and Shuster, the originators of the Superman comics, in which a bespectacled nebbish becomes a mighty hero, were also science fiction fans and are acknowledged to have produced the first amateur science fiction magazine.)

Naturally the magazines did not discourage the fan's image of himself and, under such editors as Hugo Gernsback and John W. Campbell Jr, these attitudes were deliberately fostered. One is, after all, likely to read the sort of magazines that tell one that one is due to be part of the ruling class. In both cases, the editors produced magazines that emphasised science and technology to the point that Ursula LeGuin could refer to the genre as "Fiction for young engineers."

3) Science fiction is more important than mainstream fiction because it predicts the future.

Science fiction fans have long seen a dichotomy between science fiction and "literary" writing, the diverse branches of which they lump together in the category "mainstream". This probably comes from the fact that science fiction fans have been, until recently, science orientated people who tended to get confused by the idea that sentences could have more than one meaning. Literature was fuzzy and imprecise and not at all like the sorts of facts that one found in science. Thus science fiction fans tended to become more than a little antagonistic towards the literary establishment, which wrote off science fiction as yet another literarily poor manifestation of popular culture. (Leavis must bear part of the responsibility for the literary community's reaction to science fiction but, as is so often the case in a league match, the penalty goes against the reactionary player rather than the player committing the original offense.)

In the argument between mainstream and science fiction, evidence was needed to support the fans' claims that science fiction was better than mainstream literature - after all, evidence was central to science and so was necessary to any such argument. Insofar as the quality of the writing was concerned, even the most rigid, linear thinker was forced to admit that the writing style and characterization found in your average science fiction novel wasn't really the best. What was needed was something that science fiction did better than anything else. The answer came, ironically enough, from the hackneyed taunt with which the public derided science fiction readers - "You don't really read that Buck Rogers stuff do you?"

For years, science fiction fans had rankled at that comment but finally they were able to utter those words so beloved of the underdog - "I told you so!" In 1945, the United States dropped an atom bomb on Hiroshima, followed by another on Nagasaki - largely, one suspects, to prove that the first one wasn't a fluke. Science fiction fans could recount with delight the story of Cleve Cartmill, who found the F.B.I. on his doorstep because, well before the first atom bomb had been tested, he had written a story explicitly describing the effects of such a bomb. "See," the fans said, "It's not Buck Rogers stuff. Atomic Bombs won the war for us. So there!!!"

Unfortunately the story wasn't that clever as a prediction. Any half-way decent engineer, who kept up with the technical journals, could have come up with exactly the same "predictions". Indeed, all that the designers of the first atomic bombs were doing was extrapolating from certain properties of radioactive elements. Extrapolation accounts for a number of the claims that science fiction can predict the future. There's really nothing special in being able to say "We can speak to people by telephone. One day we'll be able to do that without the telephone wires. We might even be able to send pictures the same way." (Of course, you then get some charlie who'll over-extrapolate himself to the point that he has matter transmission, but we were talking about science fiction here and not fantasy.) Short term extrapolation of this nature is like using a rifle to shoot a fish in a particularly shallow barrel. That it is not restricted to science fiction can be seen quite clearly today in the public pronouncements of working scientists who feel quite comfortable in making predictions that even the wildest of science fiction writers in Campbell's day would not have dared. The universe is made up of very very short pieces of super-string with sixteen dimensions? Who are they trying to fool?

The second type of science fiction "prediction" has more in common with using a shotgun on our precariously barrelled fish. It cannot be

denied that a lot of science fiction is set in the future and, if one wishes to write about events in the future, one is obliged to develop a future background. The processes by which such a background is written include extrapolation, wild guesses and stealing - call it research if you're picky - from past writers or history. (As Asimov put it: "Take an Empire that was Roman/ And you'll find it is at home in/ All the vast expanses of the Milky Way" and he should know; General Bel Riose indeed!) It stands to reason that some aspects of some of these futures will, by sheer chance if for no other reason, come to pass. Just as, by chance, one of the pellets from our hypothetical shotgun cartridge might hit the fish, one of the future aspects suggested by one of our science fiction writers might turn out to be literally true. I'm not suggesting that this is a bad thing to happen. What does annoy me is the way that some shooters and some science fiction readers and authors, will pick on the one piece of lead shot that found its way into the fish and say "There! That proves what a good shot I am!" When one combines the process of extrapolation with the shotgun scattering of wild guesses one is going to get a hit every now and then. What we should be looking at is the rapidly increasing layer of lead shot on the bottom. It takes a remarkably liberal interpretation to suggest that George Orwell's predictions for 1984 have proved to be particularly accurate. He was working on the basis of several very pessimistic assumptions that proved false in time. Certainly his shotgun scored a number of hits. His division of the world into three superpowers fighting their wars and forging their alliances on foreign soils seems pretty good if one substitutes the U.S. for Oceania, the U.S.S.R. for Eurasia and China for Eastasia. However, his predictions fall terribly short when one considers the current role of the Arab oil states and the emerging role of the Third World in international politics. Similarly, while Buck Rogers might well have predicted television - a prediction which, as mentioned, is more short term extrapolation than anything else, especially considering that the teletype was capable of sending pictures at the time that the comic strips were written - look at all of the other devices that were suggested therein. True it is not yet the Twenty Fourth Century, but I'll put my neck on the line and suggest that, Ephraim Fischbach notwithstanding, we're unlikely to see antigravity belts. That's really scraping the bottom of the barrel.

For a final example of the exaggeration of science fiction's predictive ability as soothsayer, the fish in a barrel analogy must be stretched almost to breaking point. It relies on our shooter throwing a school of red herrings into the barrel, obscuring the original fish, and then claiming that he has shot the fish. Without rolling up one's sleeves and delving around in the barrel for the shot fish, there's really no way to disprove the shooter's claim. Asimov described the best example of this sort of claim - the claim that Jules Verne talked about the periscope. A close reading of 20,000 LEAGUES UNDER THE SEA will reveal nary a trace of a periscope. What has happened is that people have read the book - or, more likely, have heard of the submarine featured therein, the Nautilus - and have assumed that, since the Nautius is a submarine and submarines have periscopes, then the Nautilus must have had a periscope hence Verne invented the periscope - Q.E.D..

The main problem with science fiction predictions is that they can only be identified after the event - a problem that the field has in common with Nostradamus or any of the current wave of soothsayers. This pretty much negates any usefulness that science fiction's supposed predictive power might have. (For a mainstream writer's evaluation of the problems associated with such predictions, may I recommend Bill Shakespeare's "Macbeth"?) To which predictions should one pay attention? If one paid

attention to the spate of novels having as their initial premise that the Earth would be devastated by atomic warfare in the nineteen sixties, one would have committed suicide in 1959. The books that predicted that space travel was going to be opened up by private enterprise certainly reflect the problems that science fiction predictions have when based on extrapolation and past history. The extrapolation was that humans could travel in space. Newtonian physics made that quite plausible and, by the end of World War II, the potential that rocketry had had been felt - certainly in London. However, the science fiction writer, in searching for a paradigm for the development of space travel, looked back to the development of aeroplanes, which was done by individual companies and by eccentrics like the Wright Brothers. Thus we got the generation of backyard spaceship inventors so beautifully parodied in books such as Harry Harrison's STARSHASHERS OF THE GALAXY RANGERS or Fredric Brown's WHAT MAD UNIVERSE. (Did anyone use the pyramid building paradigm before 1950?)

Science fiction is not then a particularly valuable predictor of gadgetry. For all of its successes - Arthur C. Clarke's geosynchronous communication satellite being the noteable case - there is a larger much less widely publicised number of failures. Of course you couldn't have told the forties science fiction fan this - even though, in a rather gentle satire, Robert Bloch attempted to do so. (Try rereading "A Way of Life". It appears in the Santesson collection THE FANTASTIC UNIVERSE OMNIBUS.)

There has been a more recent attempt to resurrect science fiction's value as a predictor which touts science fiction as an insulator against future shock. The concept is that, although science fiction readers may not be on their way to rule the Technocracy, they are at least better adapted to survive in a world where the accepted conditions and values are changing as quickly as they are today. Science fiction, it is argued, through presenting alternate futures, frees one's mind to new possibilities. It sounds like an attractive theory, but I've yet to see much evidence for it. I doubt very much that it can be found in the tightly bound group of people who identify themselves as science fiction fans and who publish regular amateur magazines, partly devoted to science and science fiction and who have club meetings and conventions devoted to science fiction. The newcomer to this scene is almost immediately struck by the basic contradictions between such people's behaviour and the literature that they read. Science fiction fans regularly bemoan the fact that science fiction isn't what it was twenty years ago. They seem more interested in the history of science fiction than in its future. They publish their amateur magazines on stencil or spirit duplicators, often criticising those foolish enough to resort to computer generated text and photocopying.

It is said in these circles that the golden age of science fiction is fourteen, i.e. that the science fiction that one discovers at age fourteen is the type that one tends to like for the rest of one's life. This explains why, for one age group, Heinlein and Asimov are gods while, in a younger age group, Star Trek uniforms and Spock ears abound. This time fixing does not bode well for science fiction readers as survivors of future shock. Admittedly, not all science fiction readers become fans and so it could only be that those who become heavily involved with science fiction cannot cope with the future but those who keep to small doses are better innoculated.

Yet another count against science fiction as a predictor of the future is that, although the gadgets and the situations may be futuristic, the characters seldom, if ever, are. The types of characters one finds in the science fiction readily available in Australia tend to be twentieth century

Americans, in rare cases, twentieth century British or, in exceptionally rare cases, twentieth century Australians. Few authors have attempted to come to grips with the changes in thought pattern that might be occasioned by changes in future societies. Those who do give this thought tend to search through history for their inspiration. This is the approach used by Robert Heinlein in TIME ENOUGH FOR LOVE which, in creating a frontier society, recreates the Old West, complete with covered wagons wending their way through the mountains; scruffy, unwashed outlaws; mules - albeit genetically enhanced talking mules; and critters that must be shot to keep them out of the corn. Other authors have chivalry reborn among the lasers and spaceships. George Lucas provides us with a wonderful combination of Zen and World War II in his STAR WARS saga.

It is not really possible to extrapolate human behaviour or modes of thought. These are complex areas. Sure, science fiction predicted small computers. Asimov even predicted hand calculators. Who though predicted computer games? (I don't count such things as battle simulating computers, as described by Heinlein in CITIZEN OF THE GALAXY, though, with just one tiny step, Heinlein could have had it. As it was, he described the simulation runs in almost the same terms as one might describe a kid playing his favourite arcade machine today.)

If then science fiction's value as predictor is negligible, does that mean that science fiction as a genre is worthless? Certainly not. The emphasis on science fiction as a predictor came largely from the wish of science fiction fans to legitimize the genre in terms of relevance. More recent writers have attempted to legitimize the genre in terms of its intrinsic literary value. Thus there were the stylistic experiments of the nineteen sixties that were lumped together under the label "New Wave". Such fiction seldom dealt with outer space, looking more at the inner space of the human mind. It owed more to James Joyce's FINNEGAN'S WAKE than to Isaac Asimov's Foundation Trilogy. Though not successful in themselves, such writing experiments allowed writers to break out of the limits placed on them by John W. Campbell's particular dictates. Writers capable of holding their own in contemporary literature were found writing science fiction. Ursula K. LeGuin quickly gained a name as a science fiction writer whose work librarians liked. Joanna Russ used the medium to discuss particular feminist issues that interested her. J.G. Ballard experimented with styles and convoluted stories. Philip K. Dick gained notoriety in the counter-culture for his drug enanced and twisted stories in which nothing could be taken for granted. Instead of pretending to predict the future, science fiction became more honest in its examination of the past and present. Almost as a reaction to this, film and television started to provide in profusion the sort of escapist pulp science fiction that had been the stock in trade for the pre-Campbell magazines. STAR WARS was probably the best 1930s science fiction ever filmed, even if it did have to wait almost fifty years for film-making technology to catch up with the story that it told. The story had very little to do with prediction though. Lucas acknowledges his debt to the fairy tale in his variant on "Once upon a time . . ." - "Long ago, in a galaxy far far away . . . "

Local critic and writer George Turner sees in this dichotomy - the literati on one side and the escapists on the other - the death of anything useful in science fiction and feels that it is time that science fiction got back into prediction of a sort:

"Not the business of predicting technological wonders, which is childishly easy, but the business of asking 'If this goes on, what will be the end?'"
(IN THE HEART OR IN THE HEAD George Turner, Norstrilia Press 1984, p 205)

Science fiction has, in the past, addressed itself to that sort of problem. Indeed, in a short story entitled "If this goes on", Heinlein looked at the political implications of two super-powers having particularly powerful weapons. In the story he got the technical details wrong - he suggested atomic dust, which could be sprinkled on cities from the air, rater than atom bombs - but he did fairly accurately portray the sort of stand-off that the two powers would face, with neither willing to commit the first act of aggression.

This view does, of course, presume that science fiction has a sociological role to play in society, as does any view of science fiction as a predictor of the future. Personally, I don't see the genre in that way. I'm quite happy to see science fiction as a branch of literature, to be judged on that basis. Admittedly it seldom strays into the area of High Literature and it is often badly written but the good stuff - i.e. the stuff I like - usually provides enough of a combination of story, ideas and memorable characters to keep me entertained and to provide me with things to talk about, which is all I ask of it. Certainly one may wish to elevate it to the position of Oracle, in which case, one should be careful in interpreting its pronouncements. I'd rather just enjoy reading it.

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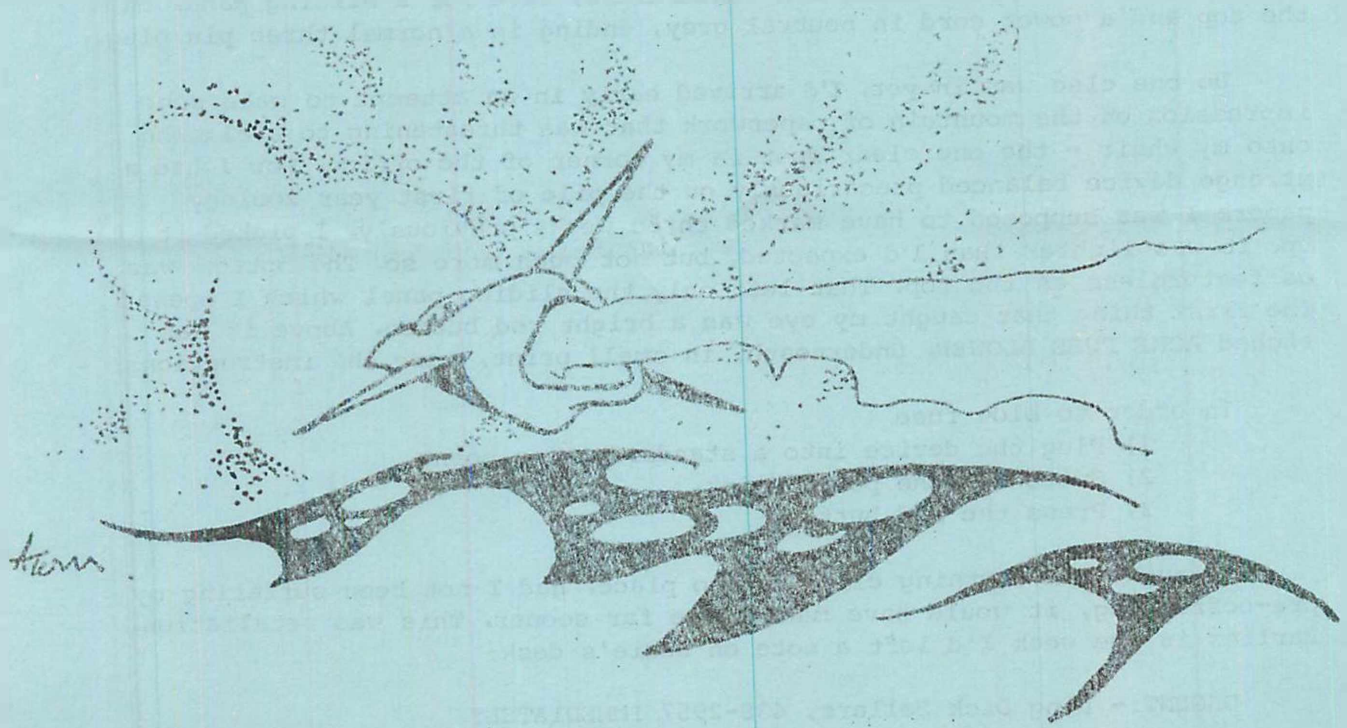


CAT KILLER

Chris Ardrey

The object was sitting on my desk when I arrived at the lab that morning. At first I took it for a piece of Terry's equipment that had somehow migrated across from her desk, but it looked more polished, more professional than her breadboarded devices. It was matt green in colour and was about the size and shape of a Walkman cassette player. The corners were rounded, and the entire thing was featureless, save for a sliding panel on the top and a power cord in neutral grey, ending in a normal three pin plug.

No one else was in yet. I'd arrived early in an attempt to make some impression on the mountain of paperwork that was threatening to avalanche onto my chair - the one clear spot in my corner of the office. Now I had a strange device balanced precariously on the pile of first year zoology papers I was supposed to have marked three weeks previously. I picked it up. It was lighter than I'd expected, but not much more so. The bottom was as featureless as the top. That left only the sliding panel which I opened. The first thing that caught my eye was a bright red button. Above it was etched ACME FUSE BLOWER. Underneath, in small print, were the instructions:

In order to blow fuse
1) Plug the device into a standard power point.
2) Switch on the power point.
3) Press the red button.

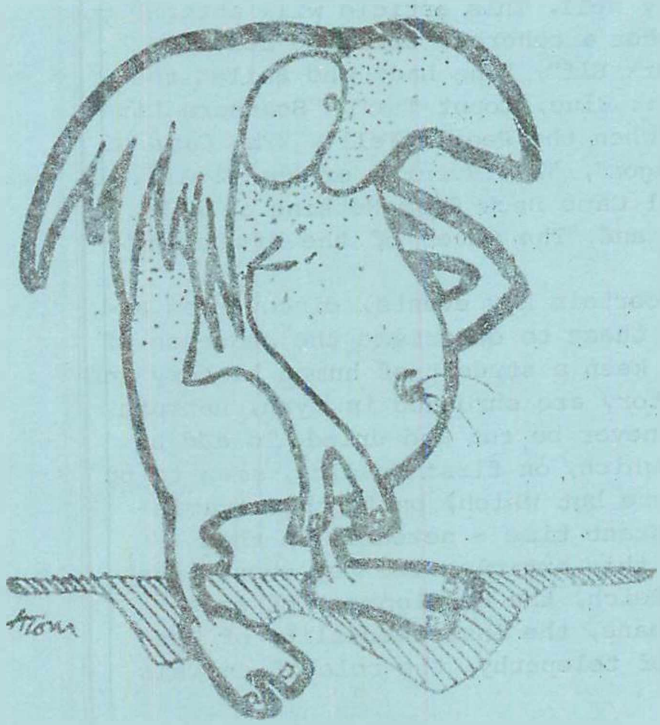
I laughed. Everything clicked into place. Had I not been suffering my pre-coffee fog, it would have made sense far sooner. This was retaliation. Earlier in the week I'd left a note on Suzie's desk:

URGENT:- Ring Dick Sellars, 438-2957 IMMEDIATELY.

I didn't see her face when the voice on the other end of the line replied "I'm sorry madam but I think you've been had. This is the Pink Passion Sex Shop." I gather that she wasn't impressed. Still, I knew Suzi to have the sort of vindictive streak that made practical joke duels a challenge. Here was her reply.

It didn't take me long to realize that if it was genuine, the box would contain a switch that would simply short circuit the electrical system. Still, a question remained. Would it really work?

I decided to be scientific about it. I assembled my basic equipment - one double adaptor, one desk lamp, one unknown device, fuses for the blowing of. If the fuse blower worked, the moment I clicked the switch, the desk lamp would go out. It did. So did the incubator in which I had been developing a batch of E. coli that had been replicating kiwi DNA as part of my phylogenetic study of Australasian flightless birds. I phoned the care-taker.



Since several irate discussions over the next few weeks centred on the blown fuse and the research setbacks it had caused, I decided not to advertise my discovery. The device itself disappeared from my office the next day and I figured that Suzi didn't want to be incriminated. I didn't say anything to her. It was obvious that her riposte had been all to successful.

Six months later. The device was back again. This time, as I slid back the cover, I noted the legend

ACME ARMAGGEDON DEVICE

In order to destroy world

1) Plug the device into a standard power point.
2) Switch on the power point.
3) Press the red button.

It was tempting.

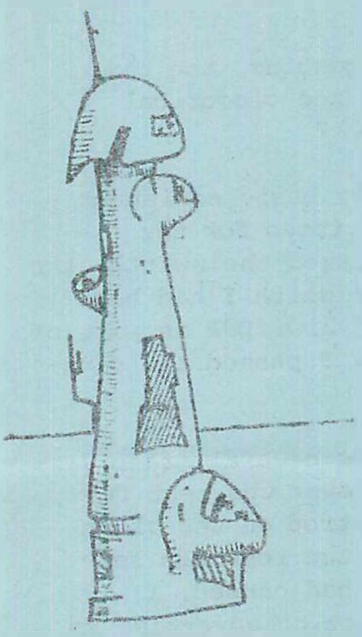
-[][][]-

"Christopher Robin went down with Alice,"
Said A.A. Milne with an absence of malice,
But this is no matter for laughter and sniggers
'Cause very soon now there'll be no more Tiggers!

John Newman

THE MISTS OF LEGEND

Jack Bearden



The future history designed by Cordwainer Smith is one of the richest in the science fiction field. This article will attempt to establish the key events in Smith's future history and thus construct a chronology for Smith's early stories.

Trying to establish a chronology for the universe of Cordwainer Smith is much like trying to reconstruct an ancient jigsaw when half the pieces have been lost and those remaining have been mixed with pieces from a very similar puzzle. The later stories in the chronology are far easier to work with. Smith chronicles the times of Rod McBan and C'mel particularly well. This article will attempt to piece together a coherent timeline for the stories "Mark Elf", "The Lady Who Sailed the Soul", "Think Blue, Count Two", "Scanners Live in Vain", "When the People Fell", "The Game of Rat and Dragon", "The Burning of the Brain", "The Colonel Came Back from Nothing at All", "Drunkboat" and "The Queen of the Afternoon".

Smith's universe is pegged out by certain key events, discoveries and people and it should be possible to use these to determine the sequence of the stories. Unfortunately Smith is too keen a student of human history and knows full well that the origins of history are shrouded in myth, untruth and semi-truth. Thus the sequence will never be cut and dried. To add to the problem, there are several stories which, on first reading, seem to be set in the "just around the corner" future but which, on further examination, are found to be set in a more distant time - noteable in this respect is "Game of Rat and Dragon". In this article, the key events that will be used are the fall of the Third Reich, the development of space travel, the pain of space and the habermans, the Instrumentality of Mankind, the discovery of stroon, the use of telepathy, the role of animals and the Vomact family.

The first story that can be clearly dated is "Mark Elf", set on Earth, sixteen thousand years after the fall of Hitler's Third Reich. It is a strange and war-torn world. Through its wastelands wander reasoning animals, unreasoning humans, war machines of the long forgotten Sixth German Reich, strange clouds left over from an American armoury and the true men, who seem to have some measure of control over things. Telepathy is an accepted talent, shared by the true men and the intelligent animals.

Into this world is reborn Carlotta vom Acht, a German girl flung into orbit at the end of World War II by her father, the head of a secret Nazi rocket base. She has been in suspended animation for sixteen thousand years. Her capsule is discovered by Laird, a true man, who brings it to Earth but, before they can be united, she encounters a Moron (one of the degenerate humans), a manshonyagger (one of the German war machines) and the Middle-sized Bear (a reasoning animal). Her final destiny is to marry Laird. Her descendants and perhaps those of her sisters Juli and Karla who were similarly placed in orbit, appear in several of the later stories as the powerful Vomact family.

The sequel to "Mark Elf", "Queen of the Afternoon", poses problems. Linebarger himself did not complete the story. According to John J. Pierce's article in SPECULATION,

> "('Queen of the Afternoon') consists of two chapters of a projected longer work of which 'Mark Elf' was originally intended to be another chapter. Telling of the arrival of one of the two sisters of Carlotta vom Acht, heroine of 'Mark Elf', among the unauthorised men of the Wild, the unpublished fragment is richly evocative of the Dark Age of post-atomic war Earth."

The story has since been completed by Linebarger's widow, Genevieve, but there are inconsistencies which can not be properly examined until stories later in the chronology have been examined. Thus, for the moment, I will pass it over until stories later in the chronology have been examined. The exact order of the stories "The Lady Who Sailed the Soul", "Think Blue, Count Two", "When the People Fell", "The Colonel Came Back From Nothing at All", "Drunkboat" and "Scanners Live in Vain" depends very much on the place of "Scanners Live in Vain" and so it is here that I must start.

"Scanners Live in Vain" is set in a world not too far removed from that of "Mark Elf". (The date given is the 782nd Year of Space.) The manshonyaggers and the unauthorised humans exist but, by this time, the name vom Acht has been contracted to Vomact. The Instrumentality exists, with Chiefs rather than the later Lords. People have reached the planets and, it is suggested, the stars but the price is high. Being in space, beyond the orbit of the Moon, causes a pain so profound that any human experiencing it wishes to die. To circumvent the problem, the haberman process was invented. This cuts the brain off from all its nerves. The Scanners, humans who have been thus desensitized, have chest panel units to monitor their bodily functions. They control the habermans, criminals who have also been processed but who do not have control over their own bodies. The Scanners guide the spaceships, while the human passengers travel in a state of suspended animation to avoid the pain of space.

In "Scanners Live in Vain", a scientist, Adam Stone, discovers a way to travel through the pain of space without the haberman process. The Scanners wish to kill him to avoid becoming redundant. One Scanner, Martel, saves Stone's life and the story ends with the Scanners becoming Chiefs of Space. However, none of the stories that follow make sense chronologically unless the term "Scanner" is retained. Scanners are mentioned in stories clearly post-dating "Scanners Live in Vain", where no mention is made of the pain of space or of the necessity for space travellers to undergo the haberman process.

The first of these stories is "The Lady Who Sailed the Soul". It deals with the sail-powered spaceships that were used to colonize the stars before the discovery of planoforming. Life expectancies are of the order of a hundred and sixty years, which suggests that the santaclara drug has not yet been discovered. The background to the story is so reminiscent of our near future that one is forced to conclude that, since "Mark Elf", the world has been reconstructed to approximate the Earth before the world wars. In "Mark Elf", the manshonyagger cannot find America or Americans but, in "The Lady", the heroine is Helen America and the city of New Madrid is mentioned. There is also mention of the neo-British reconstructing the colleges at Cambridge. (This reconstruction is hinted at in "Scanners Live in Vain" when the Scanner Chang speaks of his father who tries hard to be Chinese but who has never learnt to read Old Chinese and who thinks that aeroplanes were fine for Confucius and so are fine for him.) It is tempting to suggest that Laird and Carlotta planned the revival of the Old History but, without "Queen of the Afternoon" in its intended form, it is difficult to say.

"When the People Fell" is an awkward story to fit into the chronology. It is told as a flashback and mentions Scanner Vomact and his daughters, which suggests that it fits after "Scanners Live in Vain". The important peg in the story is the mention of the "new" santaclara drug - later to be known as suroon and which, from later works, we know comes from the planet of Old North Australia. Vomact mentions an expected lifespan of around one hundred and twenty years prior to the discovery of the santaclara drug. The story deals with the terraforming of Venus by the Goonhogo, a nation of Chinesians.

"Think Blue, Count Two" is the second of the star sailor stories. Its introduction places it before the discovery of planoforming. Scanners are again mentioned, but it is clear that the space travellers are not themselves Scanners. People have numbers rather than names, but the numbers are translated into names, perhaps for the benefit of the readers. The colonization of the stars is underway. Rejuvenation is common - Tiga-belas, the psychological guard, is in his fourth and last rejuvenation. The use of beast brains has become accepted - a central "character" in the story is a laminated mouse brain which is to defend a girl - Vessey-koosey, whose name translates as five-six. The Old Religion has been forgotten. Tiga-belas makes reference to a snowball's chance in hell, but neither technician is sure what snowballs or hell are.

To complicate the chronology, Linebarger wrote two versions of a story, one version of which can be made to fit in after "Think Blue, Count Two" and another that fits better into a later time. The story that almost fits is "The Colonel Came Back From Nothing at All". Here we see the first of the planoforming ships. We are still in the reconstructed world of "The Lady Who Sailed the Soul" but there are aspects that don't fit. The characters clearly have names rather than numbers, which would put the story before "Think Blue, Count Two". There is mention of pinlighter helmets which, according to "Game of Rat and Dragon" weren't developed until after the invention of planoforming.

The story looks at what happens to the first man to experience planoforming. He is found, stark naked, in Central Park and has to be brought out of it by a secondary telepath. There is no clear explanation of how planoforming technology jumps from this to the controlled form found in "Game of Rat and Dragon". The second version of the story "Drunkboat", is more consistent and fits neatly into the timeline later, after the establishment of the Lords of the Instrumentality.

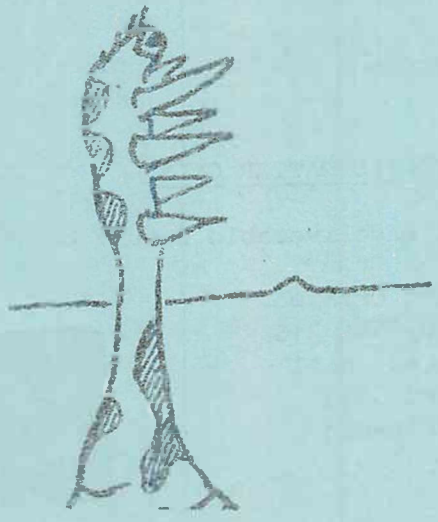
"Game of Rat and Dragon" is the final story in this chronology. It suggests an origin for the Underpeople and has planoforming clearly established. People have names and ranks, which suggests that the numbering of "Think Blue, Count Two" is a temporary aberation, but one that will recur before the Rediscovery of Man.

Thus the time line I would suggest for the early stories is "Mark Elf", "Scanners Live in Vain", "The Lady Who Sailed the Soul", "When the People Fell", "Think Blue, Count Two", "The Colonel Came Back from Nothing at All" and "Game of Rat and Dragon". The two time lines I have seen printed differ in minor detail.

Alice K. Turner's chronology in EXPLORING CORDWAINER SMITH runs "Mark Elf", "The Good Friends", "The Lady Who Sailed the Soul", "Scanners Live in Vain", "When the People Fell", "Think Blue, Count Two" and "Game of Rat and Dragon". Her argument for placing "The Lady" before "Scanners" is that the process that the sailors went through was, in effect, the same as that the

Scanners underwent, and so, being thus treated, they did not suffer the pain of space. This certainly doesn't fit the emphasis placed on the haberman process in "Scanners". "The Good Friends" is not a story that fits neatly into the Instrumentality series. There are no references that would suggest that it has a place there. Turner did not, apparently, have access to "The Colonel".

J.J. Pierce's time line makes more sense to me, except that it adds two stories which do not, as I see it, fit into the Instrumentality series, into the time line before "Mark Elf", those being "No, No, Not Rogov" and "War No. 81-Q". I also have my doubts about the dates he ascribes to the stories. Pierce dates "Mark Elf" at 4,000 A.D.. Linebarger tends to be somewhat cavalier with his dates. In "Mark Elf" he sets the date of the story at sixteen thousand years after World War II. He then starts NORSTRILIA, a novel set after the Rediscovery of Man, at "Fifteen thousand years after the bombs went up and the boom came down on Old Old Earth." (Admittedly this time line would make more sense if, rather than sixteen thousand, one reads sixteen hundred years for the descent of Carlotta's rocket.)



Regardless of the time line one chooses though, "Queen of the Afternoon" is a right royal stuff-up, introducing ideas which, according to the other stories, are well ahead of their time. Pierce, who saw the original draft, mentions that it included mention of one of the vom Acht sisters and the Jwindz - Chinesian philosophers - and the establishment of the Instrumentality of Mankind. The version that saw print has all that and more. It includes rejuvenation - which does not get another mention until "When the People Fell" - and the origin of the Underpeople - who aren't mentioned again until "Drunkboat". Above all, it is disgustingly cute - something that the more legitimate Cordwainer Smith stories avoided. A pity, as a proper version of "Queen of the Afternoon" would have added to the chronology, rather than detracting from it.

Linebarger's time line then is nowhere near as fixed as those of Larry Niven or Robert Heinlein but this is fitting as Linebarger is more a mythmaker than a chronicler of history. The uncertainty adds a mystique to the stories that would not be present in a more definite account. The stories of Cordwainer Smith are best viewed through the mists of legend.

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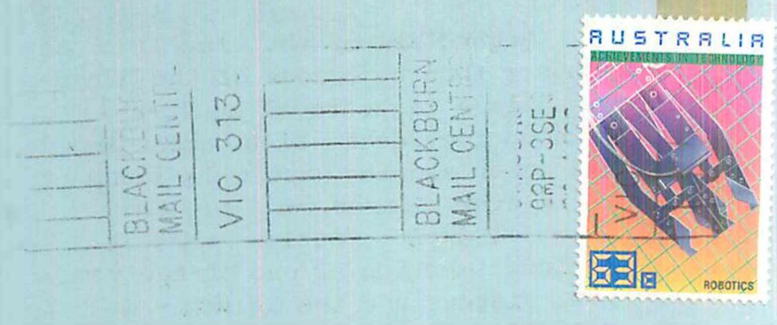

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