

THE MENTOR

SCIENCE FICTION



EDITORIAL:

as it is I wonder if it is not too late already? John Brosnan's article mentions in passing the beginning of the state of things before the present situation. I first began to notice the change, principally in the US and UK, several years ago. At the time I thought it would be short lived, but recent events in Australia have given the lie to this.

The whole operation has been very well engineered, as I have mentioned before, and the skilful infiltration of our ranks has passed almost unnoticed by those who usually are to be counted on. The state of affairs in the mundane world should have warned us - they have been featured in several well distributed journals, but this blatant upsurge in this, our own country and specific culture, is too outrageous to be ignored.

It upsets the very basis of our movement! In the past one was, in the beginning, isolated, shut off from distractions, and could spend years in contemplative bliss, soaking up the best that one could obtain, untainted by more unsightly influences. Imagine the shock when one, instead of being gently decanted, so to speak, when all the raw shock of finding this to be one of the (yeck) portions served up! It is unnatural! In the great by by one was gently led down the path by people (fans) of ones ilk. This transition phase is one of fragility. Imagine the broken husks that now litter the path of the true fandom of those who found the shock too much! This used to be called the Golden Age of the sf fan, when the activities of sf fandom blazes forth upon the sf reader transforming into an active sf fan!

Before this latest invasion, the only event that the young sf fan had to withstand was the gibbering mouthings of so called faans, (throwbacks to the earlier phenomenon of chain-letter writers) who infest sf Conventions and things loosely called "APAs".

But the latest outrage!

This group actually use the trappings of sf fandom! I have in front of me at the moment (before I destroy it with a splurge of corflu), is a (Oh foul disguise!), publication called TERRAN TIMES 3. It is intimated that an organization whose initials D.U.S.K. is the perpetrator of this..... Yes! You may have guessed it! It is published by....girls! Shudder!! That dreadful species *femmemfans* is at large in Australia! These ~~faans~~ are actually trying to hone in on one of the last bastillions of male supremacy! And they are succeeding! And this TT3 is blasphemous! It actually discusses science fiction! (Please do not quote me on any of this. It would ruin my reputation as a Ghod fearing sf fan.)

They appear to have inveigled several prominent Sydney sf fans to actually give them advice as to how to give some unwary sf fans the appearance that these *femmegans* and their *femmeganzine* are truly of the truefandom sf line. Just because they are doing so well, have made it into the inner circle of Australian sf fandom and put out such a professional fanzine does not mean.....

The issue of TT3..(I seem to remember writing that somewhere before....) has 44 pages of some of the best fan (sf) writing I have seen for years out of an Aussie sf zine. These *femmegans* have what it takes. Other than they have some very good artists (I presume they are Australian?) and the issue actually has a cover illo!

The editors state that TT is a STAR TREK orientated zine (the members of such clubs pretty well openly advocate that the "sexes are equal" viewpoint; something which, obviously is, ah, untrue on the face of it.

What really hits me is that some of the stories (noticeably the serial), are written on at least as high a level as those I publish myself! (Which, modest that everyone knows that I am, is saying something. See this issue.) I met several of the leading lights of D.U.S.K. at the Con held at Melbourne over the New Year weekend (they were down from Sydney) and managed to get away with my life, at least!

There are hints, in an article in TT3 and scattered through the issue, that they are infiltrating the UN, as well.

I cannot reiterate too often the consequences that this plot, if brought off, will have to sf fandom in Australia. We know what this kind of influx of *femmegans* had on the fan scene in the US. At the moment, there are three s.f. fanzines in Australia that are regularly published... and one of these 'regulars' is a *femmeganzine* of such quality as TERRAN TIMES : something that means only one thing for sf (male) fandom in Australia.....

When I think over the consequences of what this one zine could do ~~to~~ to sf fandom here I shudder. Have you even thought of the consequences? Why, several immediately spring to mind that are almost too horrifying for thought. If these girls continue to bring out this zine of the quality it is : think of the problems that'll face the (present) fans who want to bring a zine of their own out. For one thing, they'll have to bring out a good zine for the first issue, and keep it up. They can't afford to bring out a crudzine when ***** are bringing out a zine like TT. And think of the torments the sf fan will have going through all the cruddy material trying to find stuff of the standard of the TT contends. And the twisting of artists arms (if they can find good ones that aren't taken up drawing for TT) and the other things.....Gaaaa, my mind is going just thinking about it.....

IRE, UMP AND VAMP

by JACK WODHAMS.

Leslie listened to the echoes of a harsh bell dying in the recesses of the old house. She waited for the door to open. It might not be easy, she told herself. It might not be easy at all.

The door opened with unexpected silence, taking her off-guard. She jumped when a voice from the darkness inside sighed, "Yes? What can I do for you?"

"Oh!" she said. "Oh. I'm doing research. I..... I wonder if you would mind filling in a questionnaire?"

A light came on in the hall. She found herself being surveyed by a pair of brilliant eyes. "I'm sorry," the man said, softly courteous. "You look startled. I hope I didn't frighten you?"

"Oh, no. No, not at all. Made me jump a little, that's all." She smiled.

He smiled in return. He was a sleek, handsome man, dressed in a quilted smoking jacket. Despite his raven hair and thick jet-black eyebrows, he seemed a man of fifty or more. He eyed Leslie appreciatively, his orbs penetrating and speculative.

"Won't you come in, my dear?" he said, his voice quiet, yet throbbing, casting a spell.

"Why.....er.....thank you," she said.

She stepped into the hallway and he closed the door. There was finality in the 'clack' of the lock. "Follow me, my dear," he purred.

He led the way to the back of the house, to a fine, spacious, old-fashioned room. "Here we are," he said, turning. "Now let me take your coat."

She allowed her coat to slip from her shoulders. He folded it carefully and placed it on a chair. "Make yourself at home, my dear," he said. "I think that you'll find that the sofa is most comfortable. That's it. Yes. Good. Now let me get you a drink."

"Oh, no, really!"

He smiled. "But I must. It is not often that I have such a charming guest. What would you like? Sherry?"

"That would be fine. Thank you."

He went to the sideboard and set out two glasses. In a mirror he saw her open her handbag, take out a bottle, shake out a pill, and put the pill in her mouth.

He bent a quizzical glance at her. "You are not sick, I trust?" he said.

Caught, she blushed and said, "I have a slight headache. I'm sorry."

"Tut-tut," he said. "Too bad." He gave her a glass. "This should help to wash the pill down," he said.

"Thank you," she said, "you are very kind."

"Not at all," he said, "not at all. By the way, I should apologize. Very bad manners. I should have introduced myself at once. I am Baron Stroya, Baron Volk de Stroya. At your service, mademoiselle." He bowed gracefully.

Leslie felt like rising from the sofa that she might curtsy in return. "I am Leslie," she said. "Leslie Blancop."

"A delightful name," he said. "May I drink to it and you? To your sweetness, to your vitality and health. Would that it were mine." His eyes radiated and he lifted his glass.

Diffidently, Leslie followed his example. The sherry was sweet and delicious. Before she realised it, she had drained the last drop from the glass. "My," she said, "what extraordinary liquor. It is like nectar."

"Isn't it?" he said, and his hand reached for her glass and his face slowly loomed very close to hers.

The room began to sway before her eyes, and the Baron's face held a look of eager expectancy. Leslie tried to rise, but her muscles would not respond. Every image went out of focus, the Baron's face distorting diabolically, and she felt her awareness slipping, slipping, slipping.

A great darkness engulfed her and she fell back on the sofa unconscious.

When Leslie awoke, it was to a sense of coolness. She was naked and spreadeagled on what seemed to be a sagging bed made of some hard, rough material that felt like very stout canvas. Her hands and feet were securely tied, one at each corner of the frame. Baron Stroya beamed at her benignly.

"Ah. You are awake. Good. I was getting hungry. I don't like to start winding till my food is awake. The blood runs faster, I believe, and glands release substances that impart an exquisite flavour that is both toothsome and satisfying. I did try an unconscious body once, but it wasn't the same. The blood was cool and, somehow, I don't know, it seemed flat."

Leslie gazed at him. He was bland and smiling and, apart from the gleam in his eye, appeared remarkably composed and relaxed.

"What are you going to do to me?" she breathed.

"Do?" He laughed. "You need not fear for your chastity," he said genially. "I find you very attractive, certainly, but not outwardly, as a woman. To me, your attraction is inward, what you contain. You are food, my dear, young and tender, packed with natural goodness."

"Food?" she gasped. "Surely you don't intend to eat me?"

"Not eat, my dear, but drink."

Her heart beating fast, she panted, "I'm disgusted with you, Baron. This is a very crude kind of joke."

"On the contrary," the Baron said, "I can assure you, my dear young lady, that I am not joking, and I will shortly demonstrate the fact to you in the most convincing manner."

"You must be joking! You can't be serious!"

"I must say I admire your composure. Most of your predecessors showed signs of acute alarm, even panic, at this stage. Most of them were in such a state that they were unable to grasp the beauty of my process. This machine, of which I am very proud, is the ultimate development of patient research. I call it my vitamiser."

He was mad, absolutely mad, Leslie thought. Perspiration broke on her brow. "What does your machine do?" she forced herself to ask.

The Baron drew himself up. "This machine is a masterpiece of efficiency and a symbol of my own ingenuity.". He leaned forward and his lips drew back from his teeth. He drooled at her. "My dear," he said, "I am hungry. I am very hungry. But it is rare for anyone to show such interest, to listen and appreciate." His eyes glittered. "I will delay my feast a few minutes to explain to you."

His hands curled together and his fingers writhed among each other, squirming and washing. "You see, my dear, I am getting old and my teeth and my lungs are not what they used to be. My teeth do not enter flesh with the ease they once did,

and I cannot suck for any length of time without getting dizzy. Do you understand?"

She passed a tongue over very dry lips. "What..... What are you? You're not aa Vampire?"

He smiled but did not answer. "I invented my machine from necessity. I had to get blood in quantity. I was growing weak. And then one day I happened to see an old washer-woman putting wet sheets through a mangle. I saw the water being squeezed from the fabric, and immediately," he paused, his eyes flickering, "immediately I had an idea."

A chill passed through Leslie's body. She struggled helplessly against her bonds.

"I had a machine made to order, with two huge rollers. A marvellous piece of machinery. I remember when I first tried it out, on the salesman who brought the bill." He chuckled at the memory. "I fed him feet first, I remember. Caught his toes then wound the handle. But, my! he screamed. Made a great fuss. It was a big snag with that machine, it was very noisy. But I got more blood out of him than I'd had from anybody for a long time."

Leslie was ghastly pale. This was evil incarnate, and very strong.

"It was quite a good method," the Baron said dreamily, "but wasteful. The skin broke unevenly, and pockets formed and burst excessively, and a lot of the blood would miss the bucket. I put up screens and catchers, but they were only partially successful."

The Baron grew pensive recalling the disappointment of earlier failures that he had known in his quest for perfection. She stared up at him, numb and almost hypnotised with repugnance.

"I hate waste, don't you?" he said. He brightened. "But then I took the idea further," he said. "I had this device made, for an experiment, and, do you know, it works magnificently. I once caught a man on a warm night, sleeping in a hammock in a garden. One twist and I trapped him. And this," he patted the material under her arm, "this is an extension of that idea."

His eyes glowed with enthusiasm as he bent over her. She hung, fascinated, gaping and helpless. "This is my wringer," he said with pride and affection. "What you are lying on is stainless steel spring mesh interwoven with strong, extra-durable, nylon-reinforced canvas. Wonderful stuff! Wonderful!"

He caressed the fabric lovingly. "You, my dear, are privileged, really privileged. You see, the corners at your hands join together, and the corners at your feet." His voice was low and vibrant with anticipation. "You will be in a cocoon, my dear, a beautiful cocoon. And then.....And then..... Ha!"

His voice dropped lower to a sibilant whisper. "And then I shall wind this handle at your feet. And every turn will twist the material. Twist and twist. Twist and stretch. Tighter and tighter. And your bones will snap and crack and crumble and be crushed. Ha.... ah. And then.... And then the blood will begin to seep through and drip into the channel below. Drip by drip. And I shall have control of the flow. A quarter turn for a cupful, a full turn for a bucket."

He rubbed his hands, his eyes shining. "I am hungry, my dear. I cannot wait any longer."

He reached over her and released a catch. She dropped a short way as her hands came together. The stiff canvas shrouded her face. Involuntarily she cried out, but the sound was already muffled and indistinct. Her feet dropped a short way and came together. She was in a black tube, stifling and choking. Fear gripped her and her pulse raced.

She felt her feet moving. She was being turned. But her hands were held. Her hands were held rigid. But her feet were revolving. Round. And further round. And the fabric was getting tight, tight against her hips and shoulders. The monstrousness of such apparatus struck her dumb.

And now she was face down and her feet were being inexorably turned, more and more, and her back was straining, protesting.

Round more. More and more, an impossible contortion and shrieking pain, the spine curving and distorting to the limit of malleability, unendurably taut, never withstanding, must break, must break.....

At the extremity of physical toleration the tergiversation pill mercifully took effect.

The Baron turned the handle slowly and listened expectantly. At any moment now he was prepared to hear the pistol clap of a backbone shattering.

Slowly, slowly. No sound. She was double-jointed maybe, he thought. Twice he had double-jointed people. He turned the handle. Double-jointed people took a little longer. No sound. Any moment now. It was a most satisfying crack.

He paused in his winding. It was odd. Four complete turns and not so much as a breakfast cereal pop. Perhaps she had a weak spine, he thought, and it had broken earlier, quietly, before he had begun to pay strict attention. He shrugged, mildly disgruntled. He was hungry.

He began to turn the handle again. The folds in the material increased, the bulges squeezing and compressing, spiraling tighter and tighter, the cylinder being drawn into a great thick rope.

The Baron paused again. He dabbed the sweat from his brow. It really was most odd. Apart from the creaking in the canvas and the turning of the cogs, he had heard no sound. He was vexed. He banged the side of his head thinking to release a possible blockage in his ear.

A large tin of emergency rations stood nearby. It was fertilizer, gained from an abattoir not far away. Dried blood. He kicked the tin. He heard that quite well. He shrugged again. Maybe she had a calcium deficiency and her bones were soft.

He commenced to turn the handle once more. The folds tightened and the thick rope stretched. The bulges disappeared and the Baron began to watch the channel for the first drip of blood. Any moment now. Any moment now. His mouth watered.

The ratchet clicked and locked, clicked and locked, and surely it should be running now?

The Baron stopped. The wringing process was well advanced, the material twisted into a cord the thickness of a man's thigh. The Baron peered closely. No sign. No sign of blood. He ran his hand along the underside. No moisture at all. It was peculiar. Most peculiar.

He stepped back. He was hungry, dammit. The dried stuff was no good to him, it was unpalatable and barely gave him enough strength to keep going. The girl was healthy, she should have held pints of blood.

Tantalised, he returned to the handle. He wound desperately now, sweating freely as the tension on the canvas increased, and the turning motion was resisted more and more.

The ratchet made a final click and locked. He could wind no more. The torque was at maximum. He leaned on the wheel and stared into the channel. He could not believe his eyes. There was not one drop of blood. Not one drop.

He moved round to look closer. Dry. Absolutely dry. The tortured fabric was barely thicker than a man's wrist. Was he dreaming? Had he imagined it all? Was he having hallucinations brought on by malnutrition?

He stroked his fangs in bewilderment. It was impossible. Never had he extended the machine so much. The body should have been wrung dry to the last gob of spittle and to the last hidden tear.

He passed his hand in front of his eyes. Was he losing his grip? Was he going mad?

At that moment the strain on the back cross-member proved unbearable. With a sudden tearing, awful twang, bolts sheared, and a length of silver plated angle-iron tore free and,

with momentum from the unleashed canvas, was flung with incredible speed to pierce, penetrate and protrude through the chest of the paralysed Baron.

The canvas unwound and from its folds, Leslie emerged, calm and sure. The Baron raised stricken eyes from his chest.

"You!" he said. "You!"

She was unsmiling. "Yes," she said.

"You... You must be a... a White Witch... a White Whitch...."

She nodded slowly. "You are going to die at last," she said, "and you know what that means."

His face went grey with terror. "No!" he hissed. "No! Not a hundred times! Not a hundred times!"

Impassively she lowered her head and raised it again. "It is the law," she said. "The good that ye shall do will be repaid one-hundredfold. Likewise, the evil that ye do will also be repaid. One-hundredfold!"

He shuddered. For five hundred years he had striven to avoid this moment. One-hundredfold! He would experience the mortal fear of each and every one of his victims, would be placed in exactly the same position, and suffer, suffer, suffer, over, and over, and over, one-hundredfold.

His eyes glazed and he sobbed. With a groan of unutterable despair, he clasped the fatal metal and collapsed to the floor and died.

Around the silver plated shaft the body began to wither.

- Jack Wodhams.

—oooOooo—

"We, who have striven to place humanity upon the road to the stars, make this solemn declaration, now and for the future:
WE WILL TAKE NO FRONTIERS INTO SPACE."

-from Prelude to Space
by Arthur C Clarke.

"Earth does not permit a separate sovereign state ANYWHERE IN THE UNIVERSE."

-from Mission to the Stars
by A.E. van Vogt.

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T H A T T E S T .

Cy Chauvin.

I cannot bear
 to walk up the steps to my deep, blue love;
Nor can I sit
 by the dappled silver sea
without a thought
 for my black baby;
My conscience can never rest,
 nor my mind sleep,
While taking that terrible test --
 Life;
And although I walk through fields
 of gold-green gladness,
Not even the sun
 can shine away my sadness;
I cannot forget --
I cannot stay;
But nor can I bear
 to walk up the steps to my deep, blue love,
and pray,
 having been so far,
 and long, away;
Nor can I be like
 an unfolding flower
 delicate petal/fingers outstretched
 in adoration of the sun --
No, I cannot sit
 by the wave wrinkled sea (tinged incarnadine?)
Without a thought
 for my black baby,
Who finished her test before --
 and without --
 me.

"THOU ANUS ART A MANY SPLENDID THING."

By J. Brosnan.

I tend to divide people into two groups. Those that believe in God and those that are rational.

Or I used to.

Recently, after some pretty deep thinking, I've come to realise that perhaps after all there is a pattern in this universe. Perhaps the members of God fandom are right, there is an ultimate being, an omnipotent master designer who is the reason for it all.

But that's where they and I part company because they're under the impression that this rich man's John W. Campbell is benevolent. I don't think so. In fact I believe he's nothing but a big practical joker with a warped sense of humour. And we, us poor human beings, are taking the brunt of his jokes.

To begin with, if I was God (I know some think that I have already assumed the role....) I'm sure I could come up with a better scheme for living things than that currently in use. Of course if you believe, as I did, that there is no conscious guiding force behind the universe, the means by which life forms ensure their survival on this planet seem fairly reasonable. Survival of the fittest. Kill or be killed. Unpleasant for some but highly efficient. We, as sentient beings, may not approve but that's the way the universe crumbles. Pain, for instance, is downright nasty, but we have to admit that it's had its uses during the last few billion years. We wouldn't have evolved to the dizzy heights we now stand at if it hadn't been for pain.

That's assuming you don't admit to the existence of the Benevolent Being, of course. If you do it's a different matter entirely. Because, as the brain child of a Super Mind that supposedly been wafting around since the year dot, the whole system stinks! Its bloody putrid! Look at nature. Lots of cute little animals and things trying to eat each other. Nothing but fight, fight, pain and death.

Now is that nice?

Is it necessary?

Not as far as I can see. Why didn't God make the whole business of life a lot more pleasanter for all concerned? Why not a Walt Disney type setting or something out of the Reader's Digest? As I said before, even I could have done better. Like I would abolish pain for starters. Instead I

would just have varying degrees of pleasure. E.g. Catching on fire wouldn't hurt but would be less pleasurable than not catching on fire. Therefore the tendency not to catch on fire, as it exists in our present world, would still prevail. See. If He really wanted to, God could easily come up with something better. Why hasn't He? It can't be for lack of telling Him that we're not exactly pleased with the present situation. Some groups I know of have been trying to get the message across for centuries.

And take sex. (Aha, here's where we get to the nitty gritty, as Spinrad would say, or to the crotch of the matter, as I would say).

It's in the area of sex that His true self becomes apparent.

Assume for a moment that you are God and that you have just created Man. Looking for a means of propagation you have, on the spur of the moment, invented sex. Great. Now you are looking for a way for it to work. Where shall you place his sex organs?

On his forehead.

No. Not very safe.

Armpits?

Risky.

Let's see, where else is left? How about between the legs? Not bad. Has possibilities, fairly well protected. Convenient. Oh, damn it! You've already put something there! The outlets for waste products. What a Goddamned shame! Now you'll have to redesign the whole thing. And you were going to take the next day off too, it being the seventh and all.....

Hmmm.

Now you have a pretty good idea of what man is going to turn out like (you should do, you built him, failings and all), a hodge podge of conflicts between the part of his brain that can reason and his natural animal drives.

In short, a mess.

Now just imagine the results if this neurotic jelly came to believe that waste excretion was associated with sexual reproduction. Which is what would happen if you combined his sexual organs with his body waste outlets.

Would you do such a thing?

Would any benevolent God do such a thing?

Ours, in His eternal wisdom, did.

And He must still be laughing about it.

The idea that sex was dirty didn't start with the Victorians (I mean the other Victorians, not the crowd who are currently carrying on their traditions so splendidly), it started with primitive man. Primitive man, despite the lack of a Pasteur, knew that shit was dirty. His nose told him so. Not that it bothered him overly much, he had more important things to worry about. Like eating and the avoidance of being eaten. But sex for him must have been just another form of waste excretion, if more fun than the other kind, because at that time he had no idea that he was in any way connected with childbirth.

Woman, of course, has always been considered as UNCLEAN. There are several reasons for this. Main one was because of her menstrual cycle. Blood was considered precious by the primitive society (how times have changed) and to waste it was considered sinful. (Which makes me wonder how warriors who were prone to blood noses got on. Probably not very far.)

Woman has had consistent bad luck as far as her status with Man is concerned. Before he discovered he had a starring role in the production of offspring he was in awe of her but at the same intensely jealous of her creative abilities. When the penny finally dropped so did woman in his estimation and, in the thousands of years that followed, never regained her former standing.

The only woman in recent history who has been awarded a Certificate of Cleanliness by Man was the Virgin Mary.

And we all know what she was like.

There's an old Martian saying: "Any bisexual species that deifies a virgin just has to be sick!"

In other words, she's just an example of our incredible sexual guilt. (I've often wished that Joseph had put down on paper the story of his married life with Mary. What fantastic reading it would have made!)

But I digress.

I now want to take a look at obscenity.

First, let's try a little experiment. Go out into a crowded street and yell "FUCK" as loud as you can. Then, if you're able, come back and report on the reaction you received..... Most probably any nearby middle-aged ladies gasped and clutched, ashen faced, at their hearts. Any nearby able-bodied men would have, with scowling faces, approached and hit you soundly about the face and groin. Any nearby policemen would have arrested you.

Next, go out into the same crowded street and yell "SEXUAL INTERCOURSE!" as loud as you can. You may attract a few odd looks and perhaps a few offers if you're lucky but not much else.

Why?

There are many reasons, complicated reasons, why it is so. Such as social conditioning, for instance. A study of obscene words, swear words, their origins and histories would fill several volumes and probably has. But basically I believe that the average person's reaction to an 'obscene' word is unhealthy and irrational.

We've reached the point where we can say that the human body is beautiful and nothing to be ashamed of (actually nine out of ten human bodies are 'aesthetically revolting') but often this claim doesn't include sexual organs. People still are ashamed of them, believe they're obscene and try to pretend they're not really there (some people have more success than others at this).

Mammaries are okay though. Well...almost. We've just about arrived at the time where they will be displayed openly. You can see them in magazines, almost all of them on the beaches, strip clubs and in movies. There was the topless craze and now there's the see-through look.

Main draw-back seems to be nipples, especially in Australia.

Nipples are dirty, you see. I don't think our censors mind breasts too much, it's just nipples that bother them. Only female ones, of course. Male ones are okay because they're not dirty.

Naturally all this applies only to white breasts and nipples. Black ones have always been displayed openly on our movie and TV screens. I'm not quite sure why. I think it has something to do with black ones being cleaner than white ones. Or it's because our beloved guardians of the mind don't think that young, healthy, red-blooded Australian males could possibly become lustful at the sight of black boobs.

Yellow and brown ones they're not sure about and exposure of them varies.

Depiction of the sexual act is also obscene. Priests and writers in the Woman's Weekly all agree that intercourse is a "beautiful thing" and "God's greatest gift to Mankind" providing it takes place under certain conditions and under cover. Display it openly on film or canvas and it becomes OBSCENE, DISGUSTING, UNCLEAR, UNCLEAR!

Why?

What's the answer?

Something, I think, in the direction where Denmark and Sweden are heading. Take the wind out of the sails of sex. Lampoon it, have fun with it. Have the Pornographic Fairs. Wipe out the old, unhealthy ideas that any part of the human body is inherently disgusting. Or any sexual act, no matter what.

If there is such a thing as obscenity its a photogra h
of a Nazi concentration camp, or a victim of Hiroshima, or a
starving Biafran child. They are the real obscenities in this
world, not the harmless fuck.

- John Brosnan.

T O B R E A K A S T A R .

You lure me with your incandescence
To distant flamey stars
Third suns,

Blue and green on lonely axis
Where my carpace cuts and breaks.

Sharp the bull-head
's abrasive power but wretched
Sandstone ballast
Cuts deep welts
I cram my neck
Extense of green plates
Upwards

And fire comes,
Softly is between two blank canyons
Of high rock basalt of two thousand feet
A cold track and a black machine
Smoke, thunder, fire
And I'm afraid

I scream.
Somewhere there is lightening,
I see death
Approaching.
And then I will it and the mountain falls.

o o o o o o O o o o o o o

The above poem was sent to me some time ago in a letter with
something else (I think). The poem became seperated and I don't
remember who sent it. Would whoever sent it please let me know.
And please! write on the contrib your name. - RLC.

VOYAGE

by Robert Bowden.

The spacecraft JUNO was a fragile metal sac slipping outward along the dark, silent canals of Solar gravity. It slid through the thick fluid blackness of the celestial sphere and away from the distant, pale growing Sun, that was the source of light and life. The ion accelerating drive-electrodes had long ago been shut down and now the reactors were only ticking over, providing the power for the Life Support Systems and sundry other maintainance mechanisms. They would not regain full power for years to come, when the icy rime of vacuum would disappear from their outer shielding, with a muted whisper a faint red mist would diffuse from the drive exhausts, which would glow cherry red, decelerating the spacecraft and drawing it into orbit above the bleak, frozen ammoniated plains of Pluto.

Pluto, thought Barclay as he moved out of the control compartment through a short companionway and into his living quarters, was a dead world; it was certain. Except for Earth, where all things were made to man's measure, there was no life on any of the eight planets or multitudinous satellites and asteroids of the system: only the wrinkled faces of dead worlds under blank skies. Mars had been the first disappointment. Eight landings had been effected on its iron-red and acned crust. Space-suited figures had crawled like silver-fish across its sandy craters, while the landing module had stood, a gaunt needle against the star-sharp sky, behind them. Hopes of finding autochthonous lifeforms and remnants of past indiginous civilisations had been sponged away by cold, bleak fact. There was no life on Mars, and apparently, never had been.

The old fantasies of intelligent Martians had been half believed and dissillusionment was bitter. The universe was suddenly much more lonely and desolate.

There had been little hope of discovering life on either Venus or Mercury. These expectations were subsequently confirmed by Sunward voyages.

Venus was a beautiful world, as beautiful as was her Hellenic namesake. Her clouds were as white and bright as a glaring winter snow-field in the afternoon. The slender phallic robotorps thrust themselves deep into her virgin atmosphere, explored her secrets and returned with the news.

She was dead.

There were theories about silicon-based lifeforms to withstand the curdling heat of Mercury. They were wrong. Mercury was nothing but a puddle of lava and liquid lead. So hopes turned outward once again, past Mars and the asteroids, to where Jupiter and the other, further gas-giants swung in their majestic orbits.

They were lifeless vast hunks of poison. There was no life, organic or otherwise. There was only the whirl of colossal storms, and it was the same for Saturn, Uranus, Neptune, as it was with Jupiter.

So why was mankind reaching out to Pluto. It was, thought Barclay, as he rested weightless in his bunk, because it was the last vestige of hope. Hope was the consolation Pandora had handed man, and it was almost running out. The planetary system was dead and Pluto would be no different.

And it was impossible to reach the stars.

Back in the days of the old Saturn Vs, it had been thought by some that once man got a toehold in space, putting aloft orbital laboratories, he would discover some miraculous means of crossing the lightyears.

Ha! Cynicism was the final defense and Barclay had erected its ugly barricades across the empty streets of his mind.

There was no means of going faster than light. It was even impossible to devise a drive that could boost a ship until it approached lightspeed. Man's own complex metabolism and nervous system make it not even possible to put him in suspended animation, cold storage, to last out the transit time in a conventional rocket-ship coasting toward other planetary systems. Hundreds of years of research and experimentation had proven all this beyond any doubt.

It had once been said that if we wanted to visit the distant stars we might build a huge ship, place people aboard and tell them to make a little, self-contained world for themselves, living on it for generations and generations without count till they reach those distant stars.

To make such a ship possible there must be an energy-source on board that does not depend on a nearby sun and which is large enough to last for all that time. Once the energy has been changed from one form to another, and in order to make use of energy you must make this transmutation, there must be methods of eliminating it, as by radiating it out into space. It could not be allowed to pile up in the system as heat.

Is it possible, someone had asked, to solve both problems by making use of the same energy over and over again?

Barclay knew his second law of thermodynamics; every time you transfer energy from one form to another some of it

becomes unavailable for further use. And all the known energy-sources would be long depleted before such a ship reached any reasonable stellar destination.

The universe was too cruel.

At first there had been work for the three of them to do. There had been the correlation of inship computer results from the printout with the results sent out to them on tight-beam maser from Houston.

Then they had corrected the minor deviations of the ship's flight path while they were still easy to put right. The earlier such discrepancies were discovered and compensated for, the less effort and fuel was taken up in the correction. Further along the trajectory the corrections were made, the more difficult they became. A few degrees at the commencement of a voyage became many hundreds of kilometres difference at its end.

They were busy checking and re-checking the intricate ship systems, and then going through it all again.

But now there was nothing to keep Barclay, the astrogrator and excursion module pilot, and Cary, the commander and electronics expert, and Andreev, the medico, occupied. The JUNO was set in its path. The inship mechanisms were automatic and self-maintaining, and needed no assistance from the passengers to keep themselves operating. So the activity of these three began to slacken and they prepared for their long wait across the Solar System. As far as the responsibilities of the astronauts were concerned, the JUNO was as completely independent of them as any space entity had ever been - except for the final phases of the flight.

For the JUNO would need a human hand on its controls to guide it into a safe orbit about Pluto. A computer could not do the job alone, and the ship would be too far out for Houston's reaction to get back to Pluto orbit.

Thus it was ultimately necessary for a man to be present out there. No cybernetic machine could be programmed for the task. There was not enough known about the planet - not even an accurate measure of its mass.

But, it was thought, a man could handle the situation.

The ship was hurtling toward the asteroids and the larger ones were appearing distant in the vision screen like diamonds set in ebony, when Barclay first noticed that he was hearing the sound of the ship. Cary and Andreev were playing chess. Always, they were playing chess. It seemed they had not noticed the beat and pulse and beat as of a living and organic being. The subconscious of both Andreev and Cary was screening

the throb and pulse of omni-present power from their minds, just as it had previously screened it from Barclay's awareness.

There was the pulse of running energy beneath the bulk-head as if he had his very consciousness in the lifeblood red flow of the ship and the essence of its fabric.

He felt the rhythmic surge and thrust through the ship's fabric that reminded him of the insistent beat of his mother's heart.

The thought bewildered him.

The JUNO reached completion in the assembly factory in orbit above Kennedy and was tested on the translunar run. Most of the population of North America had been awake that night, watching the stately procession of the Ports of Earth, the Terran Orbital Stations. They had seen one of these brightly orbiting stars suddenly explode in silent concussion of light, and a fierce tiny sun had drawn slowly away and dwindled against the stars. Thus, although perhaps they felt disinterested and remote, they had watched the launching of the JUNO.

Soon after, Barclay had watched Luna pass by, and Cary and Andreev had stopped to watch her with him. "A washed-out smallpox cracks her face." The audio had crackled and they had received the message of hope and farewell from the dome at Tranquillity.

Then they had slid outward and away. The Earth had long ago been lost in the glare of the Sun, and even their telescopes failed to detect her.

Now, the Sun was growing smaller, more distant. The more remote it became, the more meaningless it was to thoughts. Their universe was no longer centered on the Sun as a source of life. It had contracted to fit the hull of the JUNO.

On Earth all energy, and therefore, all life, derives from the Sun. Its radiation caused the very first amino-acids to form in soupy primeaval seas; still causes plants to photosynthesise foods, which in turn are passed on up a chain of being to the highest animals.

The whole traumatic life process is based on the Sun. What is the drive in man that would seem to cause him to retreat from the light of day into darkness?

The darkness of space was all around them now and the Sun was retreating before it, growing paler and cold, as if hidden behind the silver, shivery mists of a winter dawn.

Cary had been on the Mars run and he remembered the white-clad figures crawling like termites across the red sands of the fourth planet and seen remote through the impersonal shield.

of his faceplate.

Andreev had flown on one of the Russian inward expeditions, like Icarus in exhilaration. He had seen Mercury and had flown too near the Sun. It had burned like blood in his face. He told of the heat that had danced in defiance on the Mercurian crags. Seas of fluorescence had burst in waves before his face, which was red and black in the shadow. He had beheld the hair of the Sun, streams of blinding colour and ragged corona. He told of the terrible urge and exhilaration of a dream to plunge into that surging fire and swim to the very heart of the source of all life.

But, of course, the young Russian overcame it.

Now, the Sun was becoming tiny and insignificant. Soon it would be nothing but a particularly bright star in the celestial womb.

The ship was the source of life. She was the mechanism that provided the light so that the plants in the hydroponics tanks could photosynthesise. The arc lights above the hydroponics tank were very bright. Barclay now stared at them often.

Cary and Andreev continued their seemingly interminable game of chess. They were both hunched up over the chessboard, their feet drawn up under the gleaming metal desk.

And there was the weightlessness.

The swollen, ruddy bulk of Jupiter was centred in the visionscreen; its oblate, bloated shape crowded the sky. The ship whipped through its gravitational field and outward from the plane of the Solar System and past the racing, wide-ranging Jovian moons.

Now the JUNO was in the gulf that separated the orbits of Jupiter and Saturn. Saturn was a still stranger world than Jupiter, almost twice as far from the Sun - across another half billion miles of comet-haunted emptiness.

Barclay did not like to think how much longer it would take them. It was too painful. The seemingly interminable game of chess had ended. Cary and the Russian had lost interest. Instead, they spent a lot of time sleeping.

And occasionally they played tick tack toe or checkers. They said that these games were far easier. Besides, they said by way of further justification, chess was boring. No one could remember clearly who won the last game.

Barclay had taken up playing patience and cribbage with cards.

He had not known there was a deck of playing cards on

board, until he found a set in a ship storage chamber. The ship provided everything. He remembered that he had had a craze for playing cards when he was a teenager, but it had been a while since he had played.

However, he had not lost, or perhaps, had regained the skill and he got most of his games of patience out and consistently got fairly high scores at cribb. It gave him quite a measure of satisfaction.

More and more he felt the electric warmth and breathing of the JUNO. Often he wondered if Cary and Andreev felt it too. No one spoke much now, so he could not communicate his sensations to them.

Slowly, but constantly, the throb of the ship seeped into his mind like warm chocolate into ragged pieces of blotting paper. He felt a strange sense of security from watching the boards of flashing, blinking lights on the guidance computer console.

There were green lights, burning. Some vestige of memory told him that if they had had been red he should have been vaguely concerned.

But they were not red, and they were playing. They were tracing out the patterns of ship operation. The lights were racing across and tracing the heartbeat of the ship. Barclay found the overall pattern of ship mechanisms fascinating in its complexity; he wished to know her intimately. He stared at the lights intently, studying her intricate facets. He began to plan the fantasy of her life, looking ahead into the ship's pattern of existence through the pattern of lights.

Cary woke him from the trance to give him his nutrient paks for his evening meal. He pulled out the nipple and sucked with deep satisfaction at the sweet white nutrient fluid. It was the ship that dispensed the nutrient paks.

Soon, Barclay lost interest in the card games.

Saturn was a hard-edged, salmon-hued ellipsoid in the visionscreen.

She hung like a toy top in the firmament; some cosmic giant had spun her on a gravitational string around a distant Sun. Barclay could barely discern each individual ring section, each concentric with the others, but they were there in their majestic tinyness.

They were much further from Saturn than they had been from Jupiter; already discernably beyond the Solar plane. They would miss Uranus and Neptune altogether. Those worlds were on the far side of the Sun.

The ship swept past Saturn, racing onwards and outwards.

Barclay could no longer make out the orb of the Sun, even though it was very rarely that he even tried. It was very rarely that he tried anything. The effort to try was too much and there was no need to look after the ship.

The ship nurtered him. She looked after his every need. Enclosed in her metallic envelope and life-giving warmth there was no need to try.

On Earth there had been the constant, killing drag of gravity. It had pulled at their hearts, muscles and minds. It dragged ones very tissues into the pit of death.

But deep within the very cellular structure of man there was a memory of saline suspension, of an age aeons ago when cells had floated free of the insistent, death-pull of gravity. There were ancestral voices that told of unconscious forms swimming blindly through ancient oceans.

"I should have been a pair of ragged claws
Scuttling across the floors of silent seas."

And there were more recent, personal memories of flesh and heartbeat and fluid darkness. Then the fulfillment had been shattered by sharp, cold forceps and the dream was ended.

And a stream of desire ran a concurrent river with the memories, swilling and merging in preconscious currents.

Now free fall was the uterine suspension. They were floating and swimming and kicking blindly in the embryonic darkness of space.

The belly of the spacecraft was swollen and pregnant with life.

The Sun was a small, pale star. The relentless cold of utter void hung all around it as it swept in swift, predetermined orbit like a streetcar on its rails. But it was warm; it radiated heat.

The spacecraft hurtled past the Nordic hell of Pluto, with its seas of liquid hydrogen and frozen, ammoniated tunda open to the vicious cold fingers of vacuum. It flashed outward, hurling itself at the ebony wall of cosmic immensity. Impetuous, it leapt the stellar abyss.

And gradually the fusion energy-source radiated its power into space and was depleted. The heartbeat died. The ship ran down like a long neglected clock.

And the foetal life within the ship's belly miscarried.

WE ARE ONLY MORTALS / HIDING IN THE SHADOWSby Cy Chauvin.

Perhaps I'm wrong,
And the situation I've pictured,
gone --
For if I stay hidden
(in the purple shadows,
beneath the clouds)
I will only experience the sadness of suffering,
the sorrows of living -- not its joys;
Let me brighten my life,
beneath the Sun,
and run,
overflowing with happiness, instead,
dead to fruitless sorrow....
Let me escape.
And yet, how foolish am I,
To think
I could run
from beneath these purple shadows,
And their accompanying emotions....
I am only mortal;
And a purple shadow
looms over our world....
Ever-present,
It can be forgotten,
But never left --
We are only mortal.

-----ooooOoooo-----

The R & R Dept.

Bruce R. Gillespie

P.O. Box 245, Ararat, Vic. 3377.

Dear Ron,

...You're not kidding about the lack of local material. (**which I mentioned in a letter to Bruce.-Ron **) I've heard about fan-clannishness, but when the numbers are reduced to about three or four people in Sydney, six or seven in Melbourne, and a few from elsewhere, patting each other on the back, the line of support looks ragged. ANZAPA is a good idea, but it seems to have encouraged its participants to rest on these meagre oars, and leave it at that. What Alex Robb does with his estimable talents between mailings, I have no idea. Maybe he even does some work at University - an idea sufficiently novel to suit the image of Alex Robb. (**Bruce's letter was written in July, 1969, and I don't think that in the past year-and-a-half things have changed that much from what he mentions above. Please take issue: at the moment I have no contribs for TM 18. So, fans, if you don't contribute, there just ain't gonna be a TM 18. Just take note how thin this issue is. -Ron **).

To THE MENTOR 16: I haven't read it for awhile, so don't worry if the comments seem sketchy.

The covers are first-class. The tribute to Pat Terry is appropriate (although he hasn't written to me yet), and his article isn't too bad. The main problem is that Anne McCaffrey is really a rather boring writer, but Pat wouldn't be the first to mix up nice people with nice authors, and call them the same thing. I've never read Andre Norton, and don't intend to, unless someone sends me a review copy. In this connection (i.e. the article THE FEMALE OF THE SPECIES) I must say that nobody dislikes female writers because they are female. More often than not, it is because they are bad writers. A case in point is CC MacApp. For years I trudged through the uninspired efforts of this doggedly boring author, who littered the pages of IF and GALAXY and WOT with his offerings. CC MacApp could work with the best will in the world, with the potentially best materials and ideas, but the spark was never there.

I found out a while ago that CC MacApp (with no Hugo or Nebula nominations that I know of) is Christine MacApp. She no longer publishes under that name.

I'm not sure what that all proves, except that Anne McCaffrey would have been uninspiring in the same way if Campbell had billed her as A McCaffrey, or as Rex Astron. Unfortunately I cannot think of a single female writer in sf whose works I like. One could advance maudlin theories like "lack of scientific passion", or "no necessity to introspect", or just that female sf writers tend to be the same kind of unbelievably suburban

matrons who write under such names as Taylor Caldwell, and Anya Seton, and - what was the name of that cookie-sounding authoress my sister was reading the other day? Doubtless there are cookie teenage females who like the works of ordinary fortyish females. And there are ladies like Anne McCaffrey and and Andre Norton who beguile fiery gentlemen like Pat Terry. Good luck to them - at least Pat's not alone in his tastes.

Derek Kew treads a well-worn path, and draws no more blood. The term "sense of wonder" is a sentimentality which never meant anything anyway, except for the fact that we have all felt it. It's that goose-pimplly feeling of meeting the unknown concept, but the feeling is often there just because we have not met it before - in other words, we were pretty young, and the meeting of new ideas was part of growing up. When the SOW is transferred to new concepts in the studies pursued at school, college, university, or in the mythical institute of Ard-Knox, then I think a part of growing up has been accomplished, and one whole reason for reading sf may have disappeared.

I enjoyed the two stories, but can't remember enough of them to comment. I think John Brosnan should keep refurbishing his stories, and keep sending them around the publishers. All apologies, Ron, but they are a bit too good to stay in fanzines.

Look, Ron, there are all sorts of other things upon which I should pontificate. AYESSEFFAR was as delightful (and as accurate) as the other Harker pieces, and I still don't know who he is. The Great Australian Fan Mystery, indeed. Since SF COMMENTARY incorporates ASFR from issue Number 4, I should say the issue is closed. But that would be a rash statement, wouldn't it? (**Yes, it would. -Ron. **)

I've received the ultimate compliment, haven't I? Praise from John Foyster, I mean. Most of my article was close to the maudlin, except for the last section, which John appreciates. I can't be bothered reading MR SMITH AND DR LINEBARGER again, to answer the other points. John is probably right on the points he mentions, but the off-putting effect of Smith's so-called "alienness" has still to be accounted for. In this, Stuart Leslie is probably still close to the mark. Anyway, SPACE LORDS appears in hardbacks soon, and I'll try to raise as much Smithy hell as possible. George Turner has a penetrating look at THE UNDERPEOPLE in SFC 4 --- in short, both ASFR 11 and THE MENTOR 14 were the mere wisps of a large dust-cloud I'll try to raise (with John Foyster's and George Turner's help, of course and the help of anyone else who wants to join in).

Exhausted, I sprawl across the typewriter. At one time I promised a fan editor I'd LoC every issue of his magazine he sent. One could collapse from overwork in this game

Yours,
Bruce.

Cy Chauvin
17829 Peters, Roseville, Mich. U.S.A.

Dear Ron,

...Now on to TM 16. The editorial was interesting - I like the idea of getting advice from your loccers. But sometimes loccers don't always give the kind of an advice an editor can - they usually don't go as "in-depth" as an editor will. Still, I like your idea and I only hope your readers co-operate with you.

John Brosnan's story was really the funniest thing I've read in the way of fan-fiction in a long time! I can't see why a story as good as that couldn't make it into the prozines, if a few things were edited out and fixed up - (the 'Uncle Campbell' thing will have to go - you wouldn't want a libel suit - it wasn't that funny, either.).

"The Female of the Species" was a very interesting article - and I agree with Mr Terry in many respects. I certainly think that Andre Norton is neglected - how come we never see her in the prozines? (Doesn't she like writing short stories? How come none of her novels are serialized there, at least?)

What's this about 'Lisa Tuttle' being listed as a writer?! She's no pro-lady writer! I know Lisa Tuttle - she lives in Houston, and edits a fanzine called MATHOM, but I don't think she's done anything for the prozines - unless she's been hiding it from me! I didn't know Joanne Eurger write anything for them either. I know she's editor of PEGUSUS, but that's all. Still, he might be right. Because there in the Review Section is a book by Phyllis Gotlieb, and here I've sent her poems and everything and she has suggested revisions, etc... I never knew she was a pro-writer - just thought she was the poetry editor for a fanzine! What a shocking surprize! Brian Richards probably won't be able to meet her, but if he'd like her address....

"Time When", by Alex Robb, was very enchanting, and haunting, but a little hard to follow. He was trying too hard to make the lines rhyme, and at times the poem doesn't quite make sense.

"The Vipers of Ptahta" wasn't too funny, especially after the Brosnan story. Most of your reviews were good, though I thought quite a few were fairly short.

"SF and the Two Cultures" was interesting - one of your better articles, I thought. It makes a lot more sense that a lot of stuff I've read. "Three by Anne McCaffrey" was disappointing - the poems, to me, seemed the type that are 'sung' - I didn't find them at all interesting to read. It was nice of her to let you print them, though. (**I have Pat Terry to thank for that. -Ron**

"AYESSEFFAR" wasn't as good as Harker's last poem. Still

sort of humorous, though.

"Serious", by W.M. Black, was very interesting, sort of funny, too. I like this story better than the other one I've seen by him (Tuesday). There's a certain style in this which makes the whole story fit together quite well. Hope you get some more pieces by him just as well done.

Your back cover by Dimitri Razuvaev is superb. It has a fantastical quality about it that I really admire. I hope to see more (a lot more!) of him in your mag. He's great! (**The only thing that's keeping me from printing another of Dimitri's illos is a \$7 screening fee. -Ron **)

Yours,
Cy Chauvin.

Alyson Blake
Sydney.

Dear Mr Clarke,

I have just finished reading your story "A Time to Live" in The Mentor no 14. It has often struck me that the time travel stories in science fiction often leave something to be desired in one way or another. Some of the portrayed emotional involvement, perhaps. Imagine if someone went back into time. Say he went from his age in the future back to the past, to this day. And he wanted to pass on some of his knowledge. Could he? And would anyone believe him? Would anyone want to? Imagine if I, for instance, was a woman from the future. I had read of you and your magazine as a result of research into the world of 1970 surviving in my time. I had gone back into the past (to your time) and I had decided to write to you and tell you that time travel is possible. And that I am from the future. Since I wouldn't want to get too involved with the people here I decided to write to you. Now, how could I prove I was from the future? Tell you what the Second Martian Expedition found? Tell you when you will die? Tell you who assassinated Elizabeth II? Tell you how the cure for cancer was found? If I did what would you do? If I did these I would be changing the future by telling you. My future might not be because of that I tell you. Just what could an ordinary person from your future do? This I think is where so many sf writers fall down when they describe the traveller from the future - they have him (or her) doing something to change the future. But how is he going to know that that he is doing is best? I think that it is much better to leave alone. It may not be the best of all possible worlds, but at least it is livable.

I like your magazine and hope your future issues are as good as this one,

Alyson Blake.

Anne McCaffrey
Sea Cliff, New York 11579 USA

Dear Ron Clarke,

Patrick A.M. Terry, my very good friend, loyal supporter, official publicity agent in the Downunder, sent me a copy of The Mentor which arrived about the time I was due to set out for the St. Louiscon over the last weekend in August ('69). Since then, I have been trying to finish a novel, two stories (one of them which is owed Harlan Ellison for DANGEROUS (RE)VISIONS AGAIN), keep up with the masses of SFWA correspondence and mailings, and watch with groaning spirits as obligatory correspondence piles up and the more pleasurable - such as acknowledging fanzines - must be put off.

In the first place, I envy you your repro.... I fight continually with the old A B Dick the SFWA owns and am not sure if the machine doesn't like me or is too old to care, but I Can't get as good copy as you do. Irksome.

In the second place, the content is excellent....AND I exclude the article on the Female of the Species by Pat... he is inimitable, isn't he? Bless him! I can't think of a nicer person on whom s-f gadgetry could perform a more deserved miracle. (The Edmund Hamiltons and I drank a toast to him at St. LouisCon for they are still talking about his meeting them in person when they arrived in Sydney.) (**It is all the more shame that Pat is not alive at the moment. S-f gadgetry is not, unfortunately, reality at the moment. - Ron**)

Derek Kew has some valid points about the "sense of wonder". I get that thrown up at me all the time. It has to be in the eye of the beholder, I think, and that's darned hard to find... most of the upcoming generation being rather sophisticated scientifically. (I was fascinated to note, during the Moon Walk, that none of the other people in the room with me questioned the fact THAT WE WERE WATCHING THE ACTUAL EVENT ON TV. They worried about such things as suit puncture, dust bogs, technical failures which I pooh-poohed, being quite comfortable in the fact that all would go well. But to watch it on TV was something I hadn't quite envisioned...pardon the pun.)

Nowadays the cry is "Show us where it's at?". Well, it's not 'at' pure science anymore unless there is an interpersonal relationship/crisis/problem. Gimmickry abounds so it can't fascinate ... except for a small percentage of tinkerers and this-goes-inters. But, how people handle the science they've/we've got is of interest, if it's well done and the situation is valid.

I find myself reminded of a quote from Alexander Pope's "Essay on Man"

Eye Nature's walks, shoot folly as it flies,
And catch the manners living as they rise;
Laugh where we must, be candid when we can,
But vindicate the ways of God to man.

I myself change the last line to "But vindicate the ways of science to man." Which ruins the meter but makes sense in the modern context. Good lord, research laboratories have answers to problems they haven't discovered and processes for methods we don't yet need. But if man is to live comfortably with automation he'd better be able to relate it to himself.

As a writer, I do not consciously go to "solve a problem", or "propose a moral solution"; I write a story that happens to want to be told for a lot of unconscious reasons; the only conscious ones being I can't Not write and I'd like to earn some money. But I can't help but be affected by what happens in the world around me so a lot of what is current crops up in my stories. Including the intelligent use of the science advances we now enjoy and an extrapolation of what is obvious to come... or, in my practical opinion, ought to come.

I suppose the sense of wonder returns when you look around and think, Migawd, we have done walked on the moon and we all watched it.

Pat's article is most flattering and except to thank him profusely for his partisanship, there's precious little I could say that would not present me as immodest or self-centred. But it is undeniable that women writers of s-f do not get the credit AS WRITERS that some of their fine work deserves. I have started in the field at a time when their pioneering helped me, as reading the fine stories of Leigh Brackett, C.L. Moore, Zenna Henderson, and mostly Andre Norton gave me enormous insight into the field. Judith Merrill encouraged me when I nearly gave up in disgust and Virginia Kidd, a top-notch writer in her own right, is my valued friend and agent. Whatever my achievements, they all, everyone, helped me.

One of the reasons there are fewer women writing and reading in this field is that science has too long been the exclusive purview of the male. As a high school student, I was deliberately conditioned away from science by curriculum advisors. This prejudice is only now being erased but the result is obvious: you have to understand science to be interested in some of the hard science stories. Naturally the woman who dips into one of these yarns is put off and possibly throws out an entire field, not realizing there are so many other facets available under that categorical title. Well, when I lecture to local junior and senior high school groups, I make the pitch to the girls not to eschew the science courses. Particularly nowadays when there is such a spurt of science-based businesses (computer sciences are skyrocketing). Lordee, I'm lecturing and I didn't mean to.

I do appreciate the article and seeing the 'zine.
Best ever, Ron,

Anne McCaffrey

30.

Cy Chauvin
Roseville, Mich USA

Dear Ron,

....TM 14 - I'm afraid I struggled part-way through the article on Cordwainer Smith and then gave up. I haven't read much by Mr Smith, I'm afraid, so I didn't find it of as much interest as some people would.

"The 'Phone Rang", by Gary Woodman, was pretty good, I thought, It builds up quite well towards a surprise and somewhat startling, ending. As a piece of fan fic, it is quite good, but to be a professional piece it would have to be a lot longer. It's the best fiction in this issue, however.

LZ:D, etc, left me cold. I didn't find it funny at all, I'm afraid, the "alien - type did nothing to me, and I didn't even bother to finish reading it. Mark it off as merely a personal thing, though - all your other readers seemed to love it!

"A Time To Live" seemed to build up nicely, Ron, but it didn't end up anywhere; there's no really original ending. You could see what was happening all along. (**Even that there were two time machines? -Ron **)

Brian Richard's review of INTERNATIONAL SF was quite interesting, especially since I never got a chance to see the magazine (Roseville is probably almost as bad as Australia when it comes to locating sf mags!) I didn't much like the way he reviewed the mag - at least not with all those big, underlined titles, and then with a short paragraph underneath it! It was a bit sloppy looking, as well as reading.

Ah, I'd like to quote David Gray: "Sex and Swearing when it appears naturally in a story is OK -" yes, I agree with him, but when does it appear naturally in a story? I mean, how can you decide whether it naturally should be there or not? I think it's up to the writer, mostly, what he wants to put in his story. And if you don't like what a writer puts in his stories, stay away from them, I guess. Silverberg has a lot in his stories, but it seems natural, and not sickening - the writers for NEW WORLDS, on the other hand, seem to portray it in the worst way possible. I think they make it dull, dirty, unhealthy - and just plain not fun to read. Don't ask me why - it's just my opinion!

Leighawatha - funniest thing in the whole issue. Wish I could write humorous verse! Keep Herald G Harker on a leash to make sure he seeps writing stuff for you!

On to the next issue! TM 15 -....Brian Richard's review was one of the best I've seen done. "The Coming of the Space Age" sounds like quite an interesting book. After reading the review, I've come to the conclusion that a few long, in-depth reviews are better than a lot of short ones. They're at least more interesting to read....

TUESDAY was puzzling. I wouldn't criticize Michael Black's

piece, since I think he's trying for the NEW WORLD type of writing - and frankly, I'm not able to understand most of it properly; I don't really enjoy that type of writing, so it would be unfair for me to say whether it's bad or not....

"Would NEW WORLDS Accept This" - no, it wouldn't. It's too unoriginal, and too obvious, and too understandable. A NW story hasn't to be written in a completely irrational manner, or be written in a rational fashion as long as it seems to make definite, overall rational story, but leaves you puzzled, bewildered, and wondering what you've read. There are exceptions to this, however.

From a later letter:

The cover of M31 is quite striking - electro-stenciling photo-covers don't always work out so well people tell me, though yours turned out quite nice. If you can't get any good art, I wouldn't mind seeing a few more photos!!

"Fragments: Aphrodite" was just that -- a fragment of a real story. Still, it evoked a rather moving feeling, I suppose, but you have to remember that there is more to a story than mood. (** At least someone has seen that it was a 'mood' story! -Ron **) Just because Ray Bradbury gets away with it doesn't mean you have to! "An article...etc." Jack Wodhams being too pseudo-intellectual/and supposedly funny: Ugh! probably describes my reaction to the piece perfectly.

"Mr Walker, Mr Wheeler" was lacking in rationalization, though it was rather effective. What was the reason behind this gun-shooting society (or whatever you call it) set up? Why was everyone shooting at each other? Reminds me of a GALAXY story in which everybody went around shooting people, and giving away the meat like it was an animal they killed. But the author never really explained why they did it.

I loved "Kangeroos Don't Smoke", it was really quite funny and witty in parts (and I usually don't like long poems!) Persuade A. Bertram Chandler to do more!!!!

Overall, the one thing I would really like to see more of in M31/The Mentor is personality -- you Ron! Write an editorial (on something, anything), put more interjections into your letter-col, etc. Zines with a personality are always more interesting to read.

There is one important thing I'm doing right now that you could help me out with: I'm doing a column called Fans Across The Sea, it's a foreign fanzine review column, and I would appreciate it if you could mention in TM somewhere that I am interested in receiving some Aust. fanzines for review in it. These are in-depth reviews, and I promise to review all the foreign (that is, non-USA) fmz sent to me. Also, the editors will receive the issue of the zine in which I review their mag, so I don't think this is a deal they can lose out on. It strikes me that a fanzine column might help people become better acquainted with Australians, too. con.p37.

S.F.A.

This 'corner' of THE MENTOR is something new I am trying. It is aimed primarily at those readers new to sf fandom and to Overseas fans who may be interested in the goings on in Aust fandom.

The heading, "S.F.A." is one of my less obscure ones. Though, as in "R & R Dept.", don't go by first impressions (no, it doesn't mean Rest and Recreation). This column, feature, what-have-you, will tell of the goings on of Aust fandom. It will be a broad account of activities in Australia, though not a full coverage. I hope to have a regular column by a well known (to TM readers, at least) Aussie fan, and to feature a feature (yeah) on an Aussie "fan personality" also. He (or she) will probably be well known to Aussies, and will very likely become more well known overseas as Aust. involvement in fanac grows.

Here is S.F.A. Let's see what you make of it.

vvvvv vvvvv

Of WorldCons.

Australia is bidding for the privilege of holding the World Science Fiction Convention here in 1975. What it will mean to Australia and to Australian fans is something I hope will be discussed here in future issues. S.F.A. is open to discussion re this subject. I would like comments, please. For and against. No taboos. (not even spelling).

There is a StrineCon Committee at the moment consisting of most of the well known fans in Aust. I am not on it. As I told Peter Darling, even if I was invited to be on it I would decline, with thanks. I reckon that at least one fan editor should be apart from the Committee, if only to print and circulate opinions that the Committee may disapprove of. In other words, an open forum. Literally.

I was at the HEICON and several people have asked me to write a Con Report. I have 'ummed and 'arred and still it isn't written. Probably won't be, in a report form.

I went there solely to have a good time and enjoy myself. And I had one. I remember people I met there - by face. Names usually went in one ear and out the other. There follows an opinionated fragment of a con report by me. Necessarily vague - I kept no notes.

I arrived in Heidelberg on Friday afternoon (I think), the

21st August, 1970; with Peter Roberts of Bristol. I had bought a decrepit 1960 Ford Anglia in Portsmouth for £30, which I parked in the parking area in front of the Stadthalle (Townhall) where the WorldCon was being held. I walked in the front door - and found the only really muck up at the Con. There was a line about 150 feet long of people waiting to register - and only one person actually doing the registering. I don't blame the organizers - now I know what happened. (The usual thing - everything falling on a couple of people's shoulders who had to do all the donkey work). I do think that at any AusCon that this situation be not allowed to happen. It is essential that a well run appearance be kept up from the start. Even if it fails later - a good start is essential. Some of the people mentioned above were in the line, standing up, for two hours, and still had to come along the next day to register, as the Hall had to be cleared by 6.30 that night, and they had not registered by that time.

I enjoyed the rest of the program : including the films (Breath World and a couple of horra ones) and the Bavarian Night and the Boat Cruise. I had gone to Germany to see the country and the people as well as attend the HEICON, so the folk dancing was appreciated. I think something of the like (not necessarily native dancing) might be an added attraction at a StrineCon, too.

I disagree with the introduction of mundane politics to sf fandom. I attended the advertised discussion re a 'Peace Proposal'. At least I walked into the room with a large American fan I had been getting acquainted with and, on finding out just what it was all about, managed to get out on some pretext or other, leaving my American friend there with the room's lone occupant. (Also American).

The masquerade ball was a success - something which, though it didn't get that far off the ground at the New Year MelCon, certainly added atmosphere. I found the Translations slowed down the talks way too far - which accounted for some of the background talking noted by other people in their reports, (bad manners the rest of the talking).

All in all, a successful WorldCon as far as I was concerned. The artshow was really fantastic and was really worth seeing. I can only hope Aust. can put on one as good. It will have to. Maybe better.

Opinions re your view of a) Can Australia hold a World Convention in 1975 and b) Should Australia hold a WorldCon (in 1975 or otherwise) plus reasons, will be welcomed. Anything you don't want quoted please mark DNQ.

What would you like to see at an Australian World S.F. Convention? And Who? S.F.A. is your Forum. Write in!

- Ron L. Clarke.

■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■



SCIENCE FICTION FANS IN AUSTRALIA :
(First in a series)

PETER

DARLING.

My noble editor has requested that I set down a few words on a topic dear to my heart - myself. Despite my assurances (sub-vocal, to be honest) that no one would want to read about Peter Darling, I allowed Ron's better judgement to sway me.

I am not sure what Ron has in mind. From his remarks it seemed that he wants people writing to give a little background to their interest in science fiction and to provide a few personal details.

To begin at the beginning. I was born, so they tell me, in Sydney (at the usual unearthly hour in the morning) on the 21st of May, 1946. While I was still fairly young my parents built and then moved to the house we now occupy at Epping, a comfortable middle class suburb to the north of Sydney. I had an unexceptional childhood, with all the usual traumas and triumphs. I went to the local Public School, and then to Eastwood Public School (in an adjoining suburb) for 5th and 6th Class.

In order to satisfy Big Brother, I put in my compulsory five years at Epping High School, where I developed my philosophy of maximum return for minimum work expended. I started in First Year doing the maximum number of languages, French, Latin and German. I managed unremarkably enough in these subjects, scoring the statutory "could do better" at the end of each year. After three years I sat for the Intermediate Certificate and to the surprise of my language teachers, I did better. To their further surprise, I dropped all these languages and concentrated on Science, Maths and History.

During the last two years at Epping High, I helped form a Photographic Club, and found it very convenient to have a room at the School (ostensibly a darkroom) to which only we had keys. Despite a few narrow escapes from constituted authority (it took some talking to explain why the darkroom instead of the classroom seemed my permanent home) I managed to serve my term and, as a reward for good behaviour, passed the Leaving Certificate with Honours in Physics and Chemistry.

The following year saw me at Sydney University. I had no clearly formed ambitions regarding the course I wanted to follow, but I had a general interest in things scientific and technical, so I decided to enrol in Engineering with the option of changing to Science later in the course.

At University, it was if my dreams had some true. Only a limited amount of time at lectures (and no-one to check if you attended those) and all sorts of diversions laid on - films almost every day at the Union theatre, meetings of groups of every variety from neo-Nazi to the Scripture Union. Putting a previous interest in journalism and my photographic experience together, I volunteered myself as a photographer for three "honi soit", the university newspaper. In the three years I was taking photographs I almost managed to get arrested, took hundreds of mediocre photographs and managed to enjoy myself greatly.

Although I was awarded a Commonwealth Scholarship, I still found money a little short and took various holiday jobs, including a job looking after the camera department in a city store that continued (on a Saturday basis) for over a year. The job I most enjoyed was as a camera-man on the University TV unit. I was lucky enough to land the job when I heard the Unit was first starting, and was one of the camera-men on the first lecture to be televised. The job proved very useful as I could work during the day, in periods when there were no lectures, on a job that was interesting enough that I probably would have done it without payment (although I certainly didn't tell them that!)

After doing two years of Engineering I decided that I wanted to continue and get a degree in Electrical Engineering, but as I had a large amount of credit towards a Science Degree, I took an extra year and obtained my B.Sc., majoring in Maths and Physics. When I returned to Engineering I applied for and was awarded an Engineering Cadetship with the P.M.G., and in due course I graduated and started work as an Engineer with that august organisation. At the present I am working on the planning of new Telephone Exchanges in an area in the South of NSW, and finding that the PMG isn't quite as inefficient as popular legend would have it.

Enough of my potted history. A few words about my general interests. It is not generally known that I am a helpless addict. Yes, even in this post-McLuhan world, I am addicted to reading. Can you think of a more pitiful sight that I present each morning, reduced to reading the blurb on Kellogg's packets? ("You eat All-Bran and you don't need it?") Because of my general interests, I started to read science fiction and enjoyed it. I read the sf books in my school library and then started to buy the sf paperbacks that were coming on the market in large numbers. I'd seen some sf magazines on news-stands, but was very discouraged by the hideous covers (as I still am) and did not buy them until after I'd read "New Maps of Hell". Despite some difficulty in finding a mysterious magazine called "Astounding" I bought most of the magazines then on sale and found the contents only about

half as bad as the covers would suggest. It was only after I checked the second-hand shops that I found that "Astounding" was now "Analog", and that neither seemed to be as great as word of mouth would have it.

Following an advertisement in "New Worlds", I wrote to the ASFA in Canberra, but as I wasn't much interested in bibliography, I didn't follow the contact any further. Some time later I saw a copy of a magazine called "Australian Science Fiction Review" which I bought. That was number two. A few weeks later, I saw the third issue, which I immediately bought. Thinking that these people seemed to be having fun, I wrote to the editor, a Mr John Bangsund, to ask what if anything was happening in Sydney.

A reply came on what turned out to be the last day of my exams. I pocketed the letter, and it wasn't until the middle of the afternoon that I remembered it. It said that two well known American authors would be visiting Sydney and a meeting had been arranged to coincide with their visit. The Hamiltons, for the "authors" were Leigh & Edmond Hamilton, were arriving in Sydney that same day, and after some hurried phone calls to the English Department at the University, I was given an address for the meeting.

As well as a reception for the Hamiltons, the meeting was also to discuss the formation of a new club. The ground was laid then for what has become the Sydney Science Fiction Foundation. The initial meetings were held at the home of the late John Danza, but I missed most of these as I was away from Sydney over the University holidays. After I returned, I attended meetings fairly frequently at the different locations the club used.

Largely as a result of the short time the club had been running, all and any eligible members were liable to be drafted to the Committee, and in short measure I found myself involved. When the previous President had to leave for Melbourne, a lack of other candidates found me unanimously elected as President. As there still seems to be no other candidates, I am still President!

At Easter, 1968, I made what was to become an annual pilgrimage to Melbourne at Easter to attend what was known as the "Melbourne SF Conference" but what was actually my first SF Convention, as well as my first sight of the late, lamented Somerset Place clubrooms of the MSFC. From this Convention I bought back two memories :- the lack of quality of the sound system at the Clubroom (the first I'd seen that was capable of rendering every word unintelligibly) and the warmth and friendship of the Melbourne fans.

Since the Convention, I've visited Melbourne many times, the last at the beginning of this year for the Tenth Australian S F Convention. In January, 1970, I was able to repay some of this hospitality when Sydney fandon organised "SYNCON '70" and many science fiction fans from Victoria attended.

Whilst I enjoy reading science fiction, it certainly doesn't represent the whole of my reading, and of course I have many interests other than science fiction fandom. The main attraction of fandom for me is probably social - it represents a means by which I can get in touch with other people with similar interests, not only in my own city but also inter-state and internationally. These friendships, whether fostered by letters, personal contact or contributors in fanzines (including the contributors to ANZAPA), have made my association with science fiction fandom personally worth while.

I hope this potted history has been of some interest to readers of The Mentor. I will look forward to reading the things that other people who are volunteered by Ron for this column have to say.

- Peter Darling.

--xxxxxxxXxxxxxx--

The above short piece by Peter is the first (it is hoped) of a series of fan biogs. by the fans themselves giving other fans in Australia and overseas some background information about these Aussie fans. In future issues I will feature other Aussie SF fans who I can persuade to write something about themselves for information for others. I hope that I will have their co-operation in this. Don't be too unhappy if I don't ask you. I am only asking people who I know enough to be fairly sure of their helping and whom I know will be known through their previous articles in TM. -Ron.

%%%%%%%%%

The R & R Dept (cont. from p.31.)

A lot of US zines reach Australia, I think, but very few Australian zines reach the US.

Yours,
Cy.

I received in the mail yesterday a copy of the zine Cy mentions (DYNACENCE, ed. by Mike Juergans, 257 Florence St, Hammond, IN., 46324 USA). Good looking zine - offset cover, comic strip (very good repro and drawn, article on Delany, poems, fanzines reviews (incl. Fans Across The Sea by Cy Chauvin) and artwork spaced pleasingly throughout the issue. Very nice genzine.

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