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RON'S ROOST

I made a decision that I may well live to regret when I re-registered THE MENTOR with Australia Post in June. I changed its publishing schedule from once every three months to once every two months. There were two reasons behind this - the first was that with the book reviews, publishing once every three months is not that up to date when the books are being released every month. The second reason is that I found the R&R DEPARTMENT was more lively when it was being seen every two months (or even every month). The things against the shorter period are time and money. The former is not that important in that if one types up the material as it arrives and puts it on disc so there is no last minute rush. (Ha! to the last - it is Truly Amazing all the stuff one finds to do when putting together the zine for platemaking: gluing in the illustrations, rubbing down the Letraset headings and all those other jobs that taken individually don't take up much time, but when done together seem to take about twelve hours, at least.) The money is a load, though, as you may have noticed me winging about for the last couple of issues.

As Sue Bursztynski says in her article AUSSIE CON II: it's all over. Well, the actual event is over, though I doubt the repercussions will be done with for some time. I have not, at this stage, had much feedback about the Con. Before it commenced various bands of wandering Americans (from both the USA and Canada) visited for varying periods (several fans stayed several days, Robbie and Marty Cantor stayed several minutes) and then went on to the Con. When the Con was over a bit of feedback was received, mostly from Media fans. We did score a half 5 lb tin of peanut butter some fans brought with them from the USA to use in a room party (in case they could not get the makings from Australia - well, that is a turn-around from taking Vegemite to the USA), but mostly it has been dead quiet.

As you may have noticed with the reproduction of last issue, and probably this issue, the platemaker is making itself noticed by leaving the middle of the page fainter than the edges. Mfff. I rang the distributors but all they could suggest was that I clean the charge wire. This I did, but it still is faint. They did say that light may be getting in, though I can't see where, or how I could stop it if it is. So you readers will just have to put up with it.

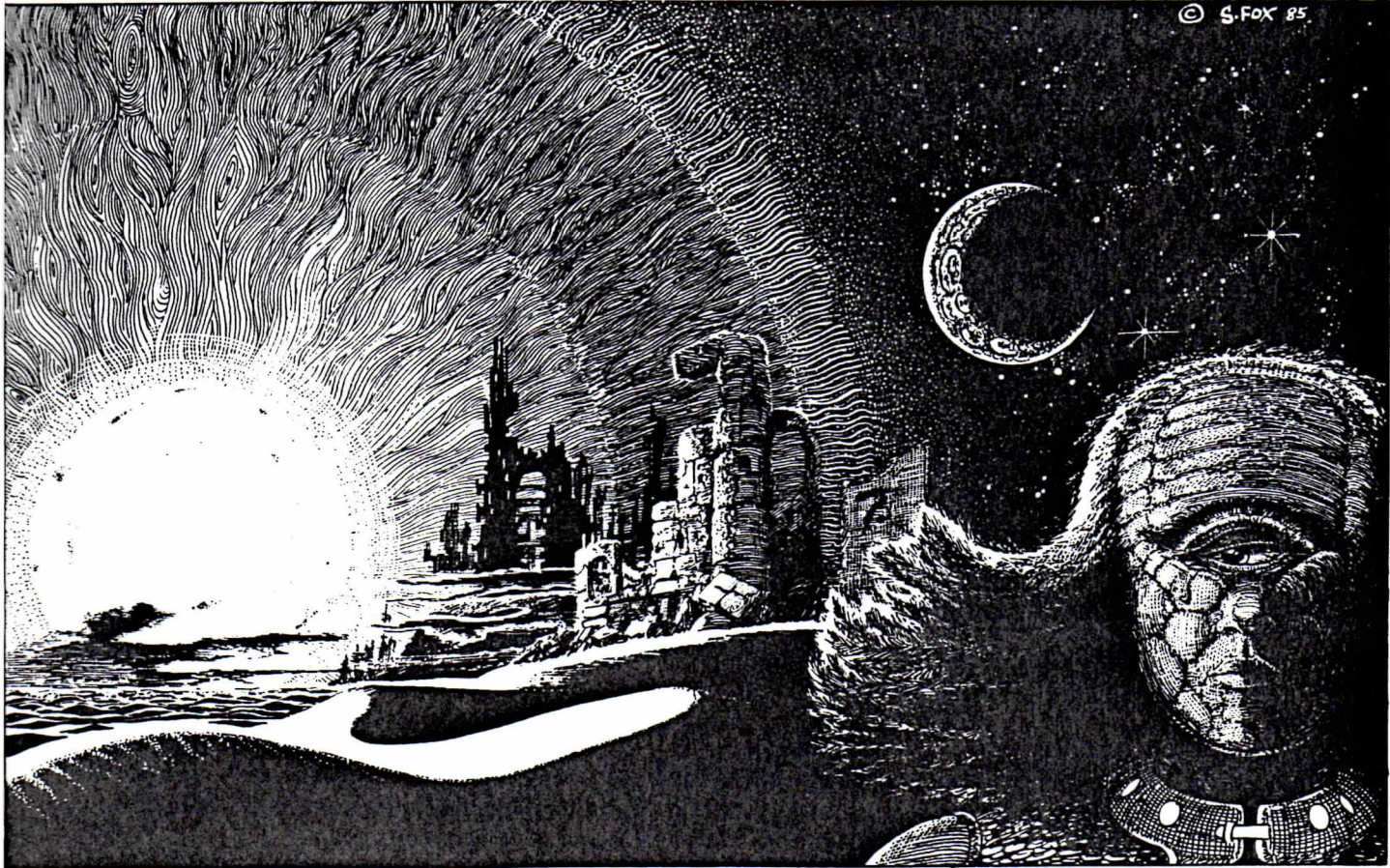
On the 26th of July Susan and I completed our family with the birth of Graeme Alexander. We now have four children, two boys and two girls, the youngest one month and the eldest (girl) ten. This new addition leaves even less time for fanzine production (and sleep...) so this bi-monthly schedule may only last till July next year.

- Ron.

THE WIZARD'S CHILD

BY GAIL NEVILLE

ILLUST. BY STEVE FOX



Huldra scanned the distant city with her solitary eye. To a hive-dweller from the deserts of the Warra, these gaunt northern towns had an ominously substantial look. Keffe was the name of this city - it clung stubbornly to the rocks at the ocean's edge as if defying the elements to topple it.

Huldra shifted her weight in the saddle. After a day's hard riding to cross the Bharran Ranges that separated the Warra from the cooler northern continent, she felt sore and ill-tempered, and smelled as strongly as her mount. *If the Giver of Chrystal had meant us to ride these things*, she thought, *He would have created us without noses!* Thurgs were hardy little beasts, however, and she was grateful for this one's stamina and docility. It had borne her and her pack uncomplaining on the long trek from the hives. Glancing back along the road, she waited for the other thurg and its rider to catch up.

Zuzukan her hatch-father, his long legs sticking out at right angles from his thurg's fat sides, came at a steadier pace, letting his colourful robes flap about him to keep away the insects that clustered about the animals.

"We are in sight of Keffe. There is another ship coming in." Huldra pointed with excitement at the sky, where a commuter shuttle from one of the spaceports on the inner moon hovered outside the atmosphere.

"I can see it," Zuzukan agreed. "We shall reach the city before the rising of the second sun. The beasts tire, child, but we have made good time."

Huldra spurred her thurg off the road, into the sand dunes leading down to the sea. The thurg's gait changed promptly to cope with the new surface, even the form of his hooves changed, flattening, spreading out, for better purchase on the sliding sand. Zuzuka continued on his own way. He would not leave the road, but Huldra wanted to go by way of the ocean's edge. It fascinated her, this ocean, the only one on the planet. It was like a shiny, lazy beast, lapping at the sand with a long, wet tongue. She slipped off the thurg's back and knelt down in the shallows. Eddies of foamy wavelets crowded about her feet. She dipped her fingers in and scooped some of the foam to her lips. It tasted like blood, salt and rank.

Remounting, she rode at a fast trot toward Keffe. The sand was wet and hard-packed here, and the thurg adopted his hardway hooves again and they made good speed as the Prime Sun dipped below the peaks of the Bharran Ranges to the south, and the Shadow sun boiled up over the ocean's flat horizon, carrying the inner moon before it like a toy. A bloated red star, the Shadow Sun gave the ocean an appearance to match its taste - an ocean of blood. Huldra thought it most poetic.

The thurg's hooves rattled on stone. They were beneath the battlements of the old city. Flagged stone streets squirmed away between teetering ruins. Huldra felt her buoyant spirits dampened as she quickened the thurg's stride through the empty streets. A busy tourist attraction by Prime, it was deserted and echoing in Shadow. Beyond the fantastic spires of the new city towered reassuringly against the bloated bulk of the Shadow Sun. Here was life, energy, and opportunity, not ghosts. Even the placid thurg seemed glad to leave the ruins behind, and sped back to the road to catch up with his companion.

They rode into Keffe side by side, Zuzukan upright in the saddle, Huldra subdued by the noise, the crowds, the curious mingling of native and off-world two-eyed races. Few off-worlders came to the Warra. The fierce heat and monotonous wastes of sand had little appeal except for the hardiest of tourists.

They had reached a kind of piazza in the centre of the city, where tourists browsed in chattering groups among the attractions at a street bazaar. Spires, towers and minarets soared above them, apartments, hotels and gaming rooms shining with light to dispell the glood of Shadowtime. Zuzukan dismounted from his thurg, and curious onlookers stopped to gaze at his fantastic robes, emblazoned with strange devices, his bronze-coloured leathery skin, and single glowing eye. Zuzukan was swift to take advantage of their interest.

"Friends, gather round", he cried, swirling his cloak, and spinning in antic circles on his spindly lets. "I am Zuzukan - the Wizard of the Warra! Gather close, friends, I have come from my homeland to show marvels to you, such as you have never seen." Having their attention, he lowered his voice conspiratorially. "We of the Warra have but two resources, friends. One is sand, from which we derive all we need. The other - " he gazed around at the curious faces bent his way, his eye glittering in the Shadowlight. " - the other is the Giver of Chrystal." His voice faded to a whisper. "The Giver of Chrystal works through us in wondrous ways. I am a Wizard of the Warra. To me is given the key to creat mysteries."

Huldra took the cue, and opened her saddle bag. From inside she took a hooded circle of cloth and a rope. Both were made of the glass fibre spun from the endless desert sands of her homeland. She and Zuzukan were Masters of the Chrystal Art, as such spinning was called, able to create fibres of varying strengths and

properties, to build hives, or create cloth, rope, and many other materials. But only one Wizard could make Shadowcloth. Hold it one way, and the fibre looked like any other spun of the sand - many faceted, sparkling like a prism with rainbow lights. But hold it another way and the fibres reflected the light in such a way as to appear invisible.

"This is Huldra," Zuzukan introduced her to the crowd. "Before your many eyes, friends, Huldra and I will bend the laws of light." He unhooked a rope from his belt, and tossed it up in the air. Made of glass fibre, it had no special properties of light, but as it rose in the air it formed a slender pole. Huldra, draped in the cloak and with the other rope concealed beneath it, started to inch her way up the stiffened rope. At the top, she adjusted the cloak so that it covered her completely and she vanished from sight. Quickly she dropped the other rope, and it stiffened beside the original, although the tourists could not see it. She transferred her weight from Zuzukan's rope to her own. Zuzukan caught hold of his rope and it crumpled in his hands. The crowd gasped.

"What is the Magic of the Warra worth, friends?" he cackled, as he folded the rope back into his belt. Showers of coins fell at his feet, and as the crowds dispersed, he knelt to gather them up. Stowing the coins in a pocket in his robe, he went back to the thugs and waited for a moment, until Huldra appeared at his side.

"Nice pickings," she said.

"It could have been better. Trouble is, many of them have heard of our Chrystal Arts, and have some idea of how the illusions work. We need to go off-world, to planets where the Arts are unknown. Then we could be rich, child."

"First we must make money. Off-world passage is expensive."

Leading their thugs, they made their way toward a street cafe, where appetizing smells drifted out from the kitchens.

"Hey, Wizard! Not so fast, Wizard!"

They stopped and turned. A soft-skinned two-eye was scurrying after them, his plump hands waving urgently.

"Not so fast, Wizard. I have a proposition for you."

Zuzukan allowed himself to be steered to a table at the cafe. His face wrinkled with amusement as the newcomer tossed Huldra a few coins.

"Run along and buy yourself a few sweetmeats, little girl. Daddy and I want to talk business."

"Do we?" Zuzukan murmured.

"Indeed we do. Let me introduce myself. I am Yoza Qazal - entrepreneur - I have created more stars than there are in the highways of Heaven. I know all about you Wizards of the Warra. You'd make a good attraction on the circuit. I caught your act back there. Very nice. Needs a little polish. But you've got talent, old man, real talent. I have ideas. What's your poison? Yulutz ale, all you Warrans drink Yulutz ale. I was watching the act, old man - it's good. Very good. But it needs glamour. Get rid of the kid. Get a woman. A two-eyed woman. I can have you a showgirl here in minutes, legs up to her collarbone, a figure to make a brave man weep. How about it? We'll bill you - 'The Wizard of Warra and his Beautiful Assistant' - Get you a hundred tuan a week, easy. Twenty per cent for myself, of course. I'm not a greedy man. How about it?"

"But what of my hatchling?"

"We'll find something for the kid to do. You trained her, you can train a full grown woman, easy."

Zuzukan sipped at his ale thoughtfully. His companion ordered more. A two-eyed waiter bent over the table to pick up his empty glass, then stepped back in indignation, glaring down at Yoza Dazal.

"This is not that kind of establishment, sir!" The waiter snapped.

Dazal gave him a bemused smile. "Are you addressing me?" He asked.

"I am, sir. If you require those kinds of - services - you will find what you seek in the Vedobe district."

Someone at a nearby table tittered in amusement, and Qazal's face reddened.

"Are you suggesting I interfered with your person?" He demanded.

"Me, sir? I'm suggesting nothing, sir. But please put your hands on the table while I pick up your glass."

"I've never been so insulted - !" Qazal stormed to his feet. "Where's the manager?"

"I'd be more than happy to take you to him, sir." The waiter said smoothly. "No doubt he will call a vice inspector. There are laws on this planet, you know. We take tourists, but we have our pride."

"We'll see the vice inspector together!" Qazal threatened. "Don't run away, Wizard. This won't take long." He strode away, followed at a more sedate pace by the waiter.

Zuzukan finished his drink, setting the glass down with a smile as Huldra shrugged off the cloak and appeared in the chair opposite.

"That wasn't very nice," he said mildly.

"He wasn't very nice. What did he order - good, fried opka legs." She laughed as she reached for the food. "He didn't know as much as he thought about the Wizards of Warra."

"What did you do to the waiter?"

"It doesn't matter what I did, it got rid of the two-eye. And he had a nice fat purse, as well." She set a bulging bag on the table.

"We'd better be moving on before he comes back. Huldra, that is not a good use of the cloak."

"It's quicker than street shows. There's lots of tuan in here." She stowed the bag in her desert suit, and got up from the table, taking another opka leg. "Little girl, indeed!"

"You must learn not to take offense so quickly, if we are going off-world."

Huldra merely laughed again, and strode on ahead, dragging her thurg along by the reins. Zuzukan followed, still smiling. He felt sorry for the off-worlder, but no doubt that smooth tongue would talk itself out of trouble as easily as it talked itself in. Perhaps he would learn to treat Warran hatchlings with a little more respect. Huldra had been born from an egg found in the deep sands of the desert, as were all Warrans, the hatchlings having full awareness at birth. She had come with the knowledge of making shadowcloth, which no other possessed. The Giver of Chrystal created the Wizards of the Warra, and the Wizards' children, as it created all things.

No, only a fool would underestimate the Wizard's child... and if the fools and their tuan would not come to the Wizards, then the Wizards must go the the fools.

Zuzukan hurried after the child that already know more than he, and was learning faster every minute.

- Gail Neville.



CLOSE ENCOUNTERS
OF LIZARDS
AT AUSSIECON 85!



Michael 85
©

AUSSIE CON II

BY SUE BURSZTYNSKI

Well, the big event has come and gone.

It was impossible to get to everything - even to everything I wanted. I had to work on Thursday and Friday and on Saturday morning attended a barmitzvah. Still, I managed to socialise, spend outrageously, eat lots of rubbish and stay up till the small hours. In other words, a normal con, only bigger.

It was a pleasure to see in one place so many writers whose work I'd enjoyed and others whose work I intend to read from now on - Jack Chalker, Larry Niven, Fred Pohl, Hal Clement, Gene Wolf (the GoH), Phyllis Ann Karr, Anne McCaffrey, David Brin, Bob Shaw, Frank Herbert...

During the con I kept a journal; what follows is a day-to-day account based on the notes I took. The con was spread over the three hotels and the State Film Centre (alas, I missed the entire film programme!), so there was a good deal of running around to do. Forgive any jumpiness in this report, therefore.

THURSDAY

Hurried home from work, fetched my things and, with my room-mate, Helene, went to town. We hunted white roses for the Wake for Richard III - only artificial ones were available. There must have been quite a run on white roses that day!

After dumping our gear at the Victoria, we went to register. At the desk, I failed to recognise a penpal (sorry, Richard! Especially since you had your name on your shirt!)

My first panel of the con was on world-creating, with Hal Clement, Larry Niven, Frank Herbert and others I didn't recognise (I missed the start). All the panellists stressed the importance of knowing your characters completely, whether you use the material or not.

The Wake for Richard III was very colourful, with many of us in costume and hundreds of white roses pinned to hats, cloaks, shirts and gowns. No drinking, though - the hotel corkage fee was too high! After a lecture, there was dancing - the form of Renaissance dance done by the Society for Creative Anachronism. I know the standard SCA repertoire, so was able to join in.

I failed to recognise a second penpal (inexcusable - she lived in Melbourne for months!)

The evening ended with socialising - Nikki White, Lucy Zinkiewicz, John Alderson and others. I refrained (with difficulty) from strangling Helene for reading aloud all the events I'd have to miss next day due to work.

Robert Jan, who had threatened to wear two red roses to the Wake, was wearing both red and white ones ("hedging" his bets?) while Adrienne Losin had painted a red rose on her face. Spoilsports.

FRIDAY

Work again. How boring. But you need a medical certificate to stay away the last day of term... *Sigh*.

In the afternoon, I invaded the hucksters rooms and splurged on books, zines and a delightful knitted unicorn Edwina Harvey had lying in wait for me (she knew I'd have to have it!), then joined the queue for Larry Niven's autograph. The man deserves a medal for the two hours he patiently signed entire libraries.

The elf-eared girl in front of me squealed "Oh, hi, Miss Bursztynski!" Egad, an ex-pupil. Last saw her when she was twelve and I was still teaching. Fandom's a small world.

I didn't enjoy the zine-publishing panels, I'm afraid, since some panel members (not all - no names, please!) indulged in the common fannish silliness of making in-jokes about a certain fan. Apart from the fact that perhaps not everyone in the audience knew said fan, the theme of the panel was supposed to be "The Need To publish", NOT "Character Assassination In Fandom". If people must bitch each other, surely it can be kept private?

Dressed for dinner, Nikki and I hurried to the Sheraton for the Star Trek panel with Nola Frame, Adrienne Losin and Leslie Fish. We enjoyed this; it was an intelligent and rational discussion, in which plausible reasons were offered for the changes in Trek over the years. Unfortunately, we couldn't stay till the end, as we had the rush off to the banquet.

Bob Shaw's after-dinner speech was delightful. We all chuckled at his anecdotes. My favourite was the one about a job he got on the strength of "two hundred articles in 'science-related journals'" (fanzines!).

Afterwards, there were films, including the STAR WARS saga, but I opted to socialise. Out came Nikkie's famous woolly dolls of media Sf characters and my two unicorns, Angus and Robertson, much to everyone's amusement. There were six librarians in the party (sheer coincidence), so we had a mini-conference. We nattered till the small hours.

SATURDAY

After returning from the barmitzvah, I went to the art show, which was impressive, if small for a WorldCon. I bid on some items with affordable reserve prices.

I missed Bob Shaw's and Gene Wolfe's autograph sessions, alas!

Helen Sargeant and I attended the Georgette Heyer tea organised by Shane McCormack. Many people came in costume. It was a very pleasant way to spend an afternoon - tea and biscuits and quiet chatting in elegant surroundings that looked Regency. There was a quiz on Heyer's books (written) with a prize (I think) of books from Galaxy.

Next stop was the Sheraton for a panel on media universes, panellists in costume. This was amusing, especially Greg Franklin's description of THE PRISONER and the groansome punning between him and a U.S. fan, Mitchell somebody, dressed as Colonel Tye from BATTLESTAR GALACTICA, something about a "black Beau Tigh"...

It did go too long, I'm afraid. One hour, with each speaker restricted by a moderator, would have been ample. It went for an hour and a half.

After dinner, I attended the masquerade. I'd decided against entering, because I wanted to see the costumes - alas, I might as well have entered for all I saw. The hall was huge, the platform low and I had to stand to see anything at all. And I was luckier than people further back, who saw nothing. A higher platform next time, committee - please.

Presentations and costumes were very good; people had really worked on them. A number of prizes were awarded, after a rather long deliberation by the judges (I thought somebody had devised a system of giving points during the masquerade, to cut down on judging time?) and some entertainment by a band that was rather too loud for my taste (others may have liked it). Lewis Morely won the prize for best overall costume, for a spectacular demon costume.

I'd have liked to get some photos, but flashes were forbidden and you had to register in advance, it seemed, for photo sessions before and after the masquerade (I hadn't known that - don't recall it being widely advertised). These sessions, also, meant masqueraders were kept standing around in costume for four hours - rather them than me! A pity, as there were some marvellous costumes.

SUNDAY

Two of my bids were successful - a nicely done Captain Kirk (pastel) and a stunning Indiana Jones (also pastel), at prices I could afford.

I got my Fred Pohl book signed and went to some panels. Several writers were on the one about "Solar Sails in the Sunset" (I caught half of it). Jack Chalker, Phyllis Anne Karr and Clare Bell (?) were on the "Fantasy-SF for kids?" panel, an enjoyable discussion of the distinctions between Sf and fantasy and between children's and adult's lit - i.e. should there be any?

Next stop was David Brin's talk on the search for extraterrestrial intelligence. Mr Brin is a fascinating, intelligent speaker. We all enjoyed his talk very much.

In the evening, I had dinner with friends then it was off to the Hugos presentation (list of winners at the end of this account).

Marc Ortlieb was a delightful M.C. There was no long-drawn out jokes or tedious "clowning", but an atmosphere of good cheer that fitted the occasion. About four of the winners were actually there to collect their awards. It was an especial pleasure to see David Brin, who had won both the Hugo and the Nebula before, show real surprise and delight over his Hugo for Best Short Story. Some people aren't spoiled by success, it seems.

The ceremony started late, but proceeded smoothly, so was over by about 10.00 pm. After a drink in the lounge, Natalie Prior, John Tipper and I had a quiet informal room party.

MONDAY

First up was the panel on Arthurian literature with Phyllis Ann Karr, Cathy Kerrigan and Robert Jan. This was mostly an information session on available books and films, most of which I knew. Everyone seemed to enjoy it, though, throwing in their own bits of information.

After lunch (spent elbowing through school holiday crowds) Nikki and I went to Phyllis Anne Karr's reading. Ms Karr read a gigglesome Star Trek story she'd written during her days as a fanwriter. A pity only five of us were there to enjoy

it - ah, well, that was everyone else's loss. Ms Karr is a delightful, friendly lady.

After a panel on professional writing with several writers, in which each discussed his own writing habits and attitudes (very enjoyable), three of us had afternoon tea - I'd have liked to go the the Bob Shaw natter, but needed a break and I didn't want to be late for David Brin's reading.

This was the last event of the con and a good one. Mr Brin read from his book THE POSTMAN (not yet available here), then from his latest, unfinished story in the Uplift series, THE UPLIFT WAR. Every now and then, he winced over a bit he said needed re-writing (I winced in sympathy - know how he feels). He'd just reached a cliffhanger when he was told the closing ceremonies were waiting. Drat!

After the ceremonies, I said goodbye to some interstate friends, then left with two others.

And that was it, except for seeing off friends over the week.

On the whole, I enjoyed the con. The committee and volunteers must be thanked for all their hard work. Some things could have been better - the organisation of the masquerade, for example, and I would have liked to see a couple of quiet hours in the middle of each day when people could take a break and go out for meals. As it was, taking a meal-break meant deciding what to miss. I happen to enjoy programmed events; I suppose it doesn't matter to people who just go to socialise. But I was sorry.

Also, I seemed to be constantly rushing between hotels for panels. The media panels all seemed to be at the Sheraton, the others at the Southern Cross. If you liked both worlds, as I do, you never got to see the beginning of any panel. Perhaps another time the con could be less spread out?

These winges aside, I had a good time. Now to save for Britain in '87...

- Sue Bursztnyski

HUGO AWARD WINNERS

Best Semi-Prozine: Locus, ed. Charles N. Brown

Pro Artist: Michael Whelan

Pro Editor: Terry Carr

Fanzine: File 770, ed. Mike Glyer

Fan Writer: Dave Langford

Fan Artist: Alexis Gilliland

John W. Campbell Award for Best New Writer: Lucius Shephard

Best Non Fiction: WONDER'S CHILD by Jack Williamson

Best Dramatic Presentation: 2010: ODYSSEY 2

Short Story: CRYSTAL SPHERES by David Brin

Novelette: BLOODCHILD by Octavia Butler

Novella: PRESS ENTER by John Varley

Novel: NEUROMANCER by William Gibson

MY DEN

- DIANE FOX

ROOMS OF PARADISE

a dozen dazzling stories of the individual in
bizarre but terrifyingly possible futures, by

BRIAN ALDISS, MICHAEL BISHOP, GENE WOLFE,
R. A. LAFFERTY, CHERRY WILDER, IAN WATSON,
SAKYO KOMATSU, GEORGE TURNER & OTHERS

Edited by Lee Harding

Foreword by Roger Zelazny



ROOMS OF PARADISE, edited by Lee Harding, foreword by Roger Zelazny. (C) 1978 St. Martin's Press (New York), h/c, cover illustration by Michael Payne. US\$8.95. Penguin edition 1982, pb, cover illustration by Mike Hollands. A\$4.95.

This anthology is as much international as Australian. The editor and four of the authors are Australian; another author is Australian-born but living abroad. There are two English authors, one Japanese, three Americans, and the introduction is by an American. The book was first published overseas, and republished by an Australian branch of an overseas company. Even the title story is by one of the English writers. Despite this, the book has somehow a decidedly Australian feel and mood.

Ian Watson, the author of the title story, is known for his striking story ideas - and has a fondness for bleak or pessimistic endings. ROOMS OF PARADISE shows an apparently utopian future, where immortality is possible, by rebirth into a new body. But the souls of the reborn are partially trapped between life and death in everlasting loneliness, and only when they sleep are they aware of this. A strange, uncomfortable story, especially to a materialist such as myself. This story may

have provided the name for the whole collection because it so effectively expresses a theme shown in many of the stories: that an apparently entirely good thing may have hidden and unexpected side effects which may be utterly disastrous. This feeling may be expressed not only in the suspicious words, "What's the catch?", but as TANSTAAFL ("There ain't no such thing as a free lunch") and even "Hell is paved with good intentions".

David Lake's story RE-DEEM THE TIME is pessimistic enough, although it is also extremely funny. A time traveller finds, not a the utopian future he expects, but a return to the Good Old Days - technology is being systematically dismantled, accompanied by a return to the customs of the past. A marvellous cautionary piece of black humour; I wouldn't think Lake meant the idea to be taken seriously as war was very much a part of the past, and I cannot see anyone giving up something which might help them to win a war.

Recreating the past would make necessary an exact knowledge of the past - something we don't have. Even when we have accurate knowledge of technology and customs, it is hard to put ourselves into the same thoughts and feelings of our ancestors - and this might prove a great problem for time travellers, as Philippa C. Madden's *IGNORANT OF MAGIC* shows. This story also suggests that the laws of nature may be partially what we believe them to be - if enough people believe in magic, it may work.

Paranormal powers are a modern variant of magic; like the older traditional magic, these powers may be a curse rather than an advantage ultimately. Kevin McKay's *PIE ROW JOE* tells a story similar to Stephen King's *CARRIE*. In the slightly Ocker voice of its title character - his nickname has nothing to do with pies, and is a nice inventive touch.

Michael Bishop's *COLLABORATING* shows a different kind of mutation - a two-headed man, or rather, two brothers who share one body. It is a powerful tale of love, distrust, jealousy and grief - but not without wit and bizarre humour. As the brother's situation is unchangeable, this is not a tale of warning - caution here would be irrelevant.

BEQUEST OF WINGS by R.A. Lafferty is another story, the sudden evolution of a generation of winged humans. Allegory as much as SF, it depicts the attitude of the old to the young, the mystique of teenage peer groups and the romanticism of tragic destiny. Society sees change as deformity. A beautiful, bitter story with the lightness and wildness of its birdlike characters.

Human strangeness of a different sort is seen in Sakyō Komatsu's *THE SAVAGE MOUTH*, the only outright horror story in the book. It deals with that classic Japanese theme, inventive forms of suicide, and with the recurrent theme in SF, cannibalism; despite the extremity of the main character's action, his views are not beyond our understanding, or even admiration. Most of the stories touch on some aspect of disguised Hell, but here there is no disguise.

Social and economic oppression is a face of Hell. Gene Wolfe's *OUR NEIGHBOUR* by David Copperfield is an entertaining pastiche of Charles Dickens with a serious sting in its tail, showing an early experiment in hypnosis and a sharp comment on social attitudes that have not changed at all. This story is borderline SF, but so good that this matters not in the slightest.

Cherry Wilder's *THE FALLDOWN OF MAN* despite theological hints in its title (red herrings) is straight SF - humans seen from the viewpoint of aliens. It is one of her delightful Torin series, and shows a great social change from the viewpoint of ordinary people - a group of wandering actors, who base a play on the adventures of the first Earthling on Torin (earlier described in her novel *THE LUCK OF BRIN'S FIVE*). A fairly sunny slice of life, this story contrasts with the downbeat themes of most of the others.

INDIFFERENCE by Brian Aldiss describes the setting up of a cyborg computer by three cloned missionaries on an isolated, backward planet. The computer, one of thousands, is part of a project to contact, or perhaps create, God. The mission is successful, though two clone-brothers die. But the survivor ends by seeing God as callously indifferent. The last line of the story is startlingly effective.

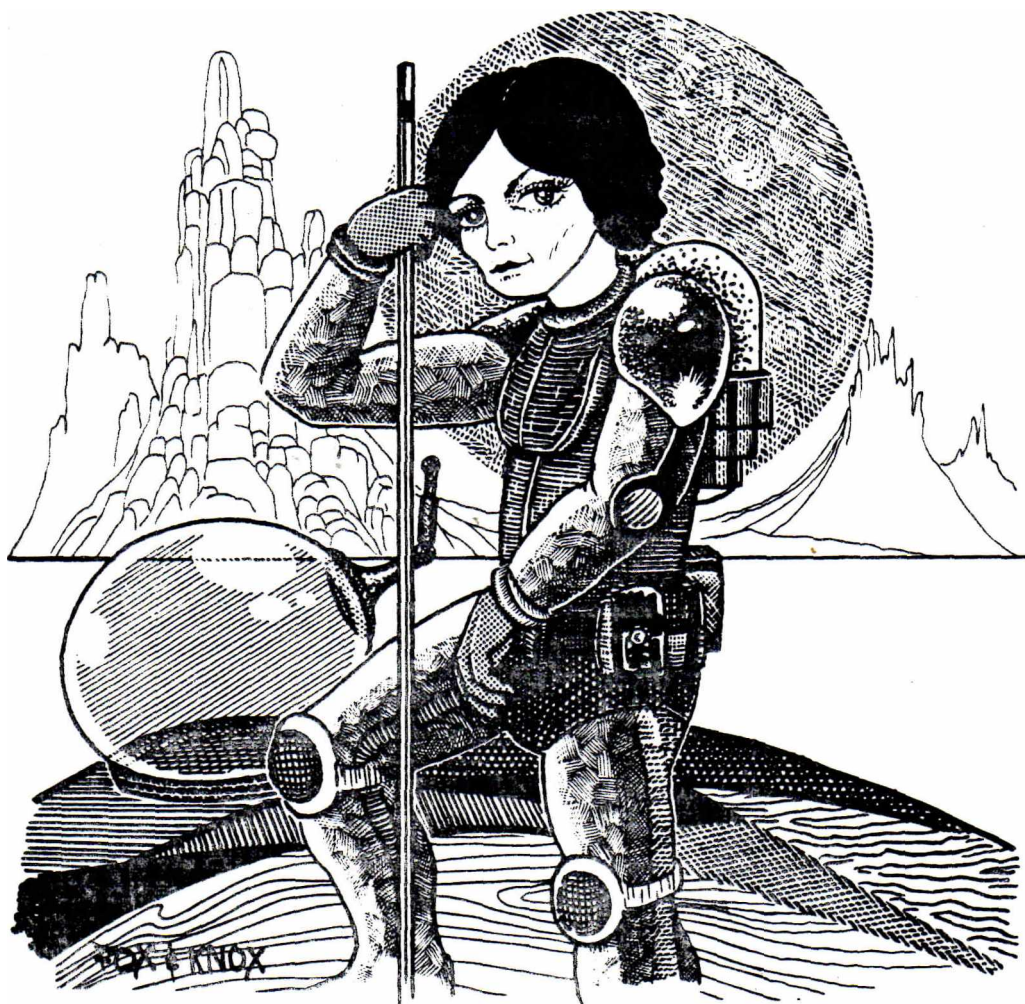
George Turner's *IN A PETRI DISH UPSTAIRS* shows the coming-of-age of an orbital culture, which will eventually control the solar system and beyond. Most such high-tech stories are idealistic and optimistic. Turner's view is uglier and frighteningly plausible. The selfish groundling politicians have allowed the space colonies to deteriorate into orbital slums, whose people cannot afford the luxury of civility - love, kindness and truthfulness are also scant. They can afford the burden of rankling envy and resentment towards the "Earthworms". The miseries

endured by a groundling heiress who is enticed into marrying an orbiter are not only a sardonic commentary on marriage that would illustrate the most savage feminist comments on that institution, but a preview of what is in store for the "Earthworms" once the orbiters inevitably gain control of the solar system. There's also the sub-theme that political hypocrisy and lip-service to morality may be preferable to unvarnished "realism", which is usually a euphemism for fascism. This story is bleak, but memorable.

Roger Zelazny's foreword is brief and graceful, only hinting of the power of some of the stories, and whetting the reader's interest.

Of the two cover illustrations, I liked the Penguin one the best: this is a subjective judgement, however.

- Diane Fox



A MAGNIFICENT PERFORMANCE

waving in one tentacle
an Innocent Jug

in the other an Autumn
Storage Jar

these are my trophies surely
you'll agree well

worth all the danger diving in
poisonous

atmosphere plunging
through slag mountains

fused over and under
old cities wearing

my irreplaceable
cutter limb

to the raw bone and all the time
dangerous as a poem in so hostile

a ruined environment weakening
my alertness to any

and every hazard waves of emotion
from the lost world they sang

those beings in between being
world-breakers in between being

beauty-makers still it resonates in
their absence that song conjuring

them unchanged above the warted blistered
landmass itching the exczema

of self scratching it raw i swear it i
saw them just same as in

the culture-packs issued to museum
planet visitors black on white white on blue

salmon on pale silk task forces of their life force
clear multifoliate as clouds just keep on

sailing shining through
inside these objects i hold them entire now

crying see me skincloak wrinkling
as if in acid with thought of parting

forever from what is gone forever gentlemen
i swear by my pores-pain truly these are

true brew of planet Hellnheaven how much as i bid

- Steve Sneyd -

JOHN J. ALDERSON:

THE MALE - DOMINATED SOCIETY

SUMMING UP

When we come to collate the results of our investigations into the three male-dominated societies, we find that the guide-lines of the older anthropologists are right, but only as far as they go. We also find some other extremely interesting facts. On the one hand we find that all these societies show relics of a previous different society, and on the other hand, we find that the Bedawin Arab, long reckoned as belonging to a most fundamentally male-dominated society, is in all probability a non-dominated society (with male descent). One does have to be careful here and not exclude a society because it does not fit pre-conceived guide-lines. But to me the more probable reality is that these people are non-dominated and they certainly fit that group of societies better than they do the male-dominated ones, and further, they are markedly different from their city counterparts. These city dwellers may come as a surprise, for it is usually regarded that herdsmanhip is the more proper role of a male-dominated society, and not merchantising or labouring. Yet some writers regard the Arab as pre-dominately a city dweller.¹

However, the some sixteen volumes of Burton's translation of THE BOOK OF A THOUSAND NIGHTS AND A NIGHT seem to have the majority of the stories set in cities or relate to the adventures of merchants such as "Sinbad the Seaman", with a heavy leavening of stories of labourers and slaves that this city orientation does not really come as a surprise. Only the fact that they have remained male-dominated may be surprising, yet it must be remembered from our studies of woman-dominated societies, that societies are very conservative and are almost impossible to change without a major economic revolution which alters the economic dominance in social relationships. Thus whilst farmers turned nomads in the case of the Arabs and the Jews who created another form of wealth other than land, that is, livestock, and their wandering removed the women from the possibility of an effective social contact with their kinsfolk, the position was similar but very different with the migration of white men to Australia and the formation of the pastoral industry which did not in any way alter the sex-dominance of the society, for when the women joined the men they brought their social cohesion with them, and even more importantly the law, which inmeshed in a web of social practice and customs remained the same so that the nature of the transplanted society remained the same as in England. Actually the web of social dominance inbedded in the laws was so strong that the Scots, non-dominated as they were and in an actual majority in, say, Victoria, succumbed to the English type of sex-dominance. The Arab and Jew managed to form a male-dominated society because they created their own economic web which permeated their new society, (that is, that wealth became livestock instead of land which was the basis of the woman-dominated society and that economic dominance required a male as heir for it required a male to handle the livestock.

Whilst a man's heir was his son, usually the eldest, but this is no means universal as we have seen the possibility that the Hebrews may have had the youngest son as heir in early times, all a man's children shared in the father's wealth,

whilst generally, though not always, the women's wealth went to their daughters. This wealth of a man was shared out in fixed proportion. We also find that the marriage present (so-called bride-price), at least the first one paid for a virgin, was split amongst the family in a similar fixed proportion. (It is more than probable that the interest in a girl being a virgin stemmed from the fact that for remarried women the marriage present went to the new family via the woman). As the right of willing wealth otherwise was quite limited in the societies we have examined, what this all boils down to is that twice in a lifetime there is a general redistribution of wealth. With the Jews there was the traditional Year of Jubilee with its general cancelling of debts and loans and mortgages and the releasing of bond-servants. With the Arab and in most cases the Jews it seems that the woman's proportion of the wealth of the tribe/land was half of that of the men, though that proportion would be raised by their mother's estates, but it does not seem clear whether the half share a daughter received is half of what the eldest son received (who got twice that of the younger sons) or half of what the younger sons received. Under the Law of Manu the situation was similar. But the division of the estate on the death of the father, and the monies received at marriage kept the wealth present in the community being continually redistributed. The ideal seems similar to the potlatch ceremonies amongst the Kwakiutl of Vancouver Island,² but more regulated.

In theory at least there would be no really poor and no really rich in a male-dominated society. In practice the scheme was less than perfect, but then few schemes for the periodic redistribution of wealth are perfect. There is also built into the ideas an automatic enriching of the eldest son (or perhaps more accurately the main heir) though this should have been matched by increased responsibility for unproductive relatives such as widows, unmarried sisters and the incapacitated.

We noted that many vestiges of older societies became fossilised in the new societies. Thus the domesticated "cow" rather than the "bull" or "bullock" is the sacred animal of India, and this despite various taboos regarding the milking and so forth. The presence of milk-maids, particularly in the legend of Krishna³ for example, preserves the older pre-Aryan practices. So too the early Jews seemed to have accepted the Law of Hammurabi, whilst the thinly disguised female deities of the Arabs and their early polyandry are well known. This survival of older social practices is the more important and the more confusing when it is considered that none of the societies we have examined are to be regarded as ancient, all being no more than 4,000 years old. Nor can we really point to a male-dominated society earlier than these either, for it seems that the domestication of herd-animals (as such) dates from about that time and all these male-dominated societies seem to be fundamentally a product of that nomadic revolution. All these three societies are now "settled" and have been for centuries, often as city dwellers.

Nomadic herdsman are by the nature of their profession, solitary (that is, excepting family and servants and, it must be confessed, soldiers) and this is well reflected in the marriage laws. Under the Law of Manu there was no divorce. The Jews, whilst allowing divorce, did frown upon it, the Bedawin Arab apparently changed spouses like we change our coats, until there were children, but with the city Arab the case seems to be different. A herdsman, miles from his brother herdsman, is not lightly going to divorce a wife he may not be able to replace without difficulty, and to reinforce this position a whole system of monetry (I use this term in the sense of wealth rather than coinage) and family ties have been woven. Divorce was at first impractical, but later became a matter of moral principle. In fact under Hindu influence the Moslem attitude to marriage is radically different in the Indian sub-continent to what it is in Arab countries elsewhere. It is probable that this isolation of the nomad family also had much to do with the ritual ease with which certain social functions can be carried on. It is significant that an organised priesthood is largely absent from such societies. This statement must be read with care. Under the Law of Manu the Brahman was certainly a priest, but so indeed were all the "twice-born", that is, everyone who had gone through their initiation before which they were "naked", both men and women and all

acted as priests in domestic ritual. The Brahmans were not, nor are they now an organised priesthood in the way we have, say a priesthood in the Church of Rome. The Arab, with the advent of Mohammed, got rid of their priesthood and have remained without a priesthood ever since. The Jews began without a priesthood, and although Moses is usually credited with its institution, it was Eleazar and his son, Phinehas, who appear to have established it, or attempted to do so, for reading the historical works of the Old Testament it is obvious that throughout the time of the Judges and the Kings, that the priesthood was a luxury, even that reinstituted by David and Solomon. After the Exile a priesthood flourished but it died with the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans in A.D. 70, and was not revived. The truth is that a priesthood, or at least an organised one, is impossible with a nomad people.

The consequence of this is that ritual remains simple (though ritual and pageantry is an essential part of male thought, the ritual remains simple). The Moslem may marry, divorce and conduct his own funeral rites, the latter naturally being done after his death. And any True Believer may perform the ritual. Immorality and adultery are uncommon amongst the Arabs. That is not to say that some affairs are not pretty casual. Thus the story goes that a man's guest exclaimed one night that he needed a woman, and his host got one of the slave-girls to marry him, and they were divorced next day.⁴ Regardless of what we may think of such a proceeding, an Arab will, if possible, for the most casual affair, go through a marriage and divorce ritual. They regard our shameless promiscuity as shockingly immoral. The tent of the nomad by its isolation had to be a place of simple rituals, but careful agreements about dowries and marriage presents prevented as much as possible deliberate injustice, and from their point of view, immorality.

Jewish women were required to carry their "Bill of Divorcement" with them so that if taken in the act of sex they could not claim incorrectly that they had divorced their husband and were free to form a new marriage... obviously an easy way out if caught in embarrassing circumstances.⁵ We see in this "certification" of a divorce a step forward from the Arab inasmuch as, though probably it did not cut down the percentage of adulteries committed, they were forced to call a spade a spade. In both cases the penalties for adultery were dire, though in reality in both cases the guilty parties had to be taken in the act, with four witnesses for the Arab and two with the Jew. Both parties were stoned to death.

With the Law of Manu, husband and wife became one (that is also the teaching of the Christian Church) and there could be no divorce. However, for certain reasons a wife could be superceded but she still remained part of the household and was cared for. That her lot at times may not have been a happy one goes without saying, particularly at the hands of her successor. In cases of adultery they were apparently allowed to undergo a severe penance and then regain the household (the man died rather cruelly). If a woman did not produce a son after a reasonable time they could be superceded but this need not have met any odium, except at the hands of the new wife. Usually if there was a daughter the household went through no such trauma for the daughter was made an "appointed" daughter, though such women were not the most popular as wives as the duties required of her son conflicted with the duties required by his father. This was because of the belief that the father was re-created in the son and that son was thus the only one who could carry on the household rituals. The wife was also required to help carry out these rituals and a man married for the simple purpose that the rituals could be effectively carried out. This required the wife to be ceremonially clean, so an adulterous woman would be disastrous. Careful thought was needed regarding a woman's menstruation and cleansing after childbirth. Such matters were common to all three peoples in principle if not particulars.

If a woman had to be ceremonially clean, the man of the house had to be most particular and a great part of the law of all three peoples was concerned with their being ceremonially clean. Again this appears to have developed from the notion that the nomad is his own priest. There is a story in the Arabian Nights of a man

caught out because he could not read the Koran whilst polluted... he refused to do so just after having committed adultery and had not been given time to perform the necessary ablutions. He even lied and said he had fallen asleep and had had a wet dream (requiring the same ceremonial ablution). It may amuse us that whilst the man cheerfully committed adultery and was in no ways repentant, he had a greater horror of touching the Koran before ritual purification. One result of this need to be ceremonially clean is that all three peoples are particularly clean in their personal lives. Two of them, the Indian and the Arab also refuse intoxicating drinks, and all abstain from pork (though the Indian usually abstains from all meat, though this is a modern innovation.)

Whether it follows from this that a very high regard was paid to woman, or not, is a moot point which we need not pursue. The fact remains that women in such societies probably hold the highest social position of anywhere in the world. Even captured women had to be decently treated. That is, if taken to bed had to be afforded the full status of wives. In the case of the Hebrews the woman was allowed to mourn her parents for a full month before sexual advances could be made to her and if she was not married, she had to be given her freedom. Nor are the lurid stories of a man making merry with his concubines with any substance, but are the product of the sultry minds of cheap romancers with no knowledge of the East. Of course men married their servants, they still do in our society, but it had to be proper and according to the general ritual of taking wives.

Polygamy certainly existed in each society, but only to a limited extent. Marriage settlements, as for example that of Israel, could forbid the taking of other wives.⁶ Amongst the Arabs the first wife would usually be consulted and she would be paid the equivalent of the new wife's marriage present. Under Manu the second wife was rare and only taken as a last resort. In practice the whole three societies are monogamous.

Again this seems to stem from the isolated position of the tent and the high place it took in the affairs of men, and perhaps also the high place that woman had in such societies. One did not disrupt the household by divorcing a wife who was barren, or even perhaps unfaithful, when another could be taken with little fuss. The fact that under the Law of Manu a husband and wife became one, a second wife became in reality a surrogate for the first, and it was so with the Hebrews, for Sarah, when she had not borne children, gave Hagar to Abraham, saying, "Go into my maid, it may be that I shall obtain children by her,"⁷ and Rachel in a similar circumstance says, "Here is my maid Bilhah; go in to her, that she may bear upon my knees, and even I may have children through her,"⁸ and Leah did the same thing for less reason.⁹ Note too that the invitation came through the wife, not the husband. This idea that the second wife or concubine was a surrogate for the first seems to have been overlooked by other researchers who seem to have been more concerned with a man's ego needing a son.

The argument of the man's ego is unworthy and inaccurate. These nomad chiefs, men like Abraham, were the centre of a substantial "tribe" (that is, numbering several thousand) and it was most important economically, socially and politically for the chief to have an heir or successor, be he of the blood or be he appointed; as Abram said, "... I continue childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus."¹⁰ For such a "tribe" to exist and to continue existing there had to be an heir or the whole social unit would disintegrate in a civil war... and be it remembered, these nomads grazed the land between the cities of their enemies. It would be politic therefore to appoint an heir immediately upon assuming the leadership of such a "tribe".

Again the Law of Manu is plain and to the point. The assumption that upon marriage a man and a woman become one, and that men and women were equal (indeed in some respects it seems that women were a little more than equal), then it follows, if my assumption is correct about secondary wives being surrogated for the first,

that there would be surrogate fathers. And this is exactly what we find. When a man died without male heirs the family could appoint one of the man's relatives to father a son upon the widow. The Hebrews had a similar custom. There are early statements of polyandry amongst the Arabs and considerable information on the subject that suggests they had the same practice.¹¹ Moreover, it is worth noting that amongst the more decadent Arabs eunuchs are used in the harems for the sexual satisfaction of the women, for these men, though they cannot father children, are capable of prolonged sex,¹² and as no children can result the practice is apparently not considered adultery.

We must conclude that the picture of the man of the male-dominated society as a jealous autocratic despot lording it over a harem of down-trodden and secluded women is entirely false. It is evident from what I have written in the past chapters that the women are not segregated or secluded, and indeed the Arab women has the right to visit relatives for up to ten days without asking permission and without giving explanation. On the other hand even a slave-girl, prevented from going to the Hammond Bath can force her owner to sell her, and a woman being sold may make what stipulations she may as to whom or may not buy her.

Only slaves were sold amongst the Arabs. The buying and selling of women is forbidden by the Law of Manu and whilst amongst the Jews a girl, or boy, could be made bond-servants, this is different from selling, and they went free after a stipulated time.

Incest was forbidden, sometimes within quite distant degrees, and yet we find half-brother and sister marriages, possibly sometimes to keep the blood as blue as blue, possible because otherwise eligible spouses were distant, and more particularly I believe, out of compassion for two people in love. This leads to an interesting point as to what constitutes law in a male-dominated society. One of the curiosities of the Law of Manu is that a fundamental law is often laid down, but exceptions are allowed which if they became general could nullify the whole law. Thus for instance differing castes were forbidden to marry, yet there are whole provisions made for those who do intermarry, and for their progeny. Law seems more of a guidance than a rigid rule as it is in our society. There appears to be too, in the Jewish law, the ideal, and that which out of compassion could be accommodated. The Arabs were similarly lenient, for example on the marriage of half-brothers and sisters which is definitely forbidden by the Prophet.¹³

All these societies, or at least the males, seem to have begun with the worship of ancestors, probably received from remote times, possibly then a planetary god, and finally became in two cases monotheistic and with the Indians at least, philosophically a believer in a distant self-created or uncreated creator. That these gods were masculine seems more a matter of grammar than sex, and more a matter of philosophy than egoism. The masculinity of none of them is apparent (that is, they don't beget offspring, as did, say, Zeus), nor did they need to commit the act of sex as an act of creation. That is, they created, not procreated. A goddess, of course, always raises the question of the demi-urge.

In all cases a dowry was paid as well as a nuptial fee which usually equals the dowry and prevents any suggestion that the woman has been sold. Past researchers have neglected the nuptial fee. These exchanges of gifts resulted in a sizeable redistribution of wealth. However, this aspect is of no value as a yardstick for similar exchanges take place in woman-dominated societies and a redistribution of obligations on both sides occur with a marriage in a non-dominated society. Here again past researchers have been mistaken.

All three societies originated as nomad herdsmen and livestock became the basis of wealth whilst "the earth is the Lord's". Though India has had a currency for centuries longer than Europe, they have not developed a "capitalist" society, with interest and such manipulations of the medium of exchange. Certainly a Brahman

could lend at interest to a "very sinful man" if he needed the money for a laudable purpose. The Arabs have only recently gained a currency and originally the Jews did not have one. My observations that even a Jew is an amateur beside a Manus Islander in matters of finance still stands.

One other aspect should be noted before leaving the subject. Due to there being over 3,000 castes in India¹⁴ I chose to go back to the original law-book, the Law of Manu. Not all the castes of India are male-dominated and unless I had taken one particular caste, the job of trying to make head or tail out of the mass of information would have been enormous. But there is another reason. That is to do with what constitutes a society.

As a society, and in particular the social aspects of a community we are examining depend wholly upon relationships between men and women and their children, that is, the family unit of the community, we have to concede that a society must be an intermarrying group. Certainly an occasional Aborigine in Australia marries into a white family, but one can hardly claim that this is intermarriage. Nothing can be learned from such hybrid marriages that is of interest to our subject. As each caste in India is an intermarrying group who do not marry outside their caste, each with its own initiation customs, its own rules and regulations, and its own inheritance rules, the nation of India cannot be regarded as a society, but rather as a collection of several thousand societies each being a caste. Indeed, even the original four colours or "varna" of the Vedas represented four different societies, not supposed to intermarry, and with their own rules, rituals and initiation ceremonies. Certainly they all held to the Law of Manu, but the Law of Manu had four different rules, one for each caste, and even when these rules appear to be the same for two castes they probably in no way meant the same thing.

The reality of the Male-dominated society is far different from the fevered imagination of the romantic novelists which seem to have been the basis of most people's knowledge of the subject. And feminists who seem to regard male-dominant societies as the ultimate in human degradation, have drawn their facts from their own festering imagination.

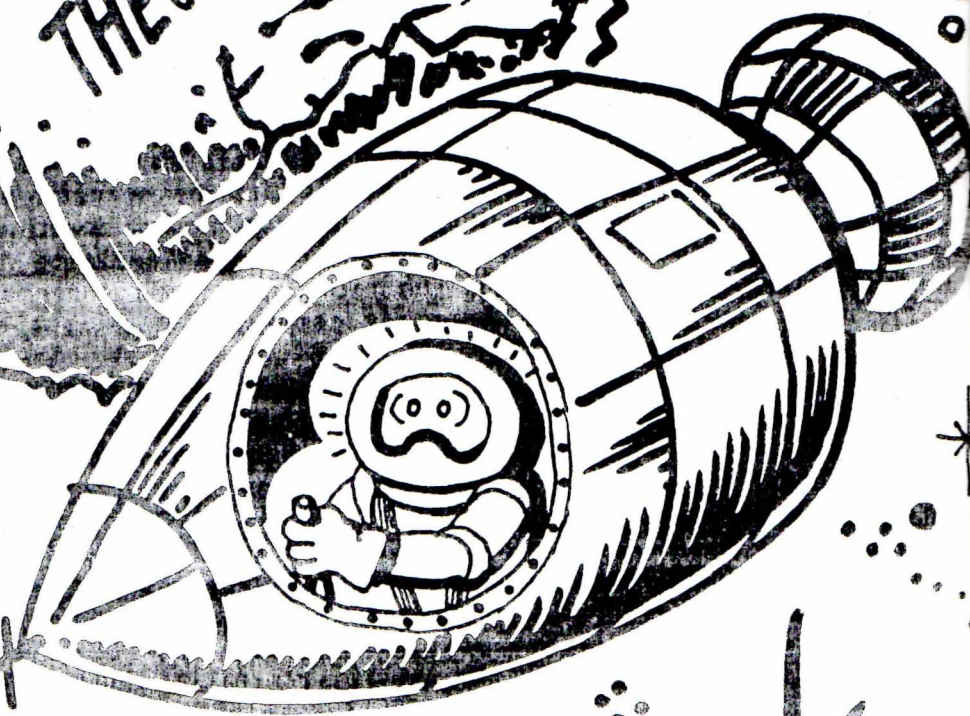
- John J. Alderson.

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5. Maimonides, M. THE GUIDE FOR THE PERPLEXED, London 1904 (Dover Ed. New York 1956, Ch.LXIX p.373.
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13. Robertson Smith, IBID. p.192.
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SPACED OUT!

KILROY OCCUPIED
THESE
COORDINATES.



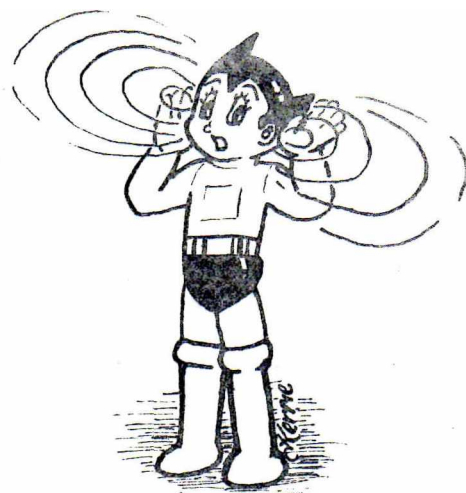
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The R. E R. Dept.



ROGER WADDINGTON, 4 Commercial St., Norton, Malton, Nth. Yorkshire YO17 9ES, UK.

Taking an optimist's view, I'd suggest that maybe Aussie fen are sitting on their fanzines because of the Worldcon; that come the Weekend itself, the Fan Room will be packed out, you won't be able to move for the piles of fanzines, each determined to prove to the overseas visitors that fandom is alive and well and living in Australia... Well, maybe I'll find out with the next, postWorldCon issue of THE MENTOR. But your mention of not all fen being in favour of the WorldCon surprises me; surely, when it takes so much to prise it away from the American continent, it should be a matter of pride, a cause for rejoicing, that any other country should host it? Such seems to have been the case the number of times it's been held in Britain; though must admit I haven't seen enough of the Aussie fanzine scene to enter fully into this debate, mostly limited to THE MENTOR. Perhaps a plea that if there is a fannish resurgence after the WorldCon, some of those future zines might attempt the long journey to Britain?

Though those new postage rates seem designed to deter, I think it must be one of the facts of life, to be expressed in the form of a graph, that as a price goes up, what can be bought for that price goes down, be it in weight, volume or (with the postal system) service. Taking extrapolation to its utmost, this might be censorship in itself, the silent, undetected form; what else can it be but an attempt to make other forms of comment and opinion other than national newspapers and magazines (still at their 'preferential' rate?) gradually wither and die? Though regretfully putting such a flight of fancy aside, I have to say that the cost of postage is actually going down over here. Not till November, and then only 1p off the basic, second-class rate; other rates will still be the same, but still, it plays merry hell with my theory!

STEVE SNEYD, 4 Nowell Place, Almondbury, Huddersfield, W. Yorkshire HD5 8PB, UK.

Given TM 53 a real "coat of looking at" - was a godsend having it with me last night in transit, with various waiting about, to a meeting of local residents of various suburbs, including ours, in the possible wind footprint of planned new paraquat manufacturing plant by ICI chemical giant. ICI had a spokesman there to "explain" and "reassure" - if that's the expert, god help us all. He didn't know, or claimed not to, the height of his plant's main existing chimney stack, couldn't remember what height the government's own research lab had recommended it should be, had never heard of any of the recent reports about health problems in communities near paraquat plants, so couldn't answer them, wouldn't discuss the manufacturing process to avoid confusing us with "bits of the jigsaw" (his manner the weary

patience of a very bored schoolteacher trying to appear affable in case there was a school inspector about). Eventually, through the fog of jargon, a number of very interesting points emerged, none very reassuring. Apparently the government people monitoring the existing output of chemical wastes from the giant (emissions) measured only inside the plant's perimeter, ie what was going up the chimneys. They'd never tested where it came down, leaving that to the local council, who don't measure at all because they "can't afford it", so take ICI's word. It was effectively admitted that the safe amounts of materials arriving on the ground (bearing in mind that ICI is in the valley, we live on surrounding hills, their chimney stack tops are below our house levels) was based on "simulations" (ie guesstimates) done in 1966, including wind-tunnel tests, based on a situation where the plant is set in flat country! It is only this year they are doing any real-life research at all. And these are the experts we are supposed to trust! One amazing verbal formulation by a (govt.) Health and Safety Executive bloke, when persistently queried by an engineer among the audience, eventually turned out to mean that various ingredients of the manufacturing process for paraquat are listed as major hazards, even though paraquat itself (which has no known antidote) is not - no wonder the ICI bloke didn't want to talk about the production methods!

Sorry about the spiel, but having seen the "reassurance" process in live action like that I can only recommend a similar experience to those who still have touching faith that "the experts" are telling the truth and "know best" when it comes to letting technology rip.

To happier topics : TRAVELMOTHER is a beautifully elegant little mood piece, every detail enhancing, right down to the different colour schemes of the Mothers - a little gem. There is an implication, I don't know if deliberate, that the Mothers have been designed by whoever as a means of bringing about reduction in human population, or even extinction, by keeping the sexes apart - if deliberate, it is the more effective for not being spelled out.

TRIAL BY TELEVISION is very effective, frighteningly so, but to me as a "future documentary" rather than a story - a static inspection of a situation without hope or escape, except the very faint hint of resistance implied in the bootleg devices to fool the screen into believing you present. Are the Blue Boxes profiteers, or rebels? Given the name for the device, presumably you in Australia also have a racket in Black Boxes to make electricity meters show false readings?

THE NIGHT SKY I put last not to denigrate, since again a compelling bit of atmosphere writing, but because I somehow felt having the girl not exist was an unnecessary plot twist, a gratuitous mcguffin if you like.

The Soviet material remains very interesting, but puzzling, perhaps translationwise or perhaps simply because things that we wonder about they find obvious: like, no doubt, western conreports in the reverse situation. Why, for example, should Awards obviously well supported votingwise, be abandoned? Why can't more of the Strugatsky books be filmed? What sort of mistakes are these that Kichin points out in Soviet SF movies? Lack of faith to the book? Technical errors? Special Effects failures? Bad casting? Lack of optimism? What? Teasing glimpses into the unknown, it would be nice to have clarified a bit in future issues.

Among the locs, Julie Vaux refers to a tanist heir as being adopted into the clan. From what I've read, the more normal usage is simply that the tanist is the heir elected during the chief's lifetime, because under the Celtic system whereby any near male relative, just about, could inherit. This offered a possible way of avoiding the civil war otherwise likely to follow the chief's death, the kind of situation that weakened the Welsh and Irish so much faced with the Normans. (The last O'Neill chiefs took a simpler approach of eliminating as many male relatives as possible by death: the more subtle Byzantine methods of blinding or castration presumably being seen as an ignoble way of reducing the inheritance pool). In some

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cases, different branches of the same family alternated inheritance: this could be done where MacBeth's claim came in, he saw himself as legitimate tanist, his claim was ignored in favour of Norman-style primogeniture inheritance intentions, hence trouble with a capital T. Incidentally, the deputy prime minister of Ireland is still called the Tanaiste, nice bit of living history, there.

Alderson's article was very informative, but I think his description of the Aryans as unwarlike is a little optimistic from what I've read of Indian History. Well before the Macedonians, Parthians etc arrived, the Indian states were at constant war among themselves, and surely also they must have made war to conquer the Dravidian etc, original people of India. It is an interesting question, though, why the Hindu states of India seem never to have made any serious attempt (barring a few statelets in Malasia) to conquer outside their borders, particularly in the directions like Afghanistan, Iran, Arabia and East Africa from which invaders and/or trade goods so regularly came. Aside from Asoka's thrust to the Hindu Kush, can't think of any native Indian rulers. Another fascinating Mentor brain-teaser.

MICHAEL HAILSTONE, PO Box 193, Woden, ACT 2606.

Much as I would rather keep from criticizing Soviet ideology, I feel I must speak out against one claim made in Igor Tolokonnu's article, that strikes me as plain wrong. I know very little Russian history, but I think this matter transcends national boundaries: the concept of the middle ages as having the underlying principle of "might is right". Nothing could be farther from the truth. Indeed it is only in modern times that such dictators as Hitler could rise to power. The best way I can back this up is by a story told me by a friend; unhappily I don't know the details, such as in which year or even century, or which king. Maybe someone better versed in history could fill these in. Anyway, the tale is of the Earl of Warwick, who took the king prisoner and demanded that the people obey him instead of the king. But he was unable to get obedience from the people, because they would obey only the king, who was the legitimate ruler, not some upstart who just happened to have tried to seize power. Sure, history is full of unjust despotic kings, queens, emperors, tzars and whatnot, but only such rulers could be despotic before modern times. (It is interesting to note, by the way, that our word despot comes from the Greek despotos, which is translated in the New Testament as nothing worse than "goodman" or "householder".)

Michelle Hallett has not fully understood my point about stress, although quoting my words, "where the natural fight or flight reaction to stress is denied" (not dented). The main point here is that stress in itself is not a bad thing. It is rather a necessary thing when one is faced with danger. If one is out in the jungle or wherever and is faced with some life-threatening, such as a sabre-toothed tiger, one comes under stress. But all this does is to tell the body to do something about the situation; either to stand and fight or run away. What is so wrong about the artificial environment of organised society, (amongst other evils) is that one is blocked from doing anything whenever put under stress. For example, if your boss chews you out at work, you can neither run away nor fight him either verbally or physically - if you want to keep your job. I have never denied that a housewife's lot is stressful. Indeed I was talking about this a few months ago with female members of my family, and it was agreed, even, I think, by my feminist sister-in-law, that women in the home have more release from stress than men at work; they can yell at the kids, or do something about most situations that put them under stress. But I also agree that a housewife's lot in the modern world is not the happiest. Indeed I was a bit surprised to hear my mother say that she had felt bored stuck at home doing the housework when I was small, but the main thing that got her through the days was the radio and her deep love of music. In that way she was of course luckier than most women. But, as I said in my earlier letter, it's worse nowadays. At least back then we knew just about all our neighbours. Nowadays housewives probably get less release from stress because of the greater social

isolation and alienation, which is an especially pernicious feature of modern society.

I'll add to my comments on feminists in my last letter with a useful phrase I picked up just the other day. Feminists tend to get their way, not by reasoned argument, but rather by emotional blackmail. That is why feminism has made such a mess of things.

On Sunday I saw the film of MY FAIR LADY on television, and it has occurred to me that there would have been a massive outcry by feminists to ban it, had it been made now instead of twenty years ago. (Indeed it's only a few weeks ago that I learnt that there had been a film made of it.) Henry Higgins makes some remarks about women far worse than those of Kingsley Amis's character, and no doubt the outraged wimmin would have quite overlooked the context; which makes it quite clear that these remarks are made by an arrogant overbearing man who has treated a young woman with blind chauvinist insensitivity and is quite incapable of seeing what he has done wrong. It'll be a very sad day if we end up with such dramatic statements being banned in the name of feminist realism.

I'm a little surprised by John Alderson's remark that single men tend to live longer than married men. The statistics on depression give rather the opposite impression: married men do better than single men, while on the other hand for some reason the opposite applies to women.

When I was in Israel, I never attempted to write the return address on letters home in Hebrew - not after getting the impression that the folks were rather put out by my writing the address on an earlier letter in Greek.

Well at long last the MATALAN RAVE #5 is out.

HARRY ANDRUSCHAK, PO Box 606, La Canada-Flintridge, Ca. 91011, USA.

Well, things are a complete mess around my place. Beverly Kanter and I have broken up, ending a 10.5 year relationship, and I feel hurt, bitter, angry, etc etc etc, and it has taken all my AA and Al-anon meetings to stop me from going back to drinking.

Actually, the biggest help has been my church minister, the Reverend Diana Heath who is the interim minister of THROOP MEMORIAL CHURCH here in Pasadena. (A lot of JPLers go to this church as well as me). The fact is that Diana worked at a mental hospital back east that treated alcoholics like me and manic-depressives like Beverly, and she was the first to tell me to separate from Beverly to maintain my sobriety. Since I have had many counseling sessions with Diana in her six months at THROOP, I had to take her advice.

I have noticed that some of my orthodox friends still do not understand how the Unitarian Universal churches can call women ministers, which they have since the middle of the 19th century. Even more upsetting for some of them is the fact that I use her for counseling sessions that have led to the fact that she knows more about me than anybody else on Earth. (And she likes me anyway.)

That I could talk to a woman about my deepest secrets, and yes, that includes my sexual life, makes no sense to them. It does to me, and to her. Diana herself said during her Mother's Day sermon that she regarded ministering as a form of mothering, and she enjoyed it. And after all, is a trained UU minister with 7 years of seminary training likely to hear anything she doesn't know about already?

So I have used her as a surrogate mother figure to help me thru this last two months, and I have come out of it sober. In fact, I am now in the process of

re-ordering my life, and that includes finding a new room-mate. He also works at JPL, is a non-smoker and non-drinker, so it looks as if we can hit it off.

I wish Diana could have stayed at THROOP, but she came in for a limited six month period before heading off to her next congregation back east. We will be candidating a new minister next month, and if the congregation calls him, he will take up office in January of 1986.

For the next few months, then, my counciler will again be Judy Morrissey, the EAP Counciler at JPL, and herself a recovering alcoholic. She announced this herself in the JPL newspaper, as a way to get alcoholics out of the closet and into her office for help. It is a fact that I feel more comfortable being counseled by a woman than a man. Perhaps another manifestation of the alcoholics need to be mothered, as proposed by many psychologists.

With this background, you can imagine some of my thoughts when reading John Alderson's article. Male dominated society, eh? Yup, and a lot of blame must certainly be the fact of male dominated religions. Now Unitarian Universalism is trying all it can to eliminate this relic of the past, and I think we have done a good job. I could never again go back to any Christian denomination. I do remember reading an article that said that while the majority of Americans do not go to church at all, more women than men do go to church. And what I cannot understand is... why? Given the anti-female attitude of most of the bible, reflected in current church doctrine and practice, why does any woman go to churches like that?

I am curious if I am one of the few men in fandom who prefers women councilers and ministers, or if other male fans find themselves comfortable sharing with women. Likewise perhaps some women might tell if they feel comfortable with men or women as councilers.

ROB GREGG, 103 Highfield Rd., Romford, Essex RM5 3AE, UK.

Unfortunately, THE MENTOR isn't really my kind of fanzine...

The most interesting articles in THE MENTOR 53 were those on Soviet Science Fiction. This is something I'm very interested in though I haven't read much of their work, owing to the fact that I can't read Russian. At the moment, I'm trying to track down some anthologies of Soviet Sf published in English. I believe they exist, but haven't seen 'em yet. You'd probably know more on the subject. It is interesting to compare the way ideas in the Sf of communist countries has developed against that of the West. I'm sure the difference is vast - as it is between U.S. and British Sf. Afraid I don't know much about Aussie Sf, with the possible exception of your contributor A. Bertram Chandler.

GRIMESISH GRUMBLINGS was an amusing little article, but I felt it was too short, and didn't fulfill its early promise. I guess that A.B.C. wasn't really used to the fan field, where anecdotes are drawn out rather than condensed as in a short story. Good stuff though, and it is a terrible shame that we shall not see any more from him in future.

I liked the reviews too, though they are fairly commonplace in all the pro-mags. As for dislikes; I found the fiction rather on the poor side with the possible exception of Gail Neville's story.

I couldn't even understand the long article by John J. Alderson, but this says more about me than his article. Still, if this is part three, maybe I'm excused.

Artwork: large illos of women semi-nude don't really appeal to my

feminist outlook. As for the rest, it was ok I guess, but left me cold. You seem to have a love of 'blank space' where art is concerned. I'm more of the 'cram' as much as possible in school.

(I noticed that with zines from the UK - they certainly cram it in; unfortunately, together with the usually bad reproduction, it does not make for a presentable zine. - Ron.)

DIANE FOX, PO Box 1194, North Sydney, NSW 2060.

The Steven Fox cover on "The Mentor" 54 was excellent, as his work usually is.

Dennis Stock's informative and interesting article was a real pleasure to read. I remember Frank Bryning's stories, and am very interested in seeing the one about the priest celebrating mass - a simple but good nasty idea, it would certainly belong in a DANGEROUS VISIONS collection. Liked the bit about the "Sanderman plug" too.

Igor Toloconnou's article, while rather dry in style, was fascinating in subject matter. I was interested in learning the Russian reactions to Western SF and fantasy, particularly the idea of LORD OF THE RINGS and Delany's TRITON as studies of alien cultures, and the brief list of good examples of "crossbreeds between abstract SF and the rational part of fantasy". I was also interested by the comments on the various Russian and Eastern European SF classics. I still haven't read many of these, and Igor's comments encourage me to do so.

The apparent limited Russian interest in shoot-em-up style adventure and space opera would seem to reflect a comment made in one of the popular magazines recently (I forget which) about the large enthusiastic audiences in America for such films as RAMBO II. The point made was that there would be much consternation if the Russians made a similar film and showed it to large crowds who yelled "get them, get them" when the hero wiped out hundreds of his country's enemies. The point was further developed that many Russians have had direct experience of their country being invaded (WW II) whereas to Americans war has in this century been something that happens in other countries, and which it is still possible for the inexperienced and unwise to romanticise ("Conan in Vietnam", as one fan commented about the Rambo film.)

It was no surprise to learn that sword and sorcery was not much liked, especially if such themes were associated with Nazi Germany (this ties in with such commentaries-in-novel-form as Norman Spinrad's THE IRON DREAM - which was banned in Germany, I suspect for mixed reasons, and would probably not do very well in Russia because people would simply not see the point of it, and would think it either a joke in poor taste or worse, Nazi propaganda!) I think however, that some fantasies would do well in Russia - Ursula le Guin's EARTHSEA series, Samuel Delany's NEVERYON series (though the frankness about homosexuality might cause censorship problems), Tolkien's LORD OF THE RINGS, William Morris' slow gentle fantasies might do well too, and Andre Norton's young-person-seeking-a-place-in-the-world stories.

Alan Stewart's THE GRACE OF GOD was another mechanized-controlled-by-compulsory-advertising-living-inside-totally-automated-surroundings story, but effective in its short length. I'm not quite sure what the end indicates - did Aleph have a heart attack at being contacted by another human being, or did the computer execute him for responding, or was he really a computer programme? Was he the 2nd last human being alive? (Susie's "idea" being that human beings were no longer able to respond as human beings but only as components of a computer).

BEAUTIFUL BITCH obviously refers to Venus - "you may be our second home" is something I doubt. If we're that stupid that we destroy Earth, I doubt we'll have

the brains to co-operate enough to colonize Venus or survive thereon.

A NEW AGE despite its rather compressed style was a grimly forthright tale and easy not only to understand but to believe. It seems less sf than an allegory on the present drives of technological man - deathlove springing from sexhate, the desire to avoid freedom because of its exhausting complexity and "imperfection".

MUMMY, I WANT A BUNNY by Evgeny Titaev was a nice weepie-with-a-happy ending, but the satirical, bitter undercurrents offset the sugar. The idea of having genetic codes of animals and being able to reconstitute them was an interesting idea, and I have somewhere seen it discussed as a possibility - however, an animal as complex as a rabbit learns much of its behaviour from other rabbits and the reconstituted specimen might be somewhat autistic (and hence prone to bite!)

Robert Mapson's question about THE NIGHT SKY, "What did the patients on the planet eat?" is easily answered if it is likely that the planet itself was an illusion, that the patient was really "unconscious" in a simulation booth and being fed through a tube (quite possible because even on a planet with no harmful things, he might still fall prey to a mood of self-destruction and damage himself with teeth and nails, chew open his wrists, gouge his eyes, etc.)

Mike Hailstone has very old fashioned notions about marriage for such an iconoclast. He obviously mistakes what should be for what is, the ideal for the factual. Yes, many husbands shelter, protect and care for their wives. However, some may be overprotective and officious, while a greater number suddenly tire of their responsibilities and suddenly walk out, leaving the wife in many cases "barefoot and pregnant" quite literally. Still others are rather inept and useless due to laziness, stupidity and/or alcoholism, and basically their wives support them. Finally there are some men who are about as useful as a rabid dog or a death adder, in other words an outright danger to any woman unluckily enough to live with them. An extreme case of this was the specimen whose wife finally managed to axe a while back - the details of his behaviour were in all the papers so I needn't give the stomach turning details. My own marriage has been very happy but I cannot thereby make the assumption that all men and women should be married.

Sorry Michael, but I think the "hatred" you mention was well and truly there long before feminist, and would be there without it: at least feminism gets it out in the open like many other unmentionable subjects (incestuous rape for example) and tries to get something constructive done about it.

IGOR TOLOCONNICOU, c/- Poste Restante, Central PO, Volgograd-66, USSR 400066.

Hallet's letter put an idea into my head concerning the mechanics of reviews (there are approaches and approaches, though). I see it as a personal viewpoint (Diane does it splendidly) which covers obvious leads and explains the book on the whole. Like Waddington says, Sf is for entertainment and pleasure. Such books - and there seems to be a majority in the West - are straight adventure stories, and disclosing them is to kill them. For example, MIDNIGHT and TWILIGHT AT THE WELL OF SOULS by Jack Chalker are this simple. But there are a few books with intense writing that could only gain by reviewing because the sum of the parts is more than the whole book. LORD VALENTINE'S CASTLE's first three parts, for example. I think the book ought to be reviewed in full; the review to be considered then a minor piece of fiction even (in fanzines). If it kills the enjoyment, well, the writer slipped. Let's move over. I maintain that a really jolly good review ought to bear this in mind.

Steve Sneyd has a grudge against Priest evidently. Actually there are only two novels translated that I know of. THE INVERTED WORLD and THE SPACE MACHINE.

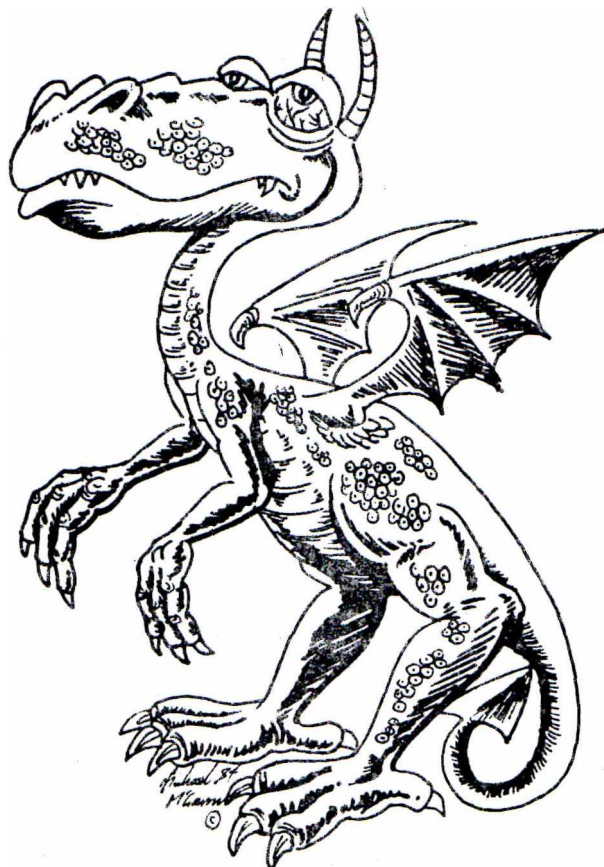
The last did the trick. It coined Wells's martians and came through two translations: that of the author himself and that of the translator. The result proved to be a very close resemblance to Wells. By-the-way, translations play not the littlest role in introducing literature. For example, we enjoy that "dreadful" Shakespeare, and Leo Tolstoy required four successive translations abroad. And no, Steve, Marxism is not such a happy-eyed outlook. ROADSIDE PICNIC and THE GREY ONES deal with the residuals of individualism, with the bourgeois view. They are a kind of warning.

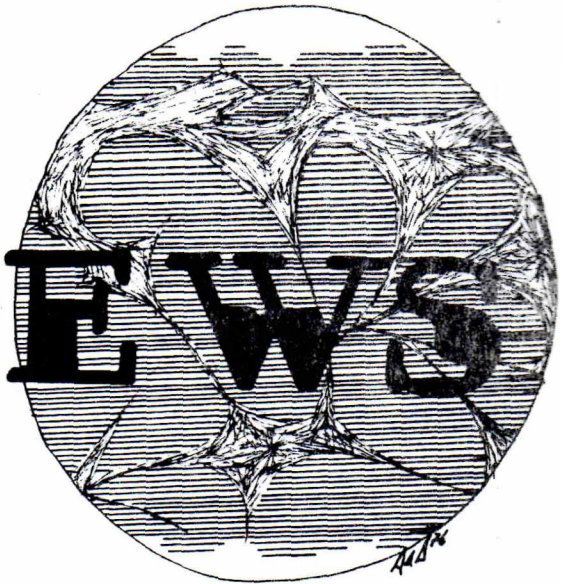
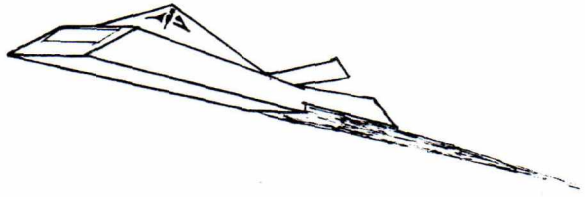
A note on THE HOLLOW WORLD. It was written in 1926. Nobody regards it as valid today; it belongs to the past. What really is important is the narrative itself, the palaeonthological past. Hey, remember THE LOST WORLD by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle?

A couple of typos in last issue: p.15 "Youth from an inferno" (Nazi youth in the future). St. Lem - are related by name or relation to other things... P.17 romantic novelettes by A. Grin and V. Kropivin and modern tales by Caverin... p.14 - split two ways: into romantic fantasy and join the mainstream.

WE ALSO HEARD FROM:

Gail Neville, Julie Vaux, and Buck Coulson who wrote: "Major news from this end - I'm recovering from an 'acute myocardial infarct' which very nearly killed me, though I'm about back to normal now. At least, it proves that I do, too, have a heart, contrary to some assertions."





REVIEWS

FOOTFALL by Larry Niven & Jerry Pournelle. Gollancz h/c, dist in Aust by the Hutchinson Group. (C) 1985. 495pp. A\$26.95. On sale now.

Niven and Pournelle have had some successful collaborations, including **THE MOTE IN GOD'S EYE** and several other novels that have had Hugo nominations. The two writers complement each other so it is nearly impossible to see the different styles.

FOOTFALL is a novel of an alien invasion. When an alien spacecraft is found decelerating from the direction of Saturn, the whole world waits as a delegation is set up in the Soviet space station. The US ambassador is a politician who has been pushing the industrial use of space, however so far his efforts had gotten nowhere - the US was leaving that to the Soviets. When the aliens smashed the space station, killing the inhabitants except for a small group, the nations of the earth reacted. As I mentioned in TM 54 - this will be the 1986 Hugo winner in the Novel section.

Highly *Recommended*.

HELLICONIA SUMMER by Brian Aldiss. Triad Granada pb, dist in Aust by William Collins. (C) 1983. 576pp. A\$6.95. On sale now.

The second in the Helliconia Trilogy, and quite a hefty volume. The third volume is **HELLICONIA WINTER**.

The planet Helliconia has passed into the long summer as it swings around the star that captured it some four million years before. The Earth Observation Station which had been set up around the planet some thousand years before to follow the events as the long year progressed had picked a young man in a lottery, as had been done before, in order to observe events more directly. The prize for the man was to physically journey down to Helliconia and meet the inhabitants. Because of a certain virus, this would result in his certain death, however the station inmates considered the visit worth it. The other plot line, with which the above touches at various points, is the attempt of the king of one of the countries to unite his and another country by marriage. To do this he has to divorce his present queen.

Recommended.

THE SENTINEL by Arthur C. Clarke. Granada trade pb, illus by Lebbens Woods. A Byron Preiss Visual Publications, Inc. book. 299pp. A\$7.95. On sale now.

The articles and stories in this collection are: INTRODUCTION: OF TIME AND STARS, RESCUE PARTY, GUARDIAN ANGEL, BREAKING STRAIN, THE SENTINEL, JUPITER V, REFUGEE, THE WIND FROM THE SUN, A MEETING WITH MEDUSA and THE SONGS OF DISTANT EARTH. Each story has a brief prologue which gives some facts of how the story came about and matters on a bit about the story itself.

The cover is a Foss, and illustrates the first story - RESCUE PARTY. The stories are not some of Clarke's best, though they do make up a nice read. THE SENTINEL is the story which Kubrik read when he first got the idea for asking Clarke to do 2001 and it is an interesting read when one has not read it previously. Many of the stories have been anthologised before - for example, A MEETING WITH MEDUSA, BREAKING STRAIN, THE WIND FROM THE SUN, and RESCUE PARTY. And, of course, GUARDIAN ANGEL is the short story which eventually grew into the novel CHILDHOODS END.

THE GOLDEN BARGE by Michael Moorcock. New English Library pb, dist in Aust by Hodder & Stoughton. (C) 1979. 189pp. A\$6.95. On sale now.

This is the first novel that Michael Moorcock completed, and though it was never published till the 1979 Savoy edition, is much as it was written. There is an Introduction by M John Harrison and the small chapter illustrations are by Jim Cawthorn, though in this edition they are uncredited.

Jephraim had several problems, the least of which was what had happened to his missing navel. It was the sight of the Golden Barge gliding out of the mist of the river that set him on his strange journey of exploration that would take him through many strange adventures and women down the river chasing the elusive craft, and when at last it reached the ocean he thought he had the answer.

Moorcock has written much Sword & Sorcery, much in allegory - this novel shows from whence he came. As to where he is going...

FALCON #1: THE RENEGADE LORD, #2: MECHANON, #3: THE RACK OF BAAL by Mark Smith & Jamie Thomson. Sphere Adventure pb, dist in Aust by William Collins. (C) 1985. About 180 (unnumbered) pages. A\$4.50. On sale October.

These constitute another sf role play game in the form of making you own decision when you are reading them. They are not only illustrated with scenes from the storie/s, but the equipment is also illustrated, and the illos are first rate.

THE RENEGADE LORD is about a Time Lord who is meddling with the past. The hero/reader's job is to track him down. The hero is working for a time travelling organisation called TIME. MECHANON concerns also distortion of times past, this time the distortion is coming from a long-dead planet. The third book released, called THE RACK OF BAAL, concerns Baal, an evil being who has broken out of his prisoning timefield and is set on spreading his followers throughout the timelines. The agents from TIME have to trap the evildoer and bring him back to justice.

My seven-year-old finds these fairly heavy going - they are meant for children eleven to early teens.

STARSTORMERS, SUNBURST, CATFANG, EVIL EYE, VOLCANO by Nicholas Fisk. Knight pb (Hodder & Stoughton), dist in Aust by Hodder & Stoughton. (C) 1979, 1980, 1981m 1982m 1983. 126pp, 110pp, 102pp, 139pp. A\$4.95. On sale Nov.

Some of the books in the Starstormers series have been released in Australia before. (SUNBURST was reviewed in TM 49) but this is the first time they have been released as a set.

Fisk must be one of the more prolific of the British children's sf authors. This series of sf stories are about four children from the 21st Century and

their efforts in the first book, STARSTORMERS, to reach their parents who were colonising a new world, by building a space ship, which they managed to do. They only managed to reach their parents in the second book, but the adventures continued. The aliens in this series are from Tyrannopolis, and the Octopus Emperor is always trying to attack their ship - it seems they built better than they knew and it withstands the attacks.

The covers of the first four volumes have very good artwork covers, that of VOLCANO is a photograph of four children. I hope the publishers go back to the artist.

A good buy for the younger fans, or for that elusive nephew or niece.

HIGH-RISE by J.G. Ballard. Triad Granada pb, dist in Aust by William Collins. (C) 1975. 173pp. A\$6.95. On sale now.

The cover artwork on this pb shows a block of high-rise apartments with the plunger of an electric detonator set into the top. Which is quite apt as the reader finds out as s/he progresses into the novel.

Set in a new 40 storied set of apartments outside London which had recently received its two-thousandth person and filled the last apartment, the novel looks on as the services of the building decline for various reasons and the inhabitants end up staying inside away from their jobs and ultimately degenerating into what is usually called the 'concrete jungle'. It used to be that the city of the future degenerated - Ballard has gone one better and has the whole thing happen in one building.

I think it was about this time that Silverberg did his 'monad' stories; Ballard has not copied Silverberg - he has set his own parameters and followed them. One of the better of Ballard's newer (considering the 1975 copyright date) works.

THE DRAGON WAITING by John M. Ford. Corgi pb, dist in Aust by Transworld Publishers. (C) 1983. 347pp. A\$6.95. On sale now.

Ford has had many stories published in ISAAC ASIMOV'S SCIENCE FICTION MAGAZINE. He has had published two other novels - WEB OF ANGELS and THE PRINCES OF THE AIR. THE DRAGON WAITING is a historical novel in many ways, yet it is pure sf in others.

Set in 1478 CE the novel has scenes set in Italy, France, Wales and England. The world of THE DRAGON WAITING is nearly that of our own continuum - there are discrepancies, the greatest of which is that Byzantium had not fallen to the Turks and the Byzantine Empire took over when the Roman Empire fell. It had taken most of a thousand years but they slowly consolidated their power and at the time of this novel were concentrating on bringing down England. Another detail is that Christianity had not caught on, because of the demise of the Roman Empire, instead the pagan religions were still thriving. The writing is clear and uses none of the pseudo-mediaeval spelling which loads down other novels to the point of incomprehensibility. Even if the reader has no background in history, he or she will find this well worth the read.

Recommended.

THE AMTRAK WARS - Book Two: FIRST FAMILY by Patrick Tilley. Sphere pb, dist in Aust by William Collins. 344pp. A\$5.95. On sale now.

As is obvious from the title, this is the second book in a series, set in North America after what was apparently a nuclear conflict. The blurb reads "The visionary chronicle of the ultimate struggle to rule earth", so I presume that later the series gets off the North American continent.

The more I read of this series, the more real the background becomes. Although the plot is of the standard sf adventure from the 1950s atom war scare, the

sense of the created world built up by the author becomes pervading. This part follows the further exploits of Steve Brickman as he returns to the fold of the Federation - the fragment of humanity that burrowed deep to escape the deluge of radiation and emerged ruled by a "family" that has both the attributes of the mafia and certain secret police forces.

I see this series, so far, as being more of a novel that has been cut up into several parts, rather than several novels ending in "cliff-hangers". Easy light reading.

MEDEA: HARLAN'S WORLD, edited by Harlan Ellison. Bantam Spectra trade pb, dist in Aust by Transworld Publishers. (C) 1975. 528pp. A\$12.95. On sale now.

The idea for this book goes back to 1975, which was when the conference took place at which the format and contents were created. That was at UCLA where Harlan Ellison constructed a course in adult education which turned into quite an event for a thousand or so people. Ellison got together sf authors, sat them down and had them creat a world, ecology and peoples. He then got them to write stories set on this world.

MEDEA is both the Book and the World. It sets forth the process of creation and follows through the steps, from when Harlan gave the idea to the authors, through to their creations. I found the going hard when plowing through the 50 pages set aside for the ideas from the audience; however the stories set on Medea were engrossing. The works of fiction are: FAR SIDE STATION (Williamson), FLARE TIME (Niven), WITH VIRGIL ODDUM AT THE EAST POLE (Ellison), SWANILDA'S SONG (Pohl), SEASONING (Clement), CONCEPTS (Disch), SONGS OF A SENTIENT FLUTE (Herbert), HUNTER'S MOON (Anderson), THE PROMISE (Wilhelm), WHY DOLPHINS DON'T BITE (Sturgeon) and WAITING FOR THE EARTHQUAKE (Silverberg).

I think this volume would be very good as an educational tool in SF courses and the like. To read it through in what was virtually one sitting as I did, makes it quite a load. It is quite a collection, and worth purchasing for the education, at least.

BRAIN CHILD by John Saul. Bantam pb. (c) 1985. 342 pp.

This book would have to be classified as a horror/thriller as Saul takes you to an unexpected conclusion to what, at first glance, might be taken for a story about possession. He peels away the plot carefully so that it reveals a unique story centring about a pawn: a nice, young man who is perhaps 'brain dead' after an accident.

The first chapters are perhaps a little slower paced than the rest of the book which I found rivetting, but they were essential to the setting up of characters, the situation (the miraculous recovery of the young man), and the underlying theme of vengeance. A small town, suffering the social illnesses of a high-technologically orientated area, was once the scene of the massacre of its Californian inhabitants. One boy escapes, taking up his dying mother's curse of vengeance. This is the theme, or is it? The inbred bitterness of the displaced persons and their descendents seem to heavily influence the plot and I found the ending, which was a return to the theme of the curse, a cop-out to what has become the typical ending of horror movies & books these days. A tail-piece to scare you.

The "real" ending of the story was one of surprise in itself. A satisfying scene of love overcoming evil (although that's perhaps a bad word in this book - more like a mistake in programming. Asimov's Susan Calvin would have had a field day in this book, but perhaps that's giving the plot away)... a rightness of the situation. The murders are explained, the murderer and his tool meet death and the poor heros come out better and wiser people. A sad ending, but one that felt good. It was a pity to have the sense of balance destroyed by the tailpiece. - Susan Clarke.

ASIMOV'S NEW GUIDE TO SCIENCE by Isaac Asimov. Viking h/c, dist in Aust by Penguin Books Aust. (C) 1984. 940pp. A\$39.95. On sale now.

This is an updated edition of the 1960 **THE INTELLIGENT MAN'S GUIDE TO SCIENCE** and appears to be what Asimov was aiming for when he started doing all those science articles in **F&SF** and other periodicals.

The book covers most of modern science - the headings are: **WHAT IS SCIENCE?** as an introduction, and then goes into **THE PHYSICAL SCIENCES** (**THE UNIVERSE, THE SOLAR SYSTEM, THE EARTH, THE ATMOSPHERE, THE ELEMENTS, THE PARTICLES, THE WAVES, THE MACHINE**, and finishes with **THE REACTOR**), then into Part II **THE BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES** (**THE MOLECULE, THE PROTEINS, THE CELL, THE MICROORGANISMS, THE BODY, THE SPECIES**, and ends with **THE MIND**). The appendix deals with **MATHEMATICS IN SCIENCE**, and gives the background of relativity, etc. There is also a Bibliography, a Name Index and a Subject Index. Throughout there are B&W illustrations, including photographs.

This is really an encyclopaedia in one volume - and is incomparably easier to read and comprehend. As can be seen from the headings, Asimov has grades the material from the macro to the micro and gives each subject his attention. It has been some time since the 1960 edition was available. This is a good time to get a copy of this excellent work.

Recommended.

THE MERCHANTS' WAR by Frederik Pohl. (C) 1984. Gollancz h/c, dist in Aust by the Hutchinson Group. 209pp. A\$23.95. On sale now.

Fans have been waiting many years for this novel - the sequel to **THE SPACE MERCHANTS**. Gollancz have changed their format for these latest books somewhat - this has a full wrap-around full colour dust jacket. It does a lot for the book, and the artwork is striking and is right out of the novel.

When the novel starts out, Venus is slowly being terraformed - there are colonies in the narrow, roofed over valleys and many volcanoes have been tapped, but much of the outside is still deadly to humans. The Earth embassy has agents there - using all their advertising skill to disrupt the Venusian life as much as possible. Two of the people on the Earth payroll are Mitzi Ku, in charge of one of the spy channels, and Tennison Tarb, whose main job was the interrogation of deviants from earth culture who had reached Venus one way or another. Tarb returns to earth after his self-imposed period of work on Venus, hoping that he can now relax and enjoy himself. However, unfortunately for him the Venusian colonists have decided to try to get Earth off their backs and pick this time to act. Tarb finds that being a top copywriter has some downs as well as up, and that the Advertiser culture on earth has 'progressed' even further while he was away. He gets hooked on a cola-derivative and starts on the long slide to oblivion. However, he does have a friend in Mitzi...

If you liked **THE SPACE MERCHANTS** you will like the sequel. Pohl has updated it, and it reads well.

FREE LIVE FREE by Gene Wolf. (C) 1984/5. Gollancz h/c, dist in Aust by The Hutchinson Group. 398pp. A\$25.95. On sale now.

The subtitle is "A Fantasy", though the blurb does mention sf. The novel is set in the present day in a large US city. An extension of a freeway is scheduled to be built through a run-down area and the police arrive to evict anyone who has not moved out so that the demolishers can knock down the buildings. One of the houses is being used as a boarding house by a man called Ben Free, who has lived in the house for some years. He attempted to circumvent the demolition by advertising for people to live-in, offering them rent free. Four people, two men and two women, took him up on the offer. Before the police arrived, Free had mentioned to several of the boarders that he had a 'treasure' or 'ticket' he had brought from the High

Country when he had decided to come to the city. After the scuffle with the police, Free had disappeared and the front of the house had been demolished. The rest of the novel tells of the attempts by the four boarders to find Free.

I found Wolf's style in this novel much like that of Pohl - that is, clear and concise and very easy to fall in with. If the reader is a fantasy fan, then he or she will find this novel worth the read.

THE TRANSFORMERS - AUTOBOTS' LIGHTNING STRIKE. Text by John Grant, illustrated by Mike Collins and Mark Farmer. (c) 1985. A Ladybird Book, h/c, dist in Aust by Penguin Books Aust. 43pp. A\$1.95. On sale now.

I think most people have seen the Japanese-inspired robots in the TV cartoons, that transform themselves from some kind of vehicle or artifact into fighting robots. This book is part of a series featuring them. I would say that they are aimed for children aged about 6 to 12 years. Our seven-year old son has done the review for this volume:

"The Trans Former books are great, especially this one - AUTOBOTS' LIGHTNING STRIKE. It's about how the Autobots try to get lightning by trapping it to get them home to cybertron. It didn't work but it defeated the Decepticons by making them malfunction.

"I want to read more of them." - Tim Clarke.

The text is simple, and the illustrations are of the modern American kind, so that this book will, as noted above, appeal to the young fans.

THE HORSECLANS - #5 THE SAVAGE MOUNTAINS, #6 THE PATRIMONY by Robert Adams. Orbit pb, (C) 1979, 1980. dist in Aust by Hodder & Stoughton. 164 and 184pp. A\$5.95. On sale now.

Further releases in the Horseclans series. In #5 the continuing story of the attempts of the immortal Milo Moray to unite the Horseclans and lead them on to a place they can call their own - or at least so he tells them. As in so many of these After-the-Bomb novels written in the last few years, there dwells in that devastated land a group of (usually) scientists, now grown warped and twisted enough to believe that they should have the power to unite the devastated continent and bring back its glory as the United States, and who end up fighting the barbarian hero for the right of conquest.

In volume #6 one of the Horseclansmen, after being exiled from his true homeland, returns to claim what is rightly his. Naturally all is not straight-forward in his quest (a knowing stepmother becomes one of his main problems) and Tim Sanderz is soon up to his swordarm in blood and intrigue. And those aforementioned scientists also show their hand in proceedings, which are in reality part of their ongoing plan to destroy Milo Moray and his ravaging bands of horsemen.

Good S&S with lots of action and blood.

FRANK FRAZETTA - BOOK FIVE Ed. by Betty Ballantine. Peacock Press/Bantam book, dist in Aust by Corgi and Bantam. 95pp. A\$18.95. On sale now

This is the book that no sf or fantasy fan should really miss. It contains full colour and B&W illustrations by Fanzetta from both published works and unpublished.

Before this volume came out there were four others; they are all worth the buying for your library. Frazetta is one of the best sf and fantasy artists currently working. Some of his women are rather abundantly endowed (for instance the Giantess on page 68 can be truly said to be 'pillowing' the elf leaning against her ample bosom. Though some of the paintings seem in some of the folios to be fuzzy, I would say that is the fault of the print, rather than the artist.

Recommended

CURRENT RELEASES FROM BANTAM USA:

WEST OF EDEN by Harry Harrison. (C) 1984. 568pp. US\$3.95. Harry Harrison's latest epic. What promises to be quite a novel. Sixty five million years ago an enormous meteorite struck the earth, filling the atmosphere with clouds of dust and killing off the dinosaurs. What, Harrison postulates, if that meteorite never hit? What would earth be like now?

SONGS FROM THE STARS by Norman Spinrad. (C) 1980. 276pp. US\$2.95. The belated novel set in '60s style that follows the journey of Sunshine Sue and Clear Blue Lou as they meet each other and Lou finds out the depths that the evil black science has taken hold of Sue's tribe.

THE LAST RAINBOW by Parke Godwin. (C) 1982. US\$7.95. A novel set in the years 429-432 and gives a picture of the man who would later be known as Saint Partic. His 'conquest' of Britain and his meeting and friendship with the native Dorelei makes for captivating reading.

AND FUTURE RELEASES:-

THE DREAM YEARS by Lisa Goldstein

STARS IN MY POCKET LIKE GRAINS OF SAND by Samuel Delany

INFINITY'S WEB by Sheila Finch

PAPERBACKS NOW ON SALE, BUT REVIEWED WHEN IN H/C:

THE CONGLOMEROID COCKTAIL PARTY - Silverberg, Bantam, US\$2.95

1984: **SPRING** - Clarke, Granada, A\$6.95

EARTH ABIDES - Steward, Corgi, A\$7.95 (The classic -
recommended)

OTHER CURRENT RELEASES:

CORGI & BANTAM: **POLAR FLEET** by Warren Norwood

SKINNER by Richard McEnroe

BELOVED EXILE by Parke Godwin

TIME MACHINE 7 - ICE AGE EXPLORER

PENGUIN: **THE FURIES** by Keith Roberts

GRANADA:

HELLICONIA SUMMER by Brian Aldiss

THE SENTIMENTAL AGENTS IN THE VOLYEN EMPIRE

ELRIC AT THE END OF TIME by Michael Moorcock

UNFORSAKEN HIERO by Sterling Lanier

CRYPTOZOIC by Brian Aldiss

LOW FLYING AIRCRAFT by J.G. Ballard

MERCENARY 2 by Piers Anthony

DRAGON MASTERS by Jack Vance

MOREAU'S OTHER ISLAND by Brian Aldiss

LAST ORDERS by Brian Aldiss

HAUNTER OF THE DARK by H.P. Lovecraft

STORMBRINGER by Michael Moorcock

HUTCHINSON:

GILGAMESH THE KING by Robert Silverberg

DOUBLEDAY: THE DEMON LORD by Peter Morwood

OCTOBER RELEASES:

GRANADA: WEST OF EDEN by Harry Harrison
DISASTER AREA by J.G. Ballard
ATROCITY EXHIBITION by J.G. Ballard
BEARING AN HOUR GLASS by Piers Anthony
CIRCUMPOLAR by Richard Lupoff
COSMIC PUPETS by Philip Dick
GALAXIES LIKE GRAINS OF SAND by Brian Aldiss
ALIEN ANIMALS by Janet & Colin Bord

SPHERE: CONAN THE UNCONQUERED by Robert Jordan

HUTCHINSON: THE BELGARIAD by David Eddings in Two Volumes.

PENGUIN: STORM SEASON ed by Robert Asprin
THE ARTIFICIAL KID by Sterling

CORGI & BANTAM: DARKLING WIND by Somtov Sucharitkul
DEATH'S ANGEL by Kathleen Sky

NOVEMBER:

CORGI & BANTAM: THE TRUE GAME by S. Tepper
THE CHRISTENING QUEST by Elizabeth Scarborough
HAMMER OF DARKNESS by L.E. Modesitt Jr

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