

# THE MENTOR 60

November 1986

Registered by Australia Post, Publication No NBH2159



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# THE MENTOR

SCIENCE FICTION

NOVEMBER 1986

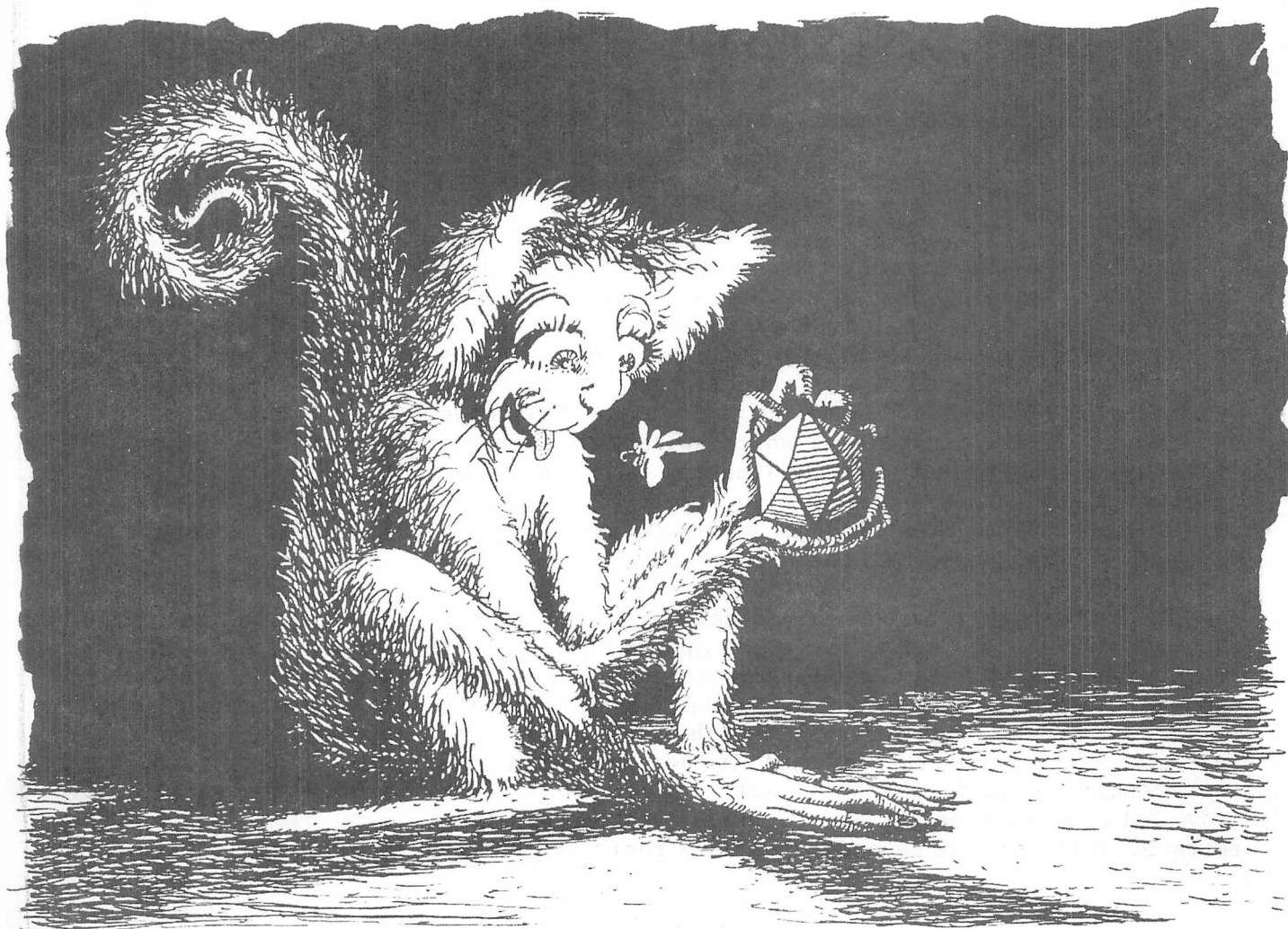
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# WATCHER AT THE GATE OF SUNS

(EXTRAPOLATED BY  
RICHARD FAULDER)

When the first Terran explorers landed on the second planet of Barnard's Star, after swooping low over the vast steppes that covered the interior of the continent they called Delta, they found scattered across the landscape huge lenses. On the shaded side of each lens could be found what was, to them, a grotesque alien creature. When it ignored the interlopers they ventured closer and found that, from where the creature stood, the multiple units that made up Barnard's Star could be seen framed in the rocky lens, which appeared like a gigantic gate. As the explorers flew onward they found that, no matter what the time of day or location, a given creature always stood so as to give itself a view which placed the sun at the centre of the lens. From this strange habit it was given the scientific name of *Custos portusolis*. The Watcher at the Gate of Suns.

Certainly by the latter half of the twentieth century it had been deduced that Barnard's Star had a large and apparently invisible companion that was causing it to wobble slightly in its passage through the galaxy. However, it had always been assumed that this companion was a dark super-gas giant at some distance from the primary. Imagine the surprise of the explorers as they approached the system, generation after generation, and it became increasingly clear that Barnard's Star was actually a quadruple body, with the atomic fires burning in the large central body with a cluster of three small proto-stars held in a close gravitational embrace. While not large enough to have their own nuclear reactions kindled, the

Throughout the spring and summer, when 'insects' were most plentiful, the Watchers lived fairly much a lotus-eaters' existence, and grew fat. Their only enemies, aside from zoologists seeking specimens, were packs of nocturnal carnivores, which also included in their diets the tripod grazers (the vertebrae of their tails had undergone partial fusion to give, in effect, an extra jumping leg) which wandered over the plains by day and huddled together at night for a few hours of nervous sleep. Watchers were slow, but those same strange structures by which they received their sonar echoes were equally able to hear other sounds, and many a carnivore was either snatched up to vanish into the maw, or disabled by the powerful kick from a horn-shod tip of a leg.

With the coming of autumn the male Watchers ceased their eternal circling of Gates. During the summer their peculiar phototropism had ensured that they remained in the vicinity of the Gate, and their easy source for food. Impelled by lust, they set out across the plains, tracking down the females at their Gates by means of the special scents known as pheromones. Should more than one male arrive at a female, there would be a savage, kicking fight until the loser either died or fled. Mating over, the male departed to wander aimlessly, living on his stored fat and what little food he could catch until he either found an unoccupied Gate, another female, or starved to death. Meanwhile the female, also living on her fat, settled down to gestate the young. Dissections of pregnant females showed that the young did indeed start off with a normal head, but it became twisted as it grew in the womb.

In spring the young were born. Slender, relatively fleet-footed animals, they lived by seizing passing prey in their tentacles, judging distance by the curvature of the lens of their eye, rather than by binocular vision, much at the Terran chameleon does. The young stayed by their mother during the summer, and retreated to her when under attack. With the coming of autumn, however, they wandered off to find a vacant Gate, perhaps one abandoned by a male at the same time.

Unfortunately it has not been possible to trace the evolution of the Watchers by direct fossil evidence. They have apparently evolved from their ancestral stock in the 7 million years since the two halves of Delta were violently reunited. Given that their known relatives are jungle-dwelling animals, it seems reasonable to assume that their ancestors also lived in the jungle. Although our knowledge of the paleoclimatology of Barnard II still has many gaps, we can assume that sea currents would have favoured the development of jungle on at least one half of Delta as the halves drifted around the planet. However, as the two halves met once more the high coastal ranges on the east and west margins of the continent meant that the interior of the continent became a rainshadow zone, as it is today. There is enough water in the form of snow to make possible the growth of grass and other herbs, but not trees.

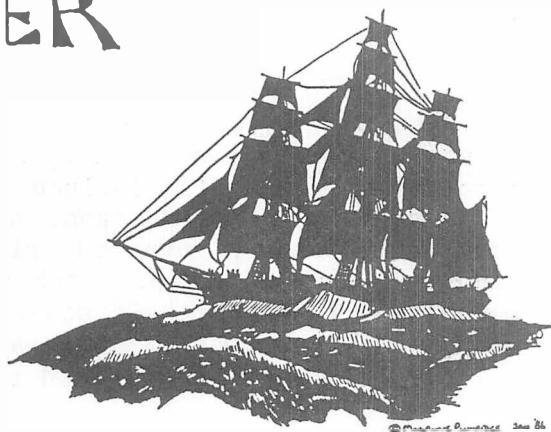
As the continent dried out the ancestors of the Watchers would have to have adapted or die. Undoubtedly the turning point in their evolution would have been the appearance of a luminous mutant in their oral bacteria. We cannot be sure when this happened, but the change to their present form would not have started until the Gates were uncovered to the extent that the 'insects' began to use them as homing beacons for their mating flights. The sequence of changes which would in the end produce an animal capable of snatching its prey from the air with a minimum of effort could then begin.

All these changes have taken place at a time when the interior of Delta has remained geologically stable for millions of years, much like the Australian continent on Terra. While the remains of the transitional forms which led to the Watchers must exist, they will be buried under thousands of metres of sediments on the island plains, or in the undersea deposits that lie under not only kilometres of water, but many metres of pack ice, at the southern edge of the northern ocean.

# THE YANKEE PRIVATEER



BUCK COULSON



I'm writing this less than a month after the Atlanta Worldcon. By the time you read it, you may be bored by con reports - tough shit. It was much smaller than last year's affair in Los Angeles; I never got an exact figure on attendance, but I heard reliable reports that it was under 5000. Mostly, it didn't seem like a large con; there weren't the crowds and jostling I've encountered at other conventions. But that's because of the way it was spread over a large area.

I saw all but two of the people I particularly wanted to see, and avoided all the people I wanted to avoid. I never managed to be at a filksing at the same time that Cindy McQuillan was there, and I never caught up with Charlotte Proctor, who publishes my column in ANVIL. I even managed to not notice her name on any of the panels she was on, and I had no idea what she looked like. My only defense about not noticing her name is that the pocket program listed 390 items, plus 80 autograph sessions (though not 80 different authors; some like Bradbury and Shaw autographed at several different times). Finding names wasn't easy to do, and, after you'd found the name, it was difficult at first to locate the panel, though by the time the con was over I was reasonably acquainted with both main hotels.

We made a leisurely drive to Atlanta, which is 600 miles from our house. The carload consisted of Juanita and I, Bruce and Lori (son and daughter-in-law), Bev DeWeese, and Jan Wagner. Gene DeWeese brought Bev down to our house on Sunday, and then went back home on Monday; he prefers hermitting to con-going. Jan drove Bruce and Lori over late Monday. (They're from Columbus, 120 miles away; Gene and Bev live 300 miles away in Milwaukee.) We left Tuesday morning, getting a quite early start, considering the amount of baggage loading and people loading we had to do. Drove down through Indiana, Kentucky, and into Tennessee, with Lori and I doing most of the driving and Bruce taking it near the end. I'd expected more shifts of drivers; the last time we did this, it was for the 1953 Worldcon in Philadelphia, and the six people were Juanita and I (unmarried at the time), Gene DeWeese, Bob Briney, Bev Clark (now Bev Boles) and Eleanor Turner, and we all took turns driving except for Briney, who didn't -- and still doesn't -- drive. But then, in 1953 I was the only legal adult in the bunch, whereas this time the youngest members are all approaching 30, with much additional experience.

Near Murfreesboro, Tennessee, we stopped for the night at the Stones River Nat'l Battlefield (from our Civil War, for you furriners who wouldn't know that). The park ranger is Charles Spearman, and his wife Stephanie is a fan and had offered us sanctuary for the night, which the elder members of the party certainly needed by then. 380 miles in a crowded car is more than we're used to at one stretch, though Juanita and I frequently take short trips with Bruce, Lori, Jan and Lee Swartzmiller. Charlie took us on a personal tour of the battlefield, which eventually had to be called on account of darkness, after which we sat around and talked and I admired the Spearman's history collection. We may have as many histories, or close it it, but they had the expensive ones I could never afford. They have science fiction as well, of course, but these days there aren't many science fiction collections I marvel at.

Next morning Lori, Jan and I explored the national cemetery that's part of the park, we got repacked and drove around those parts of the battlefield accessible by road, stopping here and there at markers, and eventually headed south again. In the cemetery, I picked up what I thought was an empty beer bottle, to dispose of it, and discovered that it was full. I suppose it's a more appropriate grave offering for a soldier than flowers... Bruce said he hadn't driven around much the day before, and would take it the rest of the way. I certainly didn't argue; he's probably a better driver than I am, since he's driving a delivery truck for a living.

Everyone wanted to see Lookout Mountain, at the edge of Chattanooga, Tennessee; it includes another Civil War battlefield, several tourist traps, and the boast that from the top of it you can see 7 states. On most days, I suspect that all you see is haze, but it's an impressive view, anyway. It's not a large mountain, only a bit over 2000 feet high, but it comes to a point as it approaches the Tennessee River, and the top 1000 feet are pretty much straight up and down on both sides. Generally, no guard rails, either. Lori is subject to vertigo and had to sit down for awhile after taking a look over the edge. Unfortunately, the mountain is steep for on all sides, and our poor overloaded station wagon overheated just as we got to the top, so we stayed longer than we'd intended while it cooled down and Bruce refilled the radiator from a borrowed bucket.

When we arrived at the con, we reluctantly let the garage staff take charge of the car, beat off several bellmen who wanted to take charge of our luggage, and got registered. Steve Francis, the huckster room manager, had told Bruce and Lori at Rivercon that he wanted their assistance as soon as they checked in Wednesday, so they and Jan disappeared in the direction of the huckster room, Juanita bathed and changed for her first performance, and I had the fun of trying to get registered. The concom, expecting a flood of attendees, had set up several different registration locations, for different classes of registrars. Unfortunately, nobody except the hucksters had been warned in advance of this. Bruce and Lori knew they'd get their membership cards from Steve, but I blithely went to the main registration room, fortunately at a slack period. I only had to wait behind one couple before being told that Juanita's and my cards weren't there, and to go to the "trouble desk". It was being manned by Sue Phillips, who looked at me and said, "Oh, you're a participant; you have to go over to the Hilton". And I thought we'd been lucky to get rooms in the Marriott where the registration was. (Actually, it was because the rooms there were cheaper for large parties; all 6 of us stayed together.) I knew where the Hilton was -- about a block from the trouble desk -- and after questioning the hotel staff, I even found the room I'd been told to go to. Of course, it was closed. Another room in the same area was open, and I finally got our badges and blue ribbons proclaiming that we were on the program and thus VIPs.

We had arrived on Wednesday because Juanita had, along with Leslie Fish and Frank Hayes, been asked to appear at a benefit filksing for a local folk club that evening. It was held in the same area as the regular filksings were later, but a \$5 admission fee was charged, the singers got a share of the gate, and the rest went to benefit the club. Everyone seemed satisfied with the amount taken in. I tried to talk my way in free as Juanita's manager, but Teri Lee Hayes, who was taking tickets, knew me too well and wouldn't let me in.

The con was set up at two main hotels, though there were other hotels in the area where some fans stayed. The Marriott had the convention lobby area, the main registration, the con suite (which was the entire 10th floor of the hotel), artshow, masquerade, Hugo awards, filking (satisfying Juanita because she didn't have to drag her guitar across the street at 5:00 AM or so from another hotel), GoH speeches, and other odds and ends. The Hilton had the huckster room, fan lounge and mimeo room, all the panel discussions, and the autograph sessions. Gaming was split among the Hilton, Marriott, and Hyatt, depending on what games you wanted to enter. (I didn't want to enter any.) The back entrance of the Marriott and the front

entrance of the Hilton were across the street from one another; in the middle of the block, of course. Large numbers of fans lined up on the sidewalks, waiting to race across whenever the light changed. I frequently wondered what the drivers, trying to go about their business, thought of all this. This going from one hotel to the other wasn't helped by the weather; instead of a southern heat wave we had cold; the high one day was 61°F. Plus occasional drizzling rain. Of course, everyone had brought their lightest clothing. I should have known better; after all, the hottest Worldcon I ever attended was in Toronto. British fans should have felt right at home here.

With up to 12 competing program items, I couldn't see much, and mostly I went to the panels according to who was on them rather than what they were about. Panel discussions can be fun, but I've seen enough of them to know you don't really learn anything from them, and I'd rather talk to people, anyway. Susan Schwartz and Joe Sanders were both on a panel titled "Fan Versus Academic Criticism", so I went to that; Joe is an old friend we hadn't seen in years, and Susan is a newer friend we hadn't seen for well over a year. The star of the show, however, turned out to be Russell Letson, who donned a propeller Mortarboard while urging cooperation between fans and academics. Juanita and I also managed to get together with Bev, Joe, Susan and Susan's friend Marj Kreuger for a dinner one night. While Susan was exclaiming over how cheap Atlanta prices were compared to New York, I was being appalled at how expensive they were, compared to Hartford City.

The art show was huge, and dominated by professionals. It might have been better to segregate the two, so that someone like Whelan wasn't next to a fan beginner. The nice thing about it was the "retrospective" show, where various collectors had loaned paintings by Finlay, Bok, Cartier, Lawrence, Ed Valigursky, van Dongen, Frank R. Paul, Robert Gibson Jones, H.We. McCauley, Wally Wood, Murphy Anderson -- the people who were illustrating when I got into the field.

My most embarrassing moment came in the huckster room. I'd noticed a woman in a costume from Tina Turner's character in "Beyond Thunderdome"; the Tina wig and the dress of a silvery mesh -- large mesh. Everyone noticed her. But I hadn't paid a lot of attention until she came over, put her arm around me, and said "Hi!" And I still didn't recognise her, until she started laughing at my expression. It was Kathy Sanders; I've known her for 20 years or so, made her the heroine of THE RENEW THE AGES, she once gave me a "Loathe Thy Neighbor" decal which I'm still wearing on a sweatshirt, she's been doing prize-winning costumes for years, and I felt an idiot. I hadn't seen her for several years, but still...

To change the subject a bit, the latest fannish activity seems to be getting arrested. I expect by the time this appears everyone will know that Ted White was picked up by federal officers for drug dealing, though as I write nothing has appeared in print. He was at the con, in between pleading guilty and being sentenced, or so I was told. I never saw him; Juanita claims that we once rode up in an elevator with him, but I didn't know it. No that I'd have spoken if I had seen him; I quit having anything to do with him a couple of years ago. Brian Earl Brown said that most of the fans he'd talked to tended to snicker over the affair; I know I did. Then last week Juanita was watching Indianapolis tv and saw an Indianapolis fan, Bob Adair, being arrested for illegal harassment of an abortion clinic. The exact charge wasn't mentioned, and the affair hasn't appeared in our newspaper. Bob is mostly a fringe-fan these days; he comes to a few midwestern conventions now and then. He used to be quite active in the Indianapolis club. Not well-liked; active. Dick Lupoff once spent an hour or so telling Bob what was wrong with his attitude (Bob had innocently asked him to do it), while being cheered on by the rest of the club members. The broadcaster said he was a minister, though the last I'd heard he was a salesman for a religious supply house. Well, he studied for the ministry, maybe he finally made it. (I did, and I didn't even study, though Bob wouldn't have approved of my ordination.) I'm still waiting for the third arrest; luck comes in three, you know.



# THE SCAVENGER

BY HELEN SARGENT.

I am a successful author.

I lie, steal, borrow and plagiarise.

I also read minds.

Yeah, yeah, I know. I'm giving two professions a bad name. Well, don't blame me. You were the ones to get me into it in the first place.

Remember me? Yeah, that's right. I'm Him. That one in the papers.

"Oh... Him!." I can hear the tone in your voice. A bit sorry that you didn't remember earlier. Well, never mind.

How quickly you forget.

It was a big adventure back then. All of two years ago.

The first artificially induced telepath. Big news! Big publicity!

The born telepaths were up in arms, literally. Most of them worked for National Security, or the Police Department.

"They're taking our jobs away," the telepaths howled, pointing shaking fingers at the brain surgeons.

The complaints were shrugged off, so the telepaths took their case to court.

"We haven't really got any precedent for this sort of thing," the Law said. "Can't you doctors wait a little?"

End of case. The doctors snorted in derision. The public laughed. It had taken the Law fifty years to catch up with the automobile. They still hadn't caught up with space travel. No one was going to wait for years.

Now! Now! Do it now! The chant was everywhere.

The telepaths skulked out of court, and back to their jobs. They pretended it didn't matter any more. But at the meetings of the Telepath's Club, they would denounce the whole business. Feed on each other's anger. One mind would link to another, and begin adding to the dark mass of fear and resentment that grew within.

They thought they were so special. And now science was creating someone just like them. They were scared of losing their jobs to a Frankenstein's monster. Fear that, if the operation failed, they would be denounced as charlatans and sent back to the world of carnivals, dark tents, and pretending their gifts didn't exist.

There was a lot to fear. So when the names of the ten 'likely prospects' were announced, the telepaths hated them. These unwitting volunteers had slapped down the gauntlet of challenge.

There were no real prerequisites for the job. Just be single, intelligent, have little to no telepathic abilities, and be willing to undergo extensive surgery.

I applied, for no other reason than that I could see the advantages of knowing what everyone thought. My reasons or applying were never questioned. Everyone just assumed I was noble. Just like the nine others. I never asked what their motives were.

We were the new pioneers. Society had quickly forgotten those first astronauts, and had been waiting a long time for new heroes.

We were newsworthy. Just fancy that, ladies and gentlemen! An attempt to manufacture a telepath, with one flick of the scalpel. How clever the doctors! How brave the volunteers!

Our life stories were sold to the highest bidder. Our thoughts on telepathy and the impending operation were auctioned off.

Finally, a day before the scheduled admission to hospital, I was chosen. I was the One. The First. The Warrior to Face the Unknown.

The Guinea Pig.

The other nine were ignored as the journalistic pack descended. They were tantalized by just one press conference before I was whisked into hospital. There was to be no publicity in there.

The wolves grew desperate. There was a substantial reward for anyone getting a picture of me with my head shaved.

They tried everything. Sneaking in as nurses, interns, and several nuns who wanted to 'pray' with me. Two even came up the side of the building, posing as window washers.

But no luck. The doctors had ensured complete security, with the notable absence of a telepathic guard. Nothing would interfere with their experiment.

Besides, I was their new toy, and they wanted to play. They gave me every test they could think of, once again with an exception. The hospital telepath refused to see me. Oh well, can't have everything.

Not that they needed any reassurance. I couldn't even guess which day they were going to operate. Even now, I'm not entirely sure. I was doped for at least two days beforehand, and unconscious for about three days afterwards.

When I awoke, I had a headache. Everything was dark. I licked my lips, then closed my eyes again.

"Look, he's awake!" I heard someone whisper. "Get the doctors."

Someone else pounded out of the room, and returned with a noisy crowd, who were trying to be quiet.

"Mister Porter, can you hear me?" asked a male voice. I wiggled a finger.

"I'm going to open the curtains a little. Please shield your eyes."

I struggled to lift an arm. Finally someone guided my hand to my face.

The curtains were parted. I took my hand away. The black faded to grey. I could make out shapes. There were seven people in the room, all looking at me.

"Glad to see you're awake, Mister Porter," said one of the nurses.

There was silence again. They shuffled uneasily. Some cleared their throats.

I knew what they were waiting for. What I had been waiting for. Had it worked? Had it all been worth it?

I concentrated. My headache soared, but I persisted.

"Nurse Compton thinks I need a shave," I managed to croak, and closed my eyes.

"That's right. That's what I thought. Did you hear? That's what I thought..." She stopped talking. Suddenly she was not excited at the prospect of someone scavenging around in her mind.

The gabble slid to an embarrassed halt. Even without trying, I knew what they were all thinking. What will he discover about me?

"We'd best let Mister Porter get some rest," a male voice said. And they all left quickly.

As I strengthened in both mind and body, I became the main attraction. Doctors and nurses would pop in and hope I would be in the mood to run through my party tricks. Do you know what I'm thinking? Can you read my mind?

It became fashionable to visit me. Like a ride on a roller coaster, just so you could say you've done it.

I obliged, thinking that practice makes perfect. I soon found out that some people were impossible to read. They had put up an unconscious wall. Like white noise on the radio. I couldn't break through. They came away smug, knowing that their thoughts were safe.

With others I had only partial success. They too had a wall, but with a few bricks missing. Still others came through as clearly as if they had spoken. Those people normally did not come back again.

When I was well enough to walk, the testing started in earnest. Once again I was their performing dog who salivated to all the bells.

All their tests were hauled out. Word perception, image perception, thought perception, receiving over distances, and so on, and so on.

When they were convinced, they thought it would be a nice gesture to enrol me in the Telepath's Club. They took me, because legally they couldn't refuse.

After the first flurry of excitement had been made, an intern approached me. He asked me to read the mind of a certain nurse.

"I just want to know where she's coming from."

It seemed a harmless enterprise. I sought her out. I had only ever spoken to her once. She was one of the few who had never asked me to read her mind.

I pretended to be idly watching her. I cleared my mind, and concentrated on her thoughts. They were just beginning to come through when I felt some inner, indescribable part of my mind starting to tear. Unbearable heat melted through the rip.

I felt a hand grab my shirt. I could barely open my eyes.

"What do you think you're doing?" the nurse demanded. "You can forget trying that crap on me. My brother's a telepath - a real one. We don't believe in your fake stuff!" And she flounced away.

I sagged against the wall. It was my first experience with strong emotion. And I suddenly wished that everyone in the world was emotionless.

I remained in hospital seclusion for another six weeks, while the doctors and psychologists played with their new improved toy.

Then the wolves were allowed in. The excitement rose again as the public's interest was rekindled. For a while. After another few days, one of the other volunteers became newsworthy.

"Let's see if you can make it a hat trick," the public chanted, and the doctors acquiesce.

So when I left the hospital to resume my life, no one cared very much. There were new heroes to worry about now.

My job wasn't waiting for me. The corporate boss didn't want a clerk who could read minds. Other employers felt challenged by such a celebrity as myself.

I applied for unemployment benefits.

To combat loneliness, I went to the Telepath's Club, eager for some birds of a feather. I stayed no more than five minutes. They presented me with their group anger. And so black and rank was it that it nearly threshed my mind into pulp.

I struggled outside, and caught a taxi home.

"Hey, I know you," the driver said as we jerked along through the traffic. "Aren't you that guy in the news?"

"That's right."

"Can you read my mind?"

"If I want to," I said tiredly.

"Well, go on then. What am I thinking?"

"I'm sorry, but I'm very tired, and I--"

"What's wrong? You can do it, can't you?"

"Yes, but--"

"Whatsamatta? Now that you're a hotshot mind reader, you don't want to know us commoners, huh?"

"Look, I'm sorry."

"Yeah, well let me tell you something. You keep going like this and you're not going to have many friends."

We drove the rest of the way in silence. I knew he was right. If I refused, people'd be insulted. And if I did read their minds, they'd edge away, nervous and afraid.

It was clear life was going to be lonely. I couldn't make new friends, and the friends I had kept well away. I decided to supplement my dole by writing down my experiences. The article was snapped up by a national newspaper, and I was a celebrity for another week. It was a good way to make a living.

I began writing short stories and articles. And once a month, I went to a writer's workshop. It's amazing how a beard and a quiet manner will let the country's hero go unnoticed.

There were ideas galore. I could take my pick from the smorgasbord. And with a little alteration here and there, no one could accuse me of plagiarism.

I know, I know. I'm breaking the moral code of telepathy, right? Too bad. They didn't want me. I wasn't classified as the 'right stuff' by them.

And as for the writers, how can they object if their idea turns up in my story. After all, as the saying goes, there's nothing new in the world.

Yeah, I know what you're saying. I'm a creep. Sure! But don't blame me. You pushed me into it. It's your damned fault. I only wish I'd been able to see into the future. I would never have volunteered.

No, forget I said that. I'm keeping quiet. I see in the newspapers that they're looking for volunteers again.

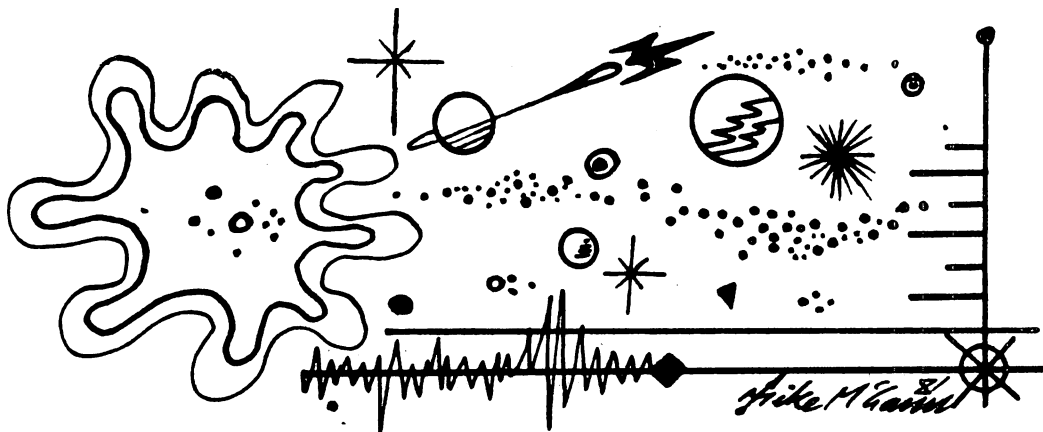
'Must be willing to undergo extensive surgery, for the purpose of foreseeing future events.'

But then again, maybe if I could foresee the future, I wouldn't have the problems I have now.

Where did I see that application form?

Helen Sargeant.

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The Sf and adventure literary magazine ISKATEL is a supplement to the magazine AROUND THE WORLD. It was founded in 1961, and is bimonthly. Circulation is 275,000 copies retail. In the first six issues published in 1985 were included the following:

Novellas - THE SONG OF THE SEA by O. Larionova; SCHOOL OF LITTLE MEN by L. Panasenko; THE BRANCHING by M. Puhov; FIRST CONTACT by V. Mihanovsky and THE DISTORTED SPACE by A. Teslenko.

Stories - TIME TO CHANGE FACES by D. Bilenkin; THE LAST TEST and THE BURDEN OF IMMORTALS by A. Plonsky; THE GARDEN OF HESPERIDS by A. Klimov.

Translations - a novela, HE CAN'T BE SET ON FIRE by Adam Hollanek (translated from the Polish by M. Puhov), a story, I CREATED YOU by Walter M. Miller Jr (translated from the English by V. El'nikov. SF works in the magazine were illustrated by the artists I. Idarov, Y. Makarov, Maxim Reih, G. Filatov, R. Avotin and V. Lukianetz. From a total of 768 pages, 236 were dedicated to SF.

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The magazine CHEMISTRY AND LIFE (a publication of the USSR Academia of Sciences, with a circulation of 305,000 copies) began to publish the SF novel THE MEETING by V. Babenko in number 5 (May) 1986. It will be published in the next four issues. The foreword was written by twice Hero of the Soviet Union, cosmonaut G. Grechko.

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LITERARY GAZETTE in its 23rd April, 1986 issue published a passage from a new novel THE LAME DESTINY by the brothers Strugatskys. It will be published fully in the Leningrad magazine NEVA later this year.

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Issue #4 (April) of the magazine SCIENCE & RELIGION (A publication of the All Union association "Znanie" (Knowledge) with a circulation of 358,000 is dedicated to the nearing of the Third Millennium. The issue has two sf stories, photographs and interviews with the leading SF writers br. Strugatskys, Kir Bulichev, V. Mihailov and D. Bilenkin.

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The LITERARY GAZETTE of 14th May announced that the USSR Writers Union had a plenum of Council on Adventure and SF Literature. It was opened by Council chairman A. Keshkov. At his plenum E. Parnov, S. Snegov, A. Strugatsky, V. Mihailov, E. Voyskunsky, O. Larionova, G. Gurevitch and others spoke.

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The Eighth Congress of the USSR writers opened in the Great Kremlin Palace on 24th June in Moscow. Among foreign guests were Claudet Avis (Europe) and Frederic Pohl (Worldcon) who greeted congress.

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On the All Union tv network on 2nd July was shown a play by Theater for the Young Spectators, under the title THE WONDERFUL ADVENTURES OF MR. BILBO BAGGINS, A HOBBIT, THROUGHOUT A WILD LAND, THE BLACK FOREST, BEYOND MISTY MOUNTAINS, THERE AND BACK.

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The publishing house "Molodaya Gvardia" issued the first volume of a new five-volume collection by I. Yefremov. In it will be presented the better known works of Yefremov. It will be completed in 1989. The edition will be 150,000 copies. This publishing house previously issued a three volume collection by Yefremov in 1975-1976.

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Recently bookshops subscribed to a limited edition of the SF library consisting of 24 volumes. This edition will be published from 1986-1990 by several publishing houses at once. The supposed number of copies is 400,000. This collection will contain the best known published works by both Soviet and foreign SF writers.

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The Tashkent publishing house of literature and the arts will issue ANDROMEDA by I. Yefremov in an edition of 500,000 copies in 1986.

The Moscow publishing house "Pravda" issued in 1986 a book, STARSHIPS. ANDROMEDA by I. Yefremov, in the series THE WORLD OF ADVENTURE. Illustrations are by I. Shalito and G. Boyko. The edition is 500,000 copies.

In Orjonikidze, a publishing house, "Ir", issued the novel THE RAZOR'S EDGE by I. Yefremov in an edition of 120,000 copies.

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In addition to the above, "Pravda" issued a reprint novel, THE SECRET OF TWO OCEANS by G. Adamov (G.B. Adamov is a pen name of Gibbs (1886-1945)). The edition is 500,000 copies.

Minsk publishing house "Yunatztva" also issued the novel THE SECRET OF TWO OCEANS, in the series THE LIBRARY OF ADVENTURES AND SF. It was illustrated by Y. Kolyandenko. There were 450,000 copies.

Minsk publisher "Universitetskaya" issued the anthology of foreign SF PLANET FOR SALE. Editors were G. Anufriev and V. Tsvetkov. It is their first anthology. The artist in this case was S. Balenok. The foreword and the background on the authors was compiled by Leningrad writers A. Balabuha and A. Britikov. The anthology has 447 pages and includes works by Asimov, Bradbury, Harrison, Simak, Leiber, Sheckley and others who were translated previously into Russian. The edition is 285,000 copies.

The Moscow publishing house Pravda issued a two novel book containing PLUTONIA and SANNIKOV'S LAND by VI Obruchev. These novels are about the earth's past. The edition is in 500,000 copies.

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The publisher "Raduga" (Rainbow) issued an additional edition of the book FATE OF OUR CHILDREN, an anthology of foreign sf in an edition of 100,000. Moscow publisher "Soviet Writer" issued an SF collection CAREFUL - MAGIC by N. Sokolova. It

includes her previously published works. It has 464 pages and 100,000 copies.

Leningrad publisher "Lenizdat" issued a new SF adventure novel THE VALTASAR FEAST by A. Shaiimov in 432 pages, and 100,000 copies.

Publisher "Detskaya Literature" (Children's Literature), Moscow 1985, issued a new sf novel, ISK by Z. Yuriev. 239 pages with illustrations. 75,000 copies were printed and excerpt were published before in some central newspaper.

Moscow publisher "Molodaya Gvardia" issued an annual anthology SF 85. Editor was I. Chernyh and artist R. Avotin. It had 383 pages and works by 29 well known writers as well as new ones. Foreign sf is represented by the story TYRANAURUS REX by Ray Bradbury. Print run was 200,000.

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"Znanie", a Moscow publisher in 1985 issued AN ANTHOLOGY OF SF #30. Editor was V. Babenko and reviewers were cosmonaut G. Grechko, critic V. Nevitch. The anthology is dedicated to childhood. It includes both old and new works. Also included are Leiber, Dick, and Steven King. The critic article herein is written by young Saratov critic R. Arbitman. The anthology is concluded by the traditional column SF MERIDIANS, which consists of a chronicle of events in the USSR and abroad. Total pages is 240 and print run is 150,000.

The Riga publisher "Liesma" in 1986 issued THE BEETLE IN THE ANTHILL by the brothers Strugatsky. The book includes two novels and four stories in 349 pages and 20,000 copies.

"Molodaya Gvardia" issued in the series THE LIBRARY OF SOVIET SF two books - a collection AND TREES LIKE HORSEMEN (title taken from a poem by the well known poet S. Esenin) by G. Shah. It includes 8 works. The artist is A. Katin. It is 320 pages and 100,000 copies. Another novel is THE BLUE MEN by P. Bagryak (a pen name for five authors, one of whom is a well known sf writer, D. Bilenkin). The artist is V. Ovchininskiy. The edition is 248 pages and 100,000 copies.

The Kiev publisher "Veselka" issued a collection, THE STAR SAIL, in the Ukrainian language, by S. Kurguzov in 115,000 copies. Also in Ukrainian they issued THE TRACE OF BARRACUDA by L. Tendiuk. This novel concludes the trilogy THE GONDVANA EXPEDITION. 115,000 copies were released.

Moscow publisher "Kniga" ("Book") issued in the series THE FATE OF BOOKS a novel BOOKS OF OUR CHILDREN by M. Petrovsky. It tells of children's literature favourites in Russia, in particular about such novella as THE SMALL GOLD KEY by A. Tolstoy, which is a masterpiece retelling of THE ADVENTURES OF PINOCCHIO by Italian writer C. Collodi, and THE WIZARD OF EMERALD CITY by A. Volkov (a retelling of THE WIZARD OF OZ by F. Baum. Later, A. Volkov wrote five books of the further adventures of these heroes. The last book, THE SECRET OF THE FORGOTTEN CASTLE tells of when the heroes battle with invaders who wish to conquer the magic land. It is 208 pages, 75,000 copies. In addition "Kniga" issued in the series WRITERS ABOUT WRITERS a book THE TRAVEL IN SOME FAR LANDS, THOUGHTS AND FEELING OF J. SWIFT WHO WAS AN EXPLORER AND AFTERWARDS A SOLDIER IN A FEW BATTLES by M. Levidov. 287 pages, 100,000 copies.

The Moscow publisher "Nauka" ("Science") issued a book ENIGMAS OF WELL KNOWS BOOKS, the second part of which is CODES OF MIHAIL BULGAKOV and is about secrets of the novel MASTER AND MARGARITA. The author of this is I. Galinskaya. Print run is 142,000 copies.

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On cinema screens the film THE STRANGE CASE OF DR. JECKLE AND MR. HYDE, based on R.L. Stevenson's novelette, appeared. It was produced by Mosfilm, screenplay by G. Kapralov and A. Orlov; Director was A. Orlov.

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Publisher, Molodaya Gvardia (Moscow 1986) issued two books in the "Soviet SF Library" series NEPTUNE'S HARP by A. Balabuha, an sf adventure novel, 295 pages; and A TOUCH OF WINGS by O. Korabelnikov and artist V. Ovchininsky, 231 pages.

Korabelnikov's book has two novellas: TO EAST FROM MIDNIGHT (the short version of it), AND DOORS WILL OPEN, and the story A TOUCH OF WINGS. Print run is 100,000 copies.

The publisher, Detskaya Literatura (Moscow 1986) issued in the series "The Library of SF and Adventures", a book A MIGHTY POWER by D. Bilenkin. In this anthology there is the novella of the same title which was published in the magazine "Ural Stalker", and 14 stories. Illustrations by D. Utenkov, 272 pages and a print run of 100,000.

From the publishers, "Znanie" (Moscow 1986) came a collection entitled METEOR ABOVE A LAKE by V. Thsherbakov; 160 pages long. Print run of 100,000 copies.

Publisher, "Raduga" (Moscow, 1986), has issued the 20th volume of the publisher's cooperative edition entitled LIBRARY OF SCIENCE FICTION which will be 24 volumes long. This particular volume contains works by Czechoslovakian sf writers - THE WAR WITH THE NEWTS by K. Capek, and the novella THE HOUSE WITH 1000 STORIES by Ya. Vais. It is 495 pages and has a print run of 400,000 copies.

Tomsk publishers (Tomsk, 1986) has issued a collection, THE LIGHT'S SPRING by V. Kolupaev. It is 479 pages and has a print run of 80,000 copies.

The Krasnoyarsk publishers (Krasnoyarsk, 1986) has issued a collection STAND IN THE FIRE by Alexandr Bushkov. It is the first book of this young author and contains three novellas: THEY HAVE BEEN CATCHING BEASTS THERE, VARAYGS WIITH INVITATION, STAND IN THE FIRE, and five short stories. It is 150 pages, illustrated by E. Belmach, with a print run of 15,000 copies.

Sofia Press (Bulgaria, 1986) issued a book, FANTASTIQUE NOVELLAS by Bulgarian writer, A. Gerov. It was translated by S. Baru and is 222 pages. The print run is not known.

Veselka Publishers (Kiev, 1986) has released a collection, TEMPONAUTS, in the series "Adventures, Science Fiction", was released in the Ukranian language and contains 25 stories by young Ukranian writers. It was illustrated by V. Ermolaev, and is 228 pages.

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In 1986, there has been two critical works for sf fans. The Irkutsk University publishers (Irkutsk, 1984-1985) issued a monography, THE NATURE OF SCIENCE FICTION by T.A. Chernyskova, with essays by Yu. Kagarlitsky and V. Gaiduk. It is 336 pages with a print run of 3,000 copies.

Leningrad University (Leningrad, 1986) has issued THE MAGIC TALE ROOTS OF SCIENCE FICTION by E. M. Neelov. It is 200 pages long and has a print run of 5,000 copies.

The publishers, "Raduga" (Moscow, 1986) has issued the novel, THE MIND PARASITES by Colin Wilson, in English. It has an afterword "On Roads of Knowledge and Belief In Man" by V. Ivasheva and commentaries by E. Mednikova. It is 331 pages long, illustrated by A. Perfiliev and E. Svyatsky and a print run of 12,190 copies. Raduga has also published AMPHIBIA MAN by A. Belayev, also in english. It is translated by L. Kolesnikova, is 128 pages long, illustrated by G. Yudin, with print run of 26,350 copies.

#### REPRINTS:

THE FIRST MEN ON THE MOON and THE FOOD OF GODS issued in the series "The World of Adventures" books by H. G. Wells (Pravda publishers, 1986); 448 pages, illustrated by V. P. Vysotesky. 500,000 copies.

THE TRAVELS OF LEMUEL GULLIVER by J. Swift (Meditsina Publishers, Tahkent, 1986); 384 pages, 240,000 copies.

THE LOST WORLD by A. Conan Doyle (Rostov publishers, Rostov-On-Don, 1986); 224 pages, illustrated by P. Sadkov, 300,000 copies.

MEN LIKE GODS by S. Snegov (Kaliningrad publisher, Kalingrad, 1986) contains an article "Asserting Humanism" by N. Zvereva about the author and his works; 607 pages, 50,000 copies. Also novels by A. Belayev were issued: AMPHIBIA MAN, THE ISLAND OF DEAD SHIPS; 271 pages, illustrated by S. Muhamadeev, 50,000



copies.

The trilogy, ADVENTURES OF ELEKTRONIK by E. Veltistov (Litatura Artistika, Kishinev, 1986); 438 pages, illustrated by E. Migunov, 200,000 copies.

IKAR, a collection of I. Yefromov (Shtiintsa publishers). Contains the novel ANDROMEDA, two novellas and five stories by I. Yefremov. Introduction by E. Brandis and V. Dmitrievsky; 576 pages, 200,000 copies.

#### MAGAZINES:

NEVA is issued by RSFSR Writers Union and Leningrad writers' organisation, has been published from April 1955 with 200,000 copy print run. In the sixth issue of for 1986 is the SF novella RULES OF A GAME by Boris Dyshlenko. B. Dysklenko is a member of the literary organisation "Club-81". Illustrated by Kovenchuk. In issues #8 and #9 was a new novella THE LAME FATE by Stugatskys, illustrated by G. Kovenchuk.

THE MAGAZINE OF SCIENCE AND RELIGION, from issue #8 has been running an sf serial EXPLOSION by Bakinian writer, P. Amnuel, illustrated by A. Ostromentsky. Issue # to #10 had the column, "What a Sensation It Is", a work "UFO: a port of residence - Earth" by Vl. Gakov.

Ural Magazine (Sverdlovsk) has published in 8 issues the sf novella CHILDREN OF MIST by A. Busshkov and in the magazine ENISEY (Krasnoyarsk) in three issues - May to June - was published an sf satire THE COUNTRY EVERYONE KNEW ABOUT, by A. Bushkov.

NATURE AND MAN Magazine is issued by the State Committee of hydrometeorology and of control on environment. It has a print run of 93,000. It published in issues #6 to #9, the sf novella INVADERS FROM EARTH by R. ilverber, translated by V. Veber, colour illustrations by I. Goncharuk.

AROUND THE WORLD Magazine began to publish from issue #7 a new novel THE CITY ABOVE by Kir Bulychev, illustrated by B. Ionaitis.

Pionerskaya Pravda Newspaper, under the title A WRITER AND HIS READERS ARE WRITING AN SF NOVELLA published a novella VACATIONS IN SPACE - OR, PLANET FIVE-FOUR. It was published in Issue #45 to 75. The author is Kir Bulychev and others. The editorial staff got more than 2,000 letters with plots and drawings. The most interesting were used by K. Bulychev in the novella. Together with the afterword in #76, most of the good art sent to the newspaper was published. The illustrations for the novella were done by S. Savelieva.

The Evening Vogograd Newspaper in August-September published the sf novella A DANGEROUS LODGER by young sf writers A. & L. Lukins. Their other novella was published in Komsomoletz Turkmenistana in July-August and was entitled INVASION.

Molodaya Guardia Newspaper (Perm) published in September, a children sf novella HOW TO CATCH DINOSAURS by V. Zapolskih.

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In August, on All Union TV, there was the premiere showing of a four part serial the LAST ARGUMENT OF KINGS, produced by "Ukrtelefilm". The screenplay was based on the novel SEVEN DAYS IN MAY by F. Niebel and G. Bayly (USA) by political commentators V. Dunayev and V. Kisin, directed by V. Kisin.

The cinema screens showed a film about the consequences of nuclear war THE DIARY OF A DEAD MAN. The screenplay was written by V. Rybakov and K. Lopushansky; director K. Lopushansky. This film woke many responses, some of them were published in the newspapers Pravda, Sovetskaya Kultura, etc. In the magazine, Soviet Cinema, in issue #17, there began a discussion of this film. The discussion was opened by A. Strugatsky.

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## A LETTER FROM A SOVIET S F FAN

Some researchers think that SF literature traits can be found in the 18th century, for our country. But as you know, SF definitions are vague and what one can call SF, the other one will call something else. And of course, we can trace SF beginnings up to more earlier times, up to the times when folk lore began. It's difficult to say there were, in the 19th century, books written which can wake an interest of mass reading audience. It's difficult to say because I haven't read those books, and what I know is from rare works done by critics.

Better known is the 19th century Russian SF taken from two published anthologies. I'll note that getting acquainted with old forgotten SF is continuing and that the third anthology of this kind will be issued in 1987. However, but for a few exceptions, these works are tedious to read. Exceptions are works by such prominent writers as N. Gogol, F. Dostoyevsky, M. Saltykov-Shchedrin and others. By the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century the works of Tziolkovsky, the astronautics pioneer, appear. (It's an interesting fact: In the last years of the 19th century there was published here in Russia a special SF magazine, perhaps the first such in the world! Regrettably there were only four issues after which the magazine was closed by tsarist censorship probably because of its free-thinking attitude.) The beginning of the twentieth century saw more sf books. Translations are made almost at one time with the original painting: more and more Russian writers try their hand in SF. The spectrum is wide - from historical SF about ancient peoples, from travels into the microworld of atoms to travel to the planets, to mystical novels about Star Gods by Kryzhanovskaya-Rochester (her novels at the time were very popular). Sure, most of these books were evident crap according to Sturgeon Law but there were such which could be published today. For example, a diology THE RED STAR and THE ENGINEER MENNY.

The true blossoming of SF literature came after the October Revolution in the '20's. In a small Siberian town, Kansk V. Itin had published the first Soviet SF novel, THE CONGURI LAND, with his own money. With the New Economic Policy then appeared private business, and it seems that SF was published literally by any publishing house - that of the state, and of the writers' co-operative societies, and private ones. It seems that SF was written by everybody too - V. Kataya, V. Kaverin, M. Shaginyan, I. Erenburg, b. Lavrenev, A. Tolstoy - this is a small list of those who wrote SF at the time, and who became classics of Soviet literature. In those far times, M. Bulgakov published his first SF works; A. Belayev was first published and which later became a Soviet SF classic. And, of course, besides home SF there were published works by foreign authors. Regrettably the full bibliography of those times was not done, and many of what was published is not known. But it was then that Soviet readers read the first books in the series about John Carter by E. Burroughs. Alas! That was the first and the last publication of this author in the USSR. In those years the first space opera appeared. The heros of BLAZING ABYSS by Muhanov are Earthmen who battle for the happiness of ordinary Martian people and to possess the power over space energy. The war was concluded, as then was the fashion, by means of a space ray. To instill a fear into the enemy they destroyed satellites of both planets and only when the leading progressive scientists of both planets came forth with their decisive inventions was it that Reason and Justice won.

In spite of mass interest in SF, fans didn't then organise themselves into clubs it seems. However, one of the then-thriving magazines THE WORLD STALKER announced an sf short story contest in 1929. There was some incident though. Somebody named Chernyak from Kiev entered with a story which won the second place. But after publishing this story readers saw that this story was written by another author and published in the magazine ARGUS in 1913. Chernak changed only title and

added an epigraph saying that if the author takes a wrong turning he will pass it with honour. Editorial staff writing about this case of plagiarism mentioned: "Be happy, citizen Chernyak! The Kiev public prosecutor will show the way." The cash prize of this plagiarizer was given over to the editorial fund meant for a building.

SF publishing was cut down sharply in the '30's. Private business was liquidated, and state publishing houses were not willing to publish sf. Critics met each new book negatively and often was not unjustified. A. Belayev fared especially badly, but he continued to work in sf till 1942 in spite of the unkind attitude. He died from hunger in 1942 in the town of Puskin near Leningrad which was then occupied by fascists. His body lay all winter in a small forgotten church, and only in spring was he interred to earth.

A new blossoming of SF literature came in the end of the '50's and the beginning of the '60's. It seems it was the sign of the times! What has been treated recently as SF became a reality. And so pale and niggardly look on the background of the time works of some writers like V. Nemtosov, V. Ohotnikov whose heroes enthusiastically invented televisors, new machines, even building combines. Lately critics aptly named such literature 'a wingless dream's literature'. The bright landmark became the publication in a magazine of the novel ANDROMEDA by I. Yefremov which coincided with the first sputnik flight. At this time there came to SF some ably talented writers: the brothers Strugatskys, A. Dneprov, I. Varshavsky, G. Gor, S. Gansovsky and many, many others. (Strugatskys tell how they began to write. They were walking with their wives and upbraided the contemporary works. Somebody said it is easy to scold, but let themselves just try to write so. We can do better, was the answer. A bet was taken, no retreat possible. and they sat at a table and so appeared their first novel, THE LAND OF PURPLE CLOUDS). And again the pages were full of local and foreign science fiction. A magazine TEHNIKA-MOLODIOJI organised a few contests, and also between socialistic countries. Later, in the 70's this magazine conducted art contests and put on an exhibition. (An interesting fact: a magazine ZNANIA-SILA which discovered the brothers Strugatskys for the reading public, had at the end of the fifties put a further appeal in one issue with R. Heinlein's THE LONG WATCH under the title LET'S GET TO KNOW EACH OTHER BETTER to the editors, publishers, journalists and writers who collaborated with THE MAGAZINE OF FANTASY & SCIENCE FICTION, SF QUARTERLY, and POSSIBLE WORLDS OF SF, offering to exchange SF publications. It would be interesting to find out what became of this address? I ask because I did not see the results - a pity!

In the middle of the 60's we find a reference to the appearance of the first sf clubs. They appeared in big cities: Moscow, Harkov, Sverdlovsk, Baku, etc. Regrettably clubs exist with small interest in contacts, associations and by the beginning of the 70's disappeared altogether. At this time, a new generation of sf readers grew up educated on sf books of the 'new golden age of sf'. They form the second wave in creating clubs, though not numerous at first. They aren't close physically and correspond and travel to each other. They are not content with mere discussion of SF literature; they collect bibliographies, write sf stories and criticize, propagandise sf, etc. Of course, the transition from first to second wave was not abrupt, the difference means only a change in activity and outlook - from mere talking to a more concrete help for the field. The third wave is essentially the same but the participants are more numerous. In the beginnings of the '80's, there was not a day when there was no news of a new sf club being born. The central cosmol press also helped. In a few publications, some interesting clubs were listed, and their addresses given. In the autumn of 1981, the Perm sf club "Rifley" organised the first convention gathering representatives of 8 to 10 clubs. The most active clubs in Perm, Abakan, Sverdlovsk, Tbilisi, Volgograd, Rostov, Kaliningrad etc. began the work with a uniting movement which afterwards received the name "Great Right". Up to this time, there were about ten conventions. The biggest was in Sverdlovsk in 1983 and awarded the "Aelita" prize, and gathered together 34 clubs. As a result of this meeting, there was voted a joint appeal to sf fans. One can say

that by the middle of the '70's the 'new golden age' was over. Not as much SF was published as in the '60's, and such a feeling was present that there became less and less. However, the year 1986 brought hope with it - though books are still scarce, magazines have an unusual crop of sf material, both Soviet and foreign. So perhaps we face a new production boom. It's long overdue! If in the '60's many new writers came to the field, in the '70's we could count them on our fingers, and in the '80's they are extremely few. In spite of that there are many talented young writers. The Western fan knows only one of them regrettably... Oleg Korabelnikov. His novella THE BIRD'S TOWER is included into a recent anthology of Soviet fiction published by McMillan.

There is much I haven't said in this Letter - There are specific things I haven't mentioned - sf books, old and recent, writers, old and young, interesting revelations about sf clubs and mass media, fandom's folklore, or survey of 'unobvious sf' (These are those which are published without sf marking or are outright mainstream with sfnal elements.) etc. A separate treatment would be required with the theme of the decline of the club movement in the last two years. There were no meetings: some clubs came apart, correspondence between them dwindled to a trickle... but it's time, alas to finish our conversation. It's a pity that we know each other so little. I hope that this letter will help you to understand a little as to what has happened here at this end of the world. I would like to add that as you do, we also like good sf and hate bad ones, want to know more about the world of science fiction and fandom.

Let's then associate, correspond, exchange news. There follows the addresses of some of the most active fans in the USSR:

22095, Minsk-95, post box 32, Anikeev Vladimir I.  
662616, Abakan, st. Krylova 90-72. Borisov Vlaadamir I.  
620219, Sverdlovsk, GSP - 353, st. 8-marta 33-v, magazine "Ural Stalker", sek. "My friend = SF". Bugrov Vitaly I.  
270020, Odessa, st. L. Tolstoi 13 - 23, Bufalenko Vladimir O.  
113162, Moscow, st. Lusinovskaya 72 - 221, Gopman Vladimir L.  
380052, Tbilisi, Vazisubani, 4mr, 2kv. 9 korp. kv4,  
Vahtangishvili I.  
614107, Perm - 107, post box 4437, Lukashin Alexandr P.  
400066, Volgograd-66, Central PO, Poste restante, Zavgorodny  
Boris A.  
400066, Volgograd-66, Central PO, Poste Restante, Tolokonnikov  
Igor  
344091, Rostov-Don, pr. Stachi 217/2 - 35, Pavlovskty Igor

We await your letters, friends!

Sincerely yours Boris Zavgorodny  
(Translated by I. Toloconnicov)



# The Lonely Bunyip

## by Greg Oates

I stood by the side of the road and watched the car disappear down the hill and around the bend. I didn't even bother cursing the driver. In a way, after all, it had been all my own fault. A long-haired, bearded hitch hiker, wearing scruffy denims and a gold earring should know better than to argue with someone who's been good enough to give him a lift. Even if that someone turns out to be stupid, bigoted and narrow-minded. Especially if that someone decides to hold forth to a captive audience on the touchy subjects of war and religion. Well, next time I'd know better. I wouldn't argue. I'd sit in acquiescent silence. That way, I'd end up in some town or other, instead of beside the road in the middle of nowhere.

It was late in the afternoon. I knew that if I sat and waited, eventually, someone else would come along. And maybe my appearance wouldn't be too much of a deterrent. Maybe I'd get a lift to the nearest town, wherever and whatever that was. But then I realised I honestly didn't give a damn whether I got a lift or not.

There was silence all round me, the still of the bush that after a while was not silent, but filled with innumerable small noises on the edge of awareness.

I put my case down, lumped the sleeping bag beside me, and sat on the gravel. I let the serenity and silence wash over me. The anger that had been with me when I'd got out of the car dissipated. For the poor, middle-aged sod driving it, I felt no longer antipathy but pity. He had been such a fool, such a narrow-minded idiot that I had been unable to keep wisely silent. So he had stopped the car and told me to get out and walk. He had told me quite a few other things too, but most of them I didn't care to remember. 'Scruffy yobbo queer' was one phrase I didn't care for at all.

I suppose I must have sat there for nearly half an hour before I realised that there was a gravel side-road leading off into the bush. Roads weren't made without reason; perhaps this one led to a farm. Something in me was averse to the idea of sitting and trying for another lift. I felt I'd spend a night in the open rather than find myself passenger to another bigot. I didn't have any deadline to get where I was going. As a matter of fact, I didn't even have anywhere definite to go...

So I humped the bundle containing the sleeping bag onto my back, picked up my case and started off towards the gravel road. As I reached the corner I was astonished to see the road actually had a name. Great Black Bunyip Walk.

Great Black Bunyip Walk? Well, I ask you! It was irresistible. I blinked once or twice and then started along the track. It was quite wide enough for even a vehicle, had I had one, and in reasonably good condition. Most likely it had been graded within the past couple of months. The bush stretched away in both directions and the track twisted and turned between the trees. I walked for nearly half an hour, while the sky dulled overhead and the air chilled. Ahead of me the road forked and there was a dusty sign. To the left was Nerrilyup, to the right Deep Black Bunyip Pool and Willow Spring. As the distances were fifty kilometres and half a kilometre respectively, I had no difficulty making up my mind which way to go. And I have to admit the bunyip concept had me fascinated.

Less than ten minutes later, I found myself by a deep pool; isolated and unexpected among rocks and trees. In spite of everything, I was not really prepared for such a sight and for a few moments simply stared open-mouthed.

I had come down a slope, and the deep, green of the pool lay before me. Under the shadows of the towering trees, the water was almost black on the far side. It had to be nearly a hundred feet across, roughly circular, and, from the rocks to my left I heard the trickling of a creek. Investigating, I found the source of the pool; a spring welling from the rocks and running down the slope to gather in the deep, natural depression. This, then, was Deep Black Bunyip Pool. I dipped my fingers in the water and drank appreciatively. If ever water could be compared to wine, then this was it!

It had been a long, hot day. Though the air had cooled a little, I still felt hot and sweaty. Lacking company, I stripped to my skin and went to the edge of the pool. My green wavering reflection looked up at me and I slipped easily into the water. It was cold, like iced velvet as I struck out towards the centre of the pool. Idly, I lay on my back and looked up at the sky. It was a pale greeny blue, and a few deep stars were beginning to show, sparkling against the infinite deep. Later, I knew, there would be a narrow silver crescent moon.

Beautiful. It suddenly struck me as I lay there that this was a place of beauty but rarely visited. A sense of loneliness began to steal over me. Vague disquiet, but without any undercurrent of fear. I made for the shore to dry and dress myself. When I had found an area of rock and bare soil, I made a small fire. It was quite dark by then and I sat huddled in my jacket and sleeping bag by the fire, looking out across the now black pool. The hot coffee mug was comforting in my hands but the sense of loneliness, which I had lost while I'd been busy, presently stole back again.

Lonely.

I don't think I'd ever really felt lonely before. I was a loner by choice, and although I enjoyed the company of other people I did not miss it when it was not there. If I'd woken one sunny day and found myself the only person in the world, I doubt that it would really have bothered me overmuch. But here, sitting by the deep pool fed by the Willow Spring, I felt an acute need for company. Foolish, I thought to myself; there probably wasn't another human being for miles around. I'd just have to survive the night alone. I leaned forward to put some more branches on the fire, and out of the corner of my eye, caught a glimpse of movement.

Not ten feet away from me, something large and black and dripping with water was rising from the edge of the pool.

I blinked, gasped, and dropped the branches. Then I hurriedly grabbed a blazing brand, leapt to my feet and backed off. Loneliness had disappeared, ousted roughly by fear. Had I been that desperate for company?

The blackness from the pool advanced slowly, resolving itself into a roughly humanoid shape. It was big! Oh man, was it big! Twice my height and I'm not exactly a little man. Bulky with it, and with arms that would have made a sumo wrestler green. Its eyes were red, above an enormous mouth which opened to show triple ranks of pointed white teeth. Water, or more likely slaver, dripped to the ground.

I wasn't quite a gibbering wreck, or at least I like to think that I wasn't. But when that fearsome mouth spoke I nearly dropped on the spot.

"You swam in my pool."

"Ah...yes..." I coughed to clear my throat. "Yes, I did. Did I... disturb you?"

"No." The voice was deep and resonant. "I rise at sunset in any case." The creature stopped and dropped to the ground between my fire and the pool. "Why are you afraid of me?"

"Afraid? Me? Well..."

It laughed, a noisy raucous sound, like a mob of demented kookaburras.

"Most people are afraid of bunyips." There was almost regret in its voice. "They're afraid, and they try to run away, and we never even get the chance to talk."

I hesitated and then moved back towards the fire; but I still held the burning brand in my grip.

"You want to... talk?"

"Why not? It's lonely being a bunyip. Most people don't even believe in us, and those who do, believe the worst of us. We bunyips have a very undeserved reputation for nastiness."

"I... can't imagine why." I put the branch in the fire and sat down again. "Are you hungry?"

"Yes-s-s-s." Sibilance, almost a chuckle. "But I'll have a snack... later. It's too early yet. I'd rather talk."

"Talk? Hmm... yes..." I frowned. "How come you can talk, and in English? I never even knew bunyips could actually speak."

"Most people don't know very much about us. We're a much maligned race. And people who meet us seldom talk about it afterwards." It sighed, and an enormous tear fell from one red eye.

"Do you want a drink of coffee then?"

"No." Scornfully. "Bunyips don't drink coffee." I decided I wasn't going to ask what they did drink.

"Well, you won't mind if I have one, will you?" I filled my mug again and squatted across the fire from the monster. No-one was ever going to believe this, I told myself. I'd be accused of tripping or hallucinating, in spite of the fact that I'd never touched drugs in my life. People just didn't believe in bunyips nowadays. Most likely even the person who'd named the road and the pool had done it for effect and not for reality.

"Why did you come here?" the bunyip asked, and I pulled a wry face.

"I was hitch-hiking, but I had a - disagreement with the driver who'd picked me up. So he told me I could get out and walk. It was late, and I thought if I went down the road I might come to a house or a farm. Instead I arrived here."

"I see, I see." The monster wriggled to ease its bulk on the stony ground. "Are you going anywhere in particular?"

"Not really. Just having a long and idle holiday."

"Oh. So you have friends you will visit? A family to return to afterwards?"

I opened my mouth to say there was no-one, but caught a curious eager gleam in those red eyes and instead took another mouthful of coffee. The creature, that after its first horrifying impact, had seemed almost amiable, had begun again to take on a sinister aspect. Then I said carefully:

"Actually, I am due back next week. My... brother is expecting a telephone call from me tomorrow. From Nerrilyup."

The faint gurgling sound from the creature could have been either amusement or disappointment.

"You'll be off again in the morning then?"

"Yes." I hoped so anyway. "He - knew I'd be along the main road either today or tomorrow. He's got friends in Nerrilyup and let them know to expect me sometime. I'll drop in on them on my way."

"Oh." The bunyip made another gurgling sound. It seemed to have huddled in on itself at my words. For a moment, I felt almost sorry for it. "I... was hoping you'd be around for a while. It's lonely out here." It sniffed.

"Sorry." Another lie. But my feeling of uneasiness had grown, if anything. It was cold, and I put some more wood on the fire. The last of my stock. If I wanted any more, I realised suddenly, I'd have to get up, leave that bright warmth and go forage for more. The bunyip sat and regarded me thoughtfully, wistfully.

"Would you like to go for a swim?"

"No!"

"Oh." It drooped in misery. "Sometimes... people do like to go for a swim. At night." It sniffed again. "Nobody's been swimming in my pool for ages. Only you."

"Only me. Oh. Well, it is a little out of the way. Do you like people swimming in your pool?"

"Oh yes. At night time anyway. During the day it's not much use. I'm asleep then. Bunyips only come out at night; did you know that?"

"I - thought so. But I wasn't sure."

"And people only swim here in the daytime." Another tear squeezed itself from one red eye and splashed onto the ground. "I'm so-o-o lonely."



And hungry too, I'll bet, I told myself as I watched it. But it was no longer terrifying. That is not to say I wasn't still scared of it. Lonely or not, it was big enough and strong enough to make short work of me if it felt so inclined. I pulled the sleeping bag up around myself.

"Are you tired?" There was something approaching concern in that inhuman voice.

"A bit." Not that I was likely to sleep, but if I could convince it that there was no conversation forthcoming it might, just might decide to leave me. Unless it had plans of making me that 'snack' it had mentioned earlier.

"Oh." It started to rise, stretched and towered over me. "I'll leave you then. I'm going to have something to eat." Me? "Goodbye."

"Goodbye." I think I managed to get the word out; I'm honestly not sure. When the creature slid noiselessly into the deep black waters I hurriedly jumped up and gathered a great pile of branches and stacked them near me. In spite of my words, I had no intentions whatsoever of sleeping. Not that night. I kept the fire fed, about as big as it had been when the bunyip had left me, not daring to let it die down. And certainly not daring to relax and drift into the sleep I felt waiting to claim me. The idea of packing my belongings and making a run for it occurred to me, but then I realised I had far more chance of getting thoroughly lost in the dark, so I decided it had to be the lesser of two evils to stay where I was. Fortunately I had recently bought a new jar of coffee, and there was plenty of water in the spring. I spent most of the night nose deep in the bag, watching the fire - and beyond it - and drinking black coffee. But eventually, around three or so in the morning, my determination slipped and I fell into a doze, the empty coffee mug dropping from my grasp as I went down into a deep black dream.

It was a dream of loneliness, of sheer panic as I ran through featureless corridors and up and down flights of grey steps, pursued by something; nameless and horrible.

I woke to darkness, to the glowing embers of my dying fire, and a colossal darkness beyond the fire. A blackness that moved, showing glowing red eyes and white teeth in the faint moonlight. I think I screamed, and was jerked back to full awareness momentarily before I fell down into darkness again. Infinite shame for a grown man to admit to fainting.

The second waking was to the bright flames of my renewed fire, and a soft velvet touch on my forehead. The monstrous creature from the pool loomed over me, a coffee mug of clear spring water held in one huge sharp-clawed hand. I blinked and took the cup, drinking deeply and staring up at it. Whatever I had anticipated, this wasn't it.

"You were having a nightmare. Crying out. Are you in pain?" There was an odd, unhuman gentleness in the voice. I struggled to sit up, pushing thoughtlessly at the restraining arm... or whatever it was. The bunyip moved away from me, resuming its earlier position on the other side of the fire: the fire that it had rebuilt for me. I sat for quite some time, clutching at the mug till my hands stopped shaking.

"I'm alright now." It was an effort to force my voice to be level and hard. "You... brought some more wood for the fire."

"It seemed to comfort you, to have it there." There was an edge of mockery in the voice. "As you tried to stay awake all night to keep it burning." A pause. "Are humans then so afraid of buniyps?"

"I... didn't think so. But then I'd never met a bunyip before."

"Nor I a human being." It pulled a face, grotesque on its monster expression. "I.... told you we were much maligned."

"I ... thought you were planning to make a meal of me."

Again, the raucous kookaburra laugh. "Certainly not."

I put the cup down and rested my chin on my hands and looked at the creature thoughtfully.

"I'm sure I must be dreaming. Bunyips don't exist. And if you do, they eat people."

"Eat people!" A softer laugh this time. "No, not that. Certainly not that." But the laugh was almost a sob.

"Then tell me."

"Tell you?"

"Why did you want me to stay? Is it just because I'm the first human being you've met? Or is there some other reason?"

The glowing red eyes blinked and lowered. The creature huddled into itself and seemed to shiver and grow smaller.

"There is ... a legend. You... will laugh at me."

"No. Of course not."

"In the Dreams before the Dreamtime; before the awakening of Man..." The voice was sonorous and mesmeric. I sat very still. "In that distant age, the bunyips ruled the world. But one of our forefathers did an evil thing. Unspeakably evil. And the gods of that time punished him. Not only him, but all his descendents for ever. We were made ugly, repellent and horrifying, so that humans would hate and fear us. The myths about us told of our wickedness, how we should be feared and shunned. But it is not true." The red eyes opened and looked across at me and the bunyip continued, "If any one of us is able, without magic or deceit, to speak with a human and convince him, or her, of our real innocence, then we may take on human form and dwell in the real world."

"Is that all? You can become a human being now?"

"No." The word escaped the monster like a tear. "For the human to say he believes is not enough. It must be proven."

"Oh." I found myself almost convinced. After all, the monster could have dragged me down into the pool while I was asleep, or unconscious. It hadn't "Go on. Tell me what I have to do." Well, why not?

"You must come and swim in the pool with me." Unwilling murmur.

"In the morning?"

"No. Now. In the hours of darkness. But it must be your choice. I cannot make you do it."

"You want me to but, don't you?"

"Yes. I am ugly, monstrous and frightening. If I were human, I would be none of these things."

"And... if I say no?"

"There is nothing that can be done." The creature stood over me. "I could drag you down into the depths of the pool. If I were to do so you would drown. And I would remain as I am. But I would be cursed for killing you. Believe me, others of my kind have tried that. The legends tell of bunyips taking humans. There was reason. But it never worked out. It must be your own free choice."

There are times when I consider myself a fool: like when I argue with people who give me lifts, and when I go swimming in the middle of the night with a bunyip for a companion. Ah well... I stood up, wriggling out of the sleeping bag. I piled more wood on the fire. It was very cold. Afterwards... if there were an afterwards, that was, I'd be freezing. And so, most likely, would my companion be. If the legend were true, that was. I was rather intrigued as to what sort of a man the bunyip would become, too. Curiosity. It's been responsible for more deaths and injury since the world began than most other things, wars excepted.

The bunyip moved heavily to the edge of the pool and splashed down into it. I shed my clothes and walked to the edge. I could feel the goosebumps rising, and not just with the cold. Gritting my teeth, I slid into the water and swam out towards the deep blackness of my companion. As I paddled by it the long claws brushed along the length of my spine. I shuddered, and then felt its huge bulk beneath me. Red eyes stared into mine, and the water splashed around us.

"Hold onto me. We must dive deep into the pool. Do not let go." I nodded, past fear, and took a deep gulp of fresh cold air. Then we were going down, deep into thick blackness. The water was icy, cold as a tomb. Down, down... it seemed forever, and then we were buffeted and jolted about. I clung tightly, firmly convinced that I was either dead or dying, or maybe still wildly hallucinating on the shore. The blackness changed tones, and to a whirling maelstrom of colours and blackness. I felt a change in pressure and hoped we were on our return to the surface. I couldn't hold my breath for much longer, surely?

And then the stars were above me and I floated alone on the surface of the Deep Black Bunyip Pool. Of my monstrous companion, there was no sign. Feeling a numbing sense of anticlimax, I pulled myself wearily from the water and staggered to the fire, when I collapsed in a heap, leaving the warmth of the flames to dry and soothe me.

It was full daylight when I awoke again. I was still sore and cold, but I was quite alone. There was no-one there, and no-one came. I dressed myself and lit the fire again. Even the coals were dead. I sat there all the morning, my eyes scanning the surface of the pool

Nothing. It must have been a dream. It must all have been a dream. But I stayed there all day, watching and waiting for I rightly didn't know what. I was still there when evening fell again and I maintained my lonely vigil until the stars again shone overhead, bleak and cold and glittering. Loneliness again stole over me. But this time there was no gentle monstrous visitor, and no ripples marked the surface of the black water. I was truly alone. Finally I drifted off to sleep, angrily denying to myself the wetness on my cheeks.

Have you ever lost a friend before you even got to know him?

Next morning I made myself swim, just to wash myself, in the pool. But I stayed close to the edge, fearful of what might or might not lie beneath the surface. My back itched, and when I felt with my fingers I found the slight ridge of

a healing shallow scratch along my spine. I half-smiled as I pulled my shirt on. Maybe it hadn't been a dream at all. I might never know...

The main road seemed further than it had when I'd walked in the opposite direction, but when I got to it I decided to keep walking. It wasn't long before I got a lift, and was dropped off in the little town of Nerrilyup, where the driver had been headed. He had given me a queer look when I'd mentioned the deep pool along the gravel road, and had said nothing else until he put me out. Then he'd leaned across to look up and out the window at me as I lifted the bag onto my back and hefted my case.

"It's a lonely place, the old Bunyip pool. Didja see... ah... anything strange out there?"

"No." I made myself look straight at him. "Nothing. Nothing at all." The wind sighed in the ghost gums and set a flurry of gravel dust down a side road. I let out a deep sigh. He shook his head, winked at me and drove off.

Nerrilyup was a little place. There were a couple of streets in either direction, a pub, a church, a school and half a dozen shops, with a scattering of timber and asbestos houses. The town wasn't big enough to rate a separate post office, and it was part of one of the shops. In front of it stood an old fashioned red telephone box. I smiled a little as I passed it, remembering my frightened self-defensive claim that I had to ring my brother from this place. Just beyond it, a woman came, almost out of nowhere, and we nearly collided. I caught at her to prevent her falling and she looked up at me. Deep black eyes, with laughter in their depths, met mine. Her hair was a silky black curtain and her nails were long and smoothly red. We both caught our balance and I started to apologise. She however looked straight at me.

"Your brother will be waiting for his telephone call."

"What?" I caught my breath and stared at her. "I... don't have a brother. I..." And then I broke off. She murmured gently:

"No? Well, somehow, I didn't really think you had..

My eyes went wide, and as she continued to regard me, the smile wide and gently mocking in her serene face, I knew then that the bunyip legend was true after all. And true in a more wonderful way than I had ever imagined.

- Greg Dales

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# T O T A L L E D

B Y       M I C H A E L       H A I L S T O N E

On the evening of Friday, 22nd October 1976, my friend Robert Holdsworth and I walked into Sydney's Central railway station to buy a ticket on that night's Cooma Mail. We were on our way to Bombala to watch a total eclipse of the Sun, or rather the total eclipse of the Sun.

Total solar eclipses seem rare in Australia for some reason. There had been one just two years earlier in June 1974, but that was way over in the southernmost tip of Western Australia, and, although I had planned to go and see it, I failed to make it. Before 1974 the last total eclipse was way back in 1922, long before most of us were born. The next won't be until 2002.

The 1976 eclipse was good for a couple of ways. Not only was it conveniently in southeastern Australia, but the Moon's umbra was substantially wide (103 miles), giving a totality lasting nearly three minutes, which is good for an eclipse in temperate latitudes. It was especially good for Melbourne, which lay right in the path of totality. Alas, I dwelt in Sydney, so I had to travel three hundred miles to Bombala, which was recommended as the best place. Having yearned all my life to see a total eclipse of the Sun, I was of course anxious least something stand in my way of reaching Bombala in time for the eclipse, which was to take place late in the afternoon of Saturday, October 23rd. Indeed that evening, as we walked into the station, I was struck by a severe attack of OXIphobia (a complaint as yet seemingly unrecognised by psychiatrists, taking the form of an irrational fear of pulling an OXI, or, to put it less esoterically, of being thwarted or of drawing a blank).

Was this OXIphobia actually a premonition of what was about to befall us that night, or rather just an attack of my normal paranoia? I can't say; I can only tell what happened. The first blow struck as Robert and I were standing in line to buy our tickets, when the ticketseller told the man just before us: "The engine's off the track."

Fine, I thought, just bloody great, so there's a derailment somewhere down the line. Now I was having grave doubts on our reaching Bombala in time. My heart sank like a stone.

When the man had bought his ticket, Robert asked him whither he was going.

"Goulburn", was the answer.

My heart sank further. I was afraid to ask either him or the ticket-seller about the matter, but Robert and I bought our tickets to Cooma, and nothing further was said about any derailment, then we boarded the train.

On the other side of the platform stood the Melbourne express, the SPIRIT OF PROGRESS. We watched it pull out at a quarter to nine. We pulled out at ten to, five minutes late. Although I didn't know it at the time, the SPIRIT was half an hour late leaving.

It was a slow trip out of Sydney, slower than usual. We stopped for quite a long time at Regents Park and Campbelltown. The derailment was on my mind all this time. At Campbelltown the passengers in the next compartment heard one of the station staff telling the crew of our train to look out for lights (or something) down the line; I was to learn this when we later compared notes.

Once we were beyond Picton, all seemed well. The train was belting along at great speed, and, as Robert and I were lucky to have the compartment to ourselves, we turned the lights out and stretched out on the seats. By now my worry about the derailment ahead was fading from my mind, While Robert at the same time was thinking that, if we were going to be blocked by a derailment, this stretch between Picton and Mittagong was a good place for it to happen, for there was a loopline that we could take through Thirlmere. This loopline had recently been closed by the Public Transport Commission and was now used by the Rail Transport Museum to run its old steam trains.

Then, just as I was being lulled to sleep, the brakes came on and the train stopped. Although we hadn't actually screeched to a halt on locked wheels, it was quite clear that we had pulled up unusually quickly. I stuck my head out the window. Almost straight away the train started off again but very slowly, and there was a loud bang as the engine ran over the first of a series of detonators. Slowly we rounded an S-bend and came in sight of another train ahead. At first I thought it must be the back of the SPIRIT OF PROGRESS, but, as we drew nearer, I realised that I was looking at the locomotive of a goods train on the northbound track.

So, I thought, this was the expected derailment. But how had the SPIRIT gotten through? Had it been rerouted through Thirlmere? If so, why hadn't we? I remembered the ticketman's words: "The engine's off the track." I peered at the engine, but I soon saw that it was not derailed. A little further on we stopped, and then I saw the three derailed waggons, one lying on its side blocking both tracks.

My heart plummeted further. Sure, I had expected that we would be held up like this, but the realization of this was nevertheless a further blow. Some railway employees came along the track spelling out the obvious: three waggons were off the track and we were stuck.

We got out and wandered forward for a closer look. We were just a few hundred yards short of Yerrinbool station. All the time the puzzle, how the SPIRIT had not been delayed like us, kept nagging at me.

The mystery was solved when I spoke to our engine driver. The SPIRIT had not been delayed for the simple reason that, when it came along, the crash had not yet happened! The trucks had come off the track a mere ten to fifteen minutes before we arrived. The goods train's crew had just enough time to lay detonators along the track around the bend, but, because there was a long straight stretch before that bend, our driver had stopped the train on seeing the other's signal lamp.

But what about the derailment I had heard about back in Sydney, hours before this one had happened? It turned out that it was the SPIRIT'S engine that had come off the rails while shunting between the platforms at Central. They had to rustle up another engine, hence the SPIRIT'S departure was delayed half an hour.

With all that explained I was left with an even deeper mystery. We had been forewarned that we would be held up by a derailment, some hours before the accident happened. If I had just had some kind of premonition, a prophetic dream about it or something, it would have made sense. This didn't, because there was nothing supernatural or psychic involved; our warning had been based on purely physical happenings, a misunderstanding of a few clearly spoken words. We had reached the truth for the wrong reason; we were right by being wrong.



Well, as it happened, Robert had been right in thinking that we were on the best stretch to be stopped by a derailment. We only had to wait for an engine to come up from Campbelltown and haul us back to Picton, whence we took the loopline to Mittagong. The loopline was very rough in parts, so we had to take it slow. We reached Cooma at ten o'clock the following morning, just four hours late but still in good time to reach Bombala in time for the eclipse, which was however marred by clouds. But that does not belong in this tale.

Suppose the SPIRIT'S engine had not come off the track and we had been on time. Remember, we were five minutes late at Bargo, the last station where we stopped before coming on the crash scene ten to fifteen minutes after the wagons had jumped the track. We might have ploughed right into the wreck at high speed. A fellow-passenger reckoned we could have pulled up in time even with no warning lights or detonators, but I'm not so sure. What if the trucks had come off just as the two trains were about to pass? Unlikely? Yes, but not as unlikely as our actual strange experience.

Years later I came across a name for this truly singular phenomenon: synchronicity. This was brought to my knowledge by an article by Rudy Rucker in the February SCIENCE 85. It seems that, while the laws of chance can be expected to throw up the odd coincidence, there do seem to be a few meaningful coincidences. Jung came up with the concept of synchronicity back in 1930. Looking for scientific justification he worked closely with the physicist Wolfgang Pauli of quantum mechanics' exclusion principle fame and wrote in 1952: "It is only the ingrained belief in the sovereign power of causality that creates intellectual difficulties and makes it appear unthinkable that causeless events exist or could ever occur." Hence synchronicities are no more preposterous than the causeless and unpredictable transitions of matter from one quantum state to another.

Synchronicity in a fictional story or film, such as young Elliott kissing a girl in class at the same time E.T. is watching a love scene on television, is easily explained as the design of the film's director Steven Spielberg. Thus suggests that such circumstances in the real world can likewise be explained only by forces or designs outside our space and time.

In the world of quantum physics the truly puzzling example of synchronicity is that of two photons speeding away from each other and instantaneously affecting each other in apparent violation of relativity, which forbids signals to travel faster than light. (See Paul Davies' OTHER WORLDS Chapter 6, "The nature of reality").

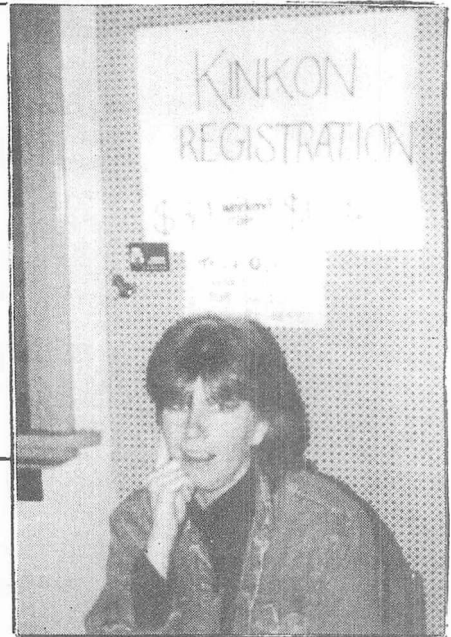
So. Is God (or Someone or Something) out there pulling the strings in our world, now and then throwing up such extraordinary coincidences as Robert and I experienced that spring night back in 1976? Many folk, not necessarily deeply religious, like to believe in a caring God, or, less personally, Providence, looking after us, seeing that we come to no harm, and so on. Maybe that's what happened that night. The derailment at Central saved up from running into the derailment at Yerrinbool.

Unhappily such rosy explanations don't stand up to the facts. At the time the railways of New South Wales had a shocking accident record; trains seemed to be coming off the tracks left, right and centre. The derailments on the evening of 22nd October 1976 were only two among many around that time, and greatly overshadowed by the worst one just three months later. Where indeed was God or Providence on the morning of Tuesday, 18th January 1977, at Granville?

- Michael Hailstone.

## K I N K O N   I I

REVIEWED BY SUE BURSZYNSKI



**VENUE:** Victoria Hotel, Melbourne. **DATES:** June 7, 8 and 9

It's a pleasure, now and then, to attend a convention that's well-organised, interestingly-programmed and exudes good humour.

KINKON was such a convention.

From the time I arrived on Friday night to the time I left on Monday afternoon, I found myself caught up in a mood of frivolity and laughter. There was the informal air of a relaxacon, yet enough panels - all well-prepared and interesting - to please those who like to attend programmed events, as opposed to socialising. For the square-eyed, there was a video-room with a constant run of good shows - old episodes of Dr. Who, Blake's 7, Monty Python and such.

There were handy pocket-sized programmes for those who didn't want to lug around their con books (also well-designed!) - a good idea that other con committees could note.

Each day there were meal-breaks that gave us the chance to eat without missing anything. I appreciated this, as I'm partial to programmed events. The committee were always available, but not overpowering - another thing other con organisers could note.

Nobody expects con events to start on time. Well, these did! Even the masquerade was on time.

My friends and I arrived on Friday evening, after work (ah, the joys of going to a con in your own city!) and were directed to our room, where we promptly proceeded to host our one and only room party for the con. If talk was fuel, the whole hotel could have blasted off that night!

The actual programme began on Saturday morning. After registering, I socialised till lunchtime, though there was a panel on the Anderson puppets - not my particular interest. After lunch I attended an entertaining panel on comics, in which Marc Ortlieb, David McDonnell and others discussed the value - or otherwise! - of comics, complete with a slide show that put paid to any lingering notions that comics are "kidstuff"!

This was followed by a well-researched panel on the various TV anthology series (TWILIGHT ZONE, OUTER LIMITS etc.). Perhaps a little too much information was packed into this one, causing it to drag a bit, but it was interesting.

More socialising followed, in the hotel lounge, where I was desperately stitching away at my costume (I'm not sure what the hotel staff made of the trail of

silver sequins I must have left!). Finally, there were enough sequins to make my diaphanous gown sparkle under the lights and a group of us went off to dinner before returning for the evening's activities.

Evening brought the masquerade. The theme was "comics", so I'd adapted my Queen of the Night costume, to become a lady of the court of Ming the Merciless. Blinking owlishly without my glasses and shivering in my thin costume, I joined the other competitors. There were some quite attractive costumes, though nothing lavish.



"Oh, hi!" squeaked the same ex-pupil I encountered last year at Worldcon... sigh! Can't escape my past.

Angus Caffrey was MC, in a bad-taste suit-of-many-colours that had to be seen to be believed! It looked like a Happy Hammond reject.

The costume parade was very well-organised, with committee people at very stage to help, and precise instructions

given. It was enlivened by many light moments, such as the introduction of the judges (Clare Andrews, Ruth Murphy and "the voluptuous, creamy-skinned - Me-erv Binns!") and the Invisible Man. As we competitors went to our seats, we were told to leave a seat for him! Guess who sat next to him? Presumably, he must have been in the altogether, since there wasn't a bandage in sight.



Unfortunately, I froze up and forgot my planned presentation, but I got a prize anyway - a video of EXPLORERS - for "sexiest see-through costume"!

This tickled me no end and I was even more amused, later in the evening, to see a male hotel receptionist gape at me and stammer, "Y-you l-look v-very n-nice..."

There was a masked ball after that, with masks provided. I didn't stay long at this.

The next morning, we saw a preview of the film FX, which I enjoyed, though I was told by Gary Armstrong that it was inaccurate in details.

The con auction followed - always entertaining, these, even if you're not buying.

As the banquet (entitled Not The Banquet) was at the Khan Mongolian - a bit too expensive for some of us and too much meat for the vegetarians - a horde of us invaded the Pancake Parlour instead, declaring it Not-the-Anti-Banquet. From this, a large number of other Anti-Banquets sprang up.

The evening panel discussed the value of awards (good for publishers, make authors happy, but otherwise - ?)



The rest of the evening, a large group of us chatted in the lounge, sipping drinks from the bar. I was too tired for the Night of Five Days (the world's worst films), so retired at midnight, but people who went seemed to enjoy it.

The last day of a con is usually quiet - not so KINKON, which was packed with panels till the end, including a hilarious trivia quiz, featuring a question about a certain fan's underwear colour!

I was in the final panel, with Ali Kayn and Robert Jan. The subject was the role of females in sf/fantasy; we covered the areas of media fan fiction and children's lit (I did the latter, as I'm a school librarian). Despite last-minute changes in panel membership, it worked very well. We had a large audience and most people seemed to enjoy throwing in their own comments. In fact, there was so much interest we nearly went over time, but as this con really was running to schedule, we finished in time for the closing ceremonies, including the presentation of the Golden Gorillas (a dubious award!). We gave the committee and helpers a round of applause for a very enjoyable con, then it was over, alas! All good things must come to an end.

Those of you who missed it, cheer up - due to the huge amount of positive feedback the organisers got during the con, there will be a KINKON 3.

- Sue Bursztynski

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# JOHN J. ALDERSON:

## ADULTERY - PERSONAL AND SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITIES

It may seem that although the ideas of what constitute incest might well be open to question, as we found upon examination, there can be no question about adultery. We know what adultery is... but as we have previously found, the examination of various subjects have yielded rather interesting information. So let us do what is seldom done (if we may have a quiet joke on the matter), put adultery under the spot-light.

In our examination of the society of the Australian Aborigines we found that they exhibited little or no "sexual jealousy" as some anthropologists so coyly put it. Their marriage patterns run from a group marriage of the Urabunna tribe to the stricter monogamy of the Aranda tribe, yet all were obliged at times to allow their wives to cater for the sexual needs of the men during prolonged corroborees<sup>1</sup>, certain women were detailed off to "consummate" foreign policy decisions with other tribes; women were sent with messengers and whose duty it was to be available to the men of the other group if they were willing to accede to the request of the messengers<sup>2</sup>; women were also offered to a vengeance party in an effort to pacify them.<sup>3</sup> Finally, in some tribes there were a range of men to whom a woman was available and vice versa<sup>4</sup>. One may add to this that women were also loaned to men of the same moiety as the husband<sup>5</sup>. None of this constituted adultery.

Illicit intercourse there is, and it takes two forms. The first is between two people of the wrong moieties and which is regarded as incest, and depending upon the closeness of the moieties the culprits are accordingly punished, with death if the moieties are close, eg the woman has connection with a man of her father's moiety, or perhaps a thrashing if the moiety is somewhat distant in terms of human relationship. We have dealt with the affairs of men and women complicated by incest which goes under the term of iturka<sup>6</sup> (and which we have dealt with, and consider the other two, atma mylkna (vulva thief) and elopement. The former only happens between a woman and a man of her husband's moiety and would be a matter of right in many tribes. But it must not be considered that this right extends to those who don't require it, that is, those who have their own spouse available. It is a private matter and settled between the men if thought necessary. However, Buckley recounts that there were innumerable affrays over women during his sojourn with the Aborigines of the Port Phillip Bay area<sup>7</sup>. He also recounts it a great disgrace if a woman has a child to other than her husband<sup>8</sup>. Most of these seem to have been either elopements or abductions. Wife stealing was really frowned upon and a matter of concerted tribal action whilst atna nylkna was a matter of private disagreement.

Wife stealing or elopements and abductions were matters settled by members of the tribe or the wronged husband and his friends, but still an action sanctioned by the society as a whole. The offending man was frequently speared and the woman thrashed, though as we have seen, she could be divorced<sup>9</sup>. It is thus quite important to distinguish between mere illicit or stolen sex and the stealing of the woman, the first being a personal affair and the second an affront to society. The punishment, spearing and thrashing are tolerably severe but by no means fatal. The

stealing of a woman cut severely into the man's economic position in the tribe, the woman being necessary to supply the certain meal of "bush-tucker", for hunting was precarious, and it also upset a whole range of "considerations" the man owed and was owed by virtue of his marriage. Wife stealing hit directly at the economic and social ties of the tribe, and was thus a tribal matter.

Amongst the Maoris abductions of women were a source of quarrels and wars, the Maoris setting high store on the matter<sup>10</sup>. Elopements seem to have always been treated as "abductions". The sexual freedom of youth had to stop after marriage but it is to be observed that high born maidens were carefully protected so as to remain virgins until marriage, and this obvious ideal is important because it was well observed that the Maoris, like the Scots, were all noble, with the exception, of course, of slaves, and it may well be argued that sexual purity was the actual ideal of the unmarried Maori. But the stealing of a woman, whether she was a willing party or not, an action readily seen, was a cause of war. Apart from anything else a point of honour was at stake. Again it must be realised that, like the Scot, the Maori woman occupied a very high place in their society. It is significant that amongst the lower classes, that it, those who were not quite so well born, a "mimic war" was waged against the offenders out of derision, and gives the impression that only lack of power prevented bloodshed over the matter. For it seems it was a private matter between the principals. Amongst the upper aristocrats adultery was punished by death, As amongst this higher class the men had a right to a plurality of wives, and the women of husbands the act of adultery was correspondingly more reprehensible.

If we were to judge from the Presbytery Records the Scots found adultery among one of their more interesting pastimes. We must however be aware, for as we have seen the view of the Church and that of the people were not the same, and as we have seen from our study on incest, the standards, that is, the prohibited degrees recognised by the Scots, allowed for much closer marriages than did the foreign ideas considered by the Church to be the Law of God, but actually borrowed from Islam. Also the ideas of marriage and divorce were more loosely practiced by the Scots, particularly by the aristocracy, it being remembered of course that there are no commoners in Scotland. An examination of the cases of adultery in the Presbytery Records show that they included the incest cases as well, which as we have already noted were obviously not regarded as incest amongst the people. So too, the (actually legal) practice of hand fasting was included as adultery, and these were usually, at the end of a year and a day, the traditional time, turned into regular church weddings. Indeed it was really only with the Reformers that the church began to seriously worry about the secular practices of their flock. (This preoccupation could very well have been spurred on by the civic authorities being worried by the spread of heresy, an affliction common to almost all of Europe). When these cases are taken from the Presbytery Records the cases of adultery have shrunk considerably.

There remain two other sources of adultery which might also be deleted from the list. The first of these stems from the practice of divorce which the Scots law allow in some form or other. Now here it is pertinent to mention a trait of Scottish law which is relevant here. Before a law can become law in Scotland the people had to accept it, and if by any means the law ceased to be applied then that law ceased to be law. Thus any law regarding marriage and divorce passed by the Scots Parliament had to be accepted and obeyed to be constitutional, so that the practice of hand fasting continued despite the efforts of Church and State remained the law of Scotland, just as the right of the Scots to marry themselves without the intervention of a third party continued to be law. The Scots thus maintained that marriage was the couple's own private business and Church and State were better off to mind their own affairs. So whilst the Church might regard two people as still wed, the parties concerned, and their neighbours, were of a different mind, so that a new union by either party would be regarded as adulterous by the Church, and particularly by visiting ecclesiastical officials, whilst by their own lights the



parties believed themselves behaving virtuously. What we are concerned with here is not some abstract idea of adultery but that idea of adultery which was accepted by the society concerned. Further, there is a certain remorselessness about Scottish logic which would agree that if one commits adultery by lusting after another party, then it is pointless punishing the flesh by abstaining. There was certainly from early times a legal mode of obtaining divorce under Scots law, and necessary so as not to complicate a lot of heritable titles, but for the ordinary Scot it was enough for his community to know that the couple had parted company and were free again to marry.

Under the more strict and later law, divorce became only available via adultery and the guilty parties got fifteen years hard labour and were not allowed to marry. So, as now, (in our own country) hand fasting remained with its convenient loosening of the bond with mutual consent<sup>11</sup>. One should not underestimate that "mutual" consent. That it could, and did, lead to trouble when the parting was not mutual is evident from the clan feud with its harrowing of Clanranald lands when Clanranald divorced a MacLeod girl<sup>12</sup>.

So, whilst the Presbytery considered divorced couples still married and the partners committing adultery if they remarried, the Scots themselves acted with the clear conscience of being free.

The second source of adultery in Presbytery Records, and probably in the eyes of the law, was the habit of some of the chiefs of affecting several wives<sup>13</sup>. As we pointed out this could well have been that it was cheaper to keep them than to send the divorced wife home (in any case some father's were touchy on this), but it is not at all clear whether or not the chiefs still had conjugal relations with the "ex-wives" and certainly their critics (who often have a surprising knowledge of what goes on in bed-chambers many miles away) considered that they did and that the women, apart from the first wife, were concubines... not a very likely idea about high-spirited Scottish women who might more likely be a second wife to a chief than a concubine. Highland households might have been "irregular" but they did not have the reputation of being dissipated. Nor is it likely that another Highland chief would allow his sister or daughter to be a mere concubine, though they might be easy about her being a second or third wife, or even being supplanted by another wife. For each wife's children had as much chance of being the heir as the others, this being a matter of ability, with "illegitimacy" being no slur and the children acknowledged and provided for.

There may also be relics of polyandry preserved in Scotland and there certainly are in folktales. Certainly the Picts, the major ancestors of the modern Scots, practiced a form of polyandry. Dio Cassius remarks that "a very witty remark is reported to have been made by the wife of Argentocoxus, a Caledonian, to Julia Augusta. When the empress was jesting with her, after the treaty, about the free intercourse of her sex with the men in Britain, she replied: 'We fulfill the demands of Nature in a much better way than do you Roman women; for we consort openly with the best men, whereas you let yourselves be debauched in secret by the vilest'"<sup>14</sup>. Some relic of polygamy is to be expected in a non-dominated society, particularly with the man or women who had the power. The evidence of polygyny lingering on is natural and evidence otherwise would need to be treated with suspicion.

Despite the Law's penalty of fifteen years hard labour for adulterers, the gaols were not filled with such offenders. One might surmise that the matter was settled privately, probably with dirks, though sexual jealousy does not seem to be below normal. But it does seem that despite the supposed laxity of morals, the Scots had their own standards and seldom strayed from within those standards.

\* \* \* \*



When we pass to the woman-dominated societies where the men are treated with despite we note that the marriage is so brittle that any protest by a man about his wife's adulteries will have him divorced forthwith, and as he is a labourer still with his mother's family he departs, as he came, with nothing. For the children, regardless of their parentage are, and remain part of their mother's family. Thus with the case of Samson who visited his wife to find her married to someone else without him being notified. It seems that no other formality of divorce was necessary than for a woman to take another man to bed. The Zuni women simply divorce their husband by placing his possessions outside their room, and that's the end of the matter... he goes back to his mother. As we have seen the Zuni indulge in constant sexual intrigues, the young men boasting that they can have any woman whose husband is absent<sup>15</sup>. Whilst this is certainly regarded as adultery the men can do nothing because a cross word can get them divorced and as they have no property and are no relation to their children they must put up with the adulteries of the wife or lose her. Obviously the morality of the men cannot be much better.

The Yanomamo, because of the killing of the infant girls by their mothers keeping the sex ratio abnormal, and because the "successful" men have several wives, some 75% of the men have to share wives and this system is simply a cloak for continual adultery. Indeed adultery is a way of life, and this is sexual behaviour accepted by the people themselves as adultery. This adultery is used as a major social force to humiliate the men and make them aggressive.

The lightness with which marriage is held by these people stems from the absolute power the women have over the men economically. The men are slaves. Adultery is commonplace and sexual jealousy carefully cultivated. There is no effective punishment for adultery and it carries no social stigma. The continual mass raping of women captured by the Yanomamo stems from this suppression of the male ego, and is a grim pointer to the causes of mass rape in our won society.

That these societies are unhealthy and perverted goes without saying.

\* \* \* \*

The previous societies could well be described as societies without law, but the societies which are woman-dominated and where the man is treated with honour, must certainly have law. In fact they tend to be legalistic, the Babylonians actually producing what is regarded as our oldest code.

Adultery is a well recognised social crime in Melanesia, and in the olden days, as Codrington says, "the people in the islands were very strict in regard to adultery". The punishment for the men was death though this was generally mitigated to a fine. In Florida the injured husband would give the chief money to have the adulterer killed and the latter, if he were able, would pay off both the chief and husband and save his life. In general it seems that throughout Melanesia death was the penalty for adultery for the men, which was muted to a fine paid to the chief and compensation to the offended husband. The woman seems usually to have been turned into a harlot, with her earnings going to the chief. There is an interesting aspect with that of a husband, on finding out the name of his wife's previous lover, demanding from him some money in compensation, and after this is paid, no more is ever said on the matter. In this case it appears that no stigma is attached to the new wife<sup>16</sup>.

A wife, jealous of her husband, will commit, or attempt to commit, suicide, for it seems from what Codrington says the methods used would not be always successful and perhaps not intended to be. The man in the same position did the same thing.

In general extramarital affairs are rare amongst the Melanesians.

The Manus Islanders, though very prudish and of strict moral behaviour, were wont to capture women of other tribes and rather shamefully use them and treat them as harlots. Possibly women outside the tribe did not count as women... the idea that people outside one's tribe are not human beings was widespread and it is not without its devotees even today.

One remembers that Joseph, accused by Potiphar's wife, was put into the King's prison where he met the Pharaoh's baker and cup-bearer. Whether this was for attempted rape or attempted adultery is not known, but he was there because of the unsupported accusation of one woman, a thwarted one at that. The WESTCAR PAPYRUS tells that the wife of one Aba-aner committed adultery with a servant and the death of the servant was caused by sorcery, apparently with no punishment for the woman<sup>15</sup>. Amongst "negative confessions" required to be made by the dead before Osiris the Judge of the Dead was that he had not lain with another man's wife, had not abused himself, nor lain with men<sup>16</sup>.

Herodotus relates a couple of interesting stories. The first concerns the Pharaoh Pheros who went blind for throwing a spear into the flooded waters of the Nile. After ten years an oracle told him that the time of his punishment was over and that he would recover his sight "if he washed his eyes with the urine of a woman who had never laid with any man except her husband." He tried that of his wife, first, but without success, then a great many other women, one after the other until his sight was restored. He then gathered all the women who had apparently erred into a town and burnt them to death, then married the one good woman<sup>20</sup>. What had happened to that woman's husband is not stated.

The second relates to Paris having been caught by a storm on his way to Troy and blown ashore in Egypt. He had Helen. When the fact that Helen was the wife of Menelaus and that they had eloped was discovered, they were arrested and hauled before Proteus, who said to Paris, "If I did not consider it a matter of great importance that I never yet put to death any stranger who has been forced upon my coast by stress of weather, I should have punished you for the sake of your Greek host..." Proteus detained Helen and the treasures they had stolen until such time as Menelaus arrived and claimed them, whilst Paris was given three days to leave the country<sup>21</sup>.

From this information we may sum up that men were certainly punished in Egypt for adultery, and the case of Pheros may well have been due to the frustration for so much vain washing in urine.

With the Babylonians we have the code of Hammarabi to help us. Thus... "129. If the wife of a man is found lying with another male, they shall be bound and thrown into the water; unless the husband lets his wife live, and the king lets his servant live..."

"133. If a man has been taken captive, and there is food in his house, and his wife forsakes his house, and enters the house of another; then because that woman has not preserved her body, but has entered another house, then that woman shall be prosecuted, and shall be thrown into the water..."

One may note that if there was no food in the house under the same circumstances then "that woman bears no blame." (135) And if a man abandons his city and his wife thereafter enters the house of another, the wife is held guiltless and shall not return to her husband. (136) In all sexual offense the man is punished, and in the case of adultery the woman as well, though her fate rested upon the mercies of her husband and the fate of the man on the mercies of the king. In the one case of incest, the mother and son, the woman is also punished. The age of the son is not specified.

With this class of society adultery is recognised as a crime against society and the "Crown" has a responsibility in the matter, mainly that of taking a fine and pardoning the offender. The man is usually punished by death and the punishment of the woman varies from being made a harlot (for the "Crown's" benefit), or put to death whilst there is the possibility that in Egypt she remained unpunished.

One is reminded of two similar types of society. The Eskimo game of "putting out the light"<sup>22</sup>, somewhat similar to the Australian version of the "key-party", is not regarded as adultery. With the Eskimo, "stealing" a woman constitutes adultery. The modern American has a similar notion - "I don't see anything immoral in committing adultery. That is, as long as you fix your wife up too."<sup>23</sup> But as seen from the quotation, it remains adultery, though it has ceased to be "immoral" and if necessary still grounds for divorce.

\* \* \* \*

One might think that there could be no trifling about adultery in the male-dominated societies. Certainly the idea with the Law of Manu that a man and woman became "one" with marriage, that a son of a man's own blood was required for salvation, and that a second wife could be taken if the first proved unfruitful all gave the man no excuse to be unfaithful, but on the other hand made it more heinous for a woman to have offspring by adultery - this latter is probably not the usual idea in adultery in any case. But adultery did break the marriage bond, otherwise apparently regarded as eternal (the husband's salvation virtually making that of the wife's automatic), for according to some authorities the adulterous woman became a jackal<sup>24</sup> in the next incarnation, though elsewhere the penalty is to dwell in hell. Another authority allowed penance for man and woman<sup>25</sup>. Yet another has a man who commits adultery being punished with death by castration, or being branded on the forehead and banished, or being roasted to death. Adultery between casts was more serious and there were quite horrific fates suggested. The position of the woman is ambiguous and her husband at fault because she should have been better guarded. It must be remembered that these various "laws" were composed for various clans and rank as customs or suggestions rather than commands<sup>26</sup>.

In general, though, the man was severely punished and the woman allowed penance and after restored to her position as wife.

Amongst the Arabs the act of adultery must be seen by four witnesses, the offenders to be stoned to death<sup>27</sup>. As Moslems are allowed up to four wives and divorce easily, a man, usually when away from home, will take a temporary wife, divorcing them immediately afterwards so that in effect they don't commit adultery. However many marriage agreements stipulate that no other wife is to be taken, which prevents this subterfuge... though Moslems do not regard such an episode as such. Further, the ease of marriage and divorce make promiscuous mating unjustifiable. Marriage, divorce and adultery seem to fall only within the domain of the families concerned, though the idea of the "State" intervening cannot be dismissed.

With the Jews polygyny was permitted and adultery punished by the stoning of both parties. Sodomy and bestiality carried the same punishment. However, by the time of our Lord it was apparent that death had been commuted to divorce<sup>28</sup>. The divorce was a private matter, but had to be accompanied by a "Bill" of divorce so that neither party could take advantage if taken in adultery of claiming they were divorced and therefore free<sup>29</sup>. Casual sex was not permitted either party and prostitution was banned.

Though in all the male-dominated societies only adultery is mentioned, rather than wife-stealing, it is not that wife-stealing did not sometimes occur, but

obviously its risks were very high indeed for only the very powerful (such as Ravana in the RAMAYANA) or the very fleet-footed could hope to escape vengeance and one could call on a quite wide range of relations to wipe out the insult to the family.

- John J. Adlerson.

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# THE BOOTH

By WAYNE RILE WILLIAMS

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DARKNESS

'CLINK'

The needle hovers an inch from Gilbert Mallory's eye. Pressure of straps holding him fast to the table. The inquisitor stands before him... his face divided into Picasso-like multicoloured geometric patterns... he is asking him something. Gilbert doesn't understand. The needle moves closer. Gilbert doesn't understand. The needle moves closer. Gilbert isn't frightened. Death sentence already hangs over him. Leukemia. Torture? ... He's already suffered that at the hands of well-meaning doctors... therapy.

Gilbert hears a piano playing the same discordant notes over and over... punctuated by whispers.

...CLOSER...

His wife had offered other tortures... she didn't understand... not her fault. He had hidden his illness from her. She saw only his abusiveness/melancholy... long silences in which she was wholly excluded.

A door opens before him... Darkness swirls in forming a tornado of negative light, which dissipates into stars.

...CLOSER...

- No memory of coming here. He wears black suit and pants... face/hands painted white. He glances about the room. Through a window, he sees a kite flying a little boy on a long string... the landscape includes both cactus and glacier.

...CLOSER...

The rest of the room - lined with mirrors reflecting distorted images of he and the inquisitor. The latter's costume undulates with colour... geometric patterns on it shift with kaleidoscopic fluidity. The inquisitor questions him in what sounds like English in reverse... every third word spoken normally. Gilbert doesn't answer. The needle punctures his cornea. He screams... then...

DARKNESS

'CLINK'

Gilbert awakes... weight of blood/humor on his cheek... shock... remaining eye bleary... he can make out a sobbing woman, next to the inquisitor. The inquisitor is saying something. Gilbert catches only, "your wife". It is Mara. Gilbert struggles. How could they do this? As he watches, hooded men rape her. The question is repeated. The inquisitor puts his hands around Mara's neck... begins to twist upwards. The neck grows thinner and thinner. Soon it will snap. Desperate, Gilbert pleads. Again the question is repeated... The inquisitor squeezes her neck... and...

DARKNESS

'CLINK'

Mara falls to the floor. Gilbert stars at her beheaded corpse with sorrow... impotence... shame. Why couldn't they kill him - he was going to die anyway?

The inquisitor asks him an unintelligible question repeatedly. Each time the decibel of his voice increases until he is mouthing word beyond human hearing. Gilbert grows dizzy... nauseous... heart pounds... blood trickles from his ears and mouth... he blacks out.

DARKNESS

'CLINK'

The tiny booth is warm. Gilbert fumbles in his pockets in the darkness for more quarters. He'd gotten several dollars worth from the front counter, when he entered the adult book store this morning. As always he had traded most of his meagre pay cheque for coins to use in the booth.

... THE PAIN...

The booth is one of many that stand in rows in the back of the book store. It is little larger than a coffin. Such cubicles are for those who required... special titillation. For Gilbert, the booth is a necessity. Prescribed pain drugs didn't work. Debilitating side effects.

...GROWING WORSE...

Mara hadn't known about the booth... thought he was seeing another woman... but he had been here... all that time... here.

...HEAD POUNDING...

It was well that she'd divorced him... wouldn't have to watch him wither/die. She'd never know the agony... fear that drove him to escape... to the booth, with its electronic diversions.

The booth scourged him of concerns with simulated pain, but the succour was brief... He must return often.

...GROWING WEAKER...

He had drank when his infant son had died. Alcohol was too mild a torture now.

...WEAKER...

Coins, where are the coins? He finds one last quarter... adjust the ado-link... drops the coin in the slot.

DARKNESS

'CLINK'

The spindle turns rapidly on the lathe. The cutting tool flay Gilbert's skin gradually as he spins on it. The depth of the cut is adjusted. Blood covers the cutting tool. Gilbert drools slightly, his pupils dilate in ecstasy of pain... one... last... time...

DARKNESS

'CLINK'.



## The R. & R. Dept.



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

Many thanks for TM 58. What occasioned a little head-scratching was your mention of Australia as the last bastion of the sf genzine; certainly not if this trend continues! Though must admit, that was the image I once had of Australian fandom, all serious and constructive with hardly a glimpse of the lighter side of fandom. Suppose it was on a par with the view I had of Australian sf, of the almost old fashioned feel, as if from a timewarp, say somewhere around the Fifties; though as said before, that was more from finding my first Australian authors in such magazines as NEW WORLDS and SF ADVENTURES of that era (well, at least before the New Waves started taking away part of the beach); and everything read since, however up to the moment, has been coloured with that same view. Likewise, Australian fandom, at least in the evidence of fanzines, seemed to exist in an almost Gernsbackian time. Give me a word-association test somewhere around my first discovery of fandom, in the mid-Sixties, and my response to "Australia?" would have been "AUSTRALIAN SF REVIEW!", and the same right through the Seventies; it's only in these latter days, when I've ventured out to discover the range of Aussie zines for myself, rather than relying on wild generalisations, that I've discovered the truth. Which is that those zines can be as light as ours, they can be as heavy as ours; in fact there's little difference at all, leading me to suspect that the marketing of Aussie fanac as "heavy, man!" was little more than a cunning ploy.

Though whether you'll ever be able to lose that heavy image now; well, that's another matter. I have a feeling that the answer might lie with the media fen combining with the sf fen, bringing new blood and new ideas, making new fanzines and new images; but suspect that might be more likely in some alternative world, rather than this one. (Oh, East is East and West is West, etc...) And, of course, how the 'new' MENTOR will appear; writing this far behind, we can't ever pretend that our comments and suggestions have had much effect on the changes to a zine; which is why I'm breaking the habit of a lifetime, and now making any; but I'm certainly looking forward to it.

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

It was nice to see an interview in TM but M. John Harrison is one of those artsy fartsy literary writers that get right up my nose. Personally I'm glad he isn't a prolific author as it makes it easier to avoid his output. Maybe in a future issue you'll get a decent interviewee.

SHOP SOILED GOODS was one of the worst pieces of fiction you've published, in my view. The short sentences and overuse of dialogue made for an unpleasant, disjointed story. No doubt this was an intentional literary ploy of Helen Sargeant, but I didn't like it.

The piece on Yevgeny Zamyatin was overlong and extremely turgid in places. I have to admit that I didn't finish it. The kind of long serious article I'd expect to find in FOUNDATION or Van Ikin's zine. The other Soviet piece was better, but still a little too obscure for anyone who doesn't read a lot of Soviet sf and isn't familiar with all the names.

Diane Fox's URBAN FANTASIES sound like an interesting anthology, and I'm tempted to get it as I've not read many of the authors featured. "Young Keith gives birth to a lobster who is really his mother" sounds like Broderick has taken up the weirdness mantle vacated by the death of Philip Dick. One thing puts me off buying URBAN FANTASIES though, and that is Diane's remark that "Many of the less literary readers would've put the book aside" before the best stories. I make no claims about being a "literary reader" as I'd much rather read Asimov or Shaw than Delany or Zelazny.

Strange that Harry Warner Jr regards selling art at cons as unfannish. If one is an amateur I suppose it could be so, but pro artists have to make a living like pro writers. And where would we be if pros didn't exist at all? Totally devoid of any sf is what. And then fandom wouldn't exist either, of course, so we'd all have to trot off and find a new hobby.

Joy Hibbert asks why women go to church. I reckon its for the same reason as men, and it rarely has anything to do with religion. Life is hard and folk are poor. There is little to brighten their dull lives. Going to church enables them to dress up in their best clothes, forget all their worries and enjoy a good bout of community singing. As a socialist, I've never been involved in religion, but my judgement of those that are comes from close relatives.

Although I've not read the I HOPE I SHALL ARRIVE SOON collection, I'd unhesitatingly nominate THE GOLDEN MAN as Philip Dick's finest collection. I think the latest releases are just rehashing the stuff he wouldn't have wanted published. It is a shame that shortly after THE UNTELEPORTED MAN was revised into LIES INC with the addition of 30,000 words the P K Dick estate have unearthed another segment of the novel. So it still isn't complete.

**HARRY WARNER, Jr., 423 Summit Ave., Hagerstown, Maryland 21740, USA.**

I'm familiar with the Faust theme so SHOP SOILED GOODS appealed to me and was within the realm of my narrow understanding. It's amusing, although I'm not sure the ending is strictly in the Faust tradition: wasn't that gentleman doomed to be dissatisfied with everything until at the very end he found happiness in the peace of a little farm? If so, Helen of Troy's return wouldn't have delighted him.

Igor Toloconnicou's summary of the Literaturnaya Gazeta debate makes it obvious that the theoretical controversies over science fiction whose participants are important literary people are as boring in Russia as they are in English-speaking parts of the world.

Dennis Stock's essay on Zamyatin turned out to be much more interesting than I'd expected, partly for the detailed information he included on the overall course of events involving the writing and publishing of fiction during the first decades of Soviet rule in Russia. But as I read the long article, I couldn't help wishing it had been redone for fanzine publication. It is, I suppose, a paper prepared for presentation at a literary con or for publication in some scholarly journal or other. In those environments it would be fine. But fans aren't accustomed to finding that some essential information must be sought in a list of footnotes at the end, and I think some additional information should have been supplied for a fan audience. For instance, near the bottom of page 23, I assumed that the quote was from some writer other than Zamyatin because the preceding paragraph terms WE "by no

means unique in its portrayal of the individual submerged..." and if I hadn't taken the trouble to leaf through the following pages to find footnote 18, and then run down all the previous 17 footnotes, I wouldn't have known it was a quote from WE after all. A specialist audience presumably known who Nonna Shaw, Jerome M. Gilbon, and other subjects of references are, but I was left wondering if they're university professors, students who wrote themes, or whoever. Shouldn't a fan audience have a definition of what "archaic Pan-Slavic" means? I wouldn't know where to look for it in an encyclopedia or dictionary. Ideally, a scholarly paper like this might be redone for fanzines by transferring the footnote information to the body of the text, followed by a bibliography of sources cited. Also useful would be a listing of works of the writer or writers whom the article is about that are in print in English-speaking nations.

*Actually, Harry, Dennis did have the footnotes at the base of each page, but the wordprocessor I am using makes it almost impossible without time-consuming rewriting, to fit them in. Also I thought that putting them at the end would give the article more of an 'essay' look than a 'scholarly article'. - Ron.*

I'm sure GBS would have been disgusted with the ending of MY FAIR LADY because of his lifelong aversion to unhappy endings in his dramatic works. I don't know how the movie ends but in the stage musical from which it was drawn, Eliza returns unexpectedly to Higgins as he is moping around and playing recordings of her voice, producing at least the implication that the two will mate. The consequences of that match make it an unhappy ending, I believe.

**JOHN FOYSTER**, 21 Shakespeare Grove, St. Kilda, Vic 3182.

Thanks for number 59 of THE MENTOR, which arrived today. My interest in its contents varied a bit from page to page, as you might expect, but there always seem to be at least one thing that gets my attention. This time around, however, I have to admit that I found the Soviet stuff a bit on the boring side. I do hope that you'll get more than book reviews (though it must also be admitted that you do a fair line yourself at the back of THE MENTOR).

Your editorial was, as you no doubt intended riveting reading. According to my calendar this is 1986, not 1968, and the world has changed in the intervening years. What is really significant is that ASFR had some influence in the SF world, and helped change the way people think about science fiction. As a result 1986 ASFR (?) cannot closely resemble the 1968 ASFR - or even the 1966 ASFR. Only John Bangsund could have produced the original ASFR, and I hope no one would be foolish enough to try to imitate the inimitable. The current version of ASFR reflects a different social climate, and a different way of thinking. So ASFR is different now from the 60s version? If it were the same, who could you imagine would be more disappointed than John Bangsund?

**BRIAN EARL BROWN**, 11675 Beaconsfield, Detroit, MI 48224, USA.

I suspect most if not all fans ego-scan each new fanzine before sitting down to actually read it. Naturally my eye was caught by Diane Fox's comment to me: "I have always suspected that the illegalization of drugs was done partly as a means of handling the growth of social dissent in America during the Vietnam war." She is wrong on two counts, the chief of which is that marijuana, cocaine and heroin were outlawed (gck! on "illegalized") back in the 30s, long, long before the Vietnam war. LSD, the other drug of choice during the anti-war days, was outlawed during the early 60s - I'm not sure just when but well before the war protest movement kicked up in 60-68. These drugs were outlawed because their intoxicating effects were frightening to ordinary citizens. There was a lot of hysterical propaganda against these drugs, just as there is today in the abortion controversy or the recent smut

commission. One might go so far as to talk about a strand of apocalysism in America. (I've been reading Ethel Efran's THE APOCALYPTICS, dealing with hysteria in cancer prevention regulations. She makes many good points here.) REEFER MADNESS, a 30s film, treats pot smoking like a combination of heroin and PCP. But the laws were in place long before Vietnam.

The idea that the government outlawed drugs to encourage their usage and have a lever to use against protest organisers (the ever present threat of drug busts) is so obviously a paranoid Conspiracy Theory that I can't believe anybody would give it serious consideration. First off, our government has never operated so efficiently that it could get a scam like that off the ground. Secondly, it's too complicated. The kind of "you know that I know that you know that I know..." thinking involved there only works in cheap thrillers. The use of drug laws was eagerly seized upon as a way to control protestors, but the government never tried to covertly impose drugs into the protest movement. Far from it, it was the drug use and its apparent harmlessness that caused a lot of young people to question everything else the government was telling them - including and particularly about the war.

The people who ban things like alcohol, drugs, smut, sodomy, sex education and/or abortions do so with no clear idea of the consequences. They never think anything that far through. To them, banning something means it doesn't exist. They're wrong, of course, but like I said, they never think these things through. For example these people want to ban sex education in high school because they think it only encourages teenage fornication. But a study released to the newspapers this very morning found that a comprehensive sex ed. program actually delays the first sexual encounter by half a year. Exactly the opposite of what the protestors said would happen.

Boris Zavgorodny's article was kind of interesting for its listing of several sf programs on television. I don't know why, but for some reason I didn't think Soviet tv admitted to the existence of sf - or of mass entertainment. A less obvious point in Boris's 'Chronicle' was the large number of fiction magazines still being published in the USSR. And conversely how few books (are any of them cheap paperbacks?). Fiction magazines were wiped out by cheap paperbacks in America.

Marc Ortlieb is right that there are quite a few retired fanzine editors in FAPA. There are also a few who aren't retired: myself, Marty & Robbie Cantor, Roy Tackett, Bruce D. Arthurs, Bruce Gillespie, Leigh Edmonds, Arthur Hlavaty, Bill Patterson and Andy Porter all come to mind.

I've mentioned Ethel Efron's THE APOCALYPTICS which raises several painful questions about regulating the chemical industry. Her main point is that a wave of hysteria concerning toxic chemicals has made it impossible to rationally consider the issues. Chief among these beliefs is that just one molecule of a toxic substance could do us in (or give us cancer). In fact our knowledge about the interactions between chemicals and human metabolism is so poor that we really can't say that we're in danger at one-part-per-billion levels or safe at parts per million. And while regulations routinely declare that prudence dictates legislation at the lower level (or calling for zero exposure) they are simply guesses and guessing in a direction that would eventually throw us back to the middle ages.

Thinking about this leaves me not so emphatic of my opinions about toxic chemicals as expressed in my letter about Steve Sneyd's problem with a chemical plant construction project. I still wouldn't want to live next to one, and would insist they be closely monitored re pollution compliances, but blind opposition to new plants does seem like just another form of Ludditism.

MAL ASHWORTH, 16 Rockville Drive, Embsay, Skipton, North Yorks, U.K.

I have been enjoying the Russian S-F theme in THE MENTOR especially, as this is something unique and not easily available elsewhere. But I'd want to disagree with Brian Earl Brown (in issue 58) about the Strugatsky's ROADSIDE PICNIC. I haven't seen the film and it may be that this is an exercise in extended boredom infinitely prolonged, knowing the penchant which Russian film-makers have for Significant Pauses and the like. But if so it is a pity, for the book itself I rate highly, A very fine story, well-handled, altogether an impressive piece of work; and one, by-the-by, which evokes, almost by analogy, more of the feel and atmosphere of an Acid Trip state - i.e. an alternative reality - than anything I've ever come across in Philip K. Dick.

There is considerable anticipation of the Strugatsky brothers' visit over here for the Worldcon next year (for which much thanks).

I acquired some of the earlier Russian S-F back in the 50s when I was a member of the excellent 'Russia Today' bookclub. The volumes were English language editions produced by the Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow, in their distinctively 'primitive' style of book production. One month might bring a large format photographic anthology of the scenery of the USSR, the next a collection of stories by Dostoyevsky or Tolstoy and the next something like Yefremov's STORIES or LAND OF FOAM or ANDROMEDA. All at 2/6d or 3/6d each, I seem to remember!

Dennis Stocks' piece on Zamyatin reminded me of a couple of overdue projects. The first is simply a re-reading of Zamyatin's brilliant WE. The second is an investigation of just how familiar Orwell really was with Zamyatin's work and how consciously he was influenced by it. Certainly I remember being struck very forcibly on first reading by what seemed a myriad of similarities in terms of symbolic and literary devices.

SUE ISLE, 2 Behan St., Bentley 6102, W.A.

Thank you for THE MENTOR 59. I was a little surprised to get it since I didn't have a contribution therein this time, but appreciated nevertheless. I wonder if you might have the time in your editorial some time to clear up some points for me. I get the feeling (and have for several issues) that the lettercol and some of the articles are part of long-term arguments/discussions that don't mean much to a person happening late upon them. I refer in particular to the discussion on feminism and the general dumping on one Joy Hibbert. I will not say whether or not I agree with what is being said about her, since I haven't read (or don't remember) the piece in contention. It's just confusing and very heavy - in 60s parlance.

*First off, contributors get several issues following the issue their contribution was printed in so that they can read any comment that is made on their piece. The letter column in THE MENTOR usually has several several discussions going on at once; some are starting, some are running out of steam and some are recurring. To really get the 'feel' of any fanzine you must read at least a year's worth if that fanzine is published bi-monthly or quarterly. - Ron.¶*

I think John Alderson's articles are fascinating, though possibly difficult to understand for younger fans. I've studied politics and psychology, which veers into some of the matters he discusses, and I do not get too far lost.

The Russian articles, particularly in TM 57, were an intriguing look into a society often regarded as alien, because we know so little about it. Yours is the only zine I've seen that has Russian fans writing to it and sharing their views. (I wonder if any of them would like a penpal?)

*In answer to the latter, see the following letter. - Ron.¶*

**BORIS ZAVGORODNY**, C/- Poste Restante, Volgograd Central Post Office, Volgograd 400044, USSR.

I have got TM 59 at last. It's fascinating! I looked through it attentively, and want to answer some questions from your readers. I haven't been to foreign conventions, so I can not judge how they are alike or not to those in the USSR. I think that they can't be too radically different, because they are in essence fan's meetings.

As to the publishing of Sf in the USSR - I will say that we have a "Goskomizdat" (State Committee on Publishing) which heads and controls all publishing here. This is the centre about which Richard Faulder asks. How frequently SF is published depends perhaps on people who work in a printing house, magazine, etc. All manuscripts are sent from the various publishing houses to Goskomizdat, and it gives or refuses permission to publish the book. This usually takes a few years to settle. A recent writers' congress stressed that it's time to change such attitudes to manuscripts received for publication. An author who spoke said that one sometimes spent 10% in an effort to write the book and another 90% to get it published. After the 27th Congress of the CPSU there will be reorganisation of industries. I think such reorganisation will come to the publishing industry too. I am especially troubled by SF's position, which is confirmed by the annual bibliography. An example is that the biggest publishing house, which is "Detskaya Literature", will publish only one new SF book in 1987. Talks about a specialist SF magazine have been conducted for over 25 years and with no result. Naive readers would think that writers don't write SF any more. It is partially correct in that some well known writers ceased to write SF as it is a genre which is hard to get published. But there exists tens of talented young writers who have heaps of interesting stories which await publication. However these are our internal problems, which I hope will be solved to SF's profit.

As for lack of knowledge about Soviet Sf abroad, I can't imagine how to be of help. I try, with Igor, to give you some impressions of Soviet Sf and about the writers. I think that this thing is mainly in Western fans. When I heard about Western fandom I thought straight away: "My, and how is their life?" I went looking for addresses. Then I encountered THE MENTOR. I remember I said to myself: This is that which I dreamed of all my fannish life. I longed to publish such a magazine. So what if publishing is the State's business. There are other ways of publishing; for example photographic paper, and I decided to title my future zine PHOTOZINE. Alas! the law is severe, and forbids any kind of duplicating. My intention was rejected. As to those few clubzines: they were published the under supervision of organisations that have the right to publish. Believe me, to get this done is sometimes more difficult than a flight to Mars.

In reference to the knowledge of Western fans of Soviet writers, I thought to do a series of notes about them, something like a mini encyclopaedia from A to Z. The work would be hard, so would I undertake it? However, dear Australian fans, perhaps I'm mistaken in thinking that you have more possibilities in the West, but it is in your power to publish more interesting Soviet SF writers. The official Soviet organisation VAAP (the Agency on writer's rights) will be glad to see Soviet writers published abroad. And look how right Richard Faulder is. We did not get TM 58. And Zamyatin's novel WE is known here as anti-Soviet propaganda.

As to the fascinating titles of Soviet SF books, I think they cannot always guarantee that the work itself will be interesting. For some time long titles have described popular book's contents. I agree that there is magic in names. It is not clear why this is so.

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

Thanks for the kind words and the plug for CRUX 6. Actually I'm asking



just \$3 for it, or \$5 for both #5 and #6. #2 is also available for \$1.50. (That includes postage). By the way, my main reason for making #6 the last issue is because I can no longer sell it owing to the worsening times. The closing of Space Age Books was the last straw.

The Russians seem to take their sf terribly seriously, going into such dreadfully deep philosophy about the universe and whatnot. How does Igor Toloconnicou manage to read so much deep stuff in Brin? Maybe I'm naive or philistine, but I found no great underlying message in SUNDIVER. In THE PRACTICE EFFECT, which I bought after reading your review thereof, he makes a failed attempt to be funny, mainly by the use of exclamation marks, whereas the novel would have worked far better as a straight serious narrative. Indeed the main idea of the story embodied in the title is a great source of wit, fun and humor, but Brin failed to bring it off for me. But then maybe that was just because I don't dig American humor.

Richard Faulder's criticism of "the culture of narcissism" worries me a bit. He has a good point, which he has made elsewhere about Californian pop psychology, which cultivates selfindulgence of this kind, but the other extreme of hiding feelings is no better. I hope he doesn't see the philosophy of "Open up your heart,/Try not to hide what you feel inside" as narcissism. I am glad that he later makes the point about the present social reluctance to show the gentler feelings. Just shows you how sadly we've backslid after coming so far.

But I'm afraid his theory explaining the longevities of married and single men and women doesn't hold water. I quoted the statistics on depression, not life expectancy, and I fail to see what bearing war and childbirth could have on that.

DIANE FOX, PO Box 1194, North Sydney 2060.

THE MENTOR 58: Sue Isle's poem was good, but I feel didn't touch on the point that the deaths of the Challenger's crew were quite unnecessary, and could have been avoided if a bit more efficiency and less penny pinching had living-off-the-past-goodwill had been involved.

Enjoyed Igor Toloconnicou's OPEN ACCOUNT, with its reviews of typical Russian Sf magazine fiction. Some of the plots sound a bit familiar. However, Sf plots and ideas tend to get re-used a lot, it isn't the plot/idea but the use that is made of it that makes a good or bad story. A WIZARD for instance, has a plot that has been used many times, rather an archetypical plot in fact, yet it is described as a good story.

The merging of Sf with the mainstream seems to be world wide - and seems to be taking many forms. One I've noticed a lot is the use of Sfnal imagery in an otherwise "straight" novel. Many apparently main-stream writers suddenly produce an Sfnal novel - some of the best Sf novels seem to be written by mainstream writers - but also, many embarrassments, imagery used illogically. At the same time, many Sf writers try to break into the mainstream either with literature or with "blockbusters" (sf type novels written to attract a mass audience).

THE MENTOR 59 - Malcolm Edward's cover was excellent. Ye gods, a full-frontal nude male (alien at that) whose popping eyes suggest more than a degree of interest in his equally nude earth female friend.

Alan Steward's HARD METAL - the ending of this didn't come as a real surprise, but was quite logical. It looks as if the terrorists/rebels were going to win - any non-millionaire injured in the fighting was a probable convert to their cause. I thought the style wasn't really successful - tended to slightly obscure the

story line, but it was worth making the experiment.

Neil Hayden's anti-nuclear/post holocaust poem got its mood and message across effectively. Enjoyed Buck Coulson's article. Actually he doesn't really go into enough detail in his definition of "Yankee", although I liked his account of Americans (in the USA sense of the word, not the entire 2-continent sense!). According to one set of definitions I saw,

To a non (USA) American, Yankee means anyone from the USA;

To people from the Southern half of the USA, it means someone from the Northern half (ie as in the phrase "damnyankee!")

To people from the Northern half of the USA it means a New Englander;

And to New Englanders, it means people from a rather small group of towns (I'm afraid I can't remember which ones as I read this set of definitions a few years ago and haven't come across them since.). I suspect that the people of the "small group of towns" call anyone from one particular town a Yankee, and in that same town, it is the name of one family! Which is a rather mind boggling idea.

Lana Brown's TAKEAWAY was a nice tense little tale. However, the change at the end as a method of telling was a bad idea - I'd have liked it best from the human's viewpoint, and have them realize that their alien "rescuers" were cannibals - it would have been a nice little shocker. Instead, the ending seemed rather flippant.

Steve Sneyd's QUESTION OF SEASONING poem has a really interesting story scenario - although I suspect that black/white racial prejudice will not be a problem by the time humans are exploring the planets - it will have been replaced by some other form of bigotry (eg anti-mutant or anti-android).

Virginia Wurth's ADVENTURE GAME - started off as one kind of story (mouse-little-man-who-suddenly-has-weird-experience) then abruptly turns into a computer game story and then into a very cliché subspecies of "trick" ending. I didn't think it bad, but it wasn't good because it didn't have any really startling revelations or insights or any new clever twists - and was so short that it had to depend on plotting. Perhaps if the characters had been developed enough to get me involved with them...

**JULIE VAUX**, 14 Zara Rd., Willoughby, NSW 2068.

You won't be getting any artwork or will most other faneds for a length of time, nor will I be making any comments more than necessary on "Art" at all - to do so would be an act of irony. Irony has an edge...

I finally found out what's wrong with my "style". It's not my minor talent or my study and grasp of technique - it's my eyes - it's not an uplifting experience to go to a specialist with hopes of getting something fixed at last and discovering your condition was worse than you thought and at the best can probably only be improved slightly. IT'S BLOODY ENRAGING AND DEPRESSING, and fosters one's paranoiac tendencies and fantasies when you've been sent to Male specialists, who as a group couldn't be bothered to find out what was really wrong, and then going to a Female ophthalmologist and a Female optician, and it only takes then an hour (mind you, they knew what they were thinking, for unlike all those @\$4####\*#@& who only needed to label a "handicap". Thanks to those @\$4####\*#@& my problem can't be fixed cos it should have been diagnosed when I was in my teens.

I do have a visual dyslexia (if that's the right word to use), I'm abnormally light sensitive to the point of seeing into the ultraviolet range (no wonder my shadow is a cat). This has been interacting with a focusing problem involving my right eye in which I have almost no peripheral vision to effect my hand

to eye co-ordination. Sigh, I finally know why I have trouble drawing a straight line even with a ruler - cos it's my right eye. I'll probably never be able to drive. O yippee, she mutters, a life dependent on public transport. I see things as farther or nearer than they are, which is why I have trouble opening doors or attempting perspective.

This also explains the migraines and headaches....

In summary, the next person I find out has been implying or saying I'm a hypochondrial whinger will be invited to eat a copy of my medical report or apologise - meanwhile I have to turn ten years of studying art techniques inside out so that I can learn to operate within these new parameters. BLAAAHHHHAAAARRRRGGGHHH!

Oh that was a lovely front cover on the July issue - its the sort of thing I'd like to see more of. Over all it was an excellent issue for art work with good clear repro - setting standards I would like to see more fanzines use.

Richard: I thought I explained the felines tend to have a thick overall "downiness" thickening into the longer mane down the back. The males tend to have a "pelt" on their shoulders and chest and less hair on the tail. They don't have pubic hair. The basic garment is a kind of leather apron to protect sensitive areas of skin.

My speculations on the Minoans, Michael Hailstone, were basically partly my amateur interest in Bronze Age archaeology and partly as a response in reading Marilyn French's BEYOND POWER. While she tends to generalize I like her idea of the ancient cultures being matriCENTRIC rather than LINEAL or ARCHAL. Would you and Alderson please not argue with Joy about who is more chauvinist? That type of semantics tends to lead into dead ends which are a waste of energy - yours and Joy's. We'll have "peace and harmony between the sexes" when we evolve away from thinking in terms of power and property and dominance. Harmony is maintained by balance. Patriarchy disrupted the balance. How and why and when is a subject to explore.

Brian Earl Brown - I would like editors to use offset for the benefit of all of us - artists and readers - presuming Ron didn't edit most of its out. As for your comments to Larry, well, some of us are doomed to limited vision, but we try to make the best of it that we can, cos we have the urge to make things... Most modern artists create in response to other people's work. Boris Vallejo has a very eclectic style, as do the Brothers Hildebrandt - whose palette of colours is 19th C. neo classic. Vallejo's is modified Baroque. My personal eclecticism - I like to think I've learnt a little studying Wendy Pini's work and I like many styles and techniques. People learn by copying.

Art is synthetic, the bringing together of many factors into one unity. Quilting and welding have something in common... cutting vegies for cooking is a carving skill, and oh dear, I said I was trying to break the habit of commenting on art... at least until the condition of my eyesight stabilizes. It's been deteriorating, but I'm fighting the decline. There are plenty of famous decorative artists who work in flat styles. Maybe....

Laughter. Things do get worse before they get better - hopefully both my eyes and my art will improve - no more frustration and crankiness?

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

THE MENTOR 59... Art first. The cover is great, has a sort of glowing lasciviousness that is irresistible. Why don't you run a competition with two parts,

(a) what goes in each of the think balloons, (b) what is in the invitational "note" the alien has just given the cave-woman (you could also publish it as a christmas card, and call it the Annunciation, but perhaps that would be unnecessary provocation even in our post-Xian times). Other favourite among the art is page 25 the deadpan style of ghettoblaster-equipped heroine, oh and the powerfully 3-D Kraft captain on page 29. SPACED OUT gets better as it goes on: could be to SF cartoons what Dark Star is to SF films if it keeps up the growing promise.

Good news the Strugatskys have had an asteroid named after them. They certainly deserve it.

HARD METAL is a nice fast-moving tale.. and logical, that it could become a 'class distinction', having replacement parts, particularly with all the current rumours of car crash victims being tidily marked 'brain stem dead' so a needed part can go pronto to the private hospital where some affordable waits for a retread. And it's effective the way the bodyguard protagonist reacts as emotionlessly as a metal spare part himself. Of the poems, I think favourite for me is Andrew Darlington's reaction to Deimos, the kind of offhand dismissal of strangeness inevitable with casehardening of space travel, very effectively capsulated.

Could get into respelling out my points re the Salic Law and the India dowry murders (as I understood it from our media, the main complaint is that the Indian government is doing too little too late to stop the "paraffin stove accidents", so it's hard to see on a cui bono basis why the Delhi regime should spread the stories) but would be space consuming. It does leave me feeling Alderson's reading of my comments on those points and my mild query about why Hindu expansionism seemed so limited that, despite his obviously immense research, there is a (very human) tendency to cut the evidence to fit the post-hole. So it goes. On the latter, there may be sense in his implied theory that colony peoples don't invade their motherlands due to some traditional respect, though there would have been few Aryans left in the ex-Aryan areas round the Caspian/Hindu Kush in historic times, plus such 'filial respect' didn't stop Ashoka invading Afghanistan, , and I also wonder how many of the long-time descendants of early Aryan invaders of India really remembered their country of origin anyhow, but the Americans, with much greater knowledge of their nations of origin, weren't stopped from invading Europe in WWI and II, the Romans from conquering the area round Troy, nor later Caliphs from attacking Mecca, so it seems a theory which could do with at least qualifying.

The Soviet art portfolio is curiously reminiscent of the 50s and early 60s Sf paperback covers in the West (the Contact Planet illustrations excepted). I didn't expect a lot of pseudo-ethnic Kremlesque onion domes in space, but I must admit I was surprised by the sameness to what we're used to. Perhaps I can echo the loccer who asks for Chinese SF, and ask for Chinese SF art... if such exists?

PAMELA BOAL, 4, Westfield Way, Charlton Heights, Wantage, Oxon. OX12 7EW, England.

As you point out in THE MENTOR 59 yourself, there's no great trick in producing clean clear copy with the electronic facilities you possess. Never the less as a bad workman should not blame his tools a good workman should not give all the credit to his tools. You have obviously given thoughts to the layout and produced a clean, uncluttered, unfussy appearance that is pleasing. The varied quality illos are well and appropriately placed. Surely the Soviet S.F. Art-Folio must be a fannish first? Congratulations. I think they are most interesting. Not being an officiendo on the subject I can only offer a tentative thought, but it strikes me from this evidence that there is no great divergence between Soviet and Western SF art?? The back cover constitutes the best photo I have seen of Halley's Comet. As we were unable to see or photograph the Comet in the northern hemisphere and our media made a mess of presenting the GIOTTO experiments in a popular science format, we received very little material at all.

I enjoyed the mixed bag of written content. I realise that John Alderson's article is one of a series, but I do feel with a zine that an article should be complete in itself, even if part of a series. There seems to be no point in relating the details of various societies marriage customs and taboo, while they are interesting facts the only conclusion that John seems to draw from them is that incest involves differing degrees of blood (or even non blood) lines in different societies. An obvious conclusion that does not need the support of so many facts. It would have been far more interesting had John sought to tell more about each of the societies and to explain the function of the marriage taboos within the society. The article falls rather between the stalls of scholarship and popular writing, in an attempt the one statement John does make is that incest is, for the most part, only a punishable offence for males. In fact so eager is he to give evidence of this fact he ignores his own evidence, surely the returning of a woman to her father's house with all her goods is a punishment? As the dictionary defines incest as 'sexual intercourse within the prohibited degree of kinship' I can well see that the kinship could involve other than blood lines. I would have liked some dates with the Scottish references. I have a vague memory of the law being changed and there no longer being barriers to a man marrying his brother's widow, that in fact custom has gone full circle. More interesting than who gets punished would have been a look at how changes arise in sexual customs and taboos, how war, famine, conquest alter a society/culture in that respect. Also important is the part that the balance of the sexes play in the process. It is pretty evident that the number of males to females has a strong bearing on today's Western world attitudes, the fact that men outnumber women almost two to one in the under 30s while in the over 50s women outnumber men by almost 3 to one has probably more influence on women's growing sexual freedom (sorry feminists) and alas the rise in the incidents of rape than other social pressures or group activities.

TAKEWAY and ADVENTURE GAME are both lacking in originality; also translating human cultures and human beings to another planet and endowing them with biologically impractical tentacles or chitinous exteriors (irrespective of colour) is a lazy device long eschewed by SF readers. HARD METAL is a better attempt, though Alan makes the mistake of not giving his readers enough information. A problem I can sympathise with, as it was a big fault of my own stories, the characters and background were so real to me I forgot my reader could only see them if I showed them. I suspect too that Alan did not do enough background research that he is not familiar enough with transplant techniques and bioelectronic devices. I like fiction in fanzines but in order for reader and writer to derive any benefit the faned must have the courage to edit.

I like Buck Coulson's style, enjoyed the letters and poetry. There's a gentle air about the cover that I find most appealing.

IGOR TOLOCONNICOU, c/- Poste Restante, Central Post Office, Volgograd-44, USSR.

I received THE MENTOR 59, all right, only it got here when I when I went on my rest leave to a quiet country place which I share with my aunties in the Tambov-depetsk-Noronej region. The house commands an excellent view - a wide basin just in front spreads out to a small river, and behind the river is a forest, into which the sun set every day... Glorious! Incredible sloth has descended on me after my exams. The repair of the flat (we did it ourselves), my leave (I dig up potatoes for my aunties, maintain the barn, etc) I steal from my literary studies. Now I'm again climbing back into the saddle, and trying to make something big for the next issue.

I'd like to comment on the responses to my locs. Well, I can't explain if Soviet Sf is earth centred, Richard Faulder. I confess that I'm quite fond of our old Earth, and this influences my subjective feeling for the field. Sure there ought to be, and are stories generating an "out there" feeling. But on the whole you are

right, I think. Earthly problems concern our literature with a social approach, and also, without doubt, 'near future' stories. Take the leading Sf writers the Strugatskys. Even XXII CENTURY: AFTERNOON and A BILLION YEARS TILL THE END OF THE UNIVERSE are permeated by our Earth. Apropos based on their book HARD TO BE A GOD is a song by K. Abelskaya, for which fans forsake programme items for. Here is a direct translation:

I see a dream, I dream nightmare...  
My verdict is voiced at last  
And beside a pillar of disgrace  
I'm put by my fate.  
And stones rain thick and fast  
The crowd roars: On fire! On fire!  
And hanging my head  
I stand before this mad crowd  
And blood is flowing from my shoulder  
I'm to be burnt out like a candle  
What do you execute me for?!  
However they keep howling: "On fire! On fire!"  
Who thought up this slander  
That it was the Devil who gave my my beauty?  
Are they blinded by mere beauty  
While tar is boiling, waiting in Hell  
Pray, fear, live like a thief  
And set all beauty on fire  
Because Beauty calls us to see far-off places  
And this encumbers...  
Then why keep dreams?  
Isn't it better to burn a witch?  
I cannot breathe..  
The smoke wraps me..  
The crowd howls from all sides  
My dream... it is not like a dream at all

Your remark that women go to churches because worship gives them a meaning to their lives was intended to sound light, perhaps. However, we have quite a number of believers in our country too; incidentally most of them are women, or seem to be so to my eye, because in my travelling around I invariably see only women in church; what am I doing there? This is a question! I'm always curious about solemn intentions and beautiful designs, but perhaps what I'm looking for after all is said is revelation, ha-hm. It is strange how people want to believe in Goodness (pun intended). Promise someone the moon from the sky, and this person will be fond of you till death takes them from you, especially young girls, and they will not be cross if you obviously can't keep your word. Refuse outright, and a more unrelenting enemy you could not find even among those who inhabit the pages of comics. The anatomy of belief was drawn by many philosophers but still it continues to be an enigma. Belief continues to move mountains... and the same belief created UFOs. Flocks of UFO aliens walk through story after story, exiting dramatically into the coming day. The last one I read was by cosmonaut Yu. Galzkov. And cosmonaut G. Grechko built a whole fleet of them, and surprised his companion by pulling a joke: when one flicks at an illuminated glass a small scale separates itself from the outside; a few of them, shining in the sun's brilliance, alarming construed an escadra of UFOs pursuing them because they were oval in form, and in space it is difficult to judge distances. It was really an uncanny sight, he says.

I am going onto another tack now. We are acquainted fairly well with matter - vacuum, atomic structure, forces (and there is a reason that Meta-galaxies and the Universe are united by a sole gravity force), so no surprises here. Space is very closely related to vacuum and is not imagined other than being static; on the

other hand time is not imagined in a quiet condition - it is pictured as flowing, jumping, moving. Nobody has been able to touch space, but it is able to be seen through. And time is not ever seen, or is it? Nowadays there are so many rocket blasts that UFO sighters can go and hang themselves. However my mother's most distinctive memory of childhood is a bright patch travelling slowly across a clear night sky in winter. And this was in the thirties.

UFOs are a mythology of our times, as will conclude future researches, but some sightings are the real unknown looking us straight in the face. Does it mean that we are able to see flowing, moving, jumping time after all? Somebody out there do a simple experiment: balance a hydroscope on a beam of a balance/scale by a weight, set nearby the balance/scales a vacuum flask half full of hot water, then pour cold water into the flask. What happens?

**WE ALSO HEARD FROM:** Ray Bowman of Box 5845, Toledo, Ohio 43613 who sent his dealers list of sf prozines you can buy from him (going back to 1920s editions);

Walt Willis, who thought Alan Stewart's story in TM 59 "immensely above the standards one expects in fanzines, and the contributions, literary and artistic, from the Soviet Union were remarkable - not just interesting as a novelty but intrinsically good", and he "agrees fervently with Faulder about the perceptiveness of Igor's remark on fandom".

Claudio Omar Noguero of Casilla de correo 810, 2000 Rosario - Sta.Fe. Argentina who wants to trade his magazines;

The Oz Comics Newsletter which gives details about an up-and-coming issues of PHANTASTIQUE;

Peter Brodie who has only partly gafiated...;

Andy Andruschak who is looking for a job at 42 and who doesn't see much future in the US space program;

Marilyn Pride who sent a flyer - which, depending on page count, may or may not be in this issue;

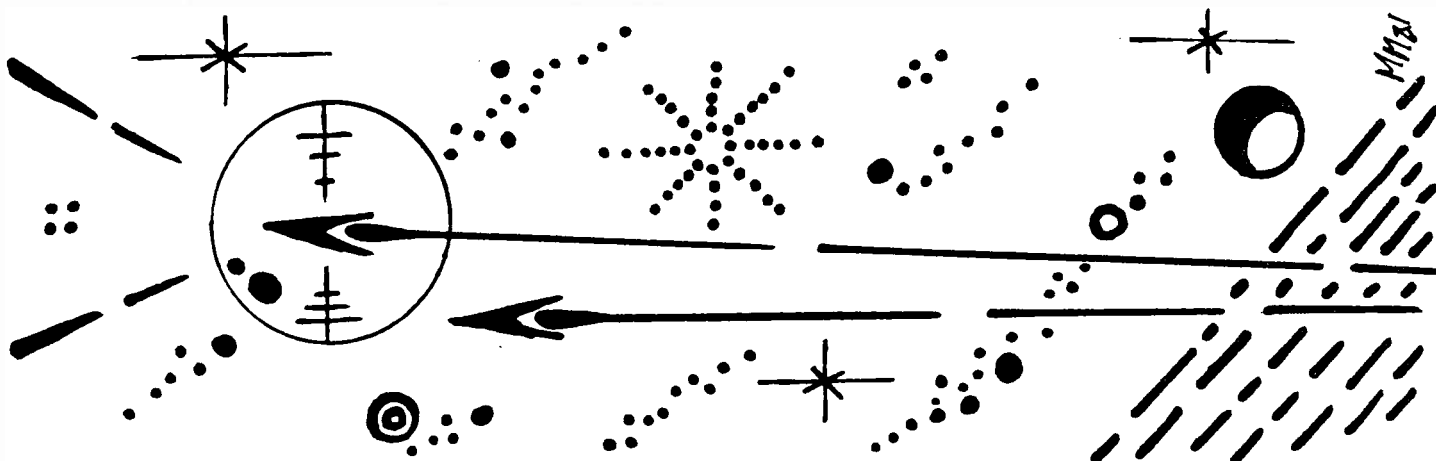
Joy Hibbert, who has gafiated for a year...and who sent a Campaign letter about an attempt to get Soviet fan Eduard Markov permission to leave that country;

Helen Sargeant, who liked most of the pieces in TM 59 but whose loc reminded me of my own - not quotable;

Gail Neville who is also having difficulty getting fannish things done because of her six children.

Malcolm English, who thought he might be up in Sydney in July, but wasn't. Maybe I'll see you in Melbourne in March at TrekCon with more of your artwork???

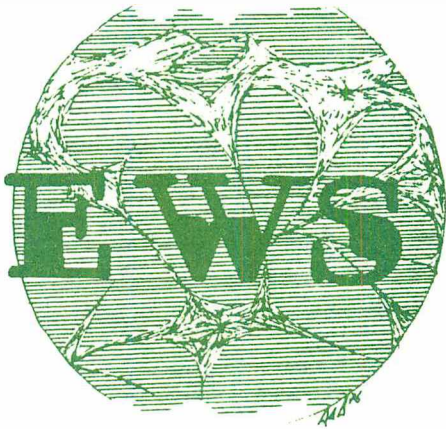
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# REVIEWS



**THE INFINITY LINK** by Jeffrey Carver. Orbit pb, dist in Aust by Hodder & Stoughton. (C) 1984. 540pp. A\$12.95. On sale now.

With 540 pages to work with, a writer can use a novel of this size to probe in-depth into his characters and weave threads into the story that than a shorter work of, say, 160 pages does not allow. Carver has used the extra pages to explore the characters and plot twists. The novel follows the story as a signal is picked up originating from outside the solar system. A robot ship is dispatched to follow up what tachyon messages appear to show is an interstellar ark whose destination is earth. Unfortunately for the several main characters the politico-military complex is determined that the aliens have no idea of any weakness that the USA might have, and is determined that if they can't have their way - all the way, then they will, as a last resort, use force in the guise of nuclear weapons to destroy the 'invader'. One of the protagonists is a young woman whose early work in the programme of allowing use of her emotions links her to another of those who minds are aimed at making peaceful contact.

**THE ANUBIS GATES** by Tim Powers. Triad Grafton pb, dist in Aust by William Collins. (C) 1983. 464pp. A\$8.95. On sale now.

Another long novel. The novel follows Brendan Doyle as he journeys from his fairly staid college job to an interview in London with a mysterious millionaire. Doyle had earned his name with a biography on Samuel Taylor Coleridge. It transpired that this biography is what had put the millionaire, Darrow, on to Doyle. He wanted him for his background information on the early nineteenth century. **THE ANUBIS GATES** is a convoluted novel - it goes from different times and characters effortlessly. The first chapter opens in 1802, in a gypsy camp; but all is not what it seems. Many of the incidents that occur later in the novel stem from the events that happen in this first chapter. I don't say this all that often: but this is one of the best books of science fantasy that I have read in a long time. It is up there with **THE MAN IN THE HIGH CASTLE** and **BRING THE JUBILEE**. \*Highly Recommended\* reading. Once you start it, it is almost impossible to put down. A book both intellectually stimulating and adventurous.

**BLACK STAR RISING** by Frederick Pohl. Gollancz h/c, dist in Aust by Century Hutchinson. (C) 1985. 282pp. A\$32.95. On sale now.

As Pohl's writing career progresses his satire becomes less blunt and

more subtle. **BLACK STAR RISING** is a good example of this evolution. The novel is set some two hundred years from now in the North American Continent. The two superpowers of today have destroyed themselves in a nuclear war and the two nations with the most population to survive it - India and China - had come to dominate the world with their culture. The countries under China's domination, including the North American continent, are not oppressed; however the quality of life for most is lower than today, mostly because of the waste of resources in these bygone days. The plot follows Pettyman Castor as he journeys to New Orleans to be a witness in a murder trial, while there he becomes the lover of a Han Chinese policewoman and manages to secure a job at a university for the time he is there. He is placed in the right position to win a place in an interstellar mission. What the mission finds on the alien planet forever changes the people of earth's future.

**THE RAGGED ASTRONAUTS** by Bob Shaw. Gollancz h/c, dist in Aust by Century Hutchinson. (C) 1986. 310pp. A\$32.95. On sale now.

I feel that this novel is a departure for Bob Shaw from the latest novels of his that I have read. **THE RAGGED ASTRONAUTS** gives the impression that he has put a lot of time and effort in making the novel flow for the reader. Though set in a different continuum than ours, the world has basically the same physical background as ours. The worlds on which the action takes place are sister planets eternally facing one another. They swim in an envelope of air and are only a few thousand miles apart. The society of Land has no exact equivalent to that of earth, though the closest would probably be Renaissance Italy. Great Houses control the society and a king rules overall. There seems to be some question through the novel as to whether the intelligent humanoids on Land evolved there - there are things that suggest they do not, including the conclusion of the novel. As I mentioned in the first paragraph of this review, this novel seems a departure from Bob Shaw's more pedestrian novels. I think he has achieved the novel he was aiming for, and I consider that if you haven't found his earlier novels quite to your taste you will probably find this one is. An engrossing read.

**MASTER OF PAXWAX** by Phillip Mann. Gollancz h/c, dist in Aust by Century Hutchinson. (C) 1986. 280pp. A\$32.95. On sale now.

**MASTER OF PAXWAX** is the first novel by Phillip Man that I have read. It also is the first novel in a series; the sequel will be published next year. The cover is an interesting work - though if it is a scene from the story it is probably from the sequel. The detail does prove that the artist read the novel. The background of the novel is complex - when humanity reached the stars in the Great Push it fought many wars - among itself and between itself and the various aliens inhabiting other planets of the galaxy, some of whom were intelligent. It took dominion over all the planets. The Families that ruled were powerful and sometimes vicious, and increasingly degenerate, both mentally and physically. Pawl Paxwax was the second son in line for the Masterhood of his Family. He was a playboy and was used to pleasure. He had an easy life until his elder brother was killed under a tractor and whilst visiting his father was witness to his parent's death. Suddenly thrust into the spotlight Pawl tried to bring his intended bride safely home. Events became progressively worse until events which had been building up for a decade suddenly precipitated a crisis. I am looking forward to reading the sequel.

**MINDSWAP** by Robert Sheckley. Grafton pb, dist in Aust by William Collins. (C) 1966. 191pp. A\$6.95. On sale now.

I think that this was first serialised in **GALAXY** magazine back in 1966. Sheckley hasn't written any novels for nearly twenty years, and I think the field is the worse for it. His writing style reminds me somewhat of Vance in the way he

describes the aliens, cities and clothes. MINDSWAP is the method the civilized beings of the universe get around. It is faster than light and when one arrives on an alien planet one finds him/herself wearing the body of an alien which one has contracted for. In this way cumbersome space-suits are done away with and the visitor can enjoy themselves. Of course in any system there are those that abuse it - in this case an alien had contracted with a dozen or so to use his body at the same time, and then stole an earthman's body. The earthman, Marvin Flynn, sets out to try to get back to earth, but finds it almost impossible, as the alien legal system on the world he first finds himself gives the body he arrived in to a prior claimant. Marvin finds him Mindswapping with other job seekers and passes through many adventures before eventually arriving at something like what he aspired for.

This is another novel which has survived the years.

**THE COLOUR OUT OF TIME** by Michael Shea. Grafton pb, dist in Aust by William Collins. (C) 1984. 160pp. A\$6.95. On sale now.

Lovecraft fans would like to read this novel. Shea has written in the modern ideom a modern novel as Lovecraft would have written it if he were alive today.

Set at a New England lake, in the middle of the tourist season, **THE COLOUR OUT OF TIME** creates an atmosphere very reminiscent of Lovecraft. The characters, in fact, refer to Lovecraft throughout the book; the heroine is even an old letter-writer acquaintance of his when she was a young girl. By the time the novel takes place she and the two male heroes are getting on in life, though they are in good condition (they have to be to try to defeat the evil spreading its influence over the placid lake). All starts out well as the two men reach the lake in a planned holiday. However it is not long before they notice the evil sheen over the lake and surrounding trees. In exploring this strange miasma they come in contact with two men who will end up victims of the alien presence - two park rangers. Well into the story they meet the heroine, who is the sister to one of the rangers. The suspense quickly mounts and soon all three are fighting for their lives against the presence and also others.

Classic horror.

**COMPUTER CRIMES AND CAPERS** edited by Isaac Asimov, Martin Greenberg & Chalres Waugh. Penguin pb, dist in Aust by Penguin Books Aust. (C) 1953-1981. 250pp. A\$12.95. On sale now.

The editors have ranged over thirty years of sf publishing to find stories that fit the heading - and many of them are from the first two decades.

The stories are: **DARL I LUV U** by Joe Gores; **AN END OF SPINACH** by StanDryer; **COMPUTERS DON'T ARGUE** by Gordon R Dickson; **GOLDBRICK** by Edward Wellen; **COMPUTER COPS** by Edward D Hoch; **SAM HALL** by Poul Anderson; **SPANNER IN THE WORKS** by J T McIntosh; and **WHILE.U.WAIT** by Edward Wellen. Two things of interest are noticeable - the military background of many of the stories and that two of the stories are by the same author. There is almost a sameness about the stories, other than the military background. They are of necessity, 'hard' science fiction. Although some of the stories, if they were not included in this volume, would have been hard for the reader to pick from the beginning as computer stories, they still have that atmosphere of solid social background, in that the stories are believably set up and created.

As with most Penguin sf, these are well crafted stories and make a good anthology. Most I do not recognise, so I suppose the editors dug through the mound of stories that hadn't been recently published, to come up with these. And they aren't the bottom of the pile.

**DRAGONS OF AUTUMN TWILIGHT** by Margaret Weis & Tracy Hickman. Penguin pb, dist in Aust by Penguin Books Aust. (C) 1984. 445pp. A\$7.95. On sale now.

The tide of multi-volume fantasy seems to be never ending. And now the big conglomerations are getting into the act. **DRAGONS OF AUTUMN TWILIGHT** is the first volume of the **DRAGON LANCE CHRONICLES**. The book is copyright by TSR Inc and in the author's note at the back it is revealed that the novel was partly plotted in a Dungeons and Dragons game.

That isn't as bad as it seems - though there is still room for editing to be done in the book. There are too many exclamation marks and awkward grammar. The plot follows the usual quest pattern, and the main characters are brought in right at the start, rather than picking them up as the plot progresses. The group has nearly everything - a half-breed elf, a dwarf, a Knight, two barbarians (one a beautiful blonde), a rough and ready warrior and his frail mage brother, a lovably eccentric thief... and the hero's lady love is off somewhere else with a broken oath and a cryptic message.

The prose is straightforward and the action is also straightforward, with easily discernable villains. A good Xmas present for the nephew or niece.

**THE PENGUIN MACQUARIE DICTIONARY** Penguin pb, printed and dist in Aust by Penguin Books Aust. (C) 1986. 752pp. A\$9.95. On sale now.

There has been several versions of the Macquarie Dictionary around - We have a copy of the hardcover and the soft-cover which was run off the hardcover plates. This edition is standard paperback size and has been brought out for the average person.

Along with the 742 pages of the dictionary there is a table of periodic elements, abbreviations and symbols, Australian armed forces ranks, and a metric conversion table. It is the perfect book for fan-editors as the type is black and clear and the pages are not fragile like other dictionaries. The book has been updated with computer terms and, as I mentioned above, is a good size for the writers/editors desk.

And, of course, it is in Australian English.

BOOKS PUBLISHED IN THE USA BY BANTAM BOOKS AND WHICH MAY BE RELEASED BY THEIR DISTRIBUTOR, CORGI & BANTAM BOOKS, IN AUSTRALIA:

**AMERICA 2040: THE GOLDEN WORLD** by Evan Innes. Volume 2 from the creators of *Wagons West*. It is copyright by Book Creations... The discoveries and dangers on a new world and the attempted colonisation by a strangled USA.

**THE DAWNING SHADOW : THE LIGHT ON THE SOUND** by Somtow Sucharitkul. A further novel of the *Inquest* and the *Dispersal of Man*. Regular readers of Sucharitkul will have some idea what to expect, others: read for something new.

#### OTHER CURRENT RELEASES:

##### CORGI & BANTAM:

**BATTLE CIRCLE** by Piers Anthony  
**OF MAN AND MANTA** by Piers Anthony.  
**PIONEERING THE SPACE FRONTIER** NatCom on Space.  
**THE IDEA BOOK FOR YOUR APPLE II** by Danny Goodman.

##### PENGUIN:

**DRAGONS OF AUTUMN TWILIGHT** by Weis & Hickman.  
**DRAGON DANCE** by John Christopher.  
**THE PENGUIN OMNIBUS OF SCIENCE FICTION**  
**KITEWORLD** by Keith Roberts

THE FALL OF THE HOUSE OF USHER by Edgar Allan Poe.  
CAT'S CRADLE by Kurt Vonnegut.  
THE MAN IN THE TREE by Damon Knight.

HODDER & STOUGHTON: THE HELIX AND THE SWORD by John C. McLoughlin.  
SUPERLUMINAL by Vonda McIntyre.  
SWORD OF THE LAMB by M.K. Wren.  
THE KEYS TO PARADISE by Bob Vardeman

CENTURY HUTCHINSON: EYE by Frank Herbert.  
THE LORDLY ONES by Keith Roberts.

**DECEMBER RELEASES:**

CENTURY HUTCHINSON: EON by Greg Bear.  
DAN'S NUKE by Marc Laidlaw.  
QUEENMAGIC, KINGMAGIC by Ian Watson.  
TRILLION YEAR SPREE by Brian Aldiss.

PENGUIN: LABYRINTHS by Jorge Luis Borges.

SPHERE: WHITE WING by Jordan Kendall

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**CLARKIE'S COMMENTS:**

Are all too short this issue. THE MENTOR 60 is truly the last of its breed for the foreseeable future. All due to a lack of time and money. Future issues will be short - about 20 pages and next year will come out quarterly. Money issues will depend if the not-review issues will come out bi-monthly or three times a year. If I do any review-only issues they will not be going overseas. Even that small size is about 60c postage.

I hope you like the mixture of articles, LoCs and fiction - you will not be seeing this abundance soon. - Ron.

THE MENTOR, ISSN 0727-8462, is edited by Ron Clarke for R & S CLARKE, 6 Bellevue Road, Faulconbridge, NSW 2776, Australia. Published every second month, commencing January. THE MENTOR is available for \$2 per single issue, or contribution or Letter of Comment. Contributions and artwork are solicited (especially short humorous pieces). If return of said contributions/artwork is requested, please send a stamped, self-addressed envelope. Photocopies aren't usually returned. I am again short of artwork, both "filler" and full page.

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