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# the Space Wastrel

8



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THE  
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# BRIGHTON

## APPROACHES

SF WORLD CONVENTION, BRIGHTON, 1987

or

APPROACHES TO THE TRIP REPORT

by

LUCY SUSSEX

How does one describe five very eventful days in the space allotted within one little fanzine? Approaches come to mind, perversely the most unsuitable ones first. The Ulysses method is obviously out - were one to emulate James Joyce's detailed description of Bloomsday, Dublin, 1904, with regard to Brighton, 1987, The Space Wastrel would be the size of the Encyclopedia Britannica.

Obviously, rule one of a trip report is to be concise. Rule two is to be amusing and rule three is to be prepared... sorry, jetlag. Rule three again - be as non-libellous as possible while observing the parameters of rule two.

With rule three in mind, perhaps the best approach is the anti-trip report:

NOT THE TRIP REPORT

by

Colonels Boris, Arkady & Mehitabel Godunov of the KGB

MOSCOW  
1400 hours  
Arrive at Sheremetyevo Airport and meet the brothers Karamazov, Guests of Honour at Running-Dog-Capitalist SF Convention. "We are your English tour guides," we say. The brothers exchange glances and buy 8 litres of Stolichnaya vodka at the Duty Free Shop.

HEATHROW  
1700 hours  
Arrive in degenerate West and are met by degenerate Westerner. He say he is Joseph Nicholas (obviously untrue) and will drive us to the hotel. As he is wearing rather noticeable radio transmitters in his ears, we forbid the brothers any conversation with him. He sulks.

LONDON  
1900 hours  
Complete search of Karamazov's hotel room for bugs, beetles and MI5 bedlice. "A drink, comrades?" say the Karamazovs, opening a bottle of Stolichnaya. Ah, one drink won't hurt.

LONDON  
2000 hours  
Ah, another bottle won't hurt. One thing puzzles us though - why is the potplant, situated on the coffee table between us and the Karamazovs, throwing up? Perhaps it has been over-watered of late, as it is sitting in a puddle. Or horrors! Does this degenerate African violet object to KGB football song, which we are teaching the Karamazovs?

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LONDON  
2100 hours  
"Have to see a muzhik about a bear," say the Karamazovs, and walk - how strange, steadily - to the bathroom. "And now for a night on the tiles," one of them says, followed by the sound of a window being forced. Would act in accordance with KGB regulations, but there is a knock at the door. Comrade Boris opens it to reveal assortment of lissome young people with pointy ears, towels and toy dragons on shoulders. "We are your room party," they say.

LONDON CENSORED

Rest of the night

LONDON  
0510 hours  
Awake feeling Badunov, to find ourselves naked in presence of MI5 camera crew. Are shown X-rated film of night before. Defect.

SECRET LOCATION  
0100 hours  
Enquire about whereabouts of Brothers Karamazov and are told they have arrived in Brighton **all by themselves**. MI5 interrogation continues. For some reason they insist on asking which retired MI5 agents were blackmailed into spying for Mother Russia fifty years ago. How should we know about these antediluvian nobodies?

The trouble about using the viewpoint of a minder, is that having delivered the Godunovs into the hands of MI5, there seems no way of getting them to the Con itself. A change of approach is needed, let's rip off the famous condensed novels of a certain SF pro!

#### EMPIRE OF THE CON

by

J.G. BOLLARD

Pentax Zoom. (1) Lateral section through the left axillary fossa of Joyce Scrivener; the elbow raised in a gesture of pique; the transliterated pudenda of Algis Budrys.

On second thoughts, no! Possibly the only approach suitable to the space remaining is awards, not Hugos, but Lucy's.

#### Tension, Dissection & Apprehension Award

Outright winners: L. Ron Hubbard and the Church of Scientology

The Scientologists contributed substantially to Conspiracy, something obvious from the program booklet, which contained six full-page ads for Writers for the Future Workshops, New Era/Bridge Publications, Mission Earth, etc. As the booklet was only 68pp. long, this meant nearly 10% was devoted to the Mother Hubbardists.

Quite naturally, this largesse was regarded with deep suspicion in some sections (a few Americans, the rest of the world), and disregarded by most others (most Americans). These are authentic fan statements:

"The Scientologists are trying to get at fandom."

"Fandom's too anarchic for the Scientologists to even get a toehold."

"The Scientologists are going to block vote five Mission Earth novels onto next year's Hugo ballot."

The paranoia (just because you're paranoid doesn't mean they don't want to make a Scientologist of you) was heightened by Algis Budrys' Hugo spot. Scheduled as an ad for the Writers of the Future Workshops, it was reportedly an ad for Bridge/New Era. Here the reporter falls down, but not drunk, as during this newsworthy event I was dining with a jovial mob who miss Hugo Awards on principle. Another authentic fan statement:

"Budrys has been bought."

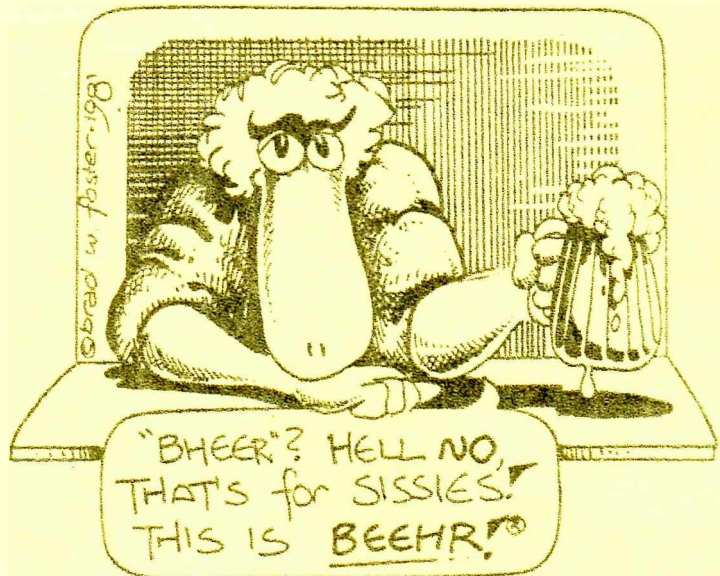
The fear and loathing finally became physical at the Omni party. I was minding my own business, gossiping with Cherry Wilder (okay, other people's business), when I was splashed by some passing alcohol. Looking up I beheld GOH Dave Langford confronting a man in an expensive tan suit. Both were dripping, although the unknown seemed damper - and the shoulders of his suit were soaked and he was wiping beer off his forehead.

"I'm sorry I missed," said Langford in distinctly noncongruous tones, before the pair were hustled outside.

"Oer," said someone. "That's Fred Harris, head of Bridge Publications and the devil incarnate."

What had missed was not the alcohol, but a beer glass, fortunately for both combatants. As I absorbed this moment of fannish history (in more ways than one), I considered offering my beer-splashed shirt to one of the fan funds, then recollected it didn't belong to me, being borrowed from J. Blackford. Sigh!

Dave Langford returned to the party; Fred Harris did not.



#### Basil Fawltly Memorial Award

(one stuffed rat in box of stale biscuits)

This award has been specially created for the Metropole's Manager, an officious individual delighting in high prices, lousy service and shouting "Everybody Out!" at room parties. I had been warned by friends at the previous week's IFLA Conference, also held in Brighton, that the Metropole resembled an upmarket Fawltly Towers. If the Metropole incenses librarians, I thought, what will it do to SF fen?

As it happened, it made the fen ropable and nearly created a lynching party. The bone, or rather bottle of contention was the Metropole's



astronomical corkage charge for outside alcohol, as opposed to their own over-priced variety. Within a very short time, fans were bringing airline bags that clinked, clanked and dripped ice into the hotel, further souring relations. Psychological warfare broke out, with the creation of a wall of Hotel Manager jokes outside the fan room, and the composition of an amiable little ditty entitled "What shall we do with the Hotel Manager?"

Hooray! Lynch the wanker!

Hooray! Lynch the wanker!

Hooray! Lynch the wanker!

Ear-ly in the morning.

On the last day the entire contents of the fan room, comprising several hundred people, joined in this violent song, causing Joseph Nicholas ever so tactfully to close the door to stop the sound carrying. This move must have been ineffective, as members of the hotel staff kept coming into the room and joining in.

#### L. Ron Hubbard Award for Kindness to Struggling Authors

Awarded to Andrew Brown, for reviving the party-lagged William Gibson with a fix of Velvet Underground.

Runner Up - Perry Middlemiss, for buying the same author a drink: "He earns in three months what I earn in a year, but he didn't have any of it on him at the time."

#### Rude Awakenings Award

To those persons who roused Committee member Chris Donaldson in her Metropole room by stealing her money and jewellery, including her wedding ring.

#### Feeble Excuses Award

To the above, for exclaiming, "We were looking for a room party!" (Both these awards can be collected from the Brighton CID)

#### Most Spectacular Award

The Fireworks display.

#### Least Spectacular Award

The opening ceremony laser show. Only one colour was used - aquamarine.

#### The J. Paul Getty Balancing the Budget Award

To the Metropole's computer, which crashed, causing the loss of several important hotel bookings. The Committee was thus obliged to fork out alternate accomodation for the inconvenienced guests.

Runner Up - The fan who ordered gallons of ice-cream from the Metropole for a certain bid party, and was reportedly charged \$900.00£.

#### Mistaken Identity Award

The outright winner is the wonderful Josephine Saxton: "Oh, you come from Melbourne, do you know George Turner, the man with all those cats?"



Runner Up - The registration desk, for briefly mistaking me for the Sussex Science Fiction Society.

Honourable Mention - Those people who, when faced with two Lucy's at the same convention (I refer to the effervescent Ms Huntzinger), resorted to expressions like, "That Lucy", "The other Lucy", and "The right Lucy" (used by Doug Faunt interchangeably).

**Vivienne Westwood Award for Individualism in Dressing**

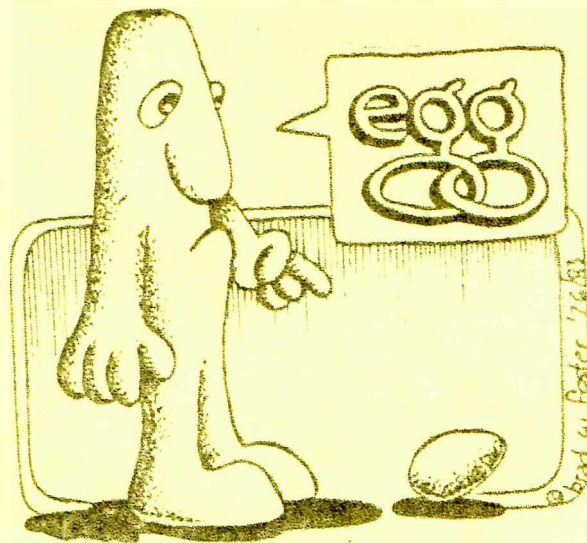
To Doris Lessing, the only person at the convention with a bun. She also sported a shell-shocked expression, but reportedly said she'd come to another SF con, if asked.

**Evelyn Billings Good Timing Award**

To the Perth in '94 party, for scheduling their party when Aussie Rules football replays were being shown on Brighton TV (a rare occurrence!)

**Courage Award**

To the splendid Gwyneth Jones, who attended the Women's Press signings on the day she was scheduled to give birth.



**The Lancelot du Lac Chivalry's not Dead but it ain't half Sick Award**  
To the gentlemen who fell over themselves to help the lovely Tanith Lee off a panel platform.

**British Fashion Industry Colour Co-ordination Award**

To the Women's Press signees, who somehow managed, with the exception of Tanith Lee, to be in matching shades of grey and black.

**Modesty & Humility Award**

To Robert Holdstock, for the most use of the pronoun 'I', during a panel, said panel being on the topic "Magical Sex".

**Sir Archibald MacSarcasm Award for Smart Answers to Dumb Questions**

Fan at Vampire panel: "Can each of the panel tell me what they find most scary about vampires?"

Tanith Lee: "Vampires aren't scary. Questions like that are!"

Runner Up - James Morrow, for claiming he got his crazy ideas from American football (I think... can't read my handwriting).

**Most Spectacular Interruption of Conversation Award**

Dave Langford & Fred Harris.

Runner Up - the Fireworks display, which ended a conversation between myself and some Polish fen, most fortunately, as our respective accents made it heavy going.



**Cheek Award**

To Andrew Brown, for botting a cigarette off Arkady Strugatsky.

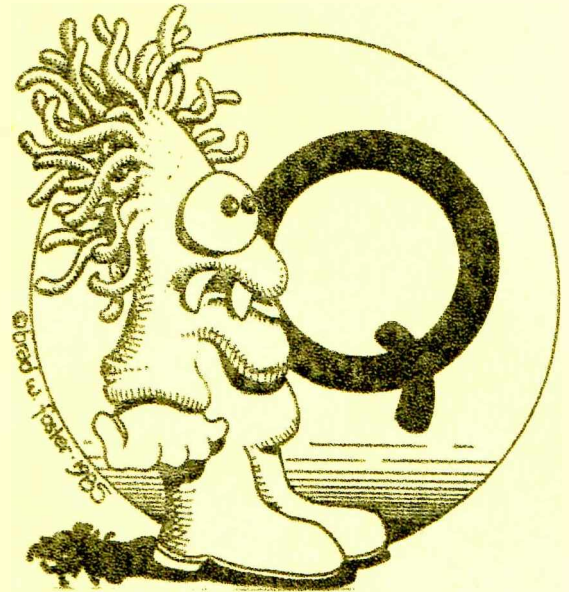
Runner Up - The adolescent British fan who wrote to the Committee demanding he be supplied with seventeen year old girls and asking for tips on how to pick up women. The Committee are seriously considering publishing gems such as these.

**Nicest Person Award**

To Horst Grimm (spouse of Cherry Wilder).

**Silliest Question Award**

To the unknown person who asked the Strugatskys to comment on the proposition that: Ordinary people in Russia and the West are basically peaceful and decent, it is their leaders who are war-mongers. As the brothers were answering this googly at length and with excruciating caution, Brian Aldiss stood up and asked the Strugatskys if they had any tips for young writers, to their obvious relief. This act should perhaps have won Aldiss the **Kindness to Authors Award**, but instead he gets a gong of his own, the **Tact Award**.



**Most Glaring Omission Award**

The James Tiptree Memorial Panel. If there could be a memorial panel for Terry Carr at Conspiracy, then there should also have been one for the late and very great Tip.

**Most Out of Place Partyguest Award**

The blow-up penguin at Lucy Huntzinger's Hawaiian shirt party. However, as it was cuddled almost continuously, it was undoubtedly the most popular penguin there.

**Most Unusual Introduction Award**

"Bill Gibson, this is the person you called a four-eyed wimp." Luckily, he didn't seem to mind much.

Runner'Up - Tana Siegel, for introducing Eric as "my little marshmallow!"

**Most Unreliable Trip Report**

Probably this one.

Lucy Sussex  
Melbourne  
11/9/1987

\* \* \* \* \*

# THROUGH A GLASS

# SHABILY

A NeasterCon Report of sorts by Michelle Muijsert or maybe Amelia Underwood...

\* \* \* \* \*

It is Easter in the city of Melbourne, fannish capital of Australia, and presumably also in other places - we don't notice if it is; a miracle is happening in our damp, grey city. ~~The/sun/is/shining/in/April!~~ It is Convention time! Even more exciting, it is time for a fannish convention. The bottle lines are drawn, the old fannish warhorses are champing at the bit and Foyster himself is helping martial the forces of trufannishness. It is a small convention but the quality is high and we are delighted to have Lucy Huntzinger among us to help us ~~split/the/living~~ live up to the Spirit of Conventions past. Ortlieb, Hirsh and Handfield open the Convention whilst I rush around ensuring everyone knows that the theme for the evening's Cocktail Party is Playgirls/Playboys/Playthings. There have been all sorts of threats in conjunction with this theme (Mark Linneman for instance has threatened to oil his body and appear clad only in a jockstrap) however I am glad to see that the theme is at least causing people to consider outré and offensive behaviour.

In due course I have arranged the room so that there are no straight lines of chairs visible anywhere, while making sure that the poisonous cask wine-petroleum and other refreshments cannot be overlooked. A number of the fen eventually look resplendent, though far and away the most popular of the males is dressed somewhat shabbily in very brief shorts and a t-shirt. Or perhaps this explains his popularity? Anyway at some stage Gina Goddard conducts a poll amongst various femz in this regard. We mark Roger Weddall about an 8 until we discover that we are being polled about costumes and Roger's shorts proceed to let him down. Eventually Roger loses, although FFANZ winner, Lyn McConchie, can be heard later muttering under her veil something about leaving shoes under any time... whatever. It is evident that Australian fandom has a sex symbol in the making, though this is hardly news to some of us. Better late than never.

I am pleased with my own costume until I realise that I will be unable to leave the hotel in it. I am dressed in a black fishnet body stocking, a short white skirt, a white furcoat (only rabbit!), scarlet high heels and lots of makeup. I have a pair of red lacy knickers hanging out one pocket. I look exactly like a prostitute, which is just as it is supposed to be. Unfortunately we are in the midst of Melbourne's most infamous redlight district where street-walkers have lately been ruled out of bounds and police are thicker than 4X drinkers. To go outside is to be arrested. I ponder briefly on this, hoping that the self-evident fact that I can never go outside again will somehow create a discontinuity in time and the convention will continue forever.

Terry Stroud arrives with his famous cake. It is the moment we have all been waiting for, had we but known it. Initially some annoyance is expressed at this disturbance to imbibing and conversation, however voices become hushed as the apparition is beheld. The cake is the shape of a cross - how else should it be at Easter? Strapped to the cross is a poor, distraught figure. It is a cabbage patch doll, with golden plaits lashed to the cake, leaving her motionless and ready for martyrdom. Bright lights are focussed on her pathetic and defenceless body as various parties record her last moments for posterity. For those of us who have already had a little much to drink, it is almost possible to see that freckled face pleading desperately for clemency. But how could a cabbage patch doll be forgiven by true fans? Why should she? Terry raises his knife high into the air...

And cuts her bonds. Breaths held in anticipation escape all over the room. Perhaps, after all, this sort of stuff is a little too heady for fans. Everyone

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relaxes, eyes cease to glint ruthlessly, and the rush for a piece of cake is on. The rise and fall of adrenalin has made them all hungry and more than ready to party the night away.

\* \* \* \* \*

Later that evening the first monstrous rumour of the Con reaches me. Tim Reddan has told Ruth Murphy that his intentions towards Ali Kayn are less than honourable in front of Ali's somewhat paranoid, recently ex-husband, Angus Caffrey. Ali is furious, being somewhat of the opinion that the night's use of her body should be discussed with her rather than whoever happens to be standing round at the same room party. Angus is green.

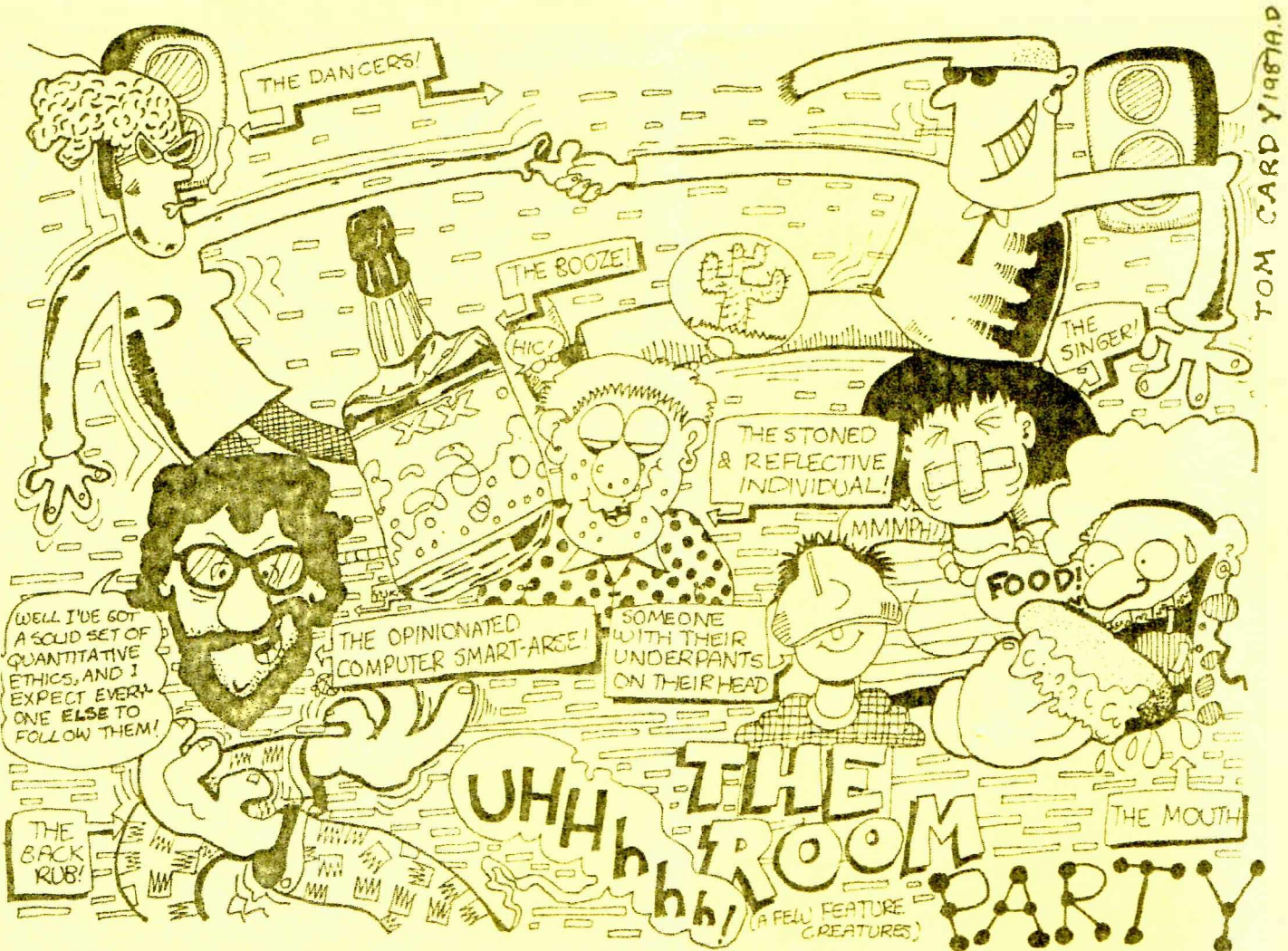
Still later I hear that Tim has groped Barb DeLaHunty who is obviously pregnant besides being unavailable. This is almost as inexcusable and certainly more personally offensive. I feel a slight admiration for Tim in that he has managed to get most of the convention offside in less than 30minutes, but no desire to emulate him.

\* \* \* \* \*

It is somewhere around here that I realise that 17 year olds are not really what I want. It's all a front. They are certainly appealing to look at but what the fuck do you SAY to them? I have no idea.

\* \* \* \* \*

We rise on Saturday morning to the face of annihilation in a bottle. Most of the Con appears to have wiped itself out on Friday night and palidly, quietly is the order of the day. Despite this, the Fanzine Launching is a great success. The basic idea is to have launching speeches for current issues of





local fanzines complimented by cheap champagne served in plastics. One ish of each fanzine is to be inserted in an empty champagne bottle and launched with appropriate blessings off the St Kilda pier into the sea. Simple but tacky, n'est-ce-pas?

Certainly it's popular. But there are some hitches. Finding people to open the bottles while we make speeches seems to involve crawling around the floor. After the scheduled speeches I call for more launchings and don't notice three people in the audience stand up. I am quite hungover and can see about six feet with my glasses on. After the three unfortunates launch their zines, Tim Reddan makes signs at me that I am supposed to launch his Straight Banana. Oh yeah. I stand up, shake, sweat and nearly pass out. I appeal for clemency during my all too brief speech on the grounds of post-Roomparty seediness. Finally it is all over. The crowd is milling viciously, finishing off the champagne, as they await the signal to head for the sea.

Have you ever tried to roll up a fanzine and fit it through the neck of a champagne bottle? Or to fit a cork back into said neck? 'Course not, you wouldn't be so stupid. I, on the other hand, moron that I am, thought that cheap champagne bottles came with plastic stoppers, not corks. Mark (Loney) gets to work with a knife on the corks and the Melbourne SF Club assist with bottle stuffing. This isn't elegant and some zines end up in very small pieces. Still, three quarters of an hour later there are eleven bottles ready for launching and twenty or so fen waiting to see the dedication. Happily we march out the door.

"Which way to the beach?" asks some bright spark. This is a consideration which hadn't occurred to me previously (yes, I'm always this well prepared for my programme items). Luckily Andrew Brown lives in St Kilda and strides manfully forth in the right direction, his head a beacon waving well above the following fen.

"What if we get arrested for littering?" asks yet another bright spark.

"Unnnnh," I reply, intelligently. (Hungover, remember.) As we reach the end of the pier, I begin to see that we are indeed in an open space where the launching of eleven champagne bottles into the surf might cause us some trouble. Happily for us, no nasty little persons in blue arrive to spoil our fun. We assume they are all still asleep, having spent the night crawling the streets of St Kilda looking for prostitutes to arrest... or whatever they do to them. I call for the Rev. Julian Warner's blessing. In other circumstances the assembled gathering might remark that he is looking particularly sartorial, dressed in black with a death's-head on his dog-collar.

"Ummm, abhhh," blesses the Rev. Jules, "errrb, argggh. Bless you."

He waves his hands vaguely in the direction of Port Philip Bay and seats himself on the nearest rock. Some of us are not impressed with the verbosity of the dedication but we get on with the launching. Some people on a yacht wave at us, not realising that the vigorous arm movements are for the purpose of propelling the bottles as far away into the briney as possible. All this fresh air, sunlight and sea-salt is doing kinky things to the fen who look distinctly healthy of a sudden. On the way back we purchase candy floss and other beach holiday type stuff, and are left bemusedly with the feeling that we have opened a window from the closed world of the Con onto a reality outside which is strangely and unexpectedly pleasant.

\* \* \* \* \*

The Con reels on in a furry, friendly fashion.

I hear vaguely that Julian Warner's life is at risk. Apparently he has referred to Lucy H and Gina G repectively as a '300 pound bull dyke' and a 'junior earth mother' or something of that ilk in the Con oneshot. I laugh. Silly bastard deserves all he gets. Some things are greater than any man and woman is one of them.

\* \* \* \* \*



Mark is playing Rail Baron in the Fan Lounge with James Styles and Julian. It is a very laidback game - Mark is not going "poot poot" or making other assorted train noises, Julian is not throwing the dice at the wall although when I enquire he does complain that he is definitely losing. James has mislaid his walking stick and so has nothing to hit people with. He is restless. In this appalling and intolerable lull of banality, he decides to tell us how he came to be a father.

"It probably happened the night I cut the tip off the condom," he announces. Initially, stunned silence greets this announcement. Mark is particularly amazed.

"Are you serious, James?"

"Of course I'm serious," James snaps and casts his eye about the room for something to hit Mark with in the absence of his walking stick. "Why not?" "James..." ...pause... "WHY did you cut the tip off the condom?"

"Well" - James is now getting defensive; it IS an odd thing to do after all - "she was always worrying about the condom breaking, so I chopped the tip off so she wouldn't have anything to worry about. She'd know."

Yeah. It's obvious. Logical, even. We are all stunned that it never occurred to us. Mark moves in for the kill.

"James, did you actually put it on and fuck her with it?"

"Of course!"

Mark is still finding this hard to assimilate and spends another 15 minutes quizzing James about the incident. He decides that as James is a Catholic, it is indeed the perfect, pope-approved form of birth control. The sin you commit when you're not, a guiltless confession-free Clayton's contraceptive. Eventually James gives way and admits that this is most likely NOT the reason he is now a father.

"It was probably all the times she told me not to wear one because then she couldn't feel anything."

"SHE couldn't feel anything?"

"That was what she said!"

At this point one could have remarked that they are apparently made for each other, however in the face of an unwanted child this seems unnecessarily harsh, although undoubtedly accurate. Mark is excited by the lunacy of it.

"I can't believe you cut the head off a condom! I have to tell everyone!"

Fortunately for James there are only 95 people at EasterCon. During the next two days Mark tells at least 10 of them. But the human ability to suspend belief in the face of overwhelmingly unlikely data is running in James' favour. They all think Mark is insane.

\* \* \* \* \*

EasterCon is mostly composed of all the good things a faanish Con should be. Gossip, endless remembrances of fannish histories and great fanzines, comparisons of the zines at the Con and promises to pub RSN, schemes and plans for that wonderful unsullied fannish future spread before us, beer, wine and food. But even these things must come to an end. The Con is finishing and for some reason I am sitting up the front with Handfield, Hirsh and Ortlieb during the poignantly brief closing ceremony. Unexpectedly one of them turns to me.

"Is there anything you'd like to say, Michelle?"

Gulp!

"Ah, yeah, well it's just great that you've all been such wonderful partiers. Thanks for that. I guess I'll see you again next Easter then, huh?"

Fatal last words.

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SMOKER'S TOE & STUDENT'S BACK

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by

MARK LONEY

Well here we are in the middle of November with TSW8 printed and ready to go with the exception of ten pages. Seven of those ten are ready to be electro-stencilled by the Peter Burns Printing Emporium, the other three are this page and the two that follow.

I know that this time I've really managed to excell myself - most of the zine was ready to go in early August and I kept saying I'd do my article, and then I kept putting it to one side... I had planned to tell you about my pronating feet, the right scholeosis of my upper back and the yellowish aftermath of my ingrown toenail. But, like this paragraph, the first draft had had far too many I's in it for me. Plus it was all too maudlin and I really couldn't see how to make it light hearted and witty.

More importantly though, the unscheduled gap in the appearances of TSW, combined with a two inch thick collection of locs, has made it necessary to do some explaining acout what comes next. Put simply, we are having trouble keeping up with the material coming in. As well as dozens of printable locs, we have a large store of artwork and more than a few articles (despite Mr Warner's continued conspicuous absence).

Time, money and postal considerations mean that we really don't want to go over the current thirty eight pages - and none of like the photo-reduction alternative. So the January 1988 issue will be all locs (unless Julian fronts up with an article) in an attempt to reduce that file to manageable proportions...

And in the interests of saving time, better layout and, unfortunately, slightly reduced print quality, I hope to be able to do all of TSW9 on my word processor at work. These pages, Lucy's article and the colophon are the product of Phil the friendly word processor. Comments on appearance are more than welcome.

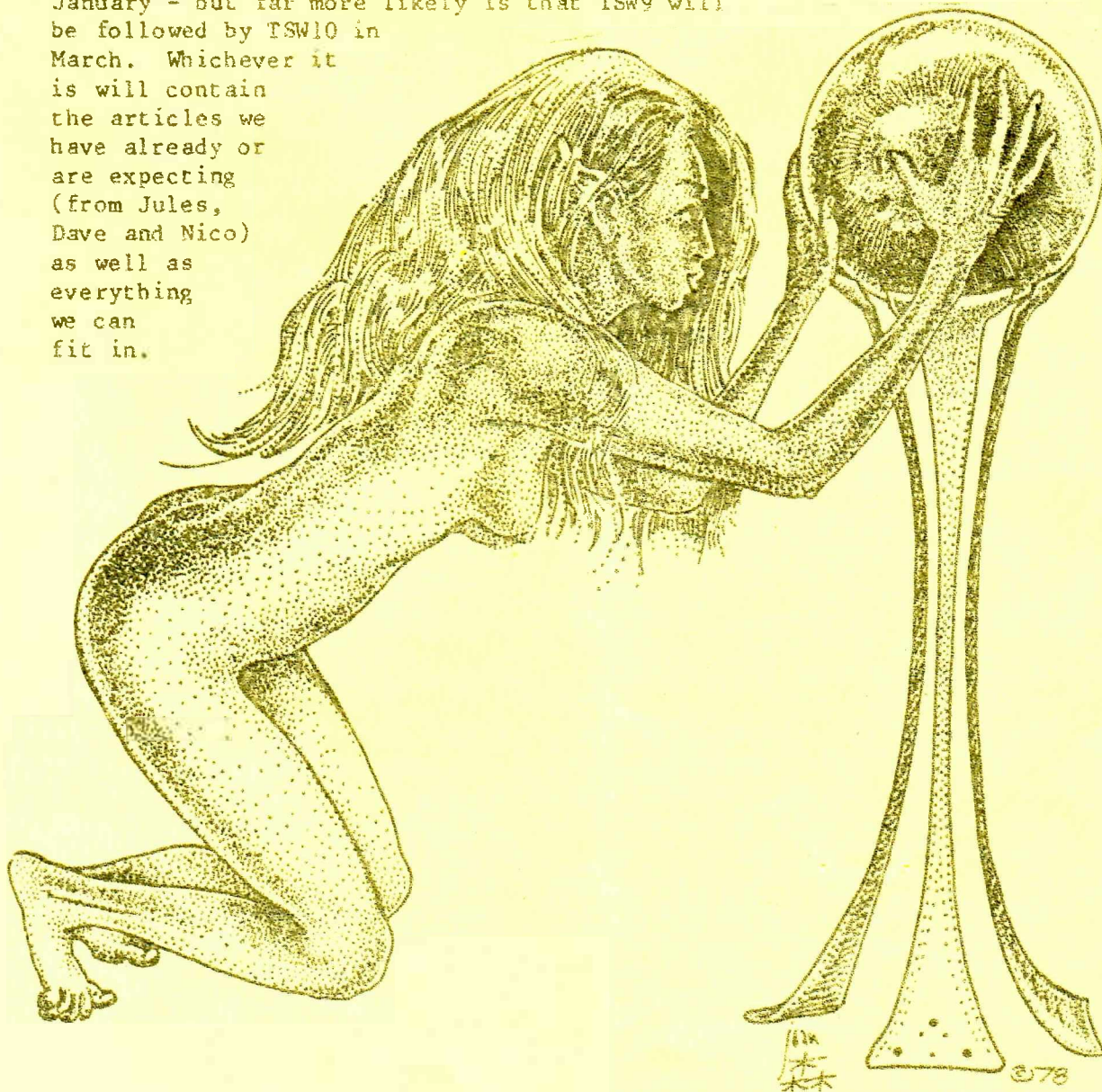
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Since the subject is in the air, I'd like to thank both Peter ('Greg did it') Burns and Greg ('Peter did it') Hills for fine-tuning Peter's electro-stenciller. The problem of faint or faded print that have bedevilled the last couple of issues now appear to have ceased. With the exception of one page of Greg Egan's review of 'Blue Velvet', the faintness of which has a different, once only, explanation (my apologies Greg), what has been printed so far, occasional glitch aside, is a vast improvement. So I think we can afford the slight drop in print clarity that the word processor entails.

This issue is also the first to have special copies run off on white stock for those amongst us who have difficulty reading print on coloured stock. They have been sent to loccers who have mentioned the problem. If anyone else prefers their black print on white paper, let us know and we'll put you down for future issues. (The white pages get printed first though, which can mean they are slightly marked or have the printing moved slightly up or down the page - but we try to ensure they're of a good standard).

I have a vision of posting TSW9 on Monday the fourth of January and then following it up with TSW9B on Friday the twenty ninth of January - but far more likely is that TSW9 will be followed by TSW10 in March. Whichever it is will contain the articles we have already or are expecting (from Jules, Dave and Nico) as well as everything we can fit in.

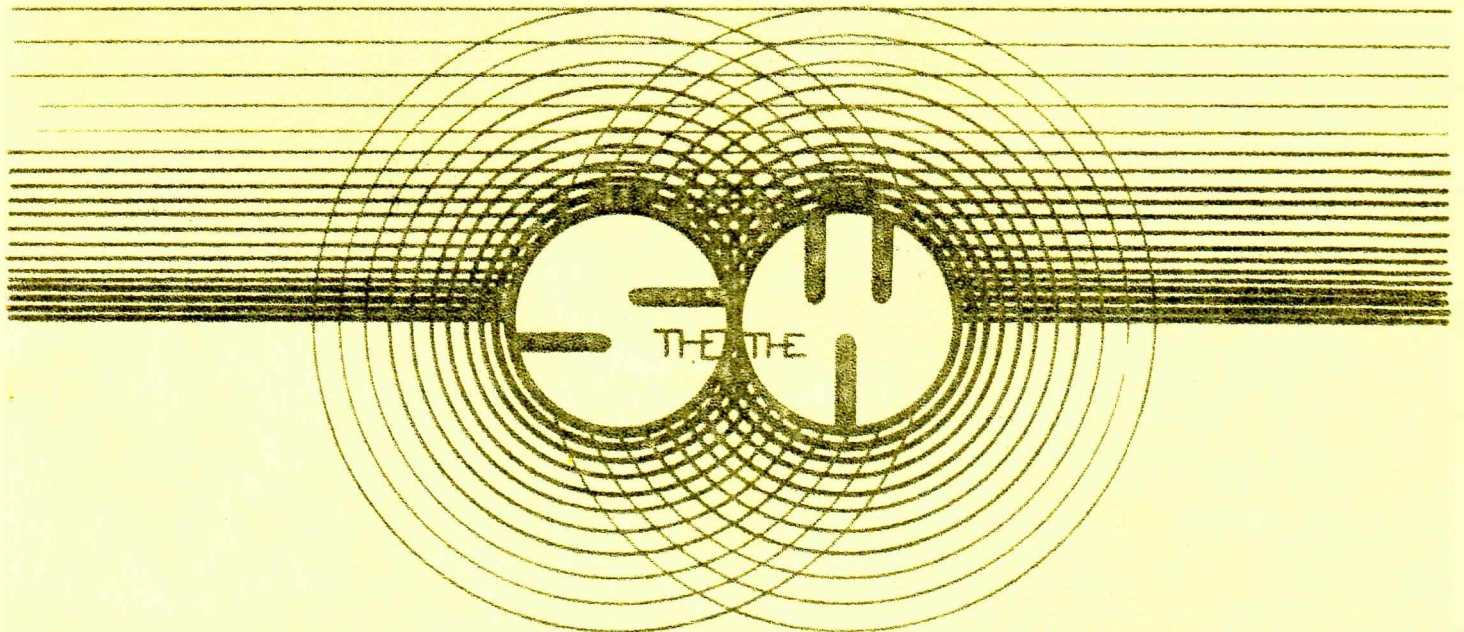




---Student's Back/Loney---

Artists can also note that we are now getting cover art printed offset by the amiable printer of ASFR, Noel Kerr. TSW9 will see the proper production of the great Shep cover we managed to mangle horribly with TSW6 (once again Shep, our apologies), but after that and a Brad Foster cover the cupboard appears to be bare. (Just like the cover for this issue...)

Here at the TSW offices we've noticed a definite slowdown in mail received in the last few months. We ascribe it all to Conspiracy - mail lag means that most people overseas wouldn't have realised (as I write) that we're running late with the issue - and hope that you're all back at the typewriters and your own tower of trifandom by the time this antipodean arrangement of articles arrives. May we all meet in the bar of the Tucker Hotel real soon now...



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**WHY YOU GOT THIS**  
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- We still like small furry animals
  - We trade/You trade/We all trade
  - Mr Loney likes you/Michelle likes you/Mr Warner likes you
  - We live in hope/You've got something we want:
  - Your loc survived the postal system
  - We'd like to add you to our mailing list and will send two issues
  - This is goodbye, not au revoir, unless something mutually satisfying occurs
  - As is traditional, all persons who get three ticks may claim a Prize on personal application to our residence, PO Box 428, Richmond Victoria 3121, Australia
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# THE UN-STATE OF THE NEIGHBOURHOOD

Wherein DAVID CROPP explains a bit about the difference between Australia and Aotearoa (that's New Zealand to those of you who are still living in times of cultural imperialism), perhaps inadvertently shedding some light on why we of the Shakey Isles don't like to be lumped in with the Aussies... hint, hint... (Michelle)

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New Zealand is not a state of Australia, a fact that sometimes seems to confuse the rest of the world, and more than a few Australians. "Why are there two separate countries down there at the bottom of the Pacific?" the rest of the world might ask when it thinks of us at all, which admittedly isn't often. "They're both democracies, aren't they? They both speak the same language, they're both the same sort of people. Why two countries? Surely one would suffice?"

Yes it probably would, and the fathers of Australian Confederation thought so as well when they invited the rather misnamed "King" Dick Seddon, New Zealand's Prime Minister at the time, to join in the Confederation conference. Huffily, Mr Seddon didn't even bother to acknowledge the invitation, so that now we Kiwis don't send parliamentary representatives to Canberra (perhaps to the secret relief of the Canberrans) and need a passport whenever we want to visit our cousins on the other side of the Tasman.

Whether it was to our ultimate benefit that Mr Seddon's dyspepsia and the resultant non-inclusion of these isles in Australia as a more populous (and slightly dusky) Tasmania is a matter of continuing debate. In 1987 our two countries probably have even more in common than we did in 1900, and not just as an appeal to a rather intangible "Anzac" spirit. We still speak the same language, albeit with different vowel sounds. We drive on the same side of the road, in brave dissent from the right-hand driving conformity of most of the rest of the world. We do more or less the same sort of things to make money, and even call the main unit of our different currencies of that money the same thing. Even our politics coincide to the extent that Australia's Labor Party invariably follows the New Zealand Labour Party into - and out of - office. This close connection between the two countries is reinforced by the frequent significant cultural exchanges that we make with each other. An example that springs to mind is that the Aussies sent us the former Wizard of Melbourne, now doing sterling duty as the Wizard of Christchurch while, in the same generous spirit, we responded by giving them the current Premier of Queensland. ((Actually this is just a vicious rumour and perusal of said Premier's personal details will reveal his birth place as being Queensland - PPH/ML))

However despite the undoubted similarity of the two nations and the close relations that we have developed with each other it cannot be denied that some cultural and social differences do exist. To take one example, not entirely at random, there are, believe it or not, more sheep per human inhabitant of New Zealand than Australia ever dreamed possible. Just why we Kiwis need so many sheep probably has more to do with the ability of those particular animals to cling tenaciously to the most vertiginous of our mountains rather than the scurrilous rumour that our shepherds like to have plenty of woolly friends to snuggle up to on a cold night in the mountains. But it can get awfully cold out in our mountains.

This does touch on what to the casual observer is the most obvious difference between the two countries. New Zealand is so much more of a, well, vertical country than Australia. There are something like two hundred and fifty peaks in New Zealand higher than Australia's tallest, Mt Kosciusko, and no less than

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nineteen of them are over three thousand meters high - a fairly spectacular pile by anyone's standards. And each of these peaks are joined up by ridges and foothills which would all be quite impressive in their own right if they didn't happen to be right next to the real monsters. And each of them is joined up in turn by even more ridges and foothills. This whole jumbled mess of peaks, ridges, valleys, glaciers, volcanoes et al which makes up New Zealand is contained in an area which is not much bigger than the state of Victoria.

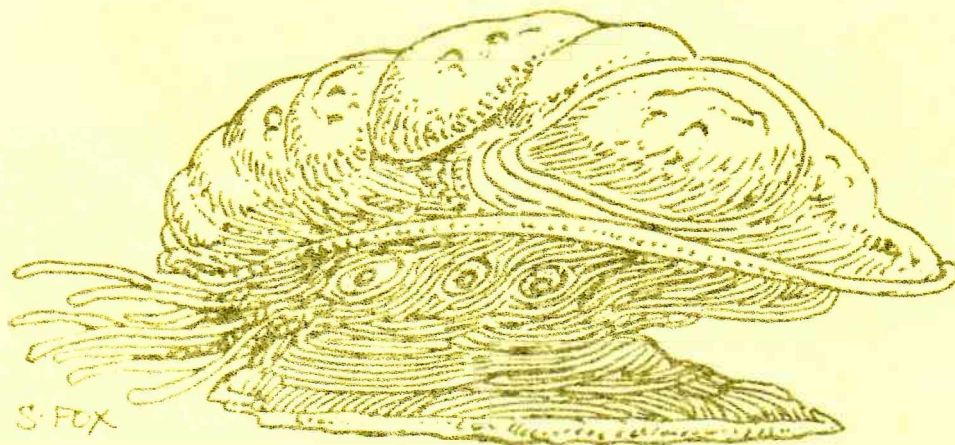
By themselves New Zealand's over-supply of mountains are big enough inconveniences, but things are even worse than that. Unlike Australia's vast expanse of nothingness, New Zealand's compact verticality is, of course, broken up into several not-so-very-large islands. This fact is not, of itself, of major significance. What is vitally important to the formation of our national character is that each of the islands is separated from each other by a stretch of water. Such stretches are called 'straits', for reasons which quite defy explanation, since that is the one thing that they are not. The most important of these straits is the one between the North Island and the South Island and is named in honour of the greatest sailor who ever lived. This was thought to be the most appropriate name by the early European settlers to New Zealand as sad experience taught them that only the world's greatest sailors could manage to cross that particular stretch of water while retaining his or her stomach contents.

It is therefore perhaps not at all surprising that the great sailor in whose honour the strait is named was never silly enough himself to venture onto its waters.

And there are plenty of other waters around these isles over which the natives (and any visitor rash enough to attempt to sail them) may practice the fine old art of heaving out stomach contents for the benefit of the seagulls. There is Foveaux Strait, for example, a thousand kilometers closer to the Antarctic gales, with even bumpier waters and many more seagulls. Or there is the sea passage to the Chathams, or to Campbell Island, or...

There's no real need to go on. New Zealand consists, essentially, of great inconvenient, snow-covered lumps of dirt and rocks which are separated from each other by wide stretches of bumpy, gale-ridden, stomach-churning areas of water. A formidable place, you might think. And you would be right.

It is these geographical excesses which explain why, despite our very close similarity on many things - language, history, outlook - that deep, deep down the psyche of the New Zealander is radically different from that of her Australian cousin. This pitiless combination of mountains and islands; of impossible country in which to live surrounded by raging seas on which it is impossible to sail to somewhere more hospitable, has bred a population with indomitable characteristics. Your Kiwi is tough, has an unquenchable spirit in the face of overwhelming odds, a dogged determination to succeed... and an extraordinary fondness for sheep.





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# IOYLL

## AT MAST-HEAD CAMP

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-----The Thoughts of Count Fogo von Slack-----

'Ah, we take ourselves too seriously.'  
- von Slack, letter to a friend upon receiving  
the Nobel Prize for Autopsychography.

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Count Fogo von Slack was lost in the jungle. Not a tall jungle, but one which the tireless wind blowing off the sea had, as it were, compressed downwards; so that what it had lost in height it made up in density; and the Count, a slender, handsome (spite several days jungle beard) and tall man, as Counts should be, could often see a little distance above the tops of the thickets, and often not.

The jungle rolled like a love-rumpled blanket over a maze of hills and valleys whose substance was sand. This terrain had been formed by that same eternal wind, the Count decided after deep and slow consideration; for the ridges angled back from the rocky coast, steep and ever climbing, following the direction of the flowing air. When? Perhaps as recently as 10,000 years ago, at which time, he thought, the last great movements of sea-level had taken place as the Pleistocene period closed and the Recent began. At the very edge of the ocean even now, in occasional bays and blow-outs, wind and water were tampering with the form of the land. And then lowly herbs and grasses had fixed upon the sand, arrested its movement; were followed by the bushes of the impenetrable heath; and a little further inland, first in the sheltered valleys, the flowing forests of coastal peppermint trees, Agonis.

Graf von Slack crawled upon hands and knees along narrow gloomy tunnels beneath thorn-laden bushes; clambered over the tangled roofs of others, sometimes breaking through and sinking to his thigh, from which position he extricated himself only with extreme difficulty; smashed pathways through mazes of dead branches with a short heavy stick, which he had found suited to the operation. At times he was preceded by his wife of many years and expeditions into the unknown, but more often followed, since the Gräfin had the greatest distaste for the webs of spiders, which here continually snared the face of the leading explorer, and so adhered that only persistent effort might remove them.

The sun had set beyond the summer sea, and the light, particularly in the lowest tunnels of this low jungle, was noticeably waning. Der Graf and Gräfin had from the last rise laid their course towards a dead tree that had once pridefully reared itself above the squabbling rout of the bushes, but now was a skeleton long stript of the leaves and bark that are the flesh of trees. So soon enough will the men who sail 12 metre yachts, or otherwise seek prominence, be stript to grinning bones. Yet the tree still performed a noble duty, since it seemed to the explorers that it marked the edge of an unseen trail.

But so entangled in the jungle were Count Fogo and his Countess that the tree had been invisible to them for some time; and as the twilight sky was grey, any lingering sunset rose being hidden by the crowding banks of vegetation; and even the wind having died; they were somewhat confused as to direction. Not by any means utterly confused, at least not yet, but on the lip of the slippery slope of doubt. It occurred to them both, as they afterwards revealed to each other, that not to light upon the trail before darkness supervened would be a signal inconvenience; their only recourse in such case being to curl up in each other's arms deep beneath the sheltering thicket, and thus pass the night a small warm hill for beetles and spiders to walk upon, for possums to nuzzle, for kangaroos and emus to blunder into.

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How like the life of modern humanity was now the situation of Count and Countess von Slack! Crowded, jostled, prickled until threatened by utter bewilderment. Many of their difficulties are not actually hostile, many of the bushes unthorned; yet all hinder and divert from course and purpose. Deep within this jungle of difficulty they lose sight of the greater landmarks, of this outstanding hill, of the trail, of the dead tree supposed to flank the trail; as in the rush and roar of a day they might forget the principles of their lives, their stated moralities, their avowed purposes; and helplessly narrowing the focus their attention think only of how to circumvent this idiot bureaucrat, that brain-damaged driver; or fall to powerlessly cursing the invisible dog that habitually defecates upon their lawn.

The trail to which Count Fogo and his beloved wife intended might be likened to a moral principle, or a determined course or career, which firmly held and constantly remembered gives direction, certainty and - greatest prize! - serenity, to life. Not brute force and a lashed tiller will penetrate the jungle to that trail. The massed bushes will hurl back such an assault, lacerated and exhausted. No. Subtlety, circumspection, and above all flexibility of means - here to clamber; here, abandoning burdensome pride, to crawl; here, where the enemy can with confidence and without consequence be broken, to smash - these are the qualities that will enable the traveller to thread the mazes of the forest. Even the trail itself must necessarily proceed by such devices. It winds round the greater trees, it creeps over hills via the lowest pass, it fords streams at their narrowest and shallowest - thus harmoniously it traverses the jungle.

Mention has been made of 'the life of modern man', and the suggestion that it is a life touched with fever. Count Fogo and Countess von Slack spend most of that life, in common with the overwhelming majority of our species, in the city, a frantic, febrile place indeed! During their sojourn in the jungle, they argued over which their city most resembled - the closed, stifling, thronging mounds where white ants, of the insectile order Isoptera, live their soft white lives in narcissistic darkness; or the many-portalled labyrinths of brown, black and red ants (but for simplicity's sake let us subsume them all under the title 'black'), the quick, pugnacious Formicidae (order Hymenoptera). Achilles' dangerous Myrmidons, ever ready to rush forth and slaughter, ravish, plunder their hinterland, and almost as quick to like behaviour in their own mazes, among themselves. Long and heatedly the Count and Countess disputed the matter; but at last, each conceding many points of the other's case, and agreeing that modern man and his habitations are more complex than either white or black ants and their nests, they joined in asserting that Homo Sapiens, in diverse of his activities and his individuals, bears strong resemblance to both termites and Myrmidons, but can be more glorious and yet baser than either.

It would take too long to characterise in detail the frenzied complexion of city life. A short extract from the Count's journal must suffice:

New Year's Eve, again out with Basil and Serenice. The Countess and I motored to Fremantle, parked at Holly Makarenia's place then walked up the cycleway by the sea to Lombardo's and boarded a boat into which hundreds of people packed to eat, drink and dance into the New Year. This we all did while the boat cruised in and out of the yacht harbour and Fremantle harbour.

Moments: Basil flicked Serenice's top up as she leaned back on the bar exposing a golden tanned back; dancing on the boat rocked, combining rhythms of music and waves; gazing from the window into the dark night, where other boats bore people dimly dancing beneath red and blue light, and I drunkenly thinking how it is sex that drives the whole frantic machine of world, man and culture (sobriety contradicts this insight not in the least, and though the philological Count is perfectly aware that Hymenoptera signifies 'membranous wings', this bruited of 'hymen' in the very name of the order of the Myrmidons tickles his conceit; moreover it is well known that early in their history the queens of Achilles' horde are driven to destroy their own 'hymens' - what benthic,



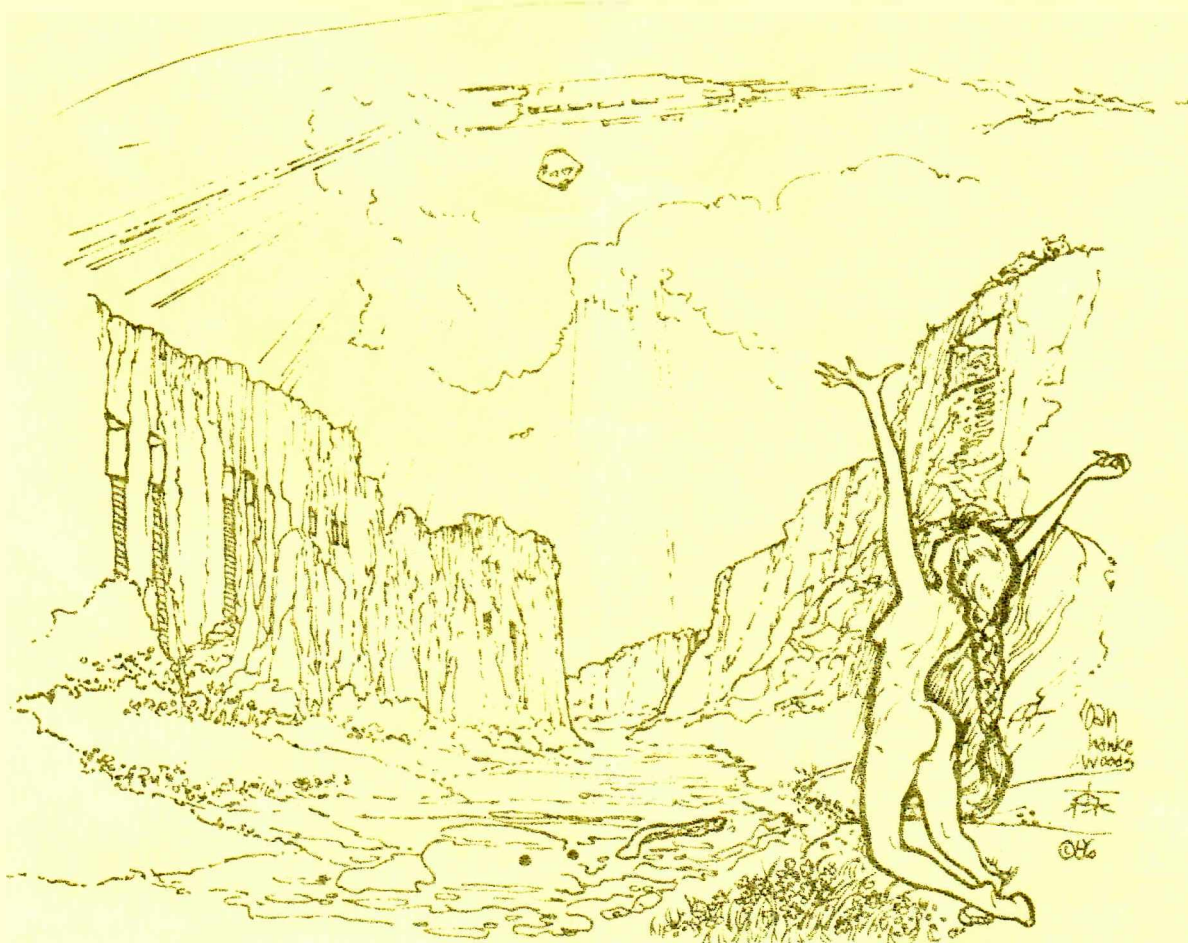
---von Slack/Idyll at Mast-Head Camp-----

ungovernable passions might not this act predicate?}.

When the year turned over we kissed all the wrong people, thereby offending the ladies. Now everyone was excessively gay, or roused, or tearful as it took them, by virtue of the great quantities of strong drink that had been consumed. Some fought. Some caressed. For my part I prefer caressing, yet so persistently were Basil and I insulted by four young blades, wishing perhaps to prove their manhood, that it was not to be borne. I held my peace until physically assailed, at which point my rapier leapt from its scabbard, and my tormentor found blood coursing from the Schmiss on his cheek. There ensued an extended moment in which I stood at bay - after all they were four, each larger than Basil or I - but their youthful bellicosity had collapsed and one ran squeaking for the constables {so much for manhood and honour}. On Basil's advice the Countess and I slipped quietly away. We walked back through the wreckage of Fremantle's revelry to collapse in Molly McKaronie's darkened house around 3 am.

The next day's newspaper revealed that there had been a 'Mardi Gras' in Fremantle and an unprecedented influx of revellers - trains full, people left on the stations angrily smashing bottles and scrawling on the walls, monster crowds in the port itself, the constables unable to control the situation as they wished. - frightened, some of them said.

On the boat, and in the streets at the end of the night, I felt the excitement - bubbly and frantic, like being in the depths of a champagne glass.



This then was the Labyrinth on an occasion of festivity. How much more laborious its terrain in the great rout of the year's days, when der Graf and Gräfin, exiled and impoverished as the best nobility in these sorrowful times, must strive with the mass and seethe of humanity for elusive gold! Lost in such a jungle how difficult it is to maintain any direction to life, to hold to a balanced, undistorted and untroubled view of the world! How easy to become utterly bewildered! And yet the solution is simplicity's self, though all too frequently forgotten: Stand Back!

---von Slack/Idyll at Mast-Head Camp-----

Standing back from a bush, the Count at once detached himself from the thorns and achieved a wider view; a path around, not easy, but certainly not impossible, was now apparent. From the last rise, it will be remembered, der Graf und Gräfin had been able to descry a whole demesne of the entanglement including the likely line of the trail. And sight from their camp, called Mast-Head Camp for reasons that will become apparent, might encompass huge tracts of jungle, hill, coastline, with all their various egregiosities, and spaces, and infrequent trails.

From clues scattered throughout the preceding narrative, as the style adopted, as the reference, wholly gratuitous in its place, indeed a metaphorical miscegeny, to 'lashed tiller', as most lately the eponymous 'Mast-Head Camp', the astute reader will have divined that der Graf von Slack has spent many an hour in recent days lying in his hammock slung between two peppermints (Agonis) in Mast-Head Camp itself, reading the Titan Melville's Moby-Dick. There it was that in the thirty-fifth chapter entitled 'The Mast-Head' he came upon the following felicitous passage:

In the serene weather of the tropics it is exceedingly pleasant - the mast-head; nay, to a dreamy meditative man it is delightful. There you stand, a hundred feet above the silent decks, striding along the deep, as if the masts were gigantic stilts, while beneath you and between your legs, as it were, swim the hugest monsters of the sea, even as ships once sailed between the boots of the famous Colossus at old Rhodes. There you stand, lost in the infinite series of the sea, with nothing ruffled but the waves. The tranced ship indolently rolls; the drowsy trade winds blow; everything resolves you into languor. For the most part, in this tropic whaling life, a sublime uneventfulness invests you; you hear no news; read no gazettes; extras with startling accounts of commonplaces never delude you into unnecessary excitements; you hear of no domestic afflictions; bankrupt securities; fall of stocks; are never troubled with the thought of what you shall have for dinner - for all your meals for three years and more are snugly stowed in casks, and your bill of fare is immutable.(1)

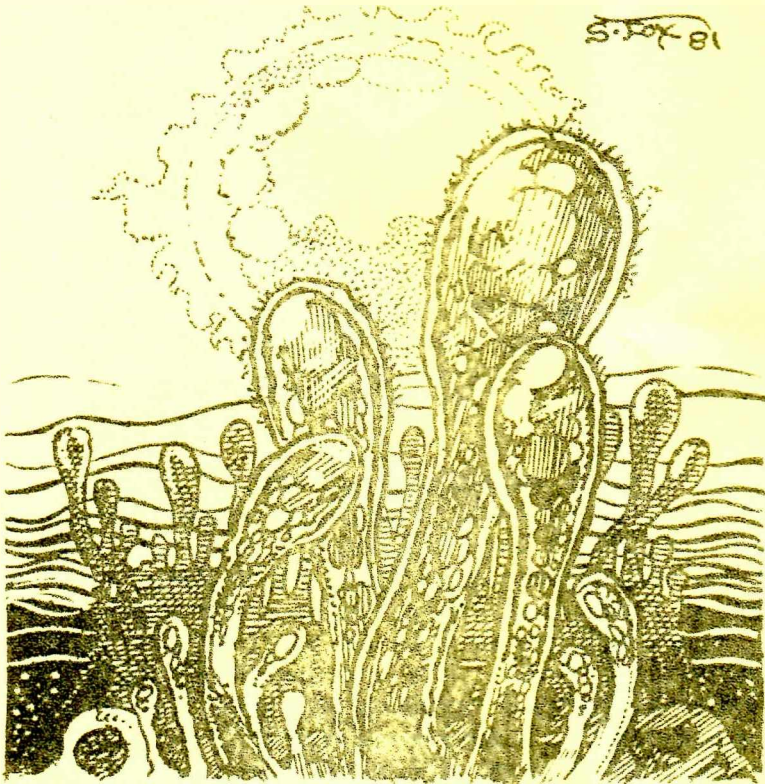
Mast-Head Camp, my friends, was a discovery! Only the hardiest four-wheel-drivers might achieve it; the trendies in their shiny Japanese toys painted with fast stripes would have been discouraged early in the long and arduous approach. Thus the Count and Countess happily lacked visitors from week's end to week's end. Here in a dell some old farmer had cleared a few bushes beneath the over-arching peppermints (Agonis) so that a small tent, a fireplace, a galley beneath a tarpaulin might be laid out. Behind: the dune hill, forested these 10,000 years, rose a little higher to its summit. Before: an elevated lip embattled the glade from the wind, upon which walking (some ten paces from the sheltered hearth) the Count and Countess were rewarded with a magnificent view. The country fell steeply in jungled folds less than a mile to the sea, which foamed and roared upon a coast of dragon's teeth: a stratum of limestone, geologically infant, yet by virtue of its softness and solubility wonderously and fantastically corroded, so that from its earlier uniformity sprang fretted petals, flowers, corals, sponges, ferns, shells, towers, battlements, entire villages of Neuschwansteins - the work of that tireless globe-girdling master sculptor, Mad Ludwig, the sea. Among the more indomitable stones that marched down like drowning armies beneath the waves, little bays recessed, paved with clean smooth sand, where the Count and Countess bathed of afternoons, laughing and twisting in bright pools like pale smooth seals.

But stay! Imagination and fond memory outstrip the eye. From Mast-Head Camp these details yet remained hid by the verdure atop the final cliff. The sea seemed a carpet, lapping this green continental rim; a carpet of pensive grey, translucent emerald, or vital Prussian, as the day turned, as the sky clouded and cleared; a carpet fringed with an ever-changing pattern of white laced foam, flowing, piling, expanding, pooling and abating without surcease.

Long the Count stood, gazing down upon the eternal sea, while the beneficence

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of the sun caused a myriad grasshoppers to sing around him, while a wattlebird croaked drowsily, for all the feathered tribes had vanished to shady perches where they now silently dozed. Fogo had become aware of tiny sharp percussions in the dell behind, infrequent, so that he had just ceased to ponder the cause of one, and freed his thought upon a new path, when the next punctuated the languor of noon. At length as Count Fogo stood dreaming one such crack sounded immediately beside him, as if an homunculus had fired a duelling piece, and a tiny missile struck his ear. He turned, and to his fascination discovered a black seedpod, rather like those of a pea vine, which, having just violently discharged itself, was still slowly curling its two split shells. Years may it hang now, its

part played, its purpose fulfilled, suspended in a dry empvran far from the attentions of termites and moulds; until perhaps a bushfire shall free its constituents to fly windborne into new elemental cycles. It was the heat of the sun, the Count surmised, that was causing the pods to twist and burst.

All the while at some little distance below the surf sighed and washed unceasingly. Unceasingly, now as before, when the first cell lay upon a still airless Earth, brooding over the kingdom of life coiled monstrously within its nucleic molecules. Unceasingly, now as after, when Earth will have burst and cast its vital Prussian seeds upon other stars. Thus the Count's reverie drifted down the count of years to a time when simple creatures will inherit planetary evening, all haste forgotten. This already ancient continent will have drifted into strange latitudes, and indeed, according to one chronicler, the whole world, stilled at last from its turning and fallen much closer to its star, will wait in eternal sunset for that star's final bursting. Fire unparalleled, fire sublime, sweeping out past this and other orbits will at last consume Earth's substance and free its vapours to float once more upon the wind of space, into new whirlpools of starbirth, new cataclysms of death. Yet until this final moment will bloody waves creep upon a bloody shore.(2)

Count von Slack turned at last and stepped back into the shade and quiet of the camp, where lunch, his hammock, and the magnificent Melville beckoned. He was neither unaware of, nor ungrateful (to whatever Gods he worshipped) for the return of spiritual serenity, the renewal of confidence, the restoration of vigour and decision that such perspectives of landscape, of imagination, of time confer. Indeed upon this occasion, as at times past, he had actively sought them as an antidote to the degradation of the human machine and psyche attendant upon Saturnalia in the Labyrinth of the Myrmidons. If his mind were a ship then it seemed to Count Fogo that for too long the helmsman of lucidity had lain drunk in the coppers, while jerked by an insensate storm the sails had boomed and the wheel spun and crashed. Fogo at first, fallen perhaps beneath the pall of a certain boredom, had enjoyed this violence of nature (for so he regarded the forces and patterns of community); but latterly he had become utterly disenchanted with his own helplessly driven, rudderless

---von Slack/Idyll at Mast-Head Camp-----

condition. The panoramas from Mast-Head Camp, actual and spiritual, were proving to be marvellously restorative.

That afternoon in the pages of Melville, the Count discovered a passage that struck him most pleasantly, a metaphor for the human mind, larger than his own 'unsteered ship', as Melville, he grudgingly admitted, might by some, in some respects, be considered to be slightly larger than himself. The two images were of course making different points; but if his own had commented upon his condition a week or two previous, how precisely Ishmael's creator sketched him now!

Consider the subtleness of the sea; how its most dreaded creatures glide under water, unapparent for the most part, and treacherously hidden beneath the loveliest tints of azure. Consider also the devilish brilliance and beauty of many of its most remorseless tribes, as the dainty embellished shape of many species of shark. Consider, once more, the universal cannibalism of the sea; all whose creatures prey upon each other, carrying on eternal war since the world began.

Consider all this; and then turn to this green, gentle, and most docile earth; consider them both, the sea and the land; and do you not find a strange analogy to something in yourself? For as this appalling ocean surrounds the verdant land, so in the soul of man there lies one insular Tahiti, full of peace and joy, but encompassed by all the horrors of the half known life. God keep thee! Push not off from that isle, thou canst never return!(3)

And yet, thought Fogo lotusly, enhammocked at Mast-Head Camp, he had returned, and lay now, if briefly, in Tahiti.

Rather thoughtlessly we left der Graf und Gräfin von Slack lost in the jungle as night was falling. You will be pleased, my friends, but scarcely surprised, to learn that shortly thereafter they crawled from a seemingly impenetrable bank of verdure onto the white sand floor of the trail, as into the bottom of a trench; but at least a trench that gave easy passage back, through a dark and bat-fluttering wood of peppermints (Agonis), to their camp. For you will long ago have realised that the Count and your humble author are one and the same, well known to most of you, albeit under an inconspicuous modern alias. It may divert you in idle moments to try and puzzle out which of the incidents recounted herein occurred strictly as given, and which have been embellished; whether, for instance, modern democracy actually permitted Count Fogo to carry his blade aboard a public pleasure craft, or whether he was obliged to make a broken wineglass serve in its stead; which opinions the Count truly holds, and which are tongue-in-cheek; but as to the Count's identity in daily life there is of course no mystery - who else would write with such unabashed, such flerid self-indulgence?

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We have seen how Count Fogo von Slack betook himself into the wilderness deliberately seeking serenity and ease of soul through the renunciation of 'unnecessary excitements' and the attainment of wide imaginative perspectives. We have seen how he found what he sought. Alas! forty days in the wilderness were all too little, and the Count on this occasion could remain but twenty. Nevertheless he achieved a tranquility and relief from distraction that in retrospect he finds enviable. His mind began to function in slow surges like the swell of the ocean; ideas floated bugely from the depths, gathered force and breached like whales; then sounded again, and once more surfaced having echoingly sung in the benthic dark, attracting kindred of many degrees, who lay now basking in idle beauty and power upon the sunny surface. Should now the Count, pricked by his reading, turn his awakened, sharpened glance upon some problem of community, of history, of life, understanding was instantly his. Vision from Mast-Head encompassed the unveiled world: as well the individual, as the spinning cloud patterns of his associations, great and small, were apparent to him; as well the consuming rage of the bushfire, as the luxury of green springing from blackened stumps a season later; as well



the suffocating swarm of the Labyrinth, as the delicious vacancy of the wilderness in which it was built, and the unimaginably greater vacancy of the empyrean through which the entire planet wound its lonely course. Ah, how comprehensible, in very fact, is life! In the senses both that it can be understood, and that it can be seized. But how often, alas, does the Count ingloriously fail of either!

At Mast-Head Camp the Count was daily delighted by unexpected insights into the machinery of his soul. But these are of no interest to you, my friends. Rather shall I expatiate somewhat upon the Count's cogitations concerning the world at large and modern hominids in particular. For the Count abhors the revolting fashion of self-baring. And what indeed might he reveal of his secret life and thoughts that is not common to the entire human race? How does he presume to differ, how do any of us differ, in ability, in charm, in our lusts, our failings, our hopes and dreams? Less than we think, my friends, less than we think. And of the Count, who wishes to know that in his ridiculous pride he has programmed his computer to greet him 'G'day again, Biggus Dickus'? Who cares that the odd char spot in the cushions recalls the occasion long ago when in a mighty rage he tore the fire living from the hearth and hurled it to the points of the compass (most of the fabrics in the room had to be replaced)? Of what conceivable interest is it that Fogo against all canons of convention once ran stark naked into the hot suburban night. Why? He was drunk at the time on apricot brandy and some unknown pills.



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There was a startled face in the dark; a car slowed as it passed, then hurried on. Fogo dived over a wall and curled up under a rose bush. The earth was damp from the sprinkler and smelt of sun-toasted grass clippings. His pursuer ran past plaintively calling his name. 'Fuck her!' muttered Fogo and became absorbed in the mandalas behind his eyelids. Sometime later, finding himself slightly chilled, he arose and wandered up the narrow side path of a comfortably closed house; dim lights, and perhaps the shine of a TV screen glowed upon the blinds. Fogo's limbs glimmered whitely in the dark. The back garden pleased him; there were islands of tended shrubbery that arched over curving paths, the bricks of which

were cool and mossy to his feet. With no particular design, Fogo silently hoisted himself to the top of the fence and was about to drop into the next garden when he was struck by the thought of German Shepherds, Dobermans and, most terrifying of all, Rottweilers huge as tigers. He sniffed deeply, the caverns of his nose expanding to gather the stars, but there was no trace of the foul effluvium of dog. Fogo descended. The notion of wild beasts in the night of jungle suburbia lent frisson to the adventure. He proceeded thus stealthily through several gardens, scenting the air for man-eating tigers, and pleased with the idea that he had discovered a whole new world, an alternative universe stitched by some para-Einsteinian topography into the interstices of dreary urban development. In his admittedly bemused and for the time

---von Slack/Idyll at Mast-Head Camp-----

being happy condition he felt that just by surmounting enough fences he could travel from Midland to Fremantle as secretly as a mouse might traverse Castle Gormenghast. But a little later Fogo was assailed by an irresistible fatigue: there was no recourse but to find a place to sleep. Another fence, another garden, and here was a shed. Silently he opened the door and entered. The shed had a window, but it was many moments before Fogo could make out anything at all: then, as much by touch as sight, he located a pile of clothes on a bench or box in a corner, climbed up, wriggled into some sort of comfort and fell into oblivion. At some stage he half woke and pulled things over him as armour against a creeping cold.

Much later Fogo woke completely - well, more or less. He found that the excitement of exploration had somewhat abated; the trans-Einsteinian realm had become boring old backyards; he had crossed several (he had no idea how many) without raising so much as a growl from beneath bush or behind shed, so now he became convinced that the law of averages was about to unleash slaving monsters upon him; in addition to this he felt not at all well. Clothes were the thing. The supreme self-confidence, or whatever it was, that had clad him earlier had vanished without a trace. Investigation of his bed discovered nothing of use. But fate smiled upon him, and clambering from the pile his face touched fabric, like a cobweb across a jungle path - a military jacket suspended on a hanger, and inside it military trousers! Thus it was that Fogo returned along the public footpath dressed as a Sergeant of Army Reserves who had lost his hat and whose arms and legs had shrunken woefully - once, indeed, he stepped on the trailing cuff of the trousers and fell over.

Had Fogo awakened the next morning as cool and clear-sighted as he was wont to wake at Mast-Head Camp, he would surely have dumped the army duds in someone else's dustbin and forgotten the matter. But he did not. His moods at that time were rather ungoverned (another aspect of the rudderless ship). He was overcome with remorse at what he now viewed as theft, and kept imagining the poor military man finding his clothes missing and falling into despair. In fact he certainly would not have, rather he would have given his poor military wife a hard time for a week, even though it was not her fault. Nothing would please Fogo now, however, but he must take the clothes immediately back.

The doorbell rang deep in the house. The door opened. Small wonder Fogo had tripped on the trouser legs: the military man was HUGE. Fogo began to regret his decision to make amends. It was probably lucky for him that the military man was completely non-plussed at the sight of the slight, ascetic, possibly even seedy Fogo standing there holding out a folded khaki uniform that must at least have reminded him of his own. 'Your clothes,' stammered Fogo. 'I was a bit out of it last night. Grog and pills, you know. Woke up in your shed. No clothes. Borrowed yours. Here's \$5 to get 'em cleaned. G'bye.' Strange sounds emerged from the military man's gaping mouth. Clutching his clothes, and regaining mastery of articulation, he started to say something, but Fogo stayed not to hear what. Uneager for further confabulation he scuttled down the steps and round the corner where he put on a respectable burst of speed. Skinny to a fault, yet not unfit, habitually shunning the world of sport and public performance, running Fogo resembled a wounded helicopter not quite able to leave the ground.(4) He arrived back at the late breakfast table somewhat puffed.

But as I have said, of what interest are such secret personal quirks and episodes? Fogo's 'Mast-Head' ruminations upon the state of the world and its likely course are surely more worthy of our attention, which ruminations, my friends, were fanned as embers to life by another passage from Melville, which the Count encountered as he lay one afternoon in his hammock:

The world is as young today, as when it was created; and this Vermont morning dew is as wet to my feet, as Eden's dew to Adam's. Nor has Nature been all over ransacked by our progenitors, so that no new charms and mysteries remain for this latter generation to find. Far from it. The trillionth part has not yet been said; and all that has been said, but multiplies the avenues to what



remains to be said. It is not so much paucity, as superabundance of material that seems to incapacitate modern authors. (5)

Well might Melville say so - in 1850, thought Count von Slack, lowering the bulging paperback onto his stomach. Heralded by the liquid trill of their contact call, a flock of silvereyes squirted from branch to branch through the tops of the peppermints (Agonis) like blown spray. The Count rummaged in the attics of a dilettante scholarship. Yes, the spirit of the time (Zeitgeist, as those with proper scholarship might say) had been different, very different.

Vermont: upon the comfortably civilized eastern coast of the United States. Yet the railways, growing like the nerves of an infant cat, could translate one in a matter of hours into the dawn of the western frontier. Buffalo still washed like a tide across the central plains, and passenger pigeons in their billions still migrated, three hundred mile long aerial rivers, over the eastern forests. Melville was sitting on the edge of the great unknown, into which the ordinary man could still penetrate, there to marry or murder savages, to rob banks or pursue bank-robbers, tear gold from the earth, discover wonders of Nature or the lost cities of vanished races - and all this single-handed, without the backing of a National Aeronautics and Space Administration, or the emasculation of insurance. In July 1850 (the year California was admitted to the union) five hundred ships lay in the bay at San Francisco, deserted by their gold-hungry sailors. And while Americans still could plunge into vacant, unsettled, incompletely explored land on their own continent, the hopeful of Europe, the restless, the seekers of freedom from the constraints, the habits, the laws of civilised life found their own frontiers overseas. The British were busy mapping a quarter of the globe in Empire red; the French, the Germans, the Dutch and others exploiting colonies wherever they could seize or maintain a foothold. Opportunities abounded for the adventurous.

Like a landscape in spring, Western culture in the mid nineteenth century was pushing out the new leaves of expectant growth. Scientific, economic and political developments conspired to persuade the literate that continuing progress and improvement was the normal condition of society and nature. The thought of the time was such as to nourish Darwin's Origin of Species (1859). Liberals held that free competition would bring economic expansion; intellectuals that competition of ideas, truth. The forces for social reform and universal suffrage were well-established, and steadily advancing. Socialist theory, hand in hand with the idea of human perfectability, gave rise to a number of experiments in utopian community. Human perfectability, too, was surely essential to the disorganised creature of Bakunian anarchism - how else might utopia be reached once the bombs had done their work? Where, wondered the Count, had he read of Michael Bakunin: '... aristocrat, large, hairy, emotional, good-hearted, contradictory, clumsy, heroic ...' and also: '[some have] suggested that his childhood was so idyllic that his subsequent anarchism was an unconscious attempt to get back to the Garden of Eden'? Count Pogo felt he would have loved the man. (6)

As to utopian experiments, Brook Farm had been on Melville's doorstep; Nathaniel Hawthorne, whom Melville was delightedly getting to know at the time of the composition of Moby-Dick, had been a 'director of agriculture' there.

... their desire was to combine the thinker and the worker, to guarantee the highest mental freedom and to prepare a society of liberal, intelligent and cultivated persons whose relations with each other would permit a more wholesome and simple life than could be led amid the pressure of competitive institutions. (7)

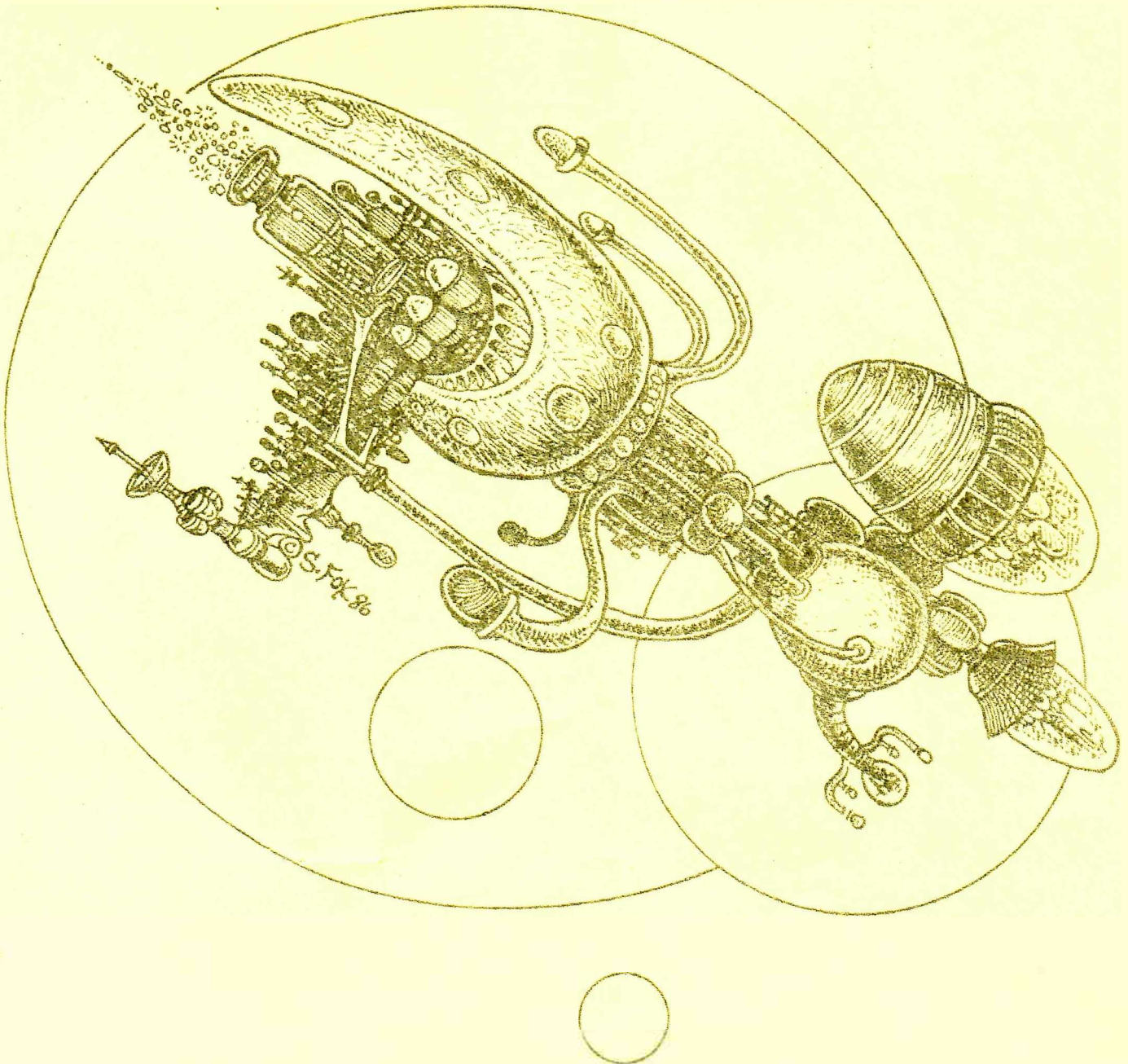
A worthy desire enough in the Count's estimation, who leaned steeply towards utopianism, Bakunism, environmentalism, albeit without the ferocity of a zealot. (Socialism was another thing: perhaps all right in theory, but apparently damaging to the intellectual balance of its devotees.) Though Brook Farm attracted craftsmen, intellectuals predominated. They published a weekly magazine, The Harbinger, devoted to social and political issues; and conducted a school noteworthy for its enlightened approach, which among other things

---von Slack/Idyll at Mast-Head Camp---

aspired to 'perfect freedom of intercourse between students and teaching body'. Der Graf von Slack sighed and smiled at the peppermint leaves and patches of blue sky beyond. In the giant sausage factory to which he had been condemned during an abortive stint of teaching ~~some~~ years before, there had been one or two student bodies which had inspired dreams of free intercourse in his ever anarchic mind. But back to Brook Farm: Gold as much as anything brought the endeavour low. They poured all available assets into the construction of a great hall; but on a night in March 1846, as they celebrated its completion, it caught fire and burned to the ground. It was a blow from which the community could not recover, though it struggled on for three more years.

Such then was the spirit of Melville's world: exploratory, expectant, on the move, filled with wonder and hope and belief in mankind, brash too, and careless.

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Here ends Part One - More in the Next Ish  
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# STRUCTURAL ANALYSIS IN SF

## WHY?

Susan Margaret examines the writings of Mark Loney and Ian Nichols and the psychology behind structural analysis in general...

Since I have myself undergone the kind of training which I suspect WAIT of offering Ian Nichols and Mark Loney, in my case a nifty number titled "Message Analysis" and a somewhat less organised unit, "Popular Culture", at Murdoch University (these were the most overtly structuralist of my Communications units there), I feel slightly qualified to comment.

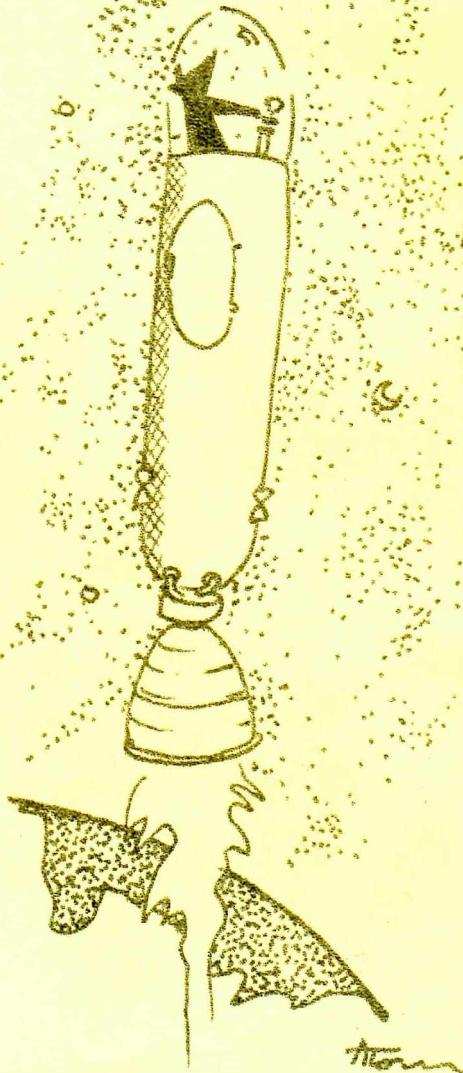
As an aside, I feel a little uneasy with the notion of an essay done for a course showing up in a zine, unless stringently rewritten. A communications student, of all people, must learn to write for her/his audience; I can imagine no more fruitful an exercise than translating an analysis from "language that will get an A" to "language that will please an audience", and I was sorry that neither writer attempted it.

However, the title question is the crucial one: why? It's a question that applies to structural analysis as a whole, and it can be tough to answer, just plain having fun being difficult to justify, at least in academic circles. For instance, I recall a wonderful article by Robert Hodge, who ran "Message Analysis", which took as its text a paragraph from an article in Mayfair called something like "Confessions of a Housewife: How I Was Unfaithful With John the Postman". From this one paragraph he was able to show that not only was the author not a housewife, she was probably not a woman.

Not very startling? No, but I haven't really done the article justice in giving the conclusion. The analysis itself was masterly, interesting, and could easily be applied to texts which might be of interest for other reasons. I suspect, for instance, that one could use it to analyse Ronald Reagan's statements and find out which of his advisors was currently in greatest favour, or to find out which faction is currently on top in the Kremlin, whichever seemed valuable. (If you want to check it out, the Hodge article is reprinted in "Approaches to Popular Culture", edited by C.W.E. Bigsby and published by Arnold, 1976 - or I'll lend my copy.)

So, to its use in SF: while both Mark's and Ian's articles made use of the terms and concepts associated with structural analysis, neither, in my view, reached to the heart of the matter. (Ian's came close, but lacked a clear analysis of the sources of pleasure in the work, and the way Heinlein legitimates these.) An article which does, if I may sound academic for a moment, is Russell Blackford's article on the works of Heinlein in

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"Contrary Modes". If I may quote a telling passage:

...the book [Stranger in a Strange Land] suffers...  
..from some major {seen in retrospect} disparities  
between what appears to be its overt ideological  
content and its form and language.

(P.63 of the Ebony Books edition, 1985.)

This, to me, is the heart of structural analysis: the notion that there is a surface text and a subtext; that the surface may partly obscure the subtext, or rather, that the subtext may be shown by the way the surface is structured, not by its overt content. Teaching oneself to see through the surface is the point of the exercise, and should be what Douglas Adams might call a LIFE experience: it should change your way of looking at things.

Thus, Russell Blackford confesses to his embarrassment at his adolescent enjoyment of Heinlein's "liberated" views; thus, I argue with my mother that there is no such thing as a "feminist" episode of "Trapper John, M.D." or a "feminist" character in "Falconcrest", though I have seen things which claimed to be both.

In each case, the subtext belies the surface. The sexual "freedom" in "Stranger" is undercut by the facelessness of the female characters: equal relations exist between equal characters. If one group of characters is portrayed as rounded personalities, while another consists of characters so interchangeable that it is impossible to tell them apart except by name (which female first had sex with Mike?), then the subtext is an affirmation of the essential inferiority of the second group. Similarly, the "feminist" in "Trapper John" who turns the tables on her would-be seducer by asking for the use of his genes in fathering her child, then telling him she's discovered a better partner, is portrayed as cold, over-intellectual, and possibly frigid. In any case, she's strictly temporary, and what better denial of her validity could exist than complete erasure? Although I have watched very little of "Falconcrest", it is not hard to perceive the pattern there (particularly since my mother and brother watch it and compare notes): the strong women are inevitably imprisoned, disfigured, killed, or at the very least (and it's not the least by Falconcrest standards) divorced.

The same relationship between surface and subtext obtains in the violence dramas like "The A-Team", which I was surprised to find Mark Loney defending in TSW 5. Sure, some non-standard variants of "the Family" are now being "defended", and the faces of some of "the bad guys" look similar to those that used to be "the good guys", but the Weapon Shop slogan is still there, with Vietnam combat training upping the ante rather than changing the rules. The A-Team is not playing a different game from Decker: they're playing the same game better, thus affirming that this game is OK to play. Show me one instance where mainstream society is held to be fundamentally at fault and a change of social direction is seriously proposed, and I'll undertake to show you where the subtext proves this impossible or undesirable.

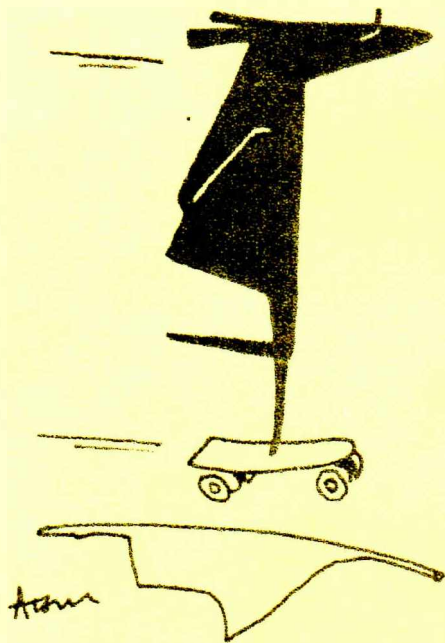
I agree with Mark that it's significant that the shoot-em-up scenes are not the climax of the plot and do not produce blood-and-guts or even those suspiciously unmarked corpses of the old Westerns, but I think he has missed the subtext message: that it's OK to resort to violence - see, no-one's really hurt and nothing is really altered by it.

To return to SF for a moment, this same subtext message is part of some of Harry Harrison's "satires" on space opera, notably the "Stainless Steel Rat" series. The surface affirmation that it is not alright to kill muddies our perception of the subtext, which is telling us that violence is fun. For instance, in the first book Inskipp confirms Slippery Jim's rather shamfaced estimate of his corpse-count: zero - BUT WHY IS SJ SHEEPISH ABOUT THIS? A "real" villain would have killed more? (Actually, unless SJ's methods are radically different in later episodes than they were in his pre-Corp days, it's an unlikely estimate: a charge of explosive large enough to blow a bank



vault is not going to leave all bank personnel unscathed.) We can enjoy the "violence-is-fun" subtext message because the surface is confirming mainstream morality.

An even more telling instance of the same: when Angelina, easily the most bloodthirsty character in the series, is finally caught, her personality is adjusted to make her less violent, but the essential Angelina is preserved. Her harmless associate Pepe Nero, who was caught with much less bloodshed a novel-and-a-half earlier, was brainwiped, reducing him to a mindless vegetable. The personalities of the violent are more worthy of preservation than those of the non-violent? Or was Pepe's real crime lack of originality?



Because this is satire, it's not always clear which message is the "real" one; I suspect that the dynamic which makes the series work is a tension between them which never quite affirms either, so that we can enjoy both. Slippery Jim himself, while constantly affirming that he is a Stainless Steel Rat, living outside society's bounds, beyond the pettiness of supine obedience to ordinary laws et cetera, et cetera, is actually working as a high-level law-enforcement officer to protect ordinary people from "the real villains", who can be killer individuals or corrupt governments. This kind of doublethink dynamic is necessary because the readers Harrison is aiming at have become aware of the fundamental flaws in the straight space opera ideology.

Something of the same can happen with "The A-Team", the difference being that the balance is a good deal less even. Whatever lip-service is paid to the notion that a non-violent solution to problems is possible, or that individual problems may be the result of faults in the whole social system, the A-Team will use at least a little dose of their "harmless" violence, and voila! - problem fixed.

For me, this is the disturbing part of violence dramas. I prefer the ones in which a man shot in the leg falls to the ground in writhing agony, bleeds profusely, is unable to walk without assistance and faints from loss of blood, to those in which he decides it's only a flesh wound and proceeds to chase the villain around the rooftops for ten minutes. I have much enjoyed "The Bill" because not only have the bad guys won in some episodes, but in some the best efforts of the good guys have made no difference - their attempts to arrest an unlicensed moneylender being laconically dismissed by those whose "rights" they were "defending" because whoever's arrested the poor are still poor, and so someone will run a moneylending racket. (Subtext message: the police are good guys and they'd change the system if they could, but...)

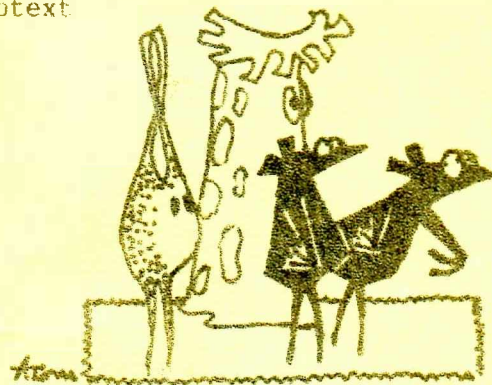
Of course, the handing out of easy solutions to difficult problems is part of the attraction of fiction, but beyond a certain point the phrase "opiate of the masses" begins to float onto the scene. One of the virtues of structural analysis is that it can apply to "texts" in many different media, of varying "literary quality", and let us know exactly what we're being beguiled into nodding our heads at regardless of the "violent-acts-per-minute" count.

Thus, the number of times the Spon Troopers shoot, or miss, the "Star Wars" good guys, is not relevant. The subtext message, that those good guys use

violent means to secure their objectives, and succeed, is. Even "The Force", Dark or Light, is primarily weapon-oriented; whether Darth Vader was killed in anger or with regret, he's still dead at the end and wouldn't have been if Luke hadn't fought him - yes, I know the Emperor did it; and look what happened to him.

The difference between the good guys and the bad guys amounts to the style of the two operations: as with the A-Team, the small-but-good wins over the large-but-bad, not because they are ethically superior (oh, the Emperor got a fair trial and I somehow blinked and missed it?), but because their organisation is based on family-style comradeship (down to brother-sister bickering and actual blood ties) rather than heartless bureaucracy. Note well the role of the father-son relationship between Darth Vader and Luke: each tries to use it to influence the other, but who succeeds? The fact that you're just as dead if shot by a comradely, family-loving rebel as you are if the lovable DV gives you one of his nasty looks doesn't rate a mention, the white plastic outside doing a wonderful job of disguising the humanity of those the rebels shoot. (Just as well it does something; as armour it doesn't even deflect Ewoks.)

Usually adults have more trouble reading subtext than children do: watch any group of kids playing Star Wars or The A-Team and you'll see they have the message very clear. They miss the surface text, of course...

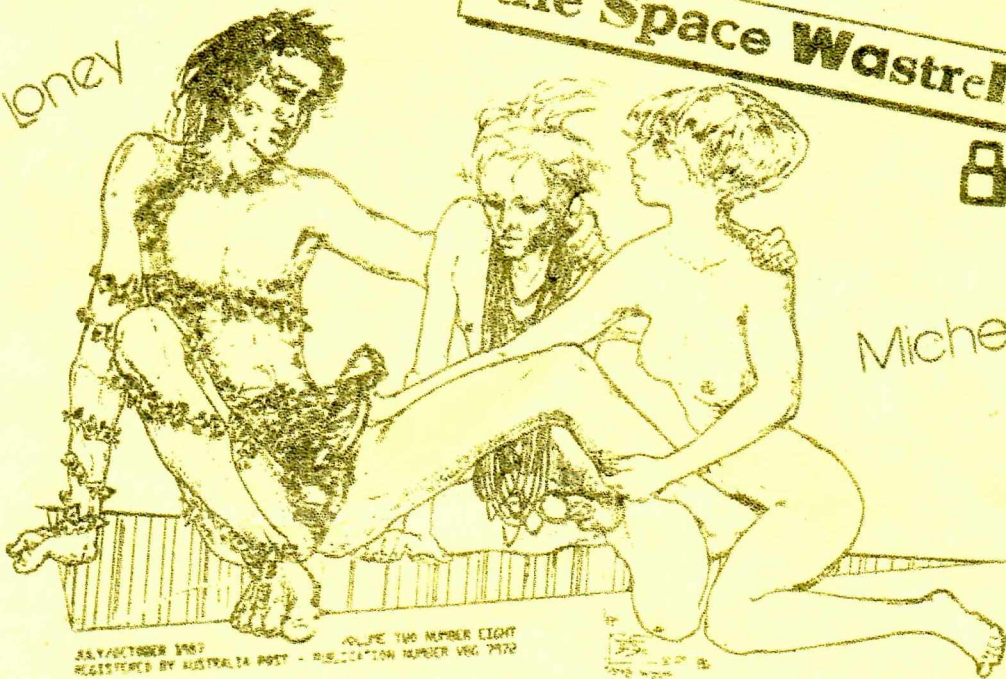


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# the Space Wastrel



Mr Honey



Michelle

MAY/OCTOBER 1987  
REGISTERED BY AUSTRALIA POST - PUBLICATION NUMBER VOG 7172

Mr Warner



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Another Taste Enhanced Film Review from  
GREG EGAN

# Blue Velvet



Walking home through a field after visiting his father in hospital, young Jeffrey Beaumont pauses to throw pebbles at a pile of junk beside an old collapsing shed just off the trail. Scouring the ground at his feet for more stones, he comes across a severed human ear.

Naturally, he takes his find to the local police, and that could easily have been the end of the matter for Jeffrey. But, naturally, he's curious. He can't forget it. He can't get it out of his mind.

So, he befriends Sandy, the police detective's daughter who hears 'bits and pieces' from her room above her father's study. It seems that a mysterious singer, Dorothy Vallens, the 'Blue Lady' at The Slow Club, is somehow involved, and with Sandy's reluctant assistance, Jeffrey sneaks into Dorothy's apartment one night, in search of more clues.

And this is when the Hardy Boys' Mystery of the film so far suddenly blows up in our faces. Because this is when we meet Frank Booth.

Frank is by far the most disturbing character I've ever seen in a movie. It's not that he is prodigiously violent (Indiana Jones, for example, kills many more people), sickeningly sadistic (any SS torturer outclasses him easily), or terrifyingly insane (Norman Bates he ain't). What makes Frank so extremely unsettling is his combination of bizarre psychopathic fetishes and absolute, unblinking self-knowledge that is the closest thing to Wisdom that anyone in this film possesses.

Frank carries with him always a small gas cylinder, filled with some unspecified substance. When you hear the hiss of the valve opening, when you see him fit the plastic mask over his nose and begin to grotesquely inhale the stuff, you cringe into your seat, because you know that what follows is not going to be nice.

Jeffrey and Sandy are impossibly, almost ludicrously, innocent and naive. Violence and evil are, it seems, utterly incomprehensible to them, as strange as an alien life form. At first. But Jeffrey grows obsessed with the vulnerable, tormented Dorothy, Frank's

IT'S A  
STRANGE WORLD

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favourite victim for his unusual sexual fantasies, and it is this obsession that drags him further and further from his own sane, cheery, bland world into the weird nightmare that Frank inhabits.

It all sounds extremely grim and nasty. It is, but it's also frequently hilarious. A mini-skirted prostitute go-go dances on the roof of the car to Roy Orbison's song "In Dreams" (Frank's favourite), while Frank beats the shit out of Jeffrey, and many of Jeffrey and Sandy's conversations are very nearly Brad-and-Janet material. Yet the film never actually mocks their innocence, or turns them into parody. Rather, their astonishing naivety is viewed with the same bemused wonder as Frank's ruthlessness and cruelty. As Jeffrey says to Sandy, or vice versa, several times as the plot grows more twisted: "It's a strange world."

Frank says something different. With all the calmness in his eyes of a man who has accepted damnation, Frank pauses every now and then, stands still and silent for a moment, and pronounces: "Now it's dark."

Blue Velvet was written and directed by David Lynch. Forget the fact that he made Dune, and remember instead the dark, haunting images of his first film, Eraserhead.

Blue Velvet is much more conventional than the almost purely dream-like Eraserhead, having a clear narrative and far closer ties to familiar reality,

but when Lynch sends the camera diving in for a macro close-up of insects swarming through the grass, deep into the cavernous spaces of the severed ear or blindingly close to a candle flame flickering into extinction, you know that he has lost none of his unique, beautiful, eerie style.



# TWO'S COMPANY...

A Review Of Two Zines by Rory R. Fetts

RIBALD 751 (30th April 1987) Available for \$5.00 for one. Published by Malnoj Pty Ltd, 10 William Street, Balmain East. 64 p. Weekly.  
BAWDY 269 (30th April, 1987) \$3.50. 48 p. As above.

These lurid publications are somewhat out of the fannish mainstream. Both are prozines, in more than one sense of the word. They're printed partly colour offset, partly black and white and the layouts are quite competent.

Ribald #751 has a striking cover photo, somewhat limited in scope but the anonymous woman has a fine set of teeth, nice eyes and flaring nostrils. All that can be said of her gentleman-friend is that he is circumcised and rather underendowed.

Inside are some rather sick cartoons by that doyen of sick cartoonists: Dwayne Tinsley (who does a lot of work for Hustler). If necrophilia and non-genital body secretions are your cup of tea, enjoy. The (again uncredited) strip cartoonist could learn much from a close examination of the works of Mr J. Packer Esq. The zine has one or two uncredited fillos, butt on the hole (sic) the advertisements are infinitely funnier than the funnies.  
[ORGASMATRON!... Basically a massager, the orgasmatron has endless uses...]  
[The Next Time Your Penis Lets You Down, Try One Of Ours... Pleasure Chest.]  
[Take a bite of our cheeky delights... For that exclusive taste of debauchery, indulge yourself with one of our beautiful and fun-loving young ladies...  
THE GOLDEN APPLE]

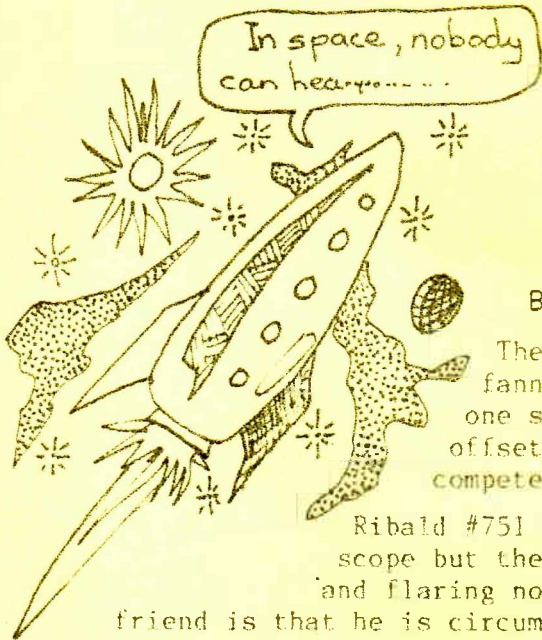
[Test your self-discipline. Succumb to your erotic desires. \*Beautiful Dominant Mistresses \*Willing Submissives \*Latex \*New TV shop or dress-making service \*Superbly equipped dungeon... SALON KITTY'S]

To be honest, the rest of this zine shows less imagination and joie de vivre: LET YOUR JUICES COME by Brian Haddock starts as a film noir encounter on a windy, rain-swept street, reaches a crescendo and ends on this bittersweet note:

"Even if I don't find her I can always bump into another pretty woman, get her wet, and then invite her back to my flat to dry off. Yes, that seems like a very good idea. So come on, rain, damn you, rain!"

Can you detect the obsessive tone, so reminiscent of the 'Black' novels of Cornell Woolrich? Can't you just hear a bluesy sax solo by Lester Young in the back ground? Evocative stuff indeed!

Next comes (for want of an unambiguous verb) a psychoquiz entitled: HOW DO YOU REALLY FEEL ABOUT WOMEN? I detest these a, b, c, or d quizzes on the basis that my response is usually e. Take question 7: "She accuses you of cheating



on her. You: (a) Tell her to mind her own business (b) Tell her you love her and there's no reason whatsoever to feel insecure (c) Feel guilty even though you haven't been unfaithful or (d) Cheat on her to prove just how right she really was." My response would be (e) Tell the truth. The quiz has no byline, so who does one complain to?

Against prevailing fannish tradition, the lettercol is near the centre of the zine and something of a Dorothy Dix effort it is, too. BF of Brooklyn, NSW is having it off with an unemployed actor ten years younger than her who is losing interest. The editor ('Billie Holt') gives good advice on howing out gracefully and I'm sure that a woman of BF's obvious suppleness, interests, wardrobe and imagination will have little difficulty finding a gent with whom to dally. The other letter from someone called MY from Sans Souci (sic) is a medical question: is it possible for a man to ejaculate and urinate simultaneously? (Pray do not panic, femmes, it isn't.)

The Classified Ads are an interesting innovation and some amateur (in the original sense) photography. The snaps aren't quite Patrick Lichfield standard: most look as if they were taken with a Rox Brownie that suffered from glaucoma. The best of the crop of ads are the following two.

SYDNEY NSW Private collector wants teen chics and teen guys for photographic modelling for own collection only. \$50.00 per hour for speedoes (a kind of swimming costume, rrf), bikini, shorts and naked cum shots, etc.

Then there is this entrepreneurial missive:

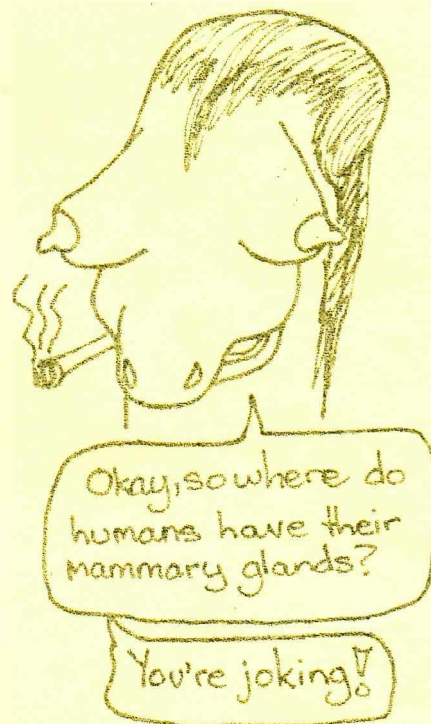
SYDNEY NSW Single male Australian with pierced, uncut cock, available for exhibition or use at private ladies meetings.

Though I customarily view fiction in zines the way Reagan does vodka, 'IT PAYS TO ADVERTISE', the serial here seen in its third installment, is an intriguing little read. A bit stiff in places, and the action scenes are painted in broad strokes, but it does move at a brisk pace to a satisfying completion.

As we all know, horoscopes are a load of utter cow-methane aimed at the gullible, but if perchance there was some veracity in stargazing the horoscope in this zine tells us that Cancers would need carnal catharsis, Leos look forward to libidinous lectures, Pisces copulate con brio and Aries (moi) be alert for adventurous amorous amblings. Tauri and Sagittari might as well keep their zippers at full mast.

The second piece of fiction is 'STRANGERS IN PARADISE' (which has nothing to do with SOUTH PACIFIC) by Peter Ridges (which may be a pseudonym or may not... look at Google Withers or Roger Moore!). Basically this is a standard tale of Boy Meets Girl Meets Girl which is reminiscent of both a french farce by Feydeau and an X-rated episode of THE LOVE BOAT.

The other zine, BAWDY #269 is basically a piece of fiction with a snappy punchline and copious colour illustrations. The text is chopped to pieces and the lack of variety makes it of less interest than its stablemate. Even so, the blonde with the double-jointed pelvic structure impacts the retinae pleasingly. Some of the photos are ambiguous. When I showed the zines (with the news that I was about to review them) to my Mother, she thought that the chap depicted had a cotton bud (Q-tip) inserted in his urethra. I tactfully told her that the picture was actually a cum-shot taken





with high-speed film. She was taken aback and blushed.

CONCLUSION:

While these zines have high production standards, their monomaniacal subject matter and lack of a clear editorial voice and direction makes them hard going. The prose is often turgid, there are no captions to tell us who the fans in the photos were or indeed which room parties in which cons they were taken... or by whom, but worst of all, neither zine is available for the usual!

Rory R. Fetts. 10/5/87

[Mr Fetts is presently doing research for a biography of Ita Buttrose tentatively entitled 'From Jail Bait to Celibate'. His 1986 docudrama 'Fear and Loathing in Galaxy Bookshop' is currently being edited down from its original 27 hours to be screened as a thirty second commercial for the League of Illiterate Australians. Future plans include a trip to Britain financed by Amnesty International (where he will investigate reports on wanton destruction of Australian fanzines), an anthology of interviews with Ditmar award winners, being a GoH at the 1987 Rooty Hill International Film Festival and a trip to Luna Park.]

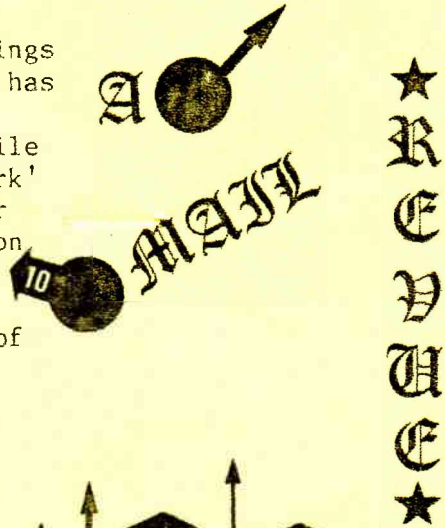
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Earlier in this issue, in a report on EasterCon, I mentioned the social aspects of a very successful programme item held at the Con, the Fanzine Launching. While the Launching was a lot of fun, I believe it deserves to be viewed as a conspicuous success more for the interest it generated in local fanzine production, and for the unexpected degree of editing talent revealed lurking in Melbourne. When organising the Launch, I expected to be presenting four or five fanzines by Oz's best known faneds. In the event, I was amazed and delighted (as far as I can remember) to be presented with around a dozen zines, most of which were not hot from the printing presses of Australia's 1986 editing in-group. From memory, the list included Australian SF Review, StunGunn, The Straight Banana, Larrikin, Chunder, Cathseye, Radiation Exposure, TSW 7, The Wizard of Menlo Park and Abbatoir 2 (token external kulcha), (3) magazines from the Dandenong Valley SF Group, the Conviction Flyer (kid you not, I), and maybe other bits. Sorry if I left anyone out.



I was particularly fascinated by the three offerings from members of the Melbourne SF club. The MSFC has little to do with local 'Old Guard' fandom and almost nothing to do with Oz Fanzine Fandom. While the club trades their clubzine 'Ethel the Aardvark' (which should have been listed above - oops!) for a number of fanzines, there has been no indication of the growth of an internal fanzine kulcha. My experience at EasterCon was much like that, I imagine, of a customer entering the Little Shop of Horrors unaware of any grisly inmates, only to encounter the Horror itself in fine, full-grown, fettle... terrible, disgusting...

A strange experience. And how I enjoy them!  
RADIATION EXPOSURE is a peculiar little one-shot



created during the Con, complete with space for autographs and defaced representations of the Con's membership badge; the EasterCon bunny in various stages of inebriation, and in one telling vignette, complete with suspenders and a chainsaw. The one-shot is replete with odd doodles and slogans, and, just in case, instructions telling Con members what to do IN CASE OF NUCLEAR ALERT. Very useful! Of course, there's the obligatory meaningless but interesting editorial. "I mean, think of your phone number, double it, divided by 23.42 and isn't that a real neat party trick, to do alone in a darkened room?" The one-shot is as Con one-shots should be: quirky, visually diverting, fannish and quite peculiar to the mood and moment.

STUNGUNN is a perzine from one of the creator's of said one-shot, Ian 'Let's Make It Look Interesting' Gunn. SG is an intentional hotch-potch of personal thoughts, newspaper cuttings, newshitz, cartooning and anecdotes containing the eternally fascinating number 23, reproduced in photocopied A4 format. Its layout follows none of the 'accepted' fanzine production values (for want of a better term) but Ian is evidently a guy with ability and ideas - the result is busy, fun and, to my mind, quite successful. My favourite was Ian's adaption of ASTERIX DOWN UNDER, a comic strip which gave me new insights into how Australia and New Zealand escaped being colonised by the dreaded Frogs.

My favourite production from the weird team, though, has got to be CONSTANTINOPLE THE BRAVE, from the pen of Phil Wlodarczyk. Phil is a talented fan-artist in what one might call, with apologies to Mr Rousseau and others, the naive style. Constantinople is a three-legged cat and this zine is, essentially, a colouring-in book. Complete with a maze, cut-outs, join the dots, a jigsaw and a 'pin the back leg on the cat' game, CTB is a therapeutic, nostalgic, amusing, unique, sardonic ~~weat~~ treat. CTB is sub-titled Fun With A Three Legged Cat and this accurately describes the interior. If you're a silly person who enjoys frivolity and/or The Residents, you'll enjoy this zine. If you're not, may I put it to you that you may possibly be wasting your time in reading this column?

\* \* \* \* \*

Just before closing, I'd like to draw attention to another couple (or so) of happenings on the local zine-scene. One is that THYME is now being edited by the new collective of LynC, Clive Newall and Peter Burns. Roger Weddall has, as promised, retired at the zenith of his career as a newszine editor (smart move) and THYME accordingly has a NEW ADDRESS listed at the end. Congratulations to LynC, Clive and Peter on a first issue as a team that was very well put together.

Tim Reddan's The Straight Banana has developed, as at ish three, a healthy - if somewhat untidy - loccol and is definitely finding its niche. The zine now only requires slightly more relaxed and fluent writing from Tim to give it a comfortable and well-rounded feel. More power to Tim for working hard on a new venture and maintaining a schedule.

Terry Frost has at last pubbed his ish, THE BIG SLEAZE: a zine redolent with Terry's refreshingly brash, open style of writing. I was charmed to be alluded to twice in Terry's Sixty Sleaziest Things In The World list and am obliged to admit that so long as Terry continues with such wholesale bribery, he will always rate a full erection on the Muijsert fanzine satisfaction scale. I am HURT, however, by rumours of a LoC from one Dave Lockett which supposedly alleges a lack of sleaze-in-action on my part both in the present and the past. I can assure you Dave, I have a history which would make your ears turn pink and I'm not dead yet! In fact, I feel that the long winter of hibernation induced by the sleepy climes of Western Australia may even now be on the wane... I await issue two with increasingly unbated breath.

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