

# CHAO

17

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Contributions are welcome. We want discussion of sf, fantasy and allied subjects, and we want it examined and discussed according to normal literary standards. We need art-work, serious and cartoon.

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# EDITORIAL

This is the last page that gets cut into stencil for CHAO, but the one on which I usually have very little idea what to write. So it is this time. There is the good old standby which I shall use once again, that is tell you what you will find within if you press on any further. First and foremost there is the second chapter of The Watershed, entitled "The Flight from Man" and deals with the dehumanization of art and music and a search for the undercurrent that represents the way those arts will be treated in the future. Some may find the conclusions somewhat controversial and others will not even see where they come from. As far as the art goes, I have worn out several pairs of shoes tramping through the major art galleries of the world, spent many hours jotting down notes of paintings. With music I confess that I had a more difficult task. Those who know music will observe immediately that I have confined myself almost wholly to the physical side of music making, and not entered in any way into the mode of its composition. I am aware that there is objection raised to the fact that most of our music is merely a string of dances, just as I am aware that some composers are using a twelve note scale. Important as these things are, I have had to let them be. I had the misfortune to go to school in a woman dominated society where music and art were things for girls whilst the only purpose men served in life was to earn money to keep a wife and family, and of course make some rich bastard richer. The lack of art, of literature and the like, in my life I managed to overcome, but not that of music. All I managed was to love it very dearly, and of course, learn somewhat of its history. The next issue I hope to continue the good work with a study of literature and language.

The other longer piece deals with Bester's "The Stars my Destination" and if I think, the deepest piece of science fiction criticism I have yet written. It may not be the best.

As for the artwork, most of it is pretty good. Whilst there is a lack of masterpieces by Bangsund and Freas, there is a Kantor cover and ditto cartoon, (that's one up on Ben Bova's ANALOG, he hasn't had a Kantor yet), and there is a Kevin Dillon (wow!) a Strelkov cartoon, and a Helena Roberts. All of which is a pretty tidy offering. Next month (!) we will feature art by such great names as Dillon, Lindquist, Strelkov and we hope a cover by none other than Gail Barton. There will be room for other art if you get it to me quickly.

"Muttering in the Mulga" returns with several inconsequential murmuring. This happy and popular feature cannot really be written by myself as well as you, dear reader, could write it. Remember it is you who have the outrageous opinions that you want aired, and to date I have not thought very much of the idea of charging you for printing them. This could easily alter if I can see that as a good way to make a bob or two.

Finally, I am contemplating standing for DUFF. This still depends. Naturally you will all vote for me, even Shayne McCormack and Christine McGowan who I gather are also standing. Girls, I'll make you a proposition, you both vote for me and I'll toss up to see which one of you I vote for. It should be remembered that these two girls are sweet intelligent young ladies, but in matters of DUFF they will be hopelessly biased.



"I believe they're saying.....  
Yankee go home!"

# THE SUFFERING SERVANT

by John J. Alderson

"...he had no beauty to attract our eyes,  
no charm to make us choose him-  
disfigured till he seemed a man no more,  
deformed out of the semblance of a man.  
He was despised and shunned by man  
a man of pain, who knew what sickness was;  
like one from whom men turn with shuddering...."

Isaiah 52:14; 53:3 Moffatt's Translation.

The Spiritual Odyssey of Gully Foyle in Bester's "The Stars my Destination."

There are heroes and Heroes. Analysis of the great epics of mankind reveal a number of similarities, which despite the most varied circumstances and adventures of the Hero, have a certain pattern into which the life and acts of the Hero fit. But the Hero does not live to fit this pattern, he makes the pattern because he pursues some great goal, and the path to that goal lies through the same land in every case. The path lies through the same land because the path is a psychological one, and the hero is a Hero, not because he does splendid deeds, but because he sought a great thing for mankind, and, more pertinently, for himself, went through a great religious experience which left him a nobler being. Gilgamesh and Maui attempted to save mankind from death, Prometheus sought fire and Beowulf saved his people. It is not coincidence that Gilgamesh and Odysseus and Dante, and a score of other Heroes, visit hell; as we all visit hell, but the Hero returns "pure and made apt for mounting to the stars."<sup>1</sup>

The greatness of these Heroes lie in the spiritual experiences they had and which now enriches all human life. They struggled and suffered. To be damned is simple and easy, all one needs to do is to do nothing, and that takes neither sweat nor tears. To some men the visit to hell does not purge, there is no purgatory. Dante passes through purgatory, but in Homer's day that place was not known by that name, yet nevertheless it existed, and the eight long, longing years Odysseus spent on Capypso's isle was a time of purging while the anger of the gods he had offended, sifted. As the Theologia Germania explains, "Christ's soul must needs descend into hell before it ascended into heaven. So must also the soul of man."<sup>2</sup> This is the revelence of the Hero to man, to us who build hell in our own hearts and must be purged.

"The Stars My Destination"<sup>3</sup> will respond well to analysis in the light of Dr Jung's theories on the Hero. (Psychology of the Unconscious). The findings of Lord Raglan ("The Hero") is that the Hero has a definite sort of pattern. And with such a pattern Gully Foyle emerges. In his introduction to "Beowulf"<sup>4</sup> David Wright says, "For Beowulf, though a hero and a superman,

is a human being. 'He is a man, and that for him and many is sufficient tragedy' (The quotation within that quotation is from J.R. Tolkien, "Beowulf, the Monsters and the Critics".) Like Beowulf, Gully Foyle is "Hero and superman", but he is also a man. Says Gerald Vann, "The Water and the Fire", "...The struggle is not an external battle, but an inner agony, and the sacrifice is a self-sacrifice..." When Gully Foyle has the long sought revenge in his grasp, he sees himself. It is he himself that needs punishment, forgiveness and cleansing. Like Christian in "Pilgrim's Progress", he discovers he has a burden on his back, an "Old Man of the Sea" of which he must be rid.

It is this deep psychology, this deep spiritual awareness that turns this piece of science fiction into a great religious novel. The theme is the greatest of themes, the struggle of right and wrong, not the struggle against wrong men but the struggle of a man within himself for his own soul. Gully Foyle, who could have gained the whole world, saves his own soul. And the world was the better for that.

The Hero unrestrained is a menace to the community. In J.J. Campbell's "Legends of Ireland" we have an account of the "hero-light" that played around the head of Cuchulainn when he returned from battle....

"The return of the chariot to Emain Macha presented a terrifying appearance...the terrible fury of battle was on Cuchulain and that hero-light was playing around his head; so that it would go ill with any who came in his way."

So Olivia Presteign sees Gully Foyle like a "lightning bolt."

When Gully Foyle is angered his face becomes a flaming blood-red tiger-mask face, ("his visage was marred more than any man's") and when the battle-rage is on Cuchulain, he too is distorted.

We find too, that the Hero, after overcoming a foe, skins it (eg Heracles after slaying the Nemean lion wears its pelt.) When Gully Foyle overcomes Dagenham in the Gouffe Martel he strips him of his coat and wears it, then like Thor, arms himself with a sledge-hammer. The same motif occurs even more pointedly with Theseus killing the Minotaur where Theseus also wears a lion-skin, is armed with a club, and of course, like the Gouffe Martel, the Labyrinth of Minos was an underground maze and prison.

The Hero is the best known archetype explained by Dr Jung.

"Another well known archetype is the Great Mother, the perfectly good woman or goddess, who intercedes and saves, as personified by the Virgin Mary and the female saints."<sup>8</sup>

The Great Mother appears in two guises, that of Robin Wednesbury and that of Jisbella McQueen. Robin also appears as the Terrible Mother at a later stage but reverts to the Great Mother. (They are two faces of the one). Despite the way these two women are treated by Gully, both intercede for him, both forgive the wrongs he has done them, both advise him and help him. As the Terrible Mother, Robin nearly destroys him, and it is well to recollect that Deianeira did destroy her husband Heracles, in both cases with an object

obtained from the foe of the Hero. Both Robin and Jisbella help educate Gully Foyle and turn him into a more fearful tiger, but both also help him to redeem himself. It is interesting, that despite the cry of both that everything Gully touches he destroys, it is through him they both find marriage and consequent happiness.

Of considerable importance is the purging by fire of Gully. Almost destroyed in the burning cathedral, a flaming figure, his stigmata glowing, Gully teleports himself through time and space. He haunts himself! At his first appearance to himself Gully has defiantly decided that even though he is to burn in hell he will still carry on his path of revenge. It is that burning figure of himself that saves Gully on another occasion, and it is that figure that fills Gully Foyle with revulsion of himself, when by such horrible means he obtains the information he wants, knowing that the man will die giving that information. It is significant that despite his anguish (remember he is in flames) he pauses a moment to gently tell Robin the news he has of her mother and sisters. Gently, from a man who formerly did not care what happened to those who stood in his way. Perhaps infected by this Burning Man he "picked up a rare disease called conscience". He is guilty, he says, of robbery and rape, blackmail and murder, treason and genocide. The Suffering servant.... "it pleased the Lord to bruise him, and by his stripes we are healed."

So Alfred Bester's "The Stars My Destination" with the Hero Gully Foyle seeking his soul-cleansing, is a religious novel, and a very worthy one and important. The means whereby Gully Foyle is purged, the hell he finds and the way he finds it are sufficiently original, as one may expect from a science fiction novel, to be of more than passing interest. The Christ motif recurs throughout but Gully Foyle also experiences a series of symbolic deaths and rebirths, each rebirth seeing him more enlightened, better endowed physically, and a soul more healthy because it is more tormented. He began with a long way to go and had to suffer many deaths.

The official records said of him....

"A man of physical strength and intellectual potential stunted by lack of ambition. Energizes at minimum. The stereotype Common Man." 9

In the wrecked space-ship Nomad he lived nearly six months in a cubboard 4 feet by 4 feet by 9 feet, and that without light, and was too mentally lazy to go mad. It was the approach of another space-ship the Vorga-T 1339 which spurned his distress signals that killed the old Gully Foyle...

"So in five seconds, he was born, he lived and he died. After thirty years of existence and six months of torture, Gully Foyle, the stereotype Common Man was no more. The key turned in the lock of his soul and the door was opened. What emerged expunged the Common Man forever." 10

(The recurring Christ motif again....Christ was also thirty years old.) At that moment sloth died. At that moment too the common man died forever, and a newer, wiser man emerged. This was one of Gully Foyle's gifts to mankind.

Here we have the first symbolic death, and after a gestation of six months (Heroes generally have some aberration concerning their birth), the birth of the new. Like Heracles, like Christ, the attempt to kill him is foiled.



Heracles strangled the snakes, Gully Foyle rescues himself. Born the man, enlivened with only one burning desire, revenge. But out of that unworthy desire, he, like Faust who also had an unworthy desire, finds his salvation.

"The child is father of the man" and Gully's efforts virtually kill him. At this stage the Hero undergoes a symbolic death, his initiation into manhood. He is rescued by The Scientific People. These are descendents of a party of scientists who were wrecked and not found for generations. By this time they had degenerated into a quasi-scientific-cum-religious community. By them he is initiated into manhood.

It is customary, upon being initiated into manhood, to receive a name, to receive the marks of initiation, to receive a wife. Gully gets all these. What Joseph their leader says to Gully is significant.

"You are the first to arrive for fifty years. You are a puissant man. Very. Arrival of the fittest is the doctrine of Holy Darwin. Most scientific. scientific." <sup>11</sup>

He is named NOMAD, and the name is tattooed across his forehead, whilst his face is tattooed into a devil's mask of swirling whorls that make him look like a tiger....of totemic significance because he behaves like a tiger. (Bester originally called the book "Tiger! Tiger!"). This is the initiation mark (the moko of the Maori who were tattooed upon maturity). Similarly the Aborigines were given heavy cicatrices across the chest upon initiation.

Cuchulain received an initiation mark, and the ancient Britons were tattooed with their totems as were the Picts. Like Cuchulain, like the initiate of the Aborigines, Gully is presented with women and he is to choose one, as a wife. Inadvertently he does, Moira.

A word should be said about the meaning of names. Gully is short for Gulliver who first visited little people, then large people, and the people Gully meets are so spiritually. Gully at least reminds me of a "gully-trap" under a sink....Gully is of the gutter, his speech, his thoughts, of the gutter; in him has collected all that is bad and noisome. "Nomad" means wanderer, and Gully has to wander far before he finds his rest. The Wanderer of course is Woden, one of Caryle's archetype Heroes. Robin's name Wednesday, is also derived from Woden. Similar meanings lie beyond many, if not all of the other names, like Joseph, the step-father of Christ.

Gully the Avenger, escapes in a stolen space-ship, regardless of the damage it will do to the colony of The Scientific People. Later Moira calls him the man "who destroyed us". Again he dies a symbolic death and is rescued by the IP Navy and nursed back to health.

After initiation, education must continue for the Hero, and Gully, like the Australian Aborigine, like a Freemason, goes on learning through various levels of understanding and experience. Gully Foyle is a monster. He uses his re-education as a cover to steal, to obtain materials for blackmail, to make a bomb to destroy the space-ship that had abandoned him, not yet sufficiently aware that the inanimate ship was not at fault. He rapes and blackmails his instructor, Robin, destroying the kind happy girl she was and leaves her filled with bitterness and hate. He uses her to help, and finally she tries suicide and kills a lot of people in her unsuccessful attempt. The first Gully would have been too lazy to rape, this one is a monster.

Again he suffers a symbolic death. His efforts to destroy the Vorga is unsuccessful and he is captured. But first Dagenham seeks information from him, and has to say, "He's not an ordinary man", and Gully's "an uncommon man" and finally, "You're really unique." He is confined in the caves of the Gouffre Martel, a jail built in caves and kept perpetually dark. By a freak of nature he contacts a girl who is also a prisoner and they determine to escape. During this time a significant part of his education occurs...he is convinced he has to be more subtle, be educated and use his brains. For-swearing bombs as mere brute strength he breaks out of prison with a sledge-hammer, taking the girl with him! The girl is Jisbella McQueen. If Beowulf rescues a treasure from a cave, surely Gully rescues a treasure in the red-haired Jisbella. With her help he has the tattoo removed, obtains a space ship and goes to collect the bullion in the Nomad (and incidently a fantastically terrible explosive which can only be denotated by thought and will, that is, by mentally expressing a desire for its detonation..."the road to hell", Jisbella calls it. Dagenham arrives at the critical moment and Gully abandons Jisbella and flees with the loot. This is another symbolic death but we are not told how he evaded his enemies or how he escaped.

It is commonplace for the Hero to find/or win a treasure, Beowulf wins a treasure from the Worm, but it is his death. The power of the treasure to kill is present too in Tolkien's "The Hobbit" where the treasure "upon which a dragon has long brooded" is the death of Thorin. Much of this is reminiscent of the "Nibelungenlied" which indeed Tolkien used, as he did "Beowulf". It comes as no surprise that with the bullion which Gully Foyle finds in the Nomad is a box containing the fantastic and frightening explosive which may be detonated by "will and idea", and indeed later part of it is set off by Robin projecting thoughts of hate. The arrival, at the critical moment, of Dagenham seems suggestive. The name suggests "dragon", the traditional guardian of treasures, and captor of young maidens, and in fact he captures, and keeps (actually marries) Jisbella, the traditional price exacted by such dragon guardians.

But there has been some awakening within Gully Foyle, not the least because of the conversation, or battle between them on the way to the Nomad, and Jisbella's "Liar,,, Lecher... Tiger... Ghoul. The walking cancer... Gully Foyle. And,

"Yes, rich and empty. You've got nothing within you Gully dear... Nothing but hatred and revenge."

"It's enough."

"Enough for now. But later?"

"Later? That depends."

"It depends on your insides Gully; what you get hold of." 12

Gully says he wants something to control himself and later finds it, for when he becomes emotionally disturbed the old tattooing shows up in blood-red on his face. Thereafter he must exercise his will to prevent its return and his discovery.

When Gully Foyle returns he is a different man. He has had his body speeded up by a special operation, he has educated himself and is now a virtual superman. Like Krishna, he returns as a buffoon (remember that other Heroes,

eg. Heracles and Odysseus and David were either mad or feigned madness). Few see through this disguise and it enables him to continue his vendetta. But he has altered. "My rutting season's over", he says, and it is so. He takes Robin, the girl he has raped, into partnership to find the Vorga, refusing to use blackmail, and never touching her sexually again. He has also learnt some kindness. Gully Foyle has so much bettered his soul. His promise is to give the girl he has destroyed a completely new start. She falls in love with him and only leaves him when he falls in love with another woman, and like Defaneira wife to Heracles, begins to destroy him.

So many Heroes have harrowed hell that the track there and back must be well worn. But the hells that Gully Foyle visits harrow Gully Foyle. It is his quest for the Vorga that takes him through various hells, hells wherein he sees himself. The first of the damned he finds is taking Analogue, a psychiatric dope for psychotics which makes a man act like the animal he identifies with. The burning man appears, tiger-face burning crimson, Gully Foyle is the tiger. All through his quests he sees the burning figure at crisis points. Actually the figure appears at other crisis points but he does not see them, the Hero doubles back to help himself.

The second of the damned is a Disease-Collector, a man who collects neurotic-addicts in whom is induced an illegal para-disease.

The third of the damned is amongst the "dregs and scum of the Solar System", in the moon colony.

"He was met by an appalling spectacle. There were two hundred men in the giant room; there were whores and their hard-eyed pimps, professional gamblers and their portable tables, dope-peddlers, money-lenders. There was a haze of arid smoke and the stench of alcohol and Analogue. Furniture bedding, clothes, unconscious bodies, empty bottles, rotting food were scattered on the floor. It was all Hogarth." <sup>13</sup>

The quarry himself was weeping in the washroom. No punishment Gully could rig up could surpass the hell this man was already enduring. "Revenge is for dreams...never for reality," Gully says. His revulsion for himself is so strong that his passion for revenge is only kept going by the thought of the real crime of the Vorga, six hundred refugees, stripped and thrown into space, and women at that.

The fourth circle of hell was the ultimate retreat from reality. It was a Sklotsky Colony.

"The ancient Sklotsky sect of White Russia, believing that sex was the root of all evil, practised an atrocious self-castration to exipate the foot. The modern Sklotskys, believing that sensation was the root of all evil, practised an even more barbarious custom. Having entered the Sklotsky Colony and paid a fortune for the privilege, the initiates submitted joyfully to an operation that severed the sensory nervous system system, and lived out their days without sight, sound, speech, smell, taste or touch.

"...In actuality, the senseless creatures were packed in catacombs where they sat on rough stone slabs and were fed and exercised once a day. For twenty three out of twenty four hours they sat alone in the dark, untended, unguarded, unloved." <sup>14</sup>

Foyle recognises these as the "living dead". Ironically he has rigged up a box such as he lived in upon the Nomad for six months, as a punishment for the guilty but it could be no hell compared with that of a Sklotsky with a guilty conscience, and this his victim had.

In reality this is not all of the hell he visits. Finally he recognises none of these as being as bad as himself. He symbolically dies again in a mad escape from the Colony, and is rescued by the Vorga and the woman he loves, to discover that she is the enemy he seeks. He cries out in agony,

"Remorseless, lecherous, treacherous, kindless villian! It's true. I'm no better than you. Worse....." 15

Gully Foyle has learned to loathe himself, and he sees himself in the person he has sought for so long to destroy; he now no longer wants revenge.

Now it is the time for temptation. Remember that Christ fasted forty days in the wilderness and when he was hungry he was tempted, first to turn stones into bread and eat. Gully Foyle is now tempted at his weakest points. He resists the temptation to take revenge, to take a partner and with the woman he loves go on a rampage of destruction, "We're the strong," to which he retorts, "We're the damned." He is then offered safety beside the woman he loves, but this he rejects and demands to face his retribution.

The temptation is continued by the most powerful people in the world, and what is offered reveals the men as they are.

Presteign tempts...

"I offer you power. Adoption as my heir, partnership in the Presteign Enterprises, the chieftainship of clan and sept. Together we can own the world." Gully declines and asks if Presteign will offer his daughter for the "path to hell" and Presteign, stripped naked, agrees.

Dagenham offers "Glory...We can offer honour...We can offer security. We'll wipe out your criminal record, give you an honoured name, guarantee a niche in the hall of fame."

But it is Jisbella who suggests that Gully be idealistic, Jisbella whom he deserted. But none of them will pay the price of idealism.

But it is Robin, the Robin whom he raped that asks Gully what he wants. He replies,

"I want to be punished. I want to be purged. I want to pay for what I've done and settle the account. I want to be rid of this damnable cross I'm carrying...this ache that's cracking my spine...."

Many Heroes are beyond the normal confines of society, a law to themselves, and this is suggested, and it is Robin, who has been the most hurt, who says, "There must always be sin and forgiveness. WE're never beyond that."

What does it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul? Gully Foyle is determined to save his soul, but merely rejecting the world will not save it.

Prometheus stole fire from the heavens and gave the dangerous gift to mankind, and as a punishment spends eternity chained to a rock with a vulture tearing at his liver. Gully gives the "road to hell" to the people of the earth, telling that they have the power to destroy themselves. This

Prometheus stole fire from the heavens and gave the dangerous gift to mankind, and as a punishment spends eternity chained to a rock with a vulture tearing at his liver. Gully gives the "road to hell" to the people of the earth, telling them that they have the power to destroy themselves. This is the power of death he gives them. The secret of getting to the stars is his to give them too, to open the stars to every man. This is the gift of life. The Common Man has died forever.

Now, "pure and made apt for mounting to the stars" Gully Foyle teleports to various star systems where men may now make their homes. Finally he returns to the Nomad, to The Scientific People, "his eyes burning with divine revelation, ... now he slept and meditated, digesting and encompassing the magnificence he has learned." Moira, the wife they had given him (and whom he ignored), finds him and tells Joseph their leader... 17

"You will not hurt him?"

"All debts must be paid..."

When Joseph sees Gully the "anger in his face was replaced with wonder."

"You cannot punish him," Moira said. "He is dying."

"No," answered Joseph quietly. "He is dreaming. I, a priest, know these dreams. Presently he will awaken and read to us, his people, his thoughts."

"And then you will punish him."

"He has found that already in himself," Joseph said.

(To what magnificence this character of Joseph rises. Throughout the book the characters have that nobility, that grandness familiar to the great French romantic novelists.)

Moira ran and returned with a "silver basin of warm water and a silver tray of food". Silver, the symbol of purity. She bathes Gully, a symbolic cleansing and sets the food before him as an offering to the "God-man". With the world she sat and waited for Gully to awaken and give the gift of life.

So Heracles, his labours over, becomes a demigod.

It is a measure of the greatness of this book, that Gully Foyle, rising from his Bloth, and becoming a tiger, must kill that tiger to redeem his soul. He redeems his soul through the agony within him, and doing so becomes a God-man. Hereby he treads the world that Heroes through the ages have trodden, that dark and terrible labyrinth of the mind through which the soul of man must find her way. Like Prometheus, Gully Foyle brought great gifts to man, but he was greater than Prometheus, for like Faust, Gully Foyle saves his soul.

No man's achievement can be greater than that of saving his soul.

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|---|---------------------------------------|
| 1 Dante, "Purgatory," Canto 33,<br>v. 142, Cary's Tr. London 1883 | 6 J. J. Campbell, Legends of Ireland  |
| 2 Quoted Vann, "The Water and the<br>Fire" p91. London 1961       | 7 Hutton, "The Tain" p302 Dublin 1907 |
| 3 Bester "The Stars My Destination"<br>London 1959                | 8 Shulman, "Dreams" p68 London 1970   |
| 4 Wright, "Beowulf" p12 Penguin 1957                              | 9 Ibid p14                            |
| 5 Ibid p75  | 10 Ibid p18                           |
|   | 11 Ibid p23                           |
|   | 12 Ibid p83                           |
|   | 13 Ibid p 143                         |
|   | 14 Ibid p 151                         |
|   | 15 Ibid p 158                         |
|   | 16 Ibid p 184                         |
|   | 17 Ibid p 192                         |



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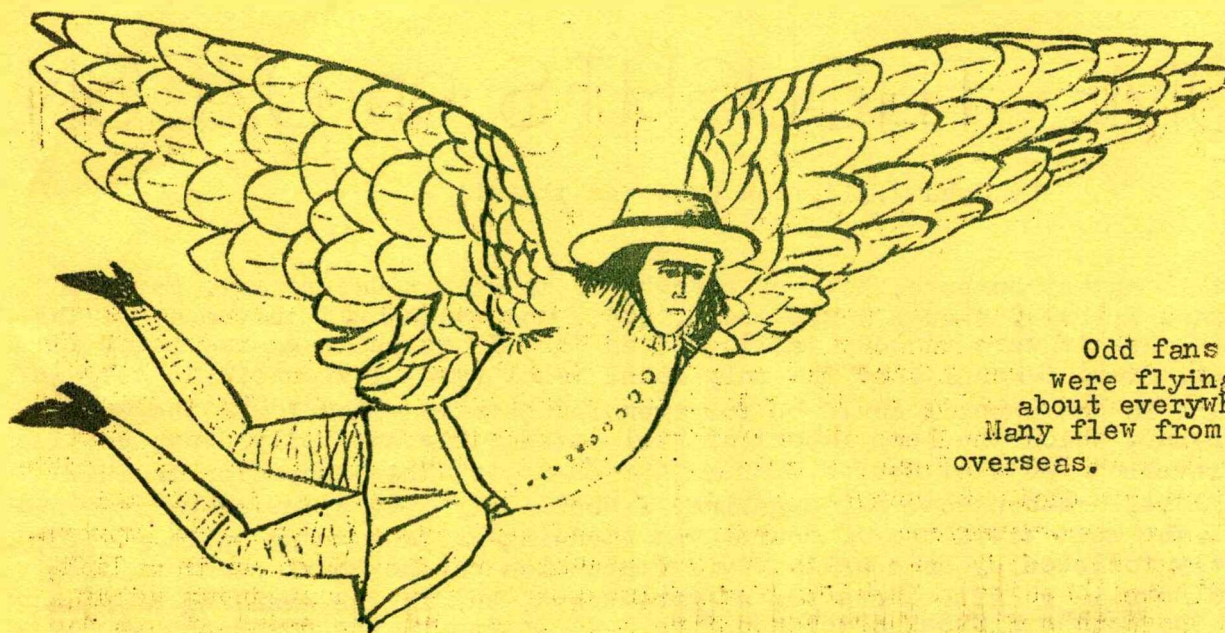
# SOME THOUGHTS on OZCON

by John J. Alderson (who was there!)

It is not my purpose, here or elsewhere, to give a Con report. For two reasons. Firstly, though I was there, I did not attend all that many of the panels, people were so busy talking to me that I was quite hoarse after it was all over. Secondly, as the only local yokel (that I know of) to get his picture in the paper I could be forgiven for thinking that I was the most important, which the less important will immediately and hotly deny, despite the revelent facts of course, and rather than risk this happening in this high level non-controversial magazine, I shall only give a few of my impressions. The most vivid one of course was standing waiting to go up in a lift, closely followed by an equally vivid impression of the hours spent waiting to go down in a lift. There was a fire-excape, but in the event of a major fire the Southern Cross Hotel would be a deathtrap. I was not happy at all about the standard of the hotel, things like the air-conditioning which in some rooms could not even be switched off, and which left the place far too hot for my comfort. It took three days with the air-conditing off and the windows open to make the room liveable. I think sadly of the hotels in the country where the carpet is thicker and the tarrif a fraction, where they get their trade by quality and not due to their name and international association. However that's past.

I found myself in two panels, the first of which I had some weeks warning. That was "The Role of Sheep in Science Fiction." Just before the panel commenced John Foyster, who chaired it, told me that Bruce Gillespie would not be speaking on the panel. Not in so many words. He merely bowed up to me and said, "John, there will be no long and boring speeches." However Bruce did speak, using the time to give a spiel about the book he has published, The Electric Shepherd, being reprints from SF Commentary. I saw him later, like Mathew sitting at the receipt of custom and made cautious inquiry about the book and whether he would autograph one for me. He obliged. I then pointed out that having been scribbled in it was now second hand and worth less, but Scrouge Gillespie insisted on full price. However, to revert to the panel, which I had the priveledge of opening. I took the view thad sheep were alien monsters bent on destroying the human race, quoting that great Sf writer Banjo Paterson in support, and ended by declaring that sheep were driving the country to drink, illustrating it from a bottle of wine I had.

After the panel I was immediately grabbed by a reporter from The Age (for which George Turner writes but don't let that deceive you). We had a long chat and he had a drink, and that was that, except that next day he found me and appologised, that because of the newspaper strike the piece had not got in. He however introduced me to the Reporter from The Sun or The Herald who pestered me about how important sheep were in science fiction. Being a gentleman and not wishing to pull his leg as most farmers would have, I tried to put him right. Duly next day there appeared in both papers a beautiful picture of me with the most garbled garbage underneath.



Odd fans  
were flying  
about everywhere  
Many flew from  
overseas.

I think that somebody had mentioned that it was Robin Johnson's idea to have some Australian content in the Con. This was credited to me, and so was a statement that Australia used to ride on the sheep's back. I did say during the panel that science fiction writers had been looking for aliens from Venus to Vega and all places beyond whilst all the time they were in our own paddocks. This was translated into "Science fiction writers search for new places to write about, but they have been missing what have been in their own back paddocks." Despite being a trained journalist of old myself and continually side-stepping the issue, I was still credited with "Mr Alderson... said he hoped people took his plea for sheep seriously." I confess to being indecently amused when I read the nonsense and was quite put out when I got home and found none of my neighbours had seen my picture in the papers due to the strike...not of course that I am vainglorious but it would really have put them in their place.

I was also in the panel discussing "Myth and Legend in Science Fiction" which was a much more serious panel, and which went unreported. There I sat, with Ursula Le Guin one end and Bert Chandler the other, both with foul pipes adding considerably to the smog, and Christine McGowan, who chaired the panel, sitting close beside me ready to hit me with a bottle should I say the wrong thing, and me there too, with nary a thing to drink.

I shall mention one other panel on which appeared George Turner, Ben Bova and others. I forget the theme, but it does not matter. George was laying forth on the iniquities of modern science fiction and editors for not correct- it. I was watching Ben Nova, editor of Analog. In the words of a fine old folk song, "his face a bloody study."

On the Saturday I returned from a vain effort to obtain breakfast when I met Robert Silverberg on his way to The Space Age Bookshop, whereupon, so he wouldn't get lost, I accompanied him. Space Age I think, disappointed us both. I saw only three Australian books there, all of which I believe are readily



obtainable in America. As quite a few visitors pointed out, they were interested in books that were not available cheaper in the States, and judging from the purchases made at Sovereign Hill (Ballarat) on Monday, where there was a very limited Australiana collection, they meant what they said. Mike Glicksohn (who is a right good bloke with an excellent taste in wine) asked me about buying Australian books, explaining that most of what he saw was overpriced American books. (For those, incidently who expected Mike and I to have a real stand up fight with blood and guts everywhere, were disappointed. Meeting him was one of the great pleasures of the Convention.) However to return to Silverfish and I at Space Age books, we then toodled over to the State Library and looked at the reading and catalogue room. Well, says Bob, there's only one way to judge a library, so he looked up Silverberg, and sure enough they have a couple of his books (out of a 100 or so.) See if I have done better says I, and sure enough there were about a dozen entries. I flicked them through dairly fast so Bob would not notice that the entries are all double and so he would not notice the no of pages they had. Oh I admit I cheated, doubly. If Bob's books are not there he loses a few cents. If mine arn't I get put in jail. However, in defence of the library, they do have an science fiction collection which is probably indexed elsewhere.

One cannot dismiss Foyster's failure to poison all the overseas visitors with stale pies. They arrived Friday and he kept them under his bed until Sunday, then invited everyone up for a pie night. At least he killed what may have grown into a flourishing export trade to the detriment of those who grow or procure whatever it is that goes into pies. The Sydney effort was more successful, Ursula Le Guin got poisoned with a Sydney oyster at the banquet....the Melbourne committee apparently did not know they have been condemned for human consumption since before the World War.

I found Ursula a charming woman...please I cannot mention all the charming women who were at the Con...would you like me to mention those who were not? Christine McGowan tried to get me to speak to a certain (non-male) reporter, who claims men are scared of her. I took one look and said, "I'm scared too, she's repulsive." Says Christine, "She's repulsive to us women too."

It would be remiss of me not to mention Susan Wood who enjoyed herself so much she's coming back. Of course after the climate of Regina perhaps Melbourne is somewhat heavenly. She flung her arms around me and kissed me, no more than I expect any girl to do, but it is a bit of a shock when they do. It was only at the end of the Con that she stopped talking and I managed to sing to her the song I believe the Committee suppressed....

"Goodbye Melbourne Town  
Melbourne Town, goodbye;  
I am leaving you today  
For a country far away;  
Though today I'm stoney broke  
Without a single brown,  
Goodbye Melbourne Town,  
Melbourne Town, goodbye."

In conclusion: I did hear some anti-American mutterings from some of the locals, but I hope they were not expressed to the visitors. I saw and heard nothing from any of the American visitors that deserved such mutterings, and while I know that anti-American feeling is growing in Australia, it is a bad thing. It solves nothing. It is too, unbecoming of us.

Remember, Botony Bay in '88.

# REVIEWS

OPTIONS by Robert Sheckley, 158 pgs, Pyramid Books, \$US 1-25

The reader may be interested in what is going to happen to Tom Mishkin next, but he or she will not be worried. Indeed it seems that Tom himself is not unduly worried. Simply the story is that he breaks down whilst on a space flight through the Lesser Magellanic Cloud whilst loaded with a most non-descript cargo, and lands on the planet Harmonia where he seeks a spare part. Of course this is where the troubles begin because Harmonia is a planet of hallucinations, or at least is when Mishkin arrives, and to make things more complicated he has a rather disorientated robot (not the least of whose problems arise from the fact that he was programmed for a different planet). From this moment onwards, neither Mishkin nor the reader knows what is going to happen next. All of which is terribly funny for the reader, and all the multitudinous adventures, whether they are real or imaginary, is taken with considerable aplomb by Mishkin.

The reader may have noted that this takes place in the Lesser Magellanic Cloud, which is some few miles away, indeed out of this world altogether. The book is indeed out of this world, and indeed it has an Alice-in-Wonderland charm about it that is quite captivating. It has considerable humour, indeed it is probably one of the funnier Sf books, indeed one of the more humorous that I have come across, and worth reading on that account alone. Whether or not it contains some deeper philosophy which I have not perceived, whether it really does have some earth-shaking message, I don't know. But humour is a precious thing, read it for that.

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THE OTHER GLASS TEAT by Harlan Ellison, 397 pgs, Pyramid Books, \$US 1-50.

Despite the author banging the drum for the first glass teat, "The Other Glass Teat" did not send me rushing to the local newsagent to purchase it. Admittedly, its relevance for Australia is very small. This will not stop a lot of drips from buying it, indeed seeing we are so uncritical in Australia we are regarded as a good dumping ground for remaindered books from America. As the sweet little girl in the local newsagent told me, "We sell anything."

This is a series of newspaper columns, dealing mainly with TV, and quite in keeping with the American character with its urge to belittle and destroy. Naturally this column would be popular, but is it really critical? Condemning something, or in this case nearly everything is not being critical. There is a difference believe it or not. Certainly Ellison makes some pretty cutting comments and certainly TV is pretty banal, what else can people expect if they insist on 16 hours TV per day, of course it will be banal. Five or six hours per week would be more reasonable, but the present situation is like expecting to sit down and eat caviar all day long all the year. It will start to stink and TV stinks for that same reason, there is too much of it.

It is difficult not to compare this series with a similar newspaper series (Harris, "The Angry Eye") in Australia. Certainly Harris is not confined to TV, (in reality neither is Ellison), and Ellison shows up badly. As a writer he is vulgar and coarse, his breadth of vision very narrow. He lacks polish and finesse, he lacks the ability to really be critical and penetrating. Yes indeed, compared with Harris he is an illiterate buffoon.

Herewith are some FANZINE NOTICES, not because I want to but because somehow or other this page is going to be blank if I don't, and in any case my comments may encourage the feeble minded to subscribe and thereby increase Post Office revenue...Skip that.

Accordingly let us start with the one that won the Ditmar, OSIRIS. This lately has been arriving in an old gold cover, usually with a picture on it. It is published by Del and Dennis Stocks of P.O. Box 235 Albion, Brisbane 4010. I have before me Nos 14-16 plus the Velikovsky special. These are all interesting with a leaning towards hard science, but not adverse to the other sort.

GEGENSCHHEIN is passing, or so Eric Lindsay of 6 Hillcrest Ave, Faulconbridge says, and will become a personal thingo with himself the main contributor. Never mind it went out in a blaze of glory with two articles by myself in the same issue...John John John, stop bragging. But Eric did have some good art. Well high postage etc etc, its killing us all.

Now the accurate fanzine PHILOSOPHICAL GAS Nos 31 and 32 edited by John Bangsund of P.O. Box 357, Kingston ACT 2604. These issues are given over to letters and John's March of Mind, which are all very interesting. And yes, I listened Bert Chandler about that bridge disaster, the one just waiting to happen when the "Lake Illawarra" cut Hobart in two. Generally its the "Melbourne" that cuts things in two isn't it.

RATAPLAN the fanzines with naked women to the front, from Leigh Edmonds of P.O. Box 74, Balaclava Vic. Where do you see women like that Leigh. A nice article by Lesleigh Luttrell on a blizzard and another by Roger Sween on libraries, Mention made of the fact that no article by myself and absence noted. Leigh Edmonds if you want articles you send stamped addressed envelopes.

THE FORERUNNER is edited by Shayne McCormack and is official organ of the Sydney Science Fiction Foundation. Address 49 Orchard Rd Bass Hill 2197. This issue No 2 has an article by Bert Chandler on Publishing In Australia but otherwise is mainly this and that.

However FORERUNNER QUARTERLY is a different kettle of fish, and is edited by Sue Clarke at 32 Spurwood Rd, Warrimoo 2775. Must be nearly a 100 pages, Sue only got up to 78. Whilst this is excellent compared with other fanzines, it is quite substandard compared with past issues...no article by me, not only that we are merely promised an interesting article by me for the next issue, but an excellent one by Bert Chandler. Snif snif, don't you love me any more Sue! However, it has almost everything else, articles of all sorts and poetry too and pictures, all on pink paper.

AD is back again from the Adelaide University Science Fiction Association. Students Association Office, Adelaide University, North Terrace Adelaide, 5001. This is mainly stories with an editorial in the centre. It also has some strange artwork and some not so strange.

THE EYE is a Tolkein fanzine, produced by the Sydney University Tolkein Society, P.O. Box 272 Wentworth. This is a spirit duplicated fanzine, a little hard on the eyes at times, and this is the first issue. Most of the articles are on Tolkein but there is one on Micheal Moorcock which I thought was somewhat difficult to stomach..I can't regard Moorcock as of much value. However contains some of Tolkein's songs set to music. Interesting.

Finally The MAD DAN REVIEW No 1. M.A. Ortlieb C/ Naracoorte High School Naracoorte 5271. Has an article on Heinlein's "Time Enough for Love". Interesting but I remain unconvinced.

# THE FLIGHT FROM MAN

"My candle here becomes the barometer  
For time and storm, the destined dark and near  
Visible invisible, outside and within,  
That blows away the light and blinds the pen  
I wield for providence unproved."

David Rowbotham.

Just prior to 1600 A.D. the great and the brilliant Mediterranean schools of art were petering out, the brightest of the bunch, the Venetian expiring in a brilliant but dead sunset. Those words I use, "brilliant," "brightest" refer both to their artistic merit, and their magnificent colour. With them the Medieval period, an age of great colour and great beauty, of great piety and great endeavour, came to an end. After 1600 we are in the modern era, the Age of Explosion. For with little exception, the styles and the subjects of painting prior to 1600 were all one all over Europe, for although certainly no-one could confuse a Durer with a Raphael, the artists were bound by the same economic and social and religious circumstances. The Church was the main patron of art, the artists tended to reflect the religion of the age in which he lived, indeed the pre-reformation artist did this with some gusto, and the only other patron or buyer of art was the nobility. Certainly the Medieval period was one of outward exploration as well as the acceptance of the learning of the past, and this again kept them in the one tradition. The acceptance of the learning of the past, whilst it freed the artist from the grotesque of the immediate folklore, and from the superstition against depicting the human face as a likeness (it was considered that an accurate likeness would give an enemy power over one's soul, a factor not much noticed in art histories, few of whose writers seem to realize that the Primitives were derived from Irish manuscript illustration and Byzantine icons). The ancient Greek treatment of the human body was naturalised to its climax by Michelangelo (in David, Moses, etc), but the worst aspects of classicism grew to bedevil (particularly French and English) painting and architecture for centuries to come.

Hitherto art had been the prerogative of the Church and the nobility, there being nobody else wealthy enough to commission or buy a work of art; and it must be remembered that by today's standards artists were well paid indeed. However the Dutch were staunch republicans, a blessing or a disease of the Middle Class depending upon one's point of view. The Dutch Burger had some wealth, probably not enough to commission huge works such as the Venetian paintings, besides they lacked homes big enough to hang such. Indeed that great masterpiece of Rembrandt, The Night Watch was several times cut down in size to fit it to available wall-space. So size became limited. There is another aspect of the middle class, they are godly after a fashion, of a Sunday, and their piety did not extend to having scenes of the Crucifixion looking down over their mid-week drinking, so subject matter changed to the homely domestic scenes which they could look on when it was too dull to look out the window. Every one of Rembrandt's subjects could have been found within a mile of his doorstep. "But "in his religious pictures (in which all the

dramatis personae are citizens of Amsterdam) Christianity for the first time since Giotto becomes an affair for ordinary men and women." <sup>1</sup> This meant a radically different type of art. The artists were again close to the people, indeed there were so many artists that one can only conclude that they were part of the people. It is difficult to say of course, just how the poorer cottagers adorned their walls, whether they hung daubs by talented sons and daughters, or scraped and saved until they could buy some superannuated piece of art in much the same way the poorer people of not so long ago hung prints of Queen Victoria or The Stag at Bay on their walls, (now oddly it may be cheaper to buy an original water-colour). The close association of art and the people, the drawing from life around him as subjects for art by the artist was a magnificent dream, a dream that for three centuries we have been trying to recapture, and perhaps only now are we succeeding. The story of European art since 1600 is a groping for naturalism and the overwhelming denial of that aim by the curse of art theories.

The expression of naturalism in art reached its high-water mark in Dutch paintings, which is not to say that their work was necessarily the best or the high water mark in art itself. That is another question entirely.

At the same time Philip II was attempting to raise Spain to her former greatness, by a somewhat more noble method. El Greco was his greatest achievement (though El Greco may have put it differently). Ascetic and severe, the paintings of El Greco seem to typify the essential in the Spanish character, and there arose a school of painting in Spain, brilliant at times in colour, severe and restrained in treatment, indeed the very opposite that one would naturally expect from court painters. Probably something in the calvanistic subjects stirred the hard hearts of Scottish connoisseurs of a later age so that the best collections of Spanish art outside Spain exist in Scotland. (Or did, they are probably housed in American bank vaults now). Essentially it was an aristocratic art, a long way from the people.

The French, ever the centre of civilization as they will tell you in and out of season, borrowed extensively from the Dutch, as in painters like Watteau (actually Flemish) whose art is usually as cold as his subjects, you know, people skating on frozen canals, and Poussin who fancied himself another Raphael and who painted those gorgeously attired people in landscapes as they really ought to be, brown trees and ionic columns scattered stregically here and there. French art was a glorious hotchpotch of everything, to this day hailed as France's original contribution to the art of the world. That's the worst of believing your own propaganda. Here and there may have struggled an aspiring artist who thought trees were green and ought to be painted so, but he got short shift.

The third main stream of art was English. English artists were usually anxious to copy their French rivals, but whether they were colour blind or just perverse, they refused to ornament their landscapes with the peacock-hued figures of Poussin, but they religiously stuck to the idea that trees and grass were brown and they made their human figures drab and dull to blend with the landscapes. Indeed, little is more dismal than an English painting of a landscape, no matter where it is. They were helped in this folly by the now decadent Dutch painters, who, having reached the winter of their artistic achievement, painted the winter of their subjects.

Now there arose a great artist in the person of Constable. He saw the trees green and painted it so, he saw the grass green and painted it so. He saw men

and women and painted them so. When he was exhibited, he was asked, "But where are your brown trees. All artists knew trees were brown and one could hardly expect them to leave their studios to verify something that every artist knew of old. So Constable received short shift, though to give the French their due, when he exhibited in Paris at least one French artist went back to his studio and repainted his trees green. It may be, indeed it is objected that Constable's landscapes are too dreamy and pretty, but I have been in Constable country and know he painted accurately. Yet for all that his work had very little influence, and a century later Englishmen were still painting their landscapes brown as they ought to be and not as they are. (In fact, if my memory serves me correctly the last exhibition I saw of English art in England the landscapes were sombre brown, even those of Venice which happens to be white and gold as Streeton painted it.

The Pre-Raphaelites made a gallant attempt to show the English that the world is a colourful place, but they too perished under the English smog. The English, great worshippers of the old Old Masters pointed to centuries old paintings hidden behind years of accumulated grime and darkened varnish (it was a fetish for every purchaser of a painting to slap on a coat of varnish over everything), and intimated in the best conservative manner that one should not depart from the sacred principles evident in such wonderful paintings. The cleansing of old paintings by modern methods is always a revelation. Of course cleaning of old paintings has its bitter and vocal critics. Only Turner of the Pre-Raphaelites, though later the Impressionists calimed him, did any good and outlasted them. He was of no school and he was not with them except perhaps in spirit. But the Pre-Raphaelites were doomed to failure. Although they were very careful with their detail they usually chose literary subjects, ("serious" was the word).

Prior to the arrival of the Impressionists there were various artists painting nature as it seems, not as it ought to be. Indeed some of the artists who later became the Impressionists and some who never really became Impressionists. Here in Australia the Heidelberg painters were in their prime, and all over the country artists (including vast numbers of women who had more available time than men) were painting straight from nature.

By now the wheel had turned full circle. The wealth was no longer in the hands of just the merchants, indeed the lower middle classes, by the time of the Impressionists, were buyers of art. And they did buy, and were buying art until about the time of the Post-Impressionists. Then as a whole they stopped buying for the very good reason that there was nothing worth their money.

The Impressionists had an odd idea or two, but their main idea of painting a picture as it occurred in a fleeting moment in time gave their art a spontaneousness previously lacking but it also gave a lack of solidity. Some of their number were however afflicted with defective vision generally myopic and one must stand a very long way from their art to get into focus. They were succeeded moreover by others whose eyesight was even more defective and in some cases mentally defective (Van Gogh being an example of both). They were the beginning of what should, and must now be regarded as the "anti-artists", who set out deliverately to destroy all traditions and all beauty in art.

It may be debatable as to whether anti-art should be permitted, though only much deserved ridicule can be used against them, but, being charitable and allowing that anti-art should be permitted, there is no reason at all to be so charitable to those rogues, knaves and con-men who lapped up their work and called it art. This perversion by these so-called critics had no excuse, and the general run of people in the community, baffled by these fools yet rejecting the "anti-art" of the so-called modern artists, simply did not buy any art. It will not surprise anyone of course who know anything of the social mores of business men, to see this "anti-art" in their offices, for business men are notoriously always several generations behind the rest of the community in social progress. Art is now again, being painted and bought, and it is at last an art to which the common man can identify himself. The artist and the community are becoming one again, and this is as it should be. However, let us examine this "anti-art" more closely.

The general trend for three hundred years has been that which has been associated with the academies which were growing further and further from the people with an art becoming more and more stylized. "In the late nineteenth century the artist reached a high point of isolation from the public, working for himself or for a limited number of art lovers who maintained private collections insulated from public scrutiny."<sup>2</sup> When the Impressionists so successfully broke with the dead academic art-forms, the flood gates were opened, not as the Impressionists so emphatically had tried to obtain, realism, but to non-reality, dehumanization and utter estrangement from the public. Myers adds, "The Post-Impressionists and later artists mostly existed in a vacuum."<sup>3</sup> He later describes it as a "flight from reality."<sup>4</sup>

"But Cézanne's detachment was even more complete. He studied his landscapes or his fragment of still life or his sitter in a spirit of real research, reducing all three to their simplest terms, dehumanizing them in just the same way as a medical student must dehumanize the body he is dissecting. Cézanne's portraits of his wife shed no light on the character of Madame Cézanne; they even tell one very little about her outward appearance."<sup>5</sup>

Other Post-Impressionists were "psychologically escapist," for example Van Gogh retreated into the mind and Gauguin abandoned civilization for the South Sea Islands.<sup>6</sup> Whilst it must be admitted that the times were dehumanized this does not condone the "artist" for adding to the tale of human misery, and in any case to accept that excuse is to admit that the artist is the product of his society and not its moulder. This I cannot except (as a creative artist myself, however humble), nor does it ring true historically. The first of these "anti-art" exhibitions was held several years before the beginnings of the Great War, and the dehumanization due to that war was a slow process. My father, who soldiered throughout those five years repeatedly told me, "If you saw someone wounded in no-man's land, he wasn't a digger, or a Turk, or a German; he was a man needing help and you went and got him." And nothing I have heard, or read from either side has ever suggested in any way that that spirit was not true. The fact is that the dehumanization of society began with these "artists", and they made the Great War, and the fools who succeeded them made the World War, and still they empty humanity from man and leave him a husk of no account. The stains on their garments is not paint, it is blood.

In a few years the "anti-art" movement took firmer shape. To quote Calvin Tomkins,

"When a collector pays ten thousand dollars for a work that is not only aesthetically but physically ephemeral - it is almost inevitably will fall to pieces within a few years - there is some justification for thinking the market itself has become absurd, and that the artist, who always appreciates a joke on the bourgeois, is actively hastening its collapse." 7

Marcel Duchamp indeed hated painting, it bored him, 8 and for many years carried on an assault on all artistic traditions with the exhibition of absurdities which he signed and therefore made works of art. Professor Mitscherlich in his study of social psychology puts forward the idea that society having rejected the father must reject traditions and claims the "subjects of our art reflect this situation. "Finished objects have become inherently uninteresting." 9 But it is all very well to be eccentric but that is no excuse for the fools who lauded Duchamp and Rauschenberg and their ilk as great artists.

It was excessively difficult to satirize these men. Their ability to turn around and say that the most outrageous spoof was indeed a great work of art was proverbial. Indeed the Dadaist movement was admittedly anti-art. 10 However Jean Tinguely made a series of "constructs" which painted abstract paintings, and he, on occasion, delightedly told a reporter that his meta-matic was an "an anti-abstract machine, because it proves that anybody can make an abstract picture, even a machine." 11 None of these improved his reputation with the Paris abstract painters who regarded him as a fumiste (a practical joker). They would not dream that they were being satirized. Tinguely's masterpiece to date has been the Homage to New York which he built in 1960 and which naturally contained machines for making abstract paintings, all being destroyed by fire and explosions immediately upon completion, this being part of the joke of the ephemeral nature of "modern art". The very last thing any fraternity wants to admit that they are being laughed at, but here finally the abstractionists have been laughed out of court and they haven't seen the joke.

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The satirical nature of Tinguely's machines extend too into the industrial side. They are made from junk, mechanically they are preposterous and usually work badly. The time seems to have arrived when human silliness is so great that men don't know, or hardly know they are being laughed at. And Tinguely is laughing.

Two historians sum up the matter with no mincing of words, "Other art forms, painting, poetry, sculpture and architecture expresses the same lack of purpose or significance beyond the mere wanton self-assertion of the homunculus. It is claimed that certain daubs and lumps express a 'metaphysis' beyond ordinary perception, but in fact they are 'the child of raving and darkness', an expression of the chaotic, sub-rational, violent and inhuman, energy without direction, the denial of both Man and God" 12.

The flight from Man is over, the "anti-art" movement is dead. It killed the old dying art form, and this is interesting because it in itself was a flight from reality. In the later stages we got an obsession towards ghoulishness, this was Surrealism. Newton sums it up so, "My own attitude to the surrealist creed is that it may be profoundly interesting as a branch of psychology, but it can be art only by accident - the accident that the Surrealist may also be an artist." 15 And, "In its insistence on the importance of subject matter



Surrealism differs in no respect from the most regrettable phrases of mid-Victorian painting." <sup>14</sup> Surrealism has cropped up again in the writings of J.G. Ballard who is obsessed with the colours of putrefaction, and draws his oracles from the entrails of the well-and-truly dead.

Freud, was of course a godsend to Surrealists who painted wholly from his theories and not from those of non-Freudian psychologists. Robert Hughes condemns Norman Lindsay for disliking Freud, <sup>15</sup> a typical example of the narrow prejudice that can afflict art-critics. Freud, regrettably, was one of the perverts of the age, a man whose judgments were biased by his own life, and who resolutely refused to be psychoanalyzed himself, thereby robbing his own finds of scientific validity. They have been accepted with relish because they dehumanize man, reducing him to a something that even the lowest animals would not care to associate with. Of the more ennobling psychology of Jung the "anti-artists" have no truck whatever.

Only a few days ago I attended an art show, and of over 400 paintings there were only half a dozen in any way abstract or a departure from an honest effort to convey to the viewer the form and nature of the subject. This is not say they were wonderful works of art, most of them were merely mediocre. But this applies to all art shows throughout history. However the art remains dehumanized, there were only two attempts at the human figure and both indescribably bad, and a couple of terrible portraits, whilst virtually none, if any of the landscapes had figures in them....admittedly the Australian landscape is usually devoid of human beings, but the essential thing remains, art is concerned with man or it lacks interest, it is only decoration, and as Tinguely has proved, decoration can be produced by anyone, even a machine. The night, for artists at least is over, but it is difficult to say how long it will take the artists to humanize their work again. Probably it will happen quickly, as at the beginning of the Age of Explosion with the Dutch art, and if this is so it will probably degenerate again over several centuries to a further dehumanization and divorcement from reality. But it would seem that in a little while art will concern itself with the more gentle side of man's existence, perhaps as a welcome relief from the grim reality of the endless struggle for existence that seems to be coming. Here we see a contrasting picture, of mankind facing the future with two faces, one terrible; the direct product of his own dehumanization in the shape of ruined ecologies, social structures and technologies; and the happier, healthier side of a return to nature, first voluntary and after forced by the sheer necessity of survival. The position of the artist is certain, his work will be simpler, and probably smaller in physical dimensions, it will be more natural, and he himself will be part of the community, in body and in spirit. There will be no other options.

Now let us pass onto another art form, music, whose beginnings at the opening of the Age of Explosion is a very precise thing, that is, compared with the other arts. However its latter end is not so clear. It does appear to be more influenced by the other arts than influencing them, and so the changes which come about, come later, but at the beginning of the last age they were more abruptly new art forms than in any other of the arts. This may be so again but I believe we will have to wait. It may be purely negative.

"How young music is," declares Mervyn Bruxner, "you will realize when I

tell you that there was hardly any instrumental music before about the year A.D. 1600. All music was vocal. I do not mean there were no instruments...I mean there was no instrumental style. The music played on instruments might just as well have been, and in fact was, sung by voices..." 16

In other words, prior to 1600 instruments were used, not in their own right, but to accompany the human voice. Virtually every other authority will tell the same story, which is not quite correct but historians of Western music have this odd idea that European music suddenly sprang into being as a very lusty child, if not full grown. The reality is, that away in the North Sea lies an ancient and very proud kingdom, which in the 14th century according to the historian Agnes Muir MacKenzie, was "the fountainhead of European music" and which by 1570 had already perfected one of the most intricate and beautiful forms of instrumental music ever devised - the piobaireachd (commonly but less correctly called the pibroch). The Gaels of Scotland also coined a term for this type of instrumental music which was complete in itself, ceol mor (big music) as distinct from ceol beg (little music - dances, marches, and accompaniments). Little is known of the history of piping prior to 1570, but two facts are evident...

"One is that during it piobaireachd was invented or, more probably, developed from an earlier type of pipe music, which has since disappeared. We know this because by 1570 the tunes were mature, sophisticated compositions with obviously many years of experiment behind them. And the other fact we can be sure of is that all this development took place in the Highlands of Scotland, for in no other country of the world has there even been any evidence of this type of music." 17

The piobaireachd is a musical composition for a solo instrument, the piob mor believed to have been equipped with drones by the time of the Battle of Harlaw in 1411. 18 The piobaireachd was taken to Europe and became the symphony. There are two fundamental differences, perhaps three. The piobaireachd contains the signature of the composer, only a minor point. After the crescendo the piobaireachd repeats the opening bars because Celtic music is eternal with neither beginning nor end. The third difference is a development. The symphony is scored for a number of instruments, indeed an ever increasing number of instruments.

The commonly accepted story is that the symphony developed out of the music of the opera when Iulli and Scarlatti began to develop the overtures of the opera towards the end of the 17th century. This brings us to the origins of the opera...

"The first attempt at what we can really call an opera was made at Florence in 1597 by a group of musicians and men of letters who were in the habit of meeting to discuss artistic matters at the home of Count Bardi." 19

Their idea was to resurrect the essentials of the old Greek tragedies. Their first experiment was Dafne, the words written by the poet Ottavio Rinuccini and the music mainly by Jacopo Peri. We still have the text but extremely little of the music. It was first performed in 1597. The same poet and musician produced Euridice in 1600 which is the first opera to survive complete. In a few years opera came into its own with the performance of Monteverdi's Arianna at Mantua in 1607 and his Orfeo the following year. Orfeo is described as

"great" opera which is not a bad achievement for opera in the first decade.

In passing it might be of interest to mention that the first oratorio, La Rappresentazione dell' Anima e del Corpo (the story of the body and the soul) was performed in 1600. The music was by Emilio de' Cavalieri. It is claimed that this is really an opera on a religious subject, and whilst this is probably correct it is also credited as the first oratorio. It is set to music all through but was designed to be acted in costume.<sup>20</sup>

Finally the other great musical event of the time, ballet. The dance must be as old as man, perhaps a lot older if lyre-birds preceded man by any length of time. Even the dance being used to tell a dramatic story is not new; for instance the Aborigines have a highly developed dramatic dance but they eschew scenery; also the Indians have a most sophisticated dramatic dance and again they eschew scenery, the scenery being illustrated by body movements of the most intricate kind, more so than any we know. But European ballet, from which our art may be said to spring was Le Ballet Comique de la Reyne performed in 1581 with the ladies of the court the first corps de ballet.<sup>21</sup> Dancing at that time was almost exclusively a male pursuit.

However, "Ballet, in the form that we recognise, had its being with the founding of L'Académie Nationale de la Danse by Louis XIV, in 1661. We are able to trace its development in an unbroken line of dancers and teachers from then until the present day."<sup>22</sup>

It is not my purpose to trace the history of any of these forms of art to the present day. Suffice it to say that they have all developed to a considerable degree, not only in the sophistication and complexity of the music, but more particularly in the vast increase in the size and power of the orchestra used, and the increasing demand for bigger and bigger concert halls for their performance. Indeed special theatres were built for the Ring cycle of Wagner, whilst in our own time we have the magnificent Sydney Opera House and its lesser known rival the Victorian Arts Centre in Melbourne. This is not only the work of composers. For example Handel's Messiah was performed first in the Musick Hall in Dublin in 1742 with a mere handful of performers. No one would dream of doing anything so simple nowadays, it would take a full choir plus at least a small orchestra.

The trend too is seen in orchestral works, the tendency amongst many composers to score their works for more and more instruments, whilst some such as Mahler wrote works of enormous size. Indeed in some modern cases there is required a full-scale electronics workshop and their works are never produced performed (if that is the word in this case) in the concert hall, and is only heard live over wireless, the alternative being recordings. Electronic music "captivated Europe" and leading "avant-garde composers...manoeuvred themselves into positions with the laboratories of government radio stations."<sup>23</sup> Whatever may be said in favour of government radio stations, they are a prey to this sort of thing because they are run by politicians, whether those politicians are in parliament or not. The force of criticism of being too enthusiastic is far less than being too **conservative**.

A similiar tendency too is, (or was, I have had the immeasurable good fortune not to have listened to the Hit Parade for the last decade) evident with many pop singers. They are backed with an immense accompaniment of brass and percussion which perhaps helps the fact that not everybody thinks that yelling and singing are the same thing.

There is a considerable, and increasing divorcement between man and the machine that makes the music. There are purists who claim that the human voice is the only music-making instrument that has any relevance to man, and many folk-singers, going back to the traditional way of singing traditional songs, sing unaccompanied. This movement is interesting, and to it we shall return shortly.

It was inevitable, that, as with the other art forms, the "anti-art" movement should have attacked music too. They did. It will be enough to give some idea of the antics of John Cage to demonstrate the methods used.

"I wasn't very gifted on the piano," Cage has said, "I disliked the technical exercises and all the physical aspects, and I remember having a kind of sinking feeling every time Aunt Phoebe or Miss Dillon played for me, because the music they played was fantastically difficult and I knew I would never be able to play that well." 24

And later in his career Cage says,

"Lazare Levy was extremely surprised that I had no knowledge of Bach or Mozart," Cage has recalled. "He accepted me as a pupil, but I took only two lessons. I could see that his teaching would lead to technical accomplishment, but I wasn't interested in that." 25

Cage however continued to play and overcame the slight handicap of not being a musician.. "...suddenly I decided that what was wrong was not me - it was the piano. I remembered that Henry Cowell had used his hands inside the piano and had even used a darnning egg to slide along the strings, so I began tring things inside the piano too - magazines, newspapers, ash trays, pie plates. These seemed to change the sound in the right direction, making it percussive, but they bounced around too much. I tried using a nail, but it slipped around. Then I realized a bolt or a large wood screw, inserted between two strings, was the answer. This changed every aspect of the sound" A whole range of other things were added at later dates to his "prepared piano." 26

But Cage wanted to be a composer and managed to study under Schönberg.

"Several times I tried to explain to Schönberg that I had no feeling for harmony. He told me that without a feeling for harmony I would always encounter an obstacle, a wall through which I wouldn't be able to pass. My reply was that in that case I would devote my life to beating my head against that wall." 27

Cage overcame this slight difficulty with two innovations. The first was noise. He collected a number of odd percussion instruments, mainly from the local junk-yards, brake drums of cars, hub caps etc and began to stage a series of percussion concerts Schdnberged attending any of these concerts. The second method was the use of silence which culminated in his famous 4'33" in three parts. The title refers to the length of time he sat before the piano with an intense look on his face. The division of this silent piece was arranged into three parts by the opening and shutting of the cover of the piano. His silent piece was not received all that well, but it should certainly suit a novice. Nor would his piece for twelve radios (Imaginary Landscape No 4) put a strain on the performers, two for each radio, one working the station selector and

one the volume. As the first performance was fated to take place after midnight, the four minutes of the work was mainly static and silence.<sup>29</sup>

His Music of Changes was composed with the help of three coins and a copy of I Ching. To plot a single note Cage would toss the coins six times, and the results would then be compared with a graph he had drawn, and this would give him the note. To determination the duration, timbre and other characteristics of the note this procedure was repeated. It took nine months to compose a forty three minute work!<sup>30</sup>

However I must, in all seriousness, question Cage's honesty. He was one of the best amateur mycologists in America but he refused to eat mushrooms in the same spirit in which he creates his music. He lacked artistic integrity, however wise in his generation he may be.<sup>31</sup>

Now, just in case you think Cage was an isolated eccentric, the Italian "composer" Giuseppe Chiari's Teatrino is, to quote the "Times", scored for "five rubber dolls, a hand powersaw, a piece of lumber, an alarm clock, a tape recorder, a table model phonograph, a snare drum, a ping pong ball and paddle, some literature, a large white cardboard and even a piano."<sup>32</sup>

One is reminded that Tinguely's Homage to New York contained a piano which played three notes over and over again during the destruction.<sup>33</sup>

So Tinguely too has laughed. But the assault on the musical work seems largely to have failed. This is probably with the coming of electronics the avant garde "composers" have found it too easy to make noise of an unearthly character, and the fundamental nature of the noises produced by electronics is their dehumanised aspect and their total lack of appeal to the human being. The ultimate in music composed by computers may be only enjoyed by computers, but certainly not to any creatures of flesh and blood. We perhaps should confess that music is reacting more slowly than the other arts, and the attack is still on, via the machine. In The Secular Abyss the authors say...

"Much 'serious' music...has a disjointed, bleak, eerie and anxious flavour, as if it represents fear, loneliness and emptiness, the sick soul vainly seeking Nirvana with no God to help it...because Europe has for the time being lost its goal and its identity."<sup>34</sup>

Their summing up of popular music has an even more worrying aspect...

"...The preferred music of this age looks back to primitive tribal orgiastic catharsis through rhythm, wierd catcalls, sexy instruments, and eerie effects. The jazz, rock'n-roll, 'pop' and other 'jungle music' probably seems carefree and released to the youngsters who enjoy it. But to the 'square' ears of more mature folk much of it seems cruel, mocking, lustful and wanton. As in the music of primitives, it produces a partial hypnotic condition of 'pocomania' in which the individual seems for a moment to lose his separate, isolated condition and re-emerge with the undifferentiated and irresponsible Libido. In most adolescents this remains purely a fantasy release from which they soon awaken, but in the more extroverted the outcome can be hooliganism, violence, vandalism, delinquency and promiscuity."<sup>35</sup>

So we have on the one hand the possibility of shortly being able to listen to a piece for six computers and twelve electronic workshops, or a highly

amplified piece of primitive savagery from the African jungles, depending upon whether one is high brow or low brow. Neither alternative is healthy. We have in one the utter dehumanization of music and in the other the utter debasement of man, and the man, seeking for something akin to his heart finds comfort in neither. Where then does he go?

We have mentioned before the singing of unaccompanied folksongs and the belief that the human voice is the only musical instrument relevant to man. Whilst this view may be exaggerated, we are, I believe, at the stage where the relevance of the musical instrument to the human being is beginning to be a philosophy of music. If so, then it becomes an interesting part of the simpler and more naturalistic culture. There are two others, or perhaps more accurately one other with two aspects. Again we are faced with the fact that when people become conscious of themselves they become nationalistic, and this I intend to deal with in the social and political sense in a later chapter. The first aspect is harmless enough (so is the other if one is reasonable about it), and is simply going back to one's own culture and taking up the threads, homespun though they be, and weaving the fabric of one's art from them. The result may lack the machine-like percision of the artificial cultures but it will be honest and colourful. This return to folk music (and of course folk song) has been going on some time.

Prior to the publication of Old Bush Songs in 1905, A.B. (Banjo) Paterson had been drawing attention to the existence of the traditional songs of this country. Roger Covell says he was "remarkably early for his times" in collecting the folk songs of Australia. He was contemporary with the early collectors overseas, Cecil Sharp in England, and of course Vaughan Williams, and Bartok and Kodaly in Hungary.<sup>36</sup> Since then of course there have been collectors galore in virtually every country, and those folk songs are being increasingly sung again. More than that though, Vaughan Williams, using them as a basis for his music broke new ground in English composing. Hitherto the English had taken their themes etc. from the Continent third hand or worse. And even Handel, who was not an Englishman but who produced works very popular in England (particularly in the "singing belt" (roughly the Midlands), the southern English with their lip-speaking do not sing so well and seem not to have the same inclination), produced his works in the Italian mode. This of course applies to much of European music, but of late composers like Bartok have returned to the folk music of Hungary. Erik Chisholm in Scotland returned again to the Piobaireachd<sup>37</sup> It may be of interest that the themes of the Piobaireachd come stright from nature, the sound of the wind (no gentle zephar in the Hebrides), the roar of the surf, the sound of the birds, in short, music inspired by nature. Nor should it be without interest that after a lapse of 200 years the Piobaireachd has again been composed, now that its nature is understood. The first new Piobaireachd was Donald Main's Salute to George Bain. There is a fine touch here, Main who discovered the principles involved in the composing of the Piobaireachd honoured Bain who discovered the principles of Celtic art.<sup>38</sup> Nor does the popularity of Percy Grainger's work spring solely from the rather lovely and spritely melodies but because he too used folk tunes as a basis of his music.

This is a movement in music we cannot disregard. Folk tunes have remained for hundreds of years because they satisfy something in the soul of man, they

appeal to him, they are part of his being, they are relevant, and a marked contrast to the highly sophisticated music of the "classical" tradition. This "nationalism" is a return to one's own culture.

The other aspect of this new nationalism in music (the arts generally if not in all things) is a desire to seek out one's country's spirit. In Australia a few years ago we had a movement called Jindyworobakism which sought for a closer acquaintance with our landscape and with the Aborigines (who have become part of that landscape and hence have its spirit. Rex Ingamells and Ian Mudie were two leading members.

"Mudie's distaste for the imported ideas brought on 'shipfed seas' represents an extraordinary reaction from what had been the central fact of colonial life: the arrival of the latest ship from abroad. Each ship was an almost religious renewal of the colonists membership of European civilization. It was a kind of reassurance that their isolation was not complete, that they still drew sustenance from the traditions of their forefathers. For a much later generation of Australian writers - or at least part of that generation - to express repugnance at the implication of ships regularly reaching Australia from overseas is a striking reversal of the earlier, colonial attitudes." 39

Colvin treats the idea of turning to the Aborigines with sympathy. It "is less illogical than it may sound and would certainly seem to have more prospects of relevance to Australian music of the future..." 40 He later quotes the painter Ainslie Roberts to the effect...

"By virtue of thousands of years of usage, the history of Australia belongs to the Aboriginal. The history is not physical, but springs from his ancient mythology, by which his daily life and customs were ruled and which gave him complete identity with his physical surroundings. The white man, because of his relatively brief tenancy of Australia, lacks such a rich identification. Access to the original spirit of the land can only be gained through the mind of the Aboriginal."

Colvin goes on to say of this passage..."The interesting thing about such a statement is not whether it is true but the consequences it may have if it is accepted as a belief." 41

He finally ends his study of Australian music by recommending that we should study all surrounding musical ideas and work from them rather than from the "Euro-  
"European tradition." 42

In this I have particularised of course. In the bulk of the world there is a fervent nationalism that, if it is not doing this now, soon will be doing so, the itch to explore one's own psyche is very strong in the world today, but it is not without a great interest in the psyche of others.

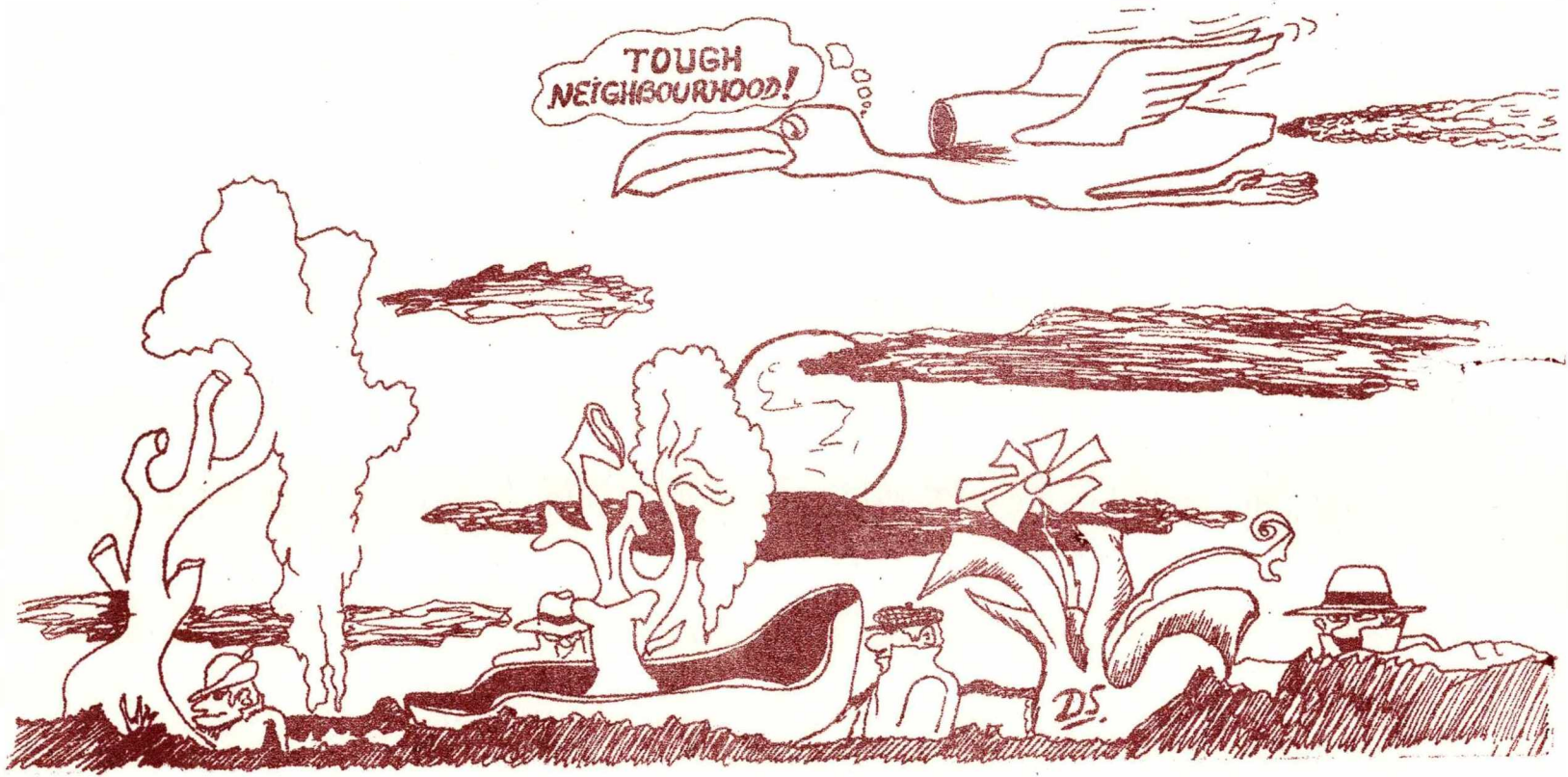
So, in the Age of Explosion, music has travelled from that of the solitary bagpipe to vast orchestras, or worse still, a computer and electronic workshop, and the further it has travelled the further it has gone from the world of men. Alternately the "pop" music has reverted to the jungle, a regression apparent too in painting and sculpture. There is now an apparent return to the folklife of peoples everywhere, a return to the music that was the heritage of those

peoples. And part of this return movement is that people make a nation and a nation is a living thing and for its music to thrive must return to the nature of the country and its people. All this works greatly for the simplicity of new musical forms. It may be that the great works of Beethoven, of Mozart, of Bach will be forgotten as an alien tradition that lead to a dead end. I hope not as I happen to love them all, but my loves will hardly be consulted in this. And, if, y studies of the economics of our future society are right, they will be forgotten, except for their simpler works, for the simple reason that not society will be able to afford a symphony orchestra, let alone a computer and an electronic workshop. There is also every possibility of us losing most of our musical instruments with only the very simplest surviving. This is not to say that we will not have great composers and great music. The human voice is a wonderful thing; our Aborigines found it very satisfying.

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31. Ibid p 119 32. Ibid p 132 33. Ibid p 173
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37. "Scottish Journal" No 1, Sept. 1952 p 7
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41. Ibid. p 87
42. Ibid. p 290.



TOUGH  
NEIGHBOURHOOD!



# MUTTERINGS IN THE MULGA

From John Clark

104 Kate St  
Morningside  
Brisbane 4170

Dear Rambling Syd Rumpo,

Let me introduce myself. I'm John Clark. I'm a member of the recently formed Brisbane F & FS Association, and a long time fan of yours. I've heard everyone of your radion shows. I was particularly pleased to see you on that high-brow hard-core science-fiction panel discussion on "The Role of Sheep in Science Fiction" at Aussiecon. Your colloquially erudite comments on sheep really screwed my cordwangle and brought moulies to my possett. I was disappointed, however, that you didn't offer us a rendition of that old favourite sheep song of yours-

Once long ago in the shade of a goolie bush,  
Toasting his splod by the faggots gleam,  
Rested a gander man nobbling his woggle iron  
And stuffing a sheep in the Old Mill Stream,  
Then up came the troopers and  
Hung him by the billibong,  
They twisted his woggle irons one two three-  
Now his hghost sits and moans  
As it grunged in his gander can-  
Who'll come a woggling his jumbuck with me....  
Oh!

Anyway, Syd, thanks for an entertaining panel discussion.

Yours nadgerly,  
John Clark.

PS. Uh oh! I'm afriad I've just made a terrible mistake. I've just seen Dennis Stocks, and he tells me it wasn't Rambling Syd Rumpo the swagman on that panel discussion at all, it was Rambling John Alderson the swagman. Er, sorry about that John....Say, has anyone else ever mistaken you for Syd. I bet they have. PPS. Would you please send me a sample copy of your fanzine CHAO. I'd like to find out more about sheep in science fiction.

Er, I have noticed that sometimes men push their wives behind them when they see me. Perhaps I do look a little like Syd

from Albert Vann

46 Fawkner St  
South Yarra 3141

John,

The story so far. There I was meandering along like barefoot in the head wondering who really screwed up Aussiecon and also thinking about writing an sf story with sheep in it; got an evening paper (with difficulty), and read an article thereon on you, Aussiecon...and sheep.

I'm still too bitter about practically every fouled-up aspect of the 33rd

World (?) SF Convention to write objectively, what should have been something turned into something else.

See the Nation Review

You were there, maybe you had fun and saw it differently, but my spies tell me that most male U.S. scribes there went home muttering OZCON as a dirty word, and to get ready for a lot of bad mouthing in print when reports start to come in from the top end.

all the best

Albert

from Christine McGowan

4 Fulview Court  
Blackburn 3130

Dear John,

How do you like my new typer, hms? I suppose it's unfair to tease impoverished farmers with visions of secondhand Smith-Corona electric portables...

I would love to be writing you a loc on the last issue of CHAO, but I confess that I either lost it or gave it away at Aussiecon, before I had finished reading it. I do remember Shayne's article though, which would have been hysterically funny if she hadn't been convinced that she meant every word. "S.F. and the Single Girl" if I remember rightly. The trouble with that girl is that she's an inhuman perfectionalist, like her beloved Spock. I can't quote verbatim (not having it in front of me) but I seem to recall that she had about seven adjectives that were pre-requisites for desirability, and he had to give out free fanzines as well! Let me tell you that there were more eligible men at that con than I could cope with, but since none of them, except you, were being prodical with fanzines, I didn't pass any of them onto Shayne. (I didn't pass you on either, did I? Oh well, you're well able to press your own suit...). Honestly though, I do think Shayne is a bit unfair to the fannish male - when you get down to the nitty-gritty, there ain't no such animal as an absolutely perfect man, in fandom or out of it. No absolutely perfect women either, if it comes to that.

Fannish regards  
Christine

Perhaps your "absolutely" is the critical factor. I have met a lot of perfect women but I have had to reject them because they made me self-conscious. But I have not lost hope, I am still looking. Naturally not only men need qualifications, women do too, though I am easy to get on with, only demanding a mere two, not seven or whatever it was Shayne looks for, and I still have this hope to find the perfect woman who does not make me self-conscious. This is not to infer, and I am sure Christine does infer so wither, that Shayne is without excellent qualifications. She has this most beautiful golden hair, and she's reputed to be a very good typist.

Yes, well actually Christine, to mention your excellent new (s/h) typewriter under the circumstances is being a bit of a cad, to use a masculine term, particularly when it is so obvious that this old effort is ready to be heaved into the lake.

Well Merry Christmas to all if you don't hear from me beforehand.