

ARROWS OF DESIRE

S V O'Jay

Potential 1989 Nova award winner

Friendly advice:

This zine contains a four-letter word, the appearance of which in print or in speech causes some individuals to have the vapours

Also included is the word "Pickersgill".

NEXT TIME YOU DECIDE TO FUCK ME, MARGARET, KISS ME FIRST

DIAGRAM FOR A TRILOGY

GREAT UNDOCUMENTED MEETINGS OF HISTORY

HONEY, I'M HOME

INCEST!

THE ALTERNATIVE GCSE

THE FIRST IMPOSSIBLE MISSION

A WORD FROM OUR SPONSOR

Contemporary note:

The originals I still had for AoD #1 were a little too faded to scan well, so this version has been retyped as close to the layout and style of the original as possible - white space and all!

This box originally showed the date (November 1988), and address for "S V O'Jay" and invited locs and contributions for #2 (Mexicon edition).

Nic Farey, December 2008

NEXT TIME YOU DECIDE TO FUCK ME, MARGARET, KISS ME FIRST

Escape from New York, John Carpenter's vision of 1997 recently re-shown on Independent Television (TV version). Pretty unreal...

It is 1988. Already prisons in the UK are bursting at the seams, and despite this untenable situation more and more individuals are being incarcerated for various crimes. The privatisation plans for industry are moving apace, with gathering rumours in the press on the same treatment for aspects of social services.

Even prisons.

It is 1990. The growth trend in the prison population has continued its alarming upward slant, and the long-predicted events are occurring. In line with the continual rightward lurch of the United States of America and even the remaining colonies, private hospitals, asylums and prisons become the norm. These are businesses, and the goal of any business is to make money. This is achieved by both pro rata payments from the government (per patient/inmate) and to an increasing extent by corruption within these institutions. The "professional" criminal and the rich psychopath soon realise the benefits of being able to obtain preferential treatment for the appropriate consideration to the governing board.

It is 1991. A newspaper article states that the original aim of prisons should be restored. That is, they should not only punish the guilty, but should also exist to protect society from violent elements. The article is suppressed. Statistics (not released under new, more draconian versions of the Official Secrets Act) show that 92.4% of the prison and mental institution populations are interned for non-violent crimes, the largest proportion of these being debt.)The second-largest being drug-related offences.) It is suggested that the seat of central government be relocated.

It is 1993. The government relocates to the Isle of Wight, and declares a state of national emergency. Voting franchises are radically redefined. Already excluding those in various institutions, the registered unemployed are also denied a vote, on the grounds that they are contributing nothing to the welfare of the country and therefore should have no hold over its government. Trades unions become illegal.

It is 1996. Control of the remaining "businesses" on the mainland is increasingly left in the hands of the on-site operators, the true owners having largely evacuated to offshore havens. Direct communications with the heads of state on Wight, though theoretically simple, become increasingly rarer. Mainland control effectively ceases to exist, as a so-called "civil war" breaks out. This is actually an inter-tribal dispute over the control of certain areas.

It is 1997. Escape from....?

DIAGRAM FOR A TRILOGY

BOOK ONE : BOVINE

This is Bovine's story. It is not told from first to last, but merely chronicles the dying and apparent death of Bovine.

Describe Bovine : his main concern is survival in its three basic components.

- (1) Food for the upkeep of Bovine's body.
- (2) Shelter to protect him from his enemies.
- (3) Reproduction for the continuation of his spirit.

Bovine is dying.

He hides in caves, tress and other places he imagines will prolong his dying. He is afraid of death. Bovine's enemies are legion, his friends few, and there are times when even his friends act like enemies. His friends are paradoxical, as he names them Light and Darkness and worships them for what they provide. His enemies are named Big, Ugly, Small and Ferocious and he sacrifices to them at the appropriate times but they are not appeased.

Bovine is dying.

In time, Bovine comes to know another enemy, but an enemy he cannot name in words other than Bovine. The enemy uses words Bovine does not understand like Fire and Axe and Spear. The enemy does not often kill Bovine, but instead gives Bovine a concept like Death but more like Dying. It is called Control.

In time this became Bovine's only enemy, and as his numbers grew he set himself apart from Bovine.

As Bovine continued to die and his numbers receded, the inbreeding of Bovine hastened his dying, but not quite enough.

Few Bovine survived this enemy, but the enemy's numbers had increased to fill the World.

His name was Equine.

BOOK TWO : EQUINE

This is Equine's story. It begins not at the beginning, which was Bovine, but instead chronicles the apparent dying of Equine.

Describe Equine : his main concern is territorial, in the parts of his understanding of the concept.

- (1) Territory = Control = Power. The first Equine equation, from which all others derive.
- (2) Weapon. The most important Equine concept, which gave him Control over Bovine, and which he hopes will make him more powerful than the next Equine.
- (3) Reproduction for the continuation of Equine's territory.

Equine does not know he is dying.

Equine remembers the days when he was few and Bovine was many. He does not think of the inbreeding which then sowed the seed of his downfall, because the inbreeding is still a way of life. The Ten Families of Equine are jealous and insular, but they walk proudly, eyes fixed on the horizons of their territory. Some Bovine are seen, their eyes cast down in humility and fear.

Equine does not know he is dying.

Equine has a brother he names Wisefriend. Wisefriend's eyes do not look to the horizon but are cast down, not in fear but in thought. Wisefriend has much knowledge to help Equine keep his pride and territory, but Equine is secretly jealous. The children of Equine are given into the care of Wisefriend so that they may learn and will not need a Wisefriend of their own.

Equine's pride does not tell him he is dying more quickly.

Equine asks Wisefriend to improve Weapon, and eyes his horizons more closely. He does not notice the change in his children. The children of Equine learn well, but they do not look down like Wisefriend, nor to the horizons like their fathers. They look up, away, beyond. In time they formulated questions, but Wisefriend was too busy improving Weapon. In time, they answered their own questions, but Wisefriend was still busy. They became alarmed at what it seemed Equine had become before they realised it was they who had changed, not Equine.

Equine was dying by his own hand.

Therefore, when Equine made his suicide attempt, his children were ready. They had discovered how to reach the skies they coveted and did so, leaving the old breed behind.

It was at this time that the name previously whispered in secret was at last spoken aloud.

That name was Aquiline.

BOOK THREE : AQUILINE

This is not only Aquiline's story. It is not told from first to last, but begins after Aquiline is well-established. It does not concern death, but may relate to resurrection.

Describe Aquiline: he is to a large extent the physical culmination of his line, having characteristics of all his predecessors in some measure.

- (1) Bovine Fear. Aquiline understands the need to know fear.
- (2) Equine Pride. Aquiline understands progress is made through pride in achievement.
- (3) Wisefriend Tools and Knowledge.

Reproduction is not crucial to Aquiline. He understands the old urges, and knows what must be done will be done. Aquiline does not need to perpetuate his name or his face. He has travelled the Universe, and knows that appearance is no mark of content. Aquiline understands the dangers of inbreeding.

Aquiline is alive.

Aquiline has FTL-systems which make nonsense of territoriality, and he knows of many beings in shapes unlike his. These he has always tried to name Friend. Where this was not possible he invented defensive uses for weapon, giving it names like Web and Barrier.

Aquiline is alive.

As time passed, all beings came to name Aquiline Friend. They knew, as Aquiline himself knew, that he was not a deity and therefore not perfect, but was basically Wise and Good. At this time Aquiline decided to write his history, but found memory of his ancestors' home was lacking. Aquiline had not visited Home since the beginning because he believed or wanted to believe that all there was destroyed.

This was one of Aquiline's rare mistakes.

Aquiline visited Home to know his history. He found a place of many colours with an uneasy beauty which he nevertheless felt to be wrong, as did his instruments. Some places were as Aquiline himself built cities, but withered in disuse.

Aquiline explored a colourful field and met beings who walked with a pride almost the equal of his own. These beings had a distorted form of Aquiline's own shape. Their eyes were on the horizons of their territory, and their name was Bovine.

Aquiline explored a ruined city and met beings of his own shape, fearful in artificial caves with much store of Weapon. Their eyes were downcast in fear, and their name was Equine.

Aquiline felt like dying.

Aquiline explored a colourful forest and met a being of a new shape. His eyes were not fixed in view, but looked to the horizon with a pride that was arrogance, were downcast with wisdom that was cunning, and were raised above and beyond with the ambition of the inheritor.

Aquiline knew Fear, and called for Web, but the stranger shrugged it off easily, approached Aquiline and sat watching him, as if extracting the sum of all knowledge by that simple act.

Aquiline felt like dying.

The stranger grinned.

His name was Lupine.

GREAT UNDOCUMENTED MEETINGS OF HISTORY (Special NOVACON edition)

- (1) BOB GELDOF meets MIKE TYSON

GELDOF: Just give us yer fookin moony, right.
TYSON: I don't remember marrying you.

- (2) PERCY THROWER meets GREG PICKERSGILL

THROWER: Sorry, I thought you were a crysanthemum.

- (3) BOB SHAW meets BOB SHAW

SHAW & SHAW: (together) Bastard! Some people think I wrote that!

- (4) DAVE HOLMES meets THE BATHROOM MIRROR, 8-00am

HOLMES: Aaaaaaaaaaaaaargh!
MIRROR: Come off it, you look exactly the same as you did last night.

- (5) SIR LES PATTERSON meets IAIN BANKS

PATTERSON: Your books are a bit over the top, aren't they?

- (6) ISAAC ASIMOV meets BERNIE EVANS

ASIMOV: Hi B-¹

¹ It was at this moment that a nuclear warhead hit, marking the opening exchange of World War III, almost exactly as I had postulated in my 1,348,902nd essay "The Luminous Horizon".

- (7) ROG PEYTON meets AN ATTRACTIVE FEMALE

PEYTON: Hi! Fancy a fuck?
FEMALE: No!
PEYTON: Oh... well, would you mind lying down while I have one?

- (8) MICK EVANS meets THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES

EVANS: Good morning, Mr President.
PRESIDENT: Who the hell are you?

- (9) ALAN J SULLIVAN meets NORMAN TEBBIT

SULLIVAN: Good morning, Mr Tebbit.
TEBBIT: Get out of my way, you quacking little squirt.

- (10) GARRY KILWORTH fails to meet HIS AUDIENCE

TONY BERRY: Where's the guest of honour, then?
CHRIS EVANS: Bastard's writing another story, isn't he?

HONEY, I'M HOME

He staggered in at 1am to the inevitable hostile reception, the catalogue of sins which never seemed to shorten, but expanded on its basic tenets to fill the available space. One, you never seem to act like a married man; two, we can't afford for you to go out spending money having a good time with your mates; three, when are we going to be able to start a family?

"Aw, honey, you know we can't afford for you to give up work right now..."

The words slurred through the alcoholic haze, the memory of the good time fading fast into the night.

"We can't afford for you to keep getting pissed either. Why don;t you spend some time at home with me for a change. When was the last time we did that? And when was the last time we made love? You make me feel so unwanted. I sometimes wonder if you love me as much as I love you..."

"Aw, honey, c'mon... I married you didn't I?"

"It's not enough."

"Please, I have a headache. Let's go to sleep, huh?"

"You always say you have a headache when I'm trying to talk to you..."

He felt, as always, like a real shit. After an hour of this they inevitably finished up in each other's arms, she apologising, he swearing to change his ways, but still knowing another bad day at work after not enough sleep would drive him back to the bottle and the pool table for a few hours of escape. And so it went.

Repeat this scene until you reach breaking point, then you might have some idea where it all ends up. That particular night, he stayed out until almost breakfast, clubbing with the boys, and then knocked the car a couple of times negotiating the quieter, police-less back roads to the house. The scene which followed broke all records, not to mention a number of the best glasses and crockery items. She snatched his car keys, tears streaming down her face, and ran out into the half-light as he stood motionlessly replaying the wounds which had been inflicted that hour.

It was a big car which steered like a cow if you weren't used to its little tricks. In retrospect, the accident was inevitable.

Much later...

"Hey, you must be the new guy on the project."

"S'right, yeah."

"Married too, I see."

"Yeah. Two kids now. Caitlin's just turned three and little Tommy's eighteen months."

"That's nice. Hey, listen, a couple of the guys are hanging around after work for a few beers, maybe shoot a little pool. You wanna come along?"

"No, thanks all the same." He smiled a private smile. "Have to get home. You know what it's like with us family men."

Laughter.

“Yeah, I guess so. Take it easy tucking in those kids.”
“Sure, sure.”

Traffic wasn't too bad, and the new car handled well. The key turned in the door at a quarter before six. He could almost smell a steak grilling for dinner.

“Honey, I'm home.”

He tossed his coat over the chair in the hallway and walked smiling into the sitting room. He stopped by the crib and cooed over it for a few minutes.

“Hey Tommy. Da-da. Da-da.”

He was still smiling as he picked up an apparently discarded doll and turned away from the empty crib toward the empty kitchen.

INCEST!

This tricky little subject seems to have surfaced in the downmarket press during the silly season. One case, as I recall, involved a man and his sister who were separated at birth, finally meeting many years later. They fell in love and set up house together. The judicial ruling was along the lines of "They aren't doing any harm and have taken deliberate steps to avoid having children, so what does it matter?" This, under the circumstances, would appear to be fair enough, given that we are talking about adults over 21. There are of course many myths and misconceptions about incest (eg all those dire warnings about what might happen if cousins marry), and not for nothing is it called the last great taboo. The very nature of the subject makes it difficult to address in a logical manner, especially when it tends to be confused so much with the sexual abuse of children.

My Concise Oxford defines incest as "sexual commerce of near kindred". But why should this be such a crime? A more scientific approach would argue in terms of diversity of genetic material, an insufficiency of which can result in unviable offspring. For the Sun readers, this means members of the royal family in the funny farm.

All this brings an interesting new aspect to "Lost in Space", enjoying its new lease of life on Channel 4. Even if it supposed that the Robinsons are only the vanguard of a colonisation program, you would think that allowances would have been made for the contingency that no others might follow. In this case, one might expect the members of the party to be made sterile, since there is an apparent insufficient diversity of genetic material. (This, of course, would not apply to Zachary Smith.) If this is not the case, then what available genetic material do we have? The Robinson parents appear generally well-adjusted, albeit in the "truth, justice, mom and apple-pie" American way, but their kids suffer from the usual Irwin Allen typecasting gene. The only variation comes from the "good" (but dim) Don West, and the scheming Smith. It's a pity that one of these two could not undergo a futuristic sex-change, as there is the potential to produce an altruistic genius, but given their usual luck, the unfortunate progeny would be more likely to be thick and evil. So what options are left?

Heinlein thoroughly redefined incest in "Time Enough For Love", although this is such an overlong, plodding tome that it is best forgotten. The genetic analysis of everyone is a simple matter of record, and "incest" is practically defined as an insufficient diversity of genetic material in a breeding pair. So all may not be lost for the Robinsons. Given the make-up of the crew (4M, 3F) there are 12 possible breeding pairs, any or all of which may be viable. The distasteful possibilities this presents would make it unlikely the series could be shown at 1pm on a Sunday, doesn't it?

Finally, two questions:

- 1) What is the legal status of "sexual commerce" between an adopted child and a natural child of the adopted parents? (A: Don;t know, if anybody out there does, please advise.)
- 2) In which state of the USA is incest most common? (A: Washington)

THE ALTERNATIVE GCSE (GENERAL CERTIFICATE OF SURREALIST ERUDITION)

ANSWER ONE QUESTION FROM EACH SECTION. YOU HAVE SEVERAL MINUTES.

SECTION ONE

1. David Langford is about as funny as having your dentist tell you that you've got herpes. Discuss, with examples (try not to exceed 100 pages).

OR -

Orson Scott Card is funnier than Tommy Cooper. Try to refute this argument.

2. Write a best-selling fantasy trilogy starting with the line "The behemoth Greganlinda bestrode fandom like an Eastercon breakfast..."

OR -

Write volume six in the "Foundation" series, with a resolution which ties in to the "Tales of the Black Widowers".

3. Suggest, with reasons, six forms in which Rog Peyton might be reincarnated for the better.

- OR -

Construct arguments both for and against the contention that Hugh Mascetti is the moral equivalent of a brown stain on the pavement.

SECTION TWO

4. Compose one of the following:

- (a) An historically accurate mediaeval whodunit in the style of Harlan Ellison.
- (b) An explicit sexual encounter in the style of Asimov.
- (c) A technical description of the TARDIS in the style of Freda Warrington.
- (d) A sequel to "The Witches of Eastwick" in the style of Anne McCaffrey.
- (e) A script for "Beauty and the Beast" in the style of J G Ballard.
- (f) A Sunday Sport front-page article in the style of Iain Banks.
- (g) A Sherlock Holmes story in the style of Storm Constantine.
- (h) A children's bedtime story in the style of A E Van Vogt.

THE FIRST IMPOSSIBLE MISSION

Jim Phelps sighed inwardly. No other person could have perceived this sigh, as the stone mask of his face presented nothing more than just another businessman on his unhurried way to just another meeting.

Several times over the long months of recruitment and training for the IMF an occasional doubt had crossed his mind, but he always maintained his resolve with the reminder that he had been given a fine opportunity: an opportunity to work for the good of his country.

He knew there would be no thanks, no medals, no public recognition of his efforts, but that did not matter. What mattered was how he and his people felt about what they were doing, the faith they kept in the Secretary, and how they could best use their not inconsiderable skills to succeed on the missions that would be set.

Jim cast his mind back to an earlier meeting, the first meeting at which the formation of the IMF was discussed. It had been 1961, in an anonymous office in an anonymous government building, where the first tentative steps had been taken to establish what was to become the nation's most effective covert force. Now, two years later, he allowed himself a brief smile. It was a good feeling, though underscored by a little tension and expectancy.

He parked the car at the side of the road, and getting out, subjected the area to a casual but piercing glance. There was nothing out of the ordinary. He entered the phone booth, and after a last quick look around, took the small key from his pocket and opened the cash box. Inside, as he had expected, was a large brown envelope and a small tape recorder. Putting the receiver to his ear, he took a large glossy photograph from the envelope and switched on the tape.

"Good morning, Mr Phelps. The man you are looking at is John F Kennedy..."

AND FINALLY, A WORD FROM OUR SPONSOR

Fuck