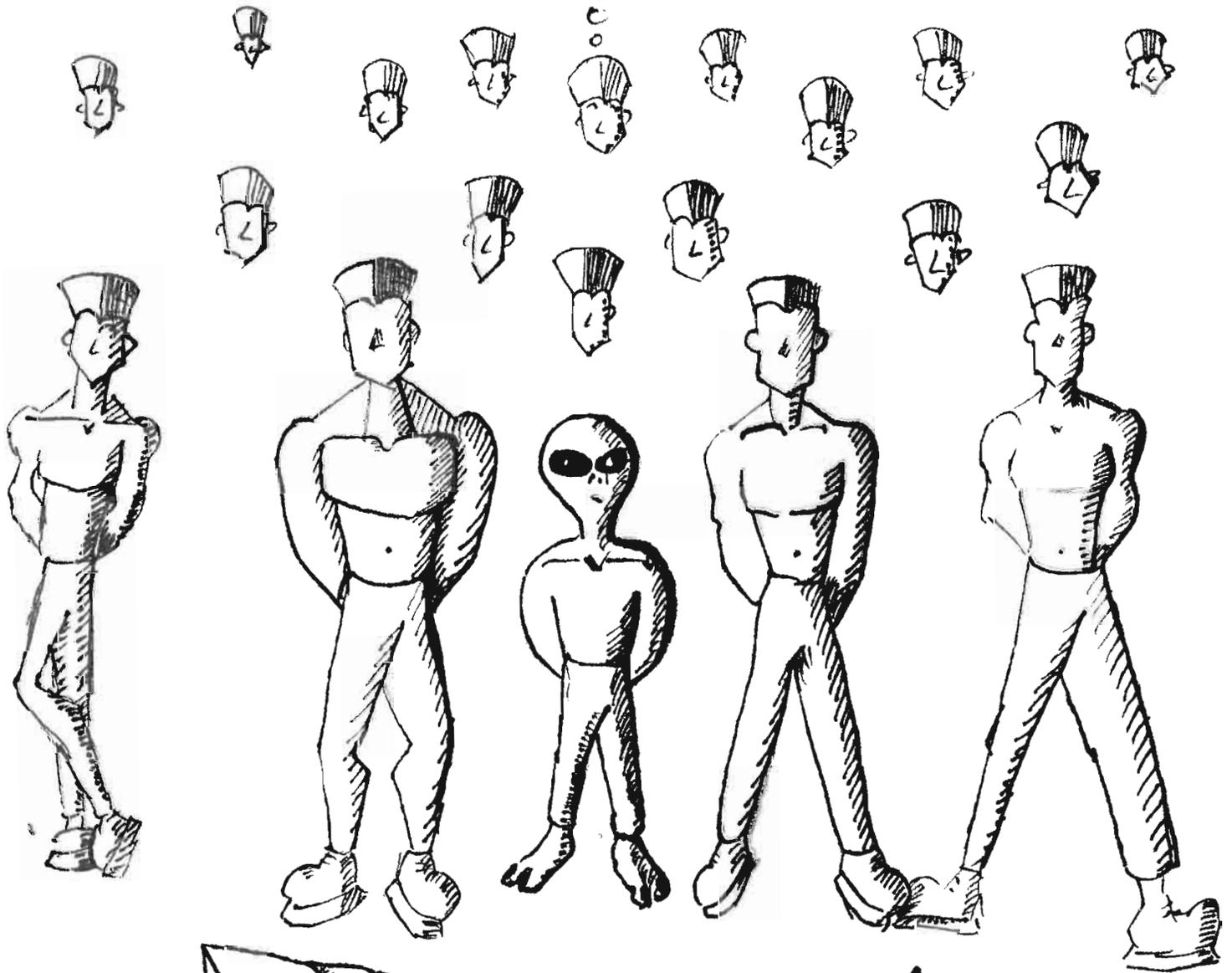


BLOODY FORIEGERS



ROADS
OF ASIA
VII

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November 1995 (late agane)

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* Lists compiled by S V O'Jay

** European Countries stolen from Alan Coren's *The Sanity Inspector*, thanks to Steve Jeffery for supplying these.

*** Seriously, now, would you have been bothered to renumber everything after you found this screw-up?

Cover and interior art by Justin Budreau, except for p28: Graham Joyce by Tim Groome (cover for Novacon 24 programme book)

Arrows of Desire is available for the usual from PO Box 178, St. Leonard, MD 20685, USA.

Issue #8 (1996): **Anarchy, Government, Dictatorship**

BLOODY FOREIGNERS! (An arbitrary sample)

Gerry Adams
Iain M Banks
Kenneth Branagh
Wernher von Braun
Jean-Jacques Burnel
Eric Cantona
Avedon Carol
Fidel Castro
Petula Clark
Diane Duane
Enya
Nic Farey
Michael J Fox
Lorena Gallo
Jean-Paul Gaultier
Oliver Gruter-Andrew
Adolf Hitler
Tim Illingworth
Bianca Jagger
Kal-EI
Linda Krawecke
Christopher Lambert
George Lazenby
Longshot
Winnie Mandela
Diego Maradona
Anne McCaffrey
Michael Moorcock
Rupert Murdoch
Manuel Noriega
William of Orange
Col. Tom Parker
Eva Peron
Hercule Poirot
Don Quixote
Geoff Ryman
Ian Sales
Arnold Schwarzenegger
William Shatner
Norman Spinrad
Arianna Stassinopoulos-Huffington
Andrew Stephenson
Patrick Stewart
Ivana Trump
James McNeill Whistler
Yanni
Tetsu Yaumachi
Boris Yeltsin

THE LAKE'S PROGRESS Part 1

Ken Lake

LIFE AFTER DEATH

Coming back from the dead, I find my downbeat piece in *AoD #6* frankly astonishing, not least because I don't even remember writing it.

In September 1992 my fag-end of a life took a totally new turn. Jan demanded a divorce, there was nothing left for me in England, I sold all my collections - books, records, stamps and so on - shoved oddments into nine tea-chests and put them in storage, packed clothes galore and 103 unread SF paperbacks, booked a wodge of airline tickets and set off round the world.

Jan bought my half of the house, and I figured I had enough cash to last out my life. I shoved it all into a high-interest deposit account, arranged for my bank to pay my Visa bills monthly, and expected to live mostly off the interest. Round the world, I drew cash against my Visa card - why take travellers' cheques, when the money could earn me interest?

Within weeks of my departure, Major withdrew us from the ERM, the value of the Pound dropped drastically, interest rates tumbled, and right from the start I was living out of capital. Not a good omen, and the whole divorce experience had shattered me, but I was determined to live my last couple of years to the full - and I had a contingency plan.

The city I hate most in the world is Toronto, and my greatest dislike is heights. Friends told me the CN tower has an exterior lift; by the time I got to the top I'd be petrified with fear, all I had to do was to evade security guards placed there solely to stop people disposing of their own lives as they see fit, and my aim would be to time my jump so that as I hit Ground Zero I'd splatter at least three Torontans.

I mentioned this to a dear friend, an elderly lady who's seen much trouble in her own life, and she was very upset. "Why so upset?", I asked. "Well, they might be tourists." "Serves them right for going to bloody Toronto." We both laughed a lot. It seemed like a good idea; I may still do it.

ASIAN ADVENTURES

My first stop was India. I spent three months touring by India railways, an experience never to be forgotten. I don't actually wake up screaming about it, but I'd never do it again, thanks. India's a *sterculinum cum margaritis* - a dunghill studded with pearls. Bigotry and corruption make it hell for all but a tiny minority, who don't even see the filth and degradation outside their heavily-guarded walls.

But if you never go anywhere else, visit Agra. See Itimad-ud-Daula, The Fort, Fateipur Sikri - and only then go to the Taj Mahal. I did this with a wonderful Oz girl, Ruth, who helped me regain a lot of my confidence and self-image. Ruth, if you're out there, thanks!

On to Singapore to stay with a wealthy couple - she the self-important and spoiled daughter of an elderly, wonderful English friend, her husband a Yankee anti-Brit bigmouth busy sacking all the Brit staff at the local branch of the multinational company that sent him there. He found the "Chinks" he engaged even less inclined to provide what he wanted: their undivided 24-hour, 7-day devotion to him and the firm, while he took time off to enjoy visits by his and her family. Surprise, surprise.

I've never had a real family Christmas, but they pressed me to stay and participate. The story's a long and nasty one; suffice it to say that on Christmas Eve I found myself

THE LAKE'S PROGRESS I

in the costly Singapore YMCA, again suicidal. The rich are not like us, but their prejudices can kill.

A charming Malay lady named Yus dragged me out of that and sent me on a ten-day tour of Malaysia by rail - just long enough to show me a beautiful and welcoming country to which I'd happily return if I could. From there to Bali, possibly the world's most lovely island once you get away from the Oz surfer-pub-crawling-throw-up-on-the-streets gangs. I did: I stayed in Ubud, toured the island, and want to go back again. An intelligent Oz millionaire told me "Our sheilas come here to get serviced by the local men, our men go to Bangkok to fuck Thai schoolgirls"; it's the Thais I feel sorry for.

Up to Hong Kong, which I've always loved. Not any more: the 1997 absorption into the PRC has driven an already highly-stressed society into near insanity, and the hideously efficient MTR underground railway system has helped a lot. If you loved Honkers in the past, stay away now. Oh, and it's bloody cold in February/March, especially after Bali. Luckily, the lovely Sara kept me sane, but after she left poisoned oysters nearly killed me.

BHARAT

1991 population estimate: 866m; a Federal republic.

1 TV set per 44 persons; 1 telephone in use per 200 persons; newspaper circulation (1988): 21 per 1,000 pop.

Life expectancy at birth (1991): 57 male, 58 female. Infant mortality rate (1991): 87 per 1,000 live births.

REPUBLIC OF SINGAPORE

1991 population estimate: 2.756m; a Republic.

1 TV set per 4.9 persons; 1 telephone in use per 2.1 persons; newspaper circulation (1990): 289 per 1,000 pop.

Life expectancy at birth (1991): 72 male, 77 female. Infant mortality rate (1991): 8 per 1,000 live births.

MALAYSIA

1991 population estimate: 17.981m; a Federal parliamentary democracy with a constitutional monarch (Paramount Ruler Sultan Azlan Shah).

1 TV set per 7 persons; 1 telephone in use per 11 persons; newspaper circulation (1989): 145 per 1,000 pop.

Life expectancy at birth (1991): 65 male, 70 female. Infant mortality rate (1991): 29 per 1,000 live births.

REPUBLIK INDONESIA

1991 population estimate: 193m; an Independent republic.

1 TV set per 24 persons; 1 telephone in use per 172 persons.

Life expectancy at birth (1991): 59 male, 63 female. Infant mortality rate (1990): 73 per 1,000 live births.

ZHONGHUA RENMIN GONGHE GUO

1991 population estimate: 1,151.486m; a Communist party led state.

1 TV set per 8 persons; 1 telephone in use per 101 persons; newspaper circulation (1989): 37 per 1,000 pop.

Life expectancy at birth (1991): 68 male, 72 female. Infant mortality rate (1991): 33 per 1,000 live births.

ALL FAKTS CORECT FOR A CHANGE

BELGIUM

The People

Belgium is the most densely populated country in Europe, and is at the same time fiercely divided on the subjects of language and religion. This means that it is impossible to move anywhere within the country, which is packed with mobs standing chin to chin and screaming incomprehensible things at one another in the certain knowledge that God is on their side, whoever He is. That there has not been more bloodshed is entirely due to the fact that there isn't room to swing a fist. Consequently, what the Belgian authorities most fear is contraception: if it ever catches on, and the population thins to the point where rifles may be comfortably unslung from shoulders, the entire nation might disappear overnight.

The Land

The land is entirely invisible, except in the small hours of the morning, being for the rest of the time completely underfoot. It is therefore no surprise to learn that Belgium's largest industries are coal and mineral mining, as underground is the only place where there is room to work. Plans have been made for reclaiming land from the sea, on the Dutch pattern, but were always shelved as soon as it was realised that there was neither room for the water that would have to be removed from the sea, nor, alternatively, any spare land to spread to extend the coastline outwards.

The History

Belgium has always suffered horribly at the hands of occupying forces, which, given the overcrowding, is only to be expected. The bayoneting of babies by Prussians, for example, was never intentional; it was simply that it was impossible to walk about with fixed bayonets in such confined spaces without finding something stuck on the end of them. For the same reason, the sprout was developed by Brussels agronomists, this being the largest cabbage a housewife could possibly carry through the teeming streets.

(Alan Coren: The Sanity Inspector. "All You Need To Know About Europe")

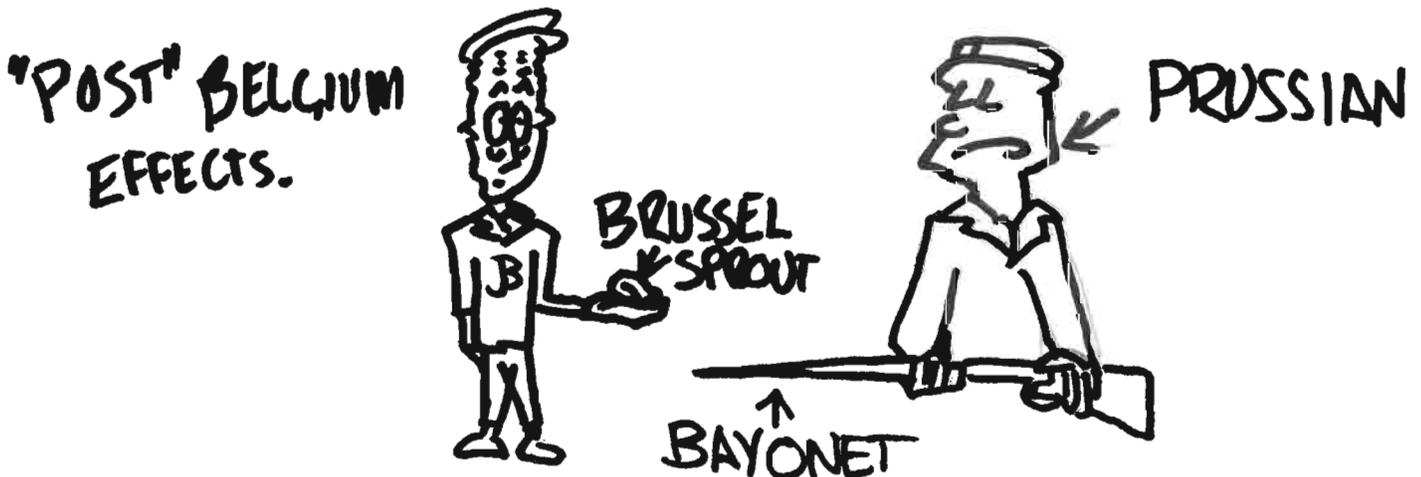
KONINKRIJK BELGIË (Dutch); ROYAUME DE BELGIQUE (French)

1991 population estimate: 9.921m; a Parliamentary democracy under a constitutional monarch (King Baudouin).

1 TV set per 3.2 persons; 1 telephone in use per 2.1 persons; newspaper circulation 213 per 1,000 pop.

Life expectancy at birth (1991): 74 male, 81 female. Infant mortality rate (1991): 6 per 1,000 live births.

ALL FAKTS CORECT FOR A CHANGE



NEWSPAPERS TOO THICK, LAVATORY PAPER TOO THIN

S V O'Jay

The observation of the title was Winston Churchill's seven word reply to a reporter who asked him what he thought of the United States of America. I am sure he would not have been surprised to learn that both his observations still pertain. Here are some others.

Er... they drive on the wrong side of the road

This is, of course, purely a matter of viewpoint. British friends who attended the inauguration of Mrs O'Jay II and wisely invested in car hire while here noted that driving on the right actually seems easier. You don't have to worry about roundabout protocol (there are only about three roundabouts in the entire country) and you're allowed to turn right on a red light if nothing is coming. Other driving tips: State laws are different, so if you're planning to drive here check 'em up. The speed limit is generally 55mph (you'll usually be pulled over for doing more than about 63mph or for any reason if you have out-of-state plates). Overtaking on the inside is legal in Maryland, illegal in Virginia, as is the case with radar detectors. Some states have 65mph limits on some roads (Md is about to introduce this as I write). Oh, and *never* drive a hire car in Florida (you will be robbed and/or shot).

Remember to flush the urinal

One for the chaps here. With few exceptions, urinals in the US are manually flushed. Look for a multi-way lever at the top of the utensil where the plumbing enters.

The light switches work the opposite way

When there are switches, that is. Many hotel rooms, and indeed free standing lamps in private houses, are operated by a twisting knob, which may be up to a three-way switch for the light. Wall mounted switches are configured on = up, off = down.

So do shop doors

This is another example of the standard of thoughtfulness expected by Americans in their dealings with those who may be providing a service, contrasting with the British attitude which often seems best categorised by the phrase "fuck off". Shop doors (of the non-automatic variety) in the UK normally open inward, those in the US outward. The US configuration makes sense only if you think it likely you will be leaving the emporium carrying more things than when you entered it.

The price of petrol is outrageous

The increasing price of petrol ("gas") in the US is a perennial topic of conversation among all classes. Almost everyone (with the possible exception of Bill Gates) complains vociferously about every extra cent. As I write, a gallon sells for about \$1.12 (75 pence or thereabouts).

The cost of healthcare is outrageous

Actually, it really is. Most things here are significantly cheaper than in good old Blighty (the cost of living is figured at 2/3 or so of that in the UK), but health insurance, doctor bills and so on are more like five to ten times their British equivalent. Current joke: How do you get good healthcare in the USA? A: Marry a Canadian.

NEWSPAPERS TOO THICK, LAVATORY PAPER TOO THIN

Holidays and vacations

I would here disabuse the notion held by those outside these shores that "vacation" is just the American word for "holiday". The two have distinct meanings. A "holiday" in the US is what the British would describe as a "Bank holiday" (more properly, as here, a "public holiday"). Unless you are a State or Federal employee (or, in some cases, a bank worker), the number of these is actually only six: New Year's Day, Memorial Day (closest Monday to May 27 - traditionally the start of Summer), Independence Day (July 4), Labor Day (first Monday in September - traditionally the end of Summer), Thanksgiving Day (fourth Thursday in November) and Christmas Day. All the other good stuff (Presidents' Day, Martin Luther King Day, Columbus Day and so on) don't usually benefit people (like me) in "regular" jobs. Vacation days are your personal holiday time (hence "on vacation", not "on holiday"). The normal allocation here is ten days per year. You also have a limited number of "sick days" you are allowed to take in a year (and be paid for them), also usually ten. Most people *will* take these days off at some time. The typical contracted working week will be 40 or 45 hours (a shock to me, coming from the leisurely office norm of 35 in the UK), although many salaried employees end up doing more than this. A recent survey came up with an average hours worked for middle-management salaried personnel of around 55 per week. This would seem to put a bit of a downer on the lifestyle (you can also add a 45-mile-each-way commute to my day), but the general attitude is "work hard, play hard". And we do.

Guns

I remember the first time I had occasion to enter the hallowed portals of Heathrow Airport, and how jarring it was at that time to see armed police. This is, of course, an everyday occurrence in the US, where just about every uniform has a belt and holster attached to it. Remember that if you ever get pulled over when driving here, especially if you comply with any interpretation of "suspicious behaviour", and try not to shit yourself when you see the nice officer drawing his weapon as he approaches your car. Also remember that you'll be looking at this in your rear view or side mirror. American cops will signal you to pull over by the usual sirens and flashing lights, but will pull up *behind* you. The Second Amendment to the Constitution of the United States of America supposedly guarantees the right to bear arms; the powerful NRA (National Rifle Association) lobby is making a lot of noise about how this right is being eroded. Somewhat paradoxically, an incident like the Oklahoma City bombing is a rarity indeed, whereas the UK has borne witness to several similar events. The infrequency of lunatics in the UK shooting up small towns would seem to remind us that gun control ought to be a good thing. The regularity of murders in the District of Columbia continues despite the fact that it is illegal to possess a firearm there.

"Have A Nice Day"

One of the more surprising things I found in day-to-day contact with the denizens of The Greatest Country In The World is that all those dreadfully banal phrases which we take the piss out of so mercilessly *actually sound right in context!* The above is the usual example, although "You're welcome" as a response to "Thank you" is probably most prevalent. When you're actually here for any length of time (residing as opposed to being a bloody foreign tourist), you come to realise that this is just basic politeness. Joke: How do they say "fuck you" in California? (A: "Have a nice day"); how do they say "fuck you" in Hollywood? (A: "Trust me"); how do they say "fuck you" in New York? (A: "Fuck you!").

THE LAKE'S PROGRESS Part 2

Ken Lake

PACIFIC ISLAND BEAUTIES

Twenty-six years as a member of the Pacific Islands Study Circle made the South Pacific my real destination, but I wasn't ready for it when I left the UK. Next came the formerly US-colonial, still US-controlled Micronesian islands off the North Pacific, most of them unknown to Brits or even most Yanks: Guam (yecch), Palau (dull), Yap (weird), Saipan (Japanese-ish), Rota (wonderful), Chuuk (poverty-stricken), Pohnpei (lovely), Kosrae (weirder) and Majuro (a sinkhole of child prostitution, poverty, overcrowding and corruption).

Basically, the Yanks destroyed island cultures by diffusing them. To a Brit, the centre of life is the village, later the town; Yanks have wheels, they build things wherever they choose. We see the effect even in Britain - retail outlets stuck on the outskirts of towns - but never to the point where population centres themselves decay. Give an island people wheels, don't provide any infrastructure, hand out grants to politicians, and you rob them of their cohesion and dignity.

I flew on to Tarawa, main island of Kiribati, and then to Funafuti in Tuvalu. These were the Gilbert and Ellice islands, British protectorates, now split and both going their own traditional ways. Had I gone straight there I'd've been shocked at their apparent backwardness, village life, barefoot people in sarongs, lack of clean water...

After the North Pacific, I could see their dignity, their independence, their strong hold on their own lifestyle. They're flourishing in their own way. Bad water is a problem on all atolls, and frankly I'm proud of what the Brits did there. It all depends on where you're standing, of course, but I'd happily return to Kiribati - if only to enjoy the abundant charms of the delightful Katekeuea (that's a girl's name).

Tuvalu has other problems caused by their insistence in going it alone - nine tiny atolls with nothing to sell. But they're fighting to overcome things, and again we've left them their Polynesian heritage. I was sorry to leave Nanisi behind (she's lovely), but glad to reach Fiji - with problems of its own, thanks to the stupidity of oldtime British planters.

They brought in Indian contract labour and left the Fijians a minority in their own country, almost totally lacking control over its economy. We don't always get it right - but for all that, Fiji is the wealthiest, most developed, most relaxed and (apart from the Indians) most enjoyable country in the Pacific. Fijian women are good fun, too.

In Western Samoa I got involved in very strange events with Christine, a married woman from Vanuatu who wanted me to take her with me, away from her husband and two of her children, but taking the middle child with us. We spent a few days at Somerset Maugham's famous Rainmaker Hotel in US Samoa, only to discover that July 4, Independence Day, is ignored there - "We are not Americans, we are a colony. We want nothing to do with them. July 4 is a Sunday, we shall go to church; July 5 is a holiday, so all the shops will be closed." That didn't please Christine, who wanted to spend - my money, of course - so we flew back to Apia (W Samoa) and parted.

Then I got myself delightfully involved with the lovely Leu - who wanted of course to be taken away from all this. It took me some time to find out she had a "custom husband" and a baby, and when she stole WS\$400 (four-fifths of the cash in my wallet - a foolish thing to do, since I was bound to notice it) I flew to Rarotonga (Cook Islands) to recover, and then off to Tonga.

THE LAKE'S PROGRESS II

Here I got sort-of-nearly married twice and absolutely-almost married the third time. It's a long story and another very, very odd one, but the unattached male *palangi* in the South Pacific is an irresistible prize.

Only slowly does one discover the disadvantages of such a match, but I did extricate myself later - though I felt a moral obligation to marry dearest Tautala if it worked out that way. However, then being then, I returned to Suva, Fiji, to plan the wedding. Things went awry once I'd left the island, so I decided to make a three-month tour of the Solomon Islands and Vanuatu while Tautala sorted things out at her end.

This was a mistake: the Solomons are a filthy, underdeveloped place, and I went down with an infection that put me through two weeks of unadulterated agony - first on a delightful uninhabited (apart from me and my host) island in Marovo Lagoon, one of the world's loveliest spots, then in the tiny township of Gizo where I was misdiagnosed and given life-threatening drugs by two doctors, one an ex-Army Scotsman, need I say more?

Finally getting a seat on a jampacked 11-seater Trislander plane, I flew back to Honiara, the capital, where a local doctor took over and saved my life by taking a chance - he threw out all my drugs, gave me different ones, and by the time the lab results came through he was proved right.

"If I had been wrong, you would be dead by now," he told me cheerfully. The whole fortnight was agony, the next ten days were painful. I never saw most of the places for which I'd bought tickets, and I flew on to Vanuatu with no idea what I'd find, but with a profound distrust of all guidebooks.

Landing at Port Vila I found a wonderful small town, half English and half French, with clean shops, friendly people, good hotels and restaurants and all I needed, including Christine again and the amazing Pauline. She was certifiably insane, kind, loving, cheerful, feckless, prone to taking off all her clothes in restaurants, unreliable, childlike and beautiful. She made my life a mixture of fun and sadness, and like Victoria, Duri, Seini, Cristina, Leu, Mele and Christine, and of course derest Tautala, I'll never forget her.

FEDERATED STATES OF MICRONESIA

1991 population estimate: 111,000; a Republic.

1 TV set per 77 persons; 1 telephone in use per 61 persons.

Life expectancy at birth (1991): 68 male, 73 female. Infant mortality rate: 65 per 1,000 live births.

REPUBLIC OF KIRIBATI

1991 population estimate: 71,000; a Republic.

1 telephone in use per 53 persons.

[No other data]

TUVALU

1991 population estimate: 9,317; Head of State Queen Elizabeth II, represented by a Governor-General.

Life expectancy at birth (1991): 60 male, 63 female. Infant mortality rate (1991): 33 per 1,000 live births.

MALOTUTO'ATASI O SAMOA I SISIFO

1991 population estimate: 190,000; a Constitutional monarchy (King Malietoa Tanumafili).

1 TV set per 2.3 persons; 1 telephone in use per 23 persons.

Life expectancy at birth (1991): 64 male, 69 female. Infant mortality rate (1991): 48 per 1,000 live births.

PULE 'ANGA TONGA

1991 population estimate: 102,000; a Constitutional monarchy (King Taufa'ahau Tupou IV).

1 telephone in use per 24 persons.

Life expectancy at birth (1991): 65 male, 70 female. Infant mortality rate (1991): 23 per 1,000 live births.

THE LAKE'S PROGRESS II

REPUBLIC OF FIJI

1991 population estimate: 744,000; a Republic.

1 TV set per 73 persons; 1 telephone in use per 12 persons; newspaper circulation (1988): 56 per 1,000 pop.

Life expectancy at birth (1991): 71 male, 80 female. Infant mortality rate (1991): 6 per 1,000 live births.

SOLOMON ISLANDS

1991 population estimate: 347,000; a Parliamentary democracy within the Commonwealth of Nations.

1 telephone in use per 58 persons.

Life expectancy at birth (1991): 67 male, 72 female. Infant mortality rate (1991): 39 per 1,000 live births.

RIPABLIK BLONG VANUATU

1991 population estimate: 170,000; a Republic.

Life expectancy at birth (1991): 67 male, 72 female. Infant mortality rate (1991): 37 per 1,000 live births.

ALL FAKTS CORECT FOR A CHANGE



FRANCE

The People

The French are [Britain's] closest neighbours, and we are therefore bound to them by bonds of jealousy, suspicion, competition, and envy. They haven't brought the shears back, either. They are short, blue-vested people who carry their own onions when cycling abroad, and have a yard which is 3.37 inches longer than other people's. Their vanity does not stop there: they believe themselves to be great lovers, an easy trap to fall into when you're permanently drunk, and the natural heirs to Europe. It has been explained to them that there is a difference between natural heirs and legitimate heirs, but they cannot appreciate subtle distinctions, probably because French has the smallest vocabulary of any language in Europe.

The Land

France is the largest country in Europe, a great boon for drunks, who need room to fall, and consists of an enormous number of bars linked by an intricate system of serpentine cobbles. Exactly why France is so cobbled has never been fully explained, though most authorities favour the view that the French like to be constantly reminded of the feel of grapes underfoot. The houses are all shuttered to exclude light, as a precaution against hangovers, and are filled with large lumpy beds in which the French spend 83.7 per cent of their time recovering from sex, booze or both. The lumpiness is due, of course, to the presence of undeclared income under the mattresses.

The History

French history, or "gloire", starts with Charlemagne, and ends with Charlemagne. Anything subsequent was in the hands of bizarre paranoiacs who thought they were God (Louis XIV) or thought they were Charlemagne (Napoleon) or thought they were God and Louis XIV and Charlemagne and Napoleon (de Gaulle). Like most other European nations, the French have fought everyone, but unlike the rest have always claimed that both victories and defeats came after opposition to overwhelming odds. This is probably because they saw two of everything.

(Alan Coren: The Sanity Inspector. "All You Need To Know About Europe")

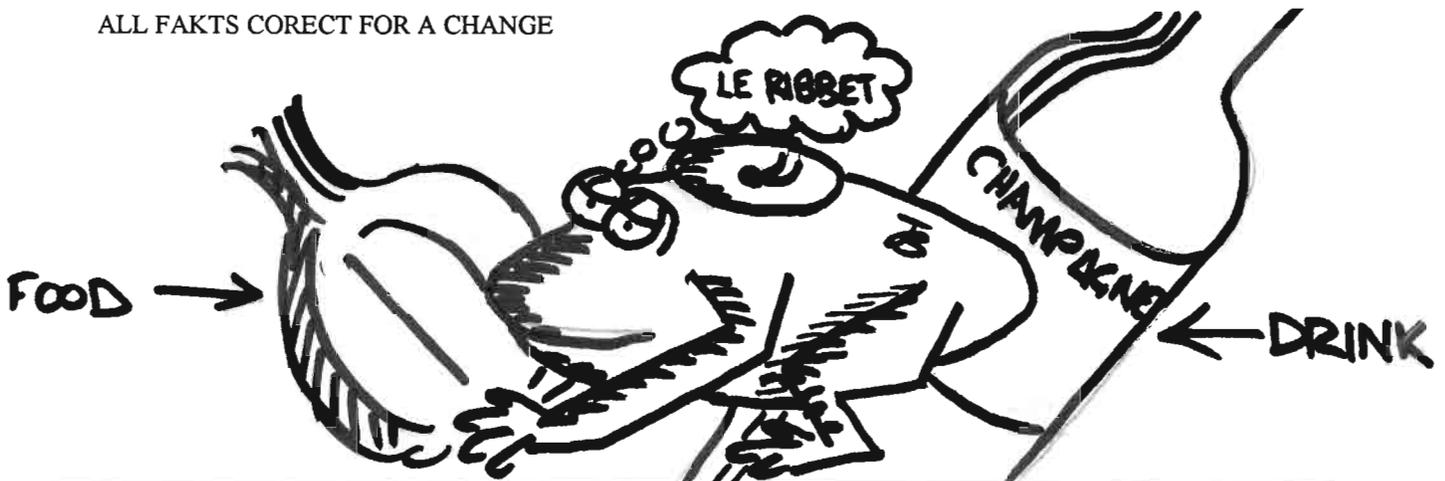
RÉPUBLIQUE FRANCAISE

1991 population estimate: 56.595m; a Republic.

1 TV set per 2.6 persons; 1 telephone in use per 1.7 persons; newspaper circulation (1990): 176 per 1,000 pop.

Life expectancy at birth (1991): 74 male, 82 female. Infant mortality rate: 6 per 1,000 live births.

ALL FAKTS CORECT FOR A CHANGE



ODD BUGGERS

Steve Jeffery

Odd buggers, foreigners. They're often nice individually, but collectively horrid. Specially when they gang up as tourists. In Oxford they stand five deep across the pavement, gawping up at crumbly old buildings in the city centre like a garlic flavoured roadblock, so you have to dive into the path of a bus to get from A to B. And why do they all wear fluorescent dayglo rucksacks?

The main problem with foreigners, of course, is that they are not English. However, since the national dish of England is fast becoming the Balti or the Chinese takeaway, after several pints of German lager at a Karaoke night down the pub, this is starting to become a bit problematic.

"Bloody foreigners!", I mutter, putting down a half-empty packet of Bombay mix to get another can of Heineken out of the Indesit fridge. Still peckish, I hunt about and come up with a leftover slice of pizza, some hummus and a couple of slices of dark Polish rye bread. I plonk the lot down on the Danish smoked glass coffee table, switch on the Fergusson TV and push a BASF tape into the Akai video. "What have they ever given us?" I light a Marlboro and settle back to watch *Akira*. "Not one bloody thing worth a damn". I ought to ring the garage tomorrow to see about a service for the Volvo.

The other problem of course is that they are better at things than us. Especially our things, like cricket and football. They are giving odds of 20-1 against for us winning the Ashes. Soccer's no better; come every World Cup, commentators inevitably harp back to England's last glory of 1966. 1966 for Christ's sake! Dave Langford's won 28 Hugos since then; Haz Bond wasn't born; *Top of the Pops* had decent tunes. At least they still can't make beer properly. But even there the buggers are learning. Stuff like Anchor Steam, Dock Street and Adams is actually quite fine. Served too cold, of course, but they're probably working on heated beer mats even now.

The language is the problem, of course. We steadfastly refuse to learn foreign languages (sometimes even our own), while the average Dane can speak three dozen languages by the time they leave kindergarten. (Kindergarten? Good grief, there's a foreign word crept in already. Have it taken out and shot!) After all, English has always been rather laissez-faire (wot?) about its borrowings from here, there and everywhere - from being invaded by all and sundry up to the Middle Ages, when we turned round and decided to invade everyone else in turn.

Our Council forms are now printed in so many languages: Urdu, Hindi, Gujurati, Sanskrit, Hebrew - and probably Albanian, that English seems relegated to a minor dialect, somewhere between Geordie and Cornish.

The French are even worse (or have the right idea, depending on your view of all this linguistic miscegenation), refusing to speak anything but French and actively culling their language of all such encroachments, like *le football* and *le weekend*. Take this tack, and English would end up with a vocabulary of three hundred words (about all some school leavers can barely manage, but half of those are expletives cheerfully plundered from Germanic languages).

Forget Galbraith; the other authority is (as any fule kno) Molesworth. Unfortunately, he does not have too much to say on the French, which is probably just as well, but he is far more perceptive on the Spanish:

Nobody kno much about Spanish xcept the Spaniards whose beards are all singed and they are v proud and like sherry just as some others about this place whose names i will not mention. All this is the reason why you hav to lisp when you speke Spanish which make it all v difficult.

ODD BUGGERS

there: a hathienda. Enter don jereth de la frontera molethworth.

A THERVANT: who ith it?

DON JERETH: it ith only me ith ithabel ecthpecting me?

A THERVANT: yeth.

DON JERETH: O thuper!

(he folowth the thervant)

ithabel! my thoul mate! ith there any therry in the houth?

ITHABEL: yeth, pour out two slugth and i will thup with thee.

DON JERETH: thplendid! O good thow. Cheerth! Over the fallth. *(he drinkth)* What ith that thound?

ITHABEL: Thantoth. it ith my brother Thantoth thipping hith therry. he ith thipping with uth.

DON JERETH: *(thwearth)* Curtheth!

That is the sort of thing that happens with Spanish and anyone who decide to kno about it is a fule.

ESPAÑA

1991 population estimate: 39.384m; a Constitutional monarchy (King Juan Carlos I de Borbon y Borbon).

1 TV set per 2.6 persons; 1 telephone in use per 2.5 persons; newspaper circulation (1990): 76 per 1,000 pop.

Life expectancy at birth (1991): 75 male, 82 female. Infant mortality rate (1991): 6 per 1,000 live births.

REPUBLIC OF POLAND

1991 population estimate: 37.799m; a Democratic state.

1 TV set per 3.9 persons; 1 telephone in use per 7.5 persons; newspaper circulation (1988): 217 per 1,000 pop.

Life expectancy at birth (1991): 69 male, 77 female. Infant mortality rate (1991): 12 per 1,000 live births.

KONGERIGET DANMARK

1991 population estimate: 5.134m; a Constitutional monarchy (Queen Margrethe II).

1 TV set per 2.7 persons; 1 telephone in use per 1.2 persons; newspaper circulation (1990): 361 per 1,000 pop.

Life expectancy at birth (1991): 73 male, 79 female. Infant mortality rate (1991): 6 per 1,000 live births.

NIPPON

1991 population estimate: 124.017m; a Parliamentary democracy.

1 TV set per 1.8 persons; 1 telephone in use per 2.3 persons; newspaper circulation (1990): 429 per 1,000 pop.

Life expectancy at birth (1991): 76 male, 82 female. Infant mortality rate (1991): 4 per 1,000 live births.

MEDINAT ISRAEL

1991 population estimate: 4.477m; a Republic.

1 TV set per 6.9 persons; 1 telephone in use per 2.1 persons; newspaper circulation (1989): 357 per 1,000 pop.

Life expectancy at birth (1991): 76 male, 79 female [*data for Jewish population only*]. Infant mortality rate (1991): 9 per 1,000 live births.

REPUBLIKA E SHQIPËRIË

1991 population estimate: 3.335m; a Democracy.

1 TV set per 13 persons; newspaper circulation: 48 per 1,000 pop.

Life expectancy at birth (1991): 72 male, 79 female. Infant mortality rate (1991): 50 per 1,000 live births.

ALL FAKTS CORECT FOR A CHANGE

HO', HO', HO'

Ian Sales

We are all more than aware of the problems in Russia and the other CIS states, and the way that the communists of old have embraced the dark underbelly of capitalism. We have all heard of the Russian mafia. But few of us have first-hand knowledge of this. For residents of Dubai, the Russians are now a fact of life. (Incidentally, I am using the word 'Russian' to refer to citizens of all the European CIS states - Russia, Byelorussia, Georgia, the Ukraine, etc. As a rule, the Islamic ex-USSR states such as Azerbaijan are less criminally-minded and more considerate towards local sensibilities.)

Dubai is the commercial centre of the United Arab Emirates, a country on the north coast of the Arabian peninsula. Since the fall of the USSR, Russians have been flocking to Dubai in vast numbers to buy goods that are not available in Moscow, St Petersburg and Minsk. With their coveted dollars, they have brought petty crime. As a rule, the UAE is crime-free. Yes, crime happens, but you could still walk through the centre of Dubai at two o'clock in the morning with a fistful of dollars and not be molested. This is no longer as true as it once was.

The Russians have brought with them all manner of petty crime. Single women can no longer rent apartments in Dubai because too many Russians were doing so and operating as prostitutes from them. They say it is now unsafe to go down the souk after ten o'clock at night because of all the Russian whores. Russians can no longer hire cars because they have been involved in so many accidents that insurance companies will no longer cover them. As an illustration, there was an accident recently that killed four Russians in a Landrover. They had been crossing Al Maktoum Bridge late at night, and drove into the water. Given that the Landrover landed in the water near the bank they were approaching, but on the opposite side of the bridge, then they must have crossed six lanes of traffic and been travelling at nearly 100 miles an hour. Drivers from other expat nations may not be perfect, but they don't as a rule try to leap Dubai Creek in a four-wheel drive...

There are now so many Russians in Dubai that shops have 'sale' signs on them in Arabic, English and Russian. A stretch of beach in Jumeirah, a suburb of Dubai, has been renamed, Moscow Beach. There have been so many Russians drowned in the rip tide off Jumeirah, that helicopter patrols have been instigated.

So why do the authorities put up with this influx of CIS citizens? Because of those coveted dollars. Each month, the Russians buy around 2000 tonnes worth of white goods. I have driven past hotels and seen piles of boxed television sets that are a good four metres high.

The Russians are renowned as hard bargainers. It is said that the women will bargain the shop assistant down to their lowest price and then offer sex to get the price down further. It is not known how many shop assistants actually take the Russian women up on their offer.

There was a recent incident involving an attractive Russian woman. She had been asked by so many Pathan and Pakistani labourers to have her photograph taken with them (she would wear a bikini) that she started charging ten Dirhams for the privilege. When the authorities heard of this, they arrested her. However, once they had her up before the Shar'iat court, they discovered she wasn't actually breaking any law and had to let her go.

It is not strictly true to say that Russians are still welcome in Dubai. They can no longer get visas to visit there, so most of them fly in through the international airports in Sharjah and Fujairah, two more of the UAE's cities. On arrival, they hire a car and

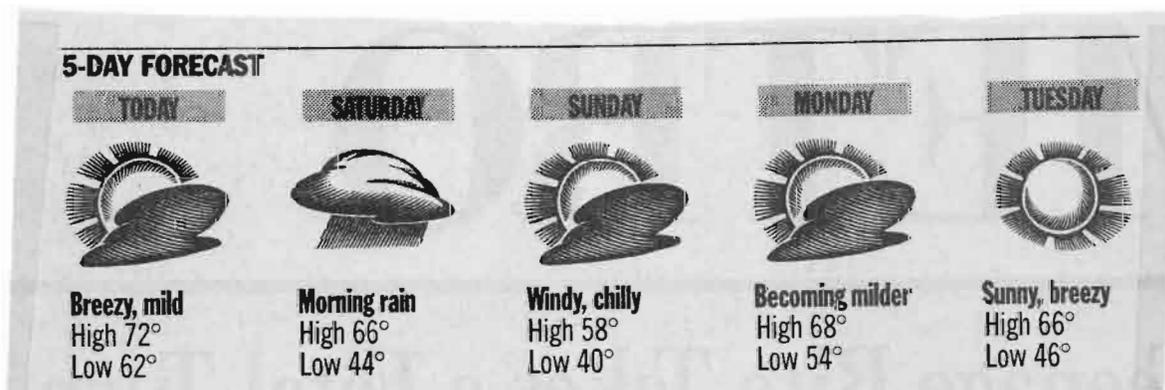
HO', HO', HO'

drive to Dubai, where all the best shopping is located. Dubai authorities are still too reliant on Russian dollars to complain about this.

It would not be unfair to say that Russians are despised by the majority of expats in Dubai. The wives of Brit expats may have earned themselves gold Rolexes in the past by sleeping with rich sheikhs, but they they never thought of that as prostitution. Of course, there is the old George Bernard Shaw tale of him asking a woman if she would sleep with him for a million quid, to which she replied "yes". But when he asked if she would sleep with him for a quid, she said "What do you think I am? A whore?". To which GBS replied "We've already established that. Now I'm just trying to work out your price". The story is no doubt apocryphal, but it does illustrate that spreading your legs on occasion for the odd expensive watch is no different to selling your body for a handful of US currency. To believe otherwise is hypocritical.

Other expat nations - ie, those from the West - are no saints in comparison to the Russians. The majority of them may be law-abiding, but there is plenty of corruption, and this does not always fall at the feet of Russians or other Arab races. They say that in Abu Dhabi, the UAE's capital, more meetings take place in car parks than do in offices, but I have heard plenty of stories about corruption in Dubai where the perpetrators are Brits. Usually the sums involved are in the millions, but nonetheless, it does happen.

It could be argued that any nation so dependent on expatriate labour, as the UAE is, is open to such abuses of trust. The UAE has a population of only some three million, of which the vast majority are expatriate. In fact, 95% of UAE nationals work for the government but only account for some 35% of the government workforce. Of the expats, fully half are from the Indian subcontinent; Westerners account for about 8% of expats. Of course, all are welcome and the country would almost not exist as a self-governing entity if it weren't for the expats. and it was equally true that no nation is immune to corruption or crime-free. But Dubai residents are full of stories about Russians, and none of them are positive. It is probably only a matter of time before the Russian mafia move in force, although given the control of finances in the UAE by the nationals, it is unlikely they will be all that effective. Only time will tell. I don't plan to be there when they do move in.



GERMANY

The People

Germans are split into two broad categories: those with tall spikes on their hats, and those with briefcases. Up until 1945, the country's history was made by those with the spikes. After 1945, it was made by those with the briefcases. In common with the rest of Europe, its history is therefore now known as economics. Ethnically, the Germans are Teutonic, but prefer not to talk about it any more. This ethnos was originally triform, being made up of Vandals, Gepidae, and Goths, all of whom emigrated south from Sweden in about 500BC; why they emigrated is not exactly clear, but many scholars believe it was because they saw the way Sweden was going, i.e. neutral. Physically, Germans are tall and blond, though not as tall and blond as they sometimes think, especially when they are short, dark Austrians with a sense of destiny. When they sing, the Germans link arms and rock sideways; it is best described as horizontal marching.

The Land

The country, or *Lebensraum*, is extremely beautiful and situated in the very centre of Europe, thus lending itself to expansion in any direction, a temptation first succumbed to in the fifth century AD (the *Volkerwanderung*) when Germany embraced most of Spain, and regularly indulged in since. It is interesting that this summer there will be three million Germans in Spain, thus outnumbering the first excursion by almost a hundred to one.

The History

For almost two thousand years, Germany was split into separate states that fought one another. In the nineteenth century, they combined and began fighting everyone else. They are currently split up again and once more fighting one another. If they combine, the result is anybody's guess. Having lost the last war, they are currently enjoying a *Wirtschaftswunder*, which can be briefly translated as "The best way to own a Mercedes is to build one". That is about all there is to German history, since no-one has ever known what was going on, and if this is the case, then the Truth cannot be said to exist. Germany has, as you can see, provided many of the world's greatest philosophers.

(Alan Coren: The Sanity Inspector. "All You Need To Know About Europe")

BUNDESREPUBLIK DEUTSCHLAND

1991 population estimate: 79.548m; a Federal republic.

1 TV set per 2.6 persons; 1 telephone in use per 1.5 persons; newspaper circulation (1987): 417 per 1,000 pop.

Life expectancy at birth (1991): 73 male, 79 female. Infant mortality rate (1991): 7 per 1,000 live births.

ALL FAKTS CORECT FOR A CHANGE

THE LAKE'S PROGRESS Part 3

Ken Lake

THE UNTIED STATES OF AMERICA

Back to Fiji, then ultimately to Los bloody Angeles, where I was cordially welcomed by a couple in Yorba Linda CA, who could not understand why I did not want to worship at their Richard M Nixon Memorial Library. Now I was travelling Amtrak, went first to Seattle WA, a miserable hole which was rained off. Down to Albany OR to stay with friends, thence to San Francisco CA, a wonderful city. Next, to Santa Barbara CA for two days (wonderful place, but that was long enough), and via L.A. again to begin my next stage.

To Tempe AZ, to stay with a friend and visit Michael McCollum, one of my favourite SF authors and a thoroughly nice guy; on to El Paso TX to take a Greyhound bus (terrible experience) to Midland TX, to stay with Dave Bridges and Linda Blanchard and their two children - wonderful fannish people who really put themselves out for me. They've now, I believe, moved to Seattle (my commiserations to them all). Now I was approaching my real US destinations, starting with Lafayette LA, home of Cajun music and food.

Lafayette is another ruined town - even a rare-book shop is miles out in a field, near nowhere at all - but the food and music are superb. No wonder Yanks are alienated: their traditional small-town settlements are deserted and dangerous, their lifestyles tied to their autos.

But then - salvation: New Orleans LA. Yes, stay out of the black areas and all that stuff, and beware a motel with the appealing name of London Lodge - though the hookers there were all pleasant girls, hearts of gold.

The French Quarter, the Garden District and the old heartland of the city are intact and utterly wonderful. Creole food's superb, the music's good, the people invariably nice - my only unpleasant encounter was with a dissatisfied black from Minnesota who didn't like a thing he saw or any of the people. "Man, everything's so slow here, don't anybody ever move fast?"

Next, to Boca Raton FL, to stay with elderly friends and attend their Reform Temple - a thrilling experience, and not just because I discovered how much Hebrew I can still read. Three rabbis, the brightest and most intelligent a woman.

Onward, ever onward to Charleston SC, one of the jewels of the Old South, a city where a disaffected black tried to cut me up on an all-black bus while everyone else pretended to find fascinating sights out of the bus windows. To Richmond VA, ruined in three ways: it's been part-destroyed by fire several times, the northerners have built hideous office blocks all over, and again no matter what you want to buy it's a \$10 taxi ride each way to some godforsaken strip mall.

Washington DC, and heaven! I spent weeks with Avedon Carol's welcoming, amusing, entertaining, cheerful, helpful parents: attended their Armenian church for three Sundays, singing along frantically in that strange ancient language and gaining great comfort from the ritual and friendship of the people. Just as everyone should visit the Taj Mahal at least once in a lifetime, and Bali, and Fiji, and New Orleans, so they should spend time in Washington DC, known locally as "The District", a phrase elsewhere reserved for the red-light area of town.

I just wish Yanks realised that people of my age and decrepitude don't want to spend hours climbing bloody steps to everywhere: despite the superb subway system, I ended up every day totally whacked, wishing they'd install lifts up to the doors of all those historic buildings.

THE LAKE'S PROGRESS III

I was really looking forward to New York NY - only to be sadly disappointed. My first few visits, years ago, were gosh-wow time; my next two were with Jan, she was gosh-wowing and I enjoyed the feedback. Now I was coming to the end of my travels, fed up, paying too much for crappy hotel rooms. As I walked the familiar streets, Brighton Beach, Coney Island, Uptown, Downtown, Midtown, Brooklyn Heights, Fort Tryon Park and The Cloisters, the Met, Museum Mile, Grand Central, the famous Pennsylvania-six-five-oh-oh-oh hotel (later Statler-Hilton, later NY Penta, now Hotel Pennsylvania), I was no longer gosh-wowing but saying sadly "I know, I know... Why am I here?"

Boston MA is fun, Cambridge (Harvard) has its high spots, but Montreal PQ is just boring. I stayed with a pleasant elderly friend, then took the excellent express bus to Quebec where - apart from the rain and cold - I really fell in love with the town. Why? Mostly because you can walk there, it has the feel of a living town with real history, with people who love it; also I was staying at the Hotel Clarendon and it's terrific.

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

1990 population census: 248,709,873; a Federal republic.

1 TV set per 1.3 persons; 1 telephone in use per 1.9 persons; newspaper circulation (1990): 255 per 1,000 pop.

Life expectancy at birth (1991): 72 male, 79 female. Infant mortality rate (1991): 8.9 per 1,000 live births.

CANADA

1991 population estimate: 26.835m; a Confederation with parliamentary democracy.

1 TV set per 1.7 persons; 1 telephone in use per 1.3 persons; newspaper circulation (1989): 221 per 1,000 pop.

Life expectancy at birth (1991): 73 male, 80 female. Infant mortality rate (1991): 7.3 per 1,000 live births.

ALL FAKTS CORECT FOR A CHANGE



INSIDE AN OLDER WALL

Steve Sneyd

Not all day just seemed it
Easily train strolling south
Under grey sky through Damen and then
Bit by bit getting underway again from Grimma mealbreak
Rolling on and on flatland and
At long last is here
Now and rush now from train to find
Dark gate gaping past gypsy van-back jeans stall then
Encircling wall followed on at last to find
Notable even among notable tower gates
Bright high angel-like figure mountain
Up up towards sky just as in childhood book Stargarder Tor
Rises on and on round wall
Guarded by round towers each black-and-yellow

Goldilocks-like identical halftimber
Roosting houses sat
Upon its top and on round
By wall that circles inside outer circle of
Noisebrimmed ring road just far enough to feel
Enticed into safe other or at least lost world; wall-circuit done,
Diving then up spoke of road inwards towards centre-hub
Now between more pale-painted
Arrayed-as-toy-rows medieval topheavy tiny houses
Reaching in well past museum where staff
Bewlideder muttered howthell Englishman got here alone
Up on to core of town to find sudden opening
Endless empty square as big as where army could march as bombers did
Not expected nor huge new block corner rising ten times Stargarder as new ruler-orator

ITALY

The People

The median Italian, according to the latest figures of the Coren Intelligence Unit, is a cowardly baritone who consumes 78.3 kilometres of carbohydrates a month and drives around in a car slightly smaller than he is, looking for a divorce. He is governed by a stable conservative government, called the Mafia, who operate an efficient police force, called the Mafia, which is the official arm of the judiciary, called the Mafia. The Italians are an extremely cultivated folk, and will often walk miles to sell a tourist a copy of the Sistine Chapel ceiling made entirely from sea-shells. They invented the mandoline, a kind of boudoir banjo shaped like a woman's bottom, not surprisingly.

The Land

Italy is boot-shaped, for reasons lost in the mists of geology. The South is essentially agricultural, and administered by local land authorities, called the Mafia; the North is industrial, and run by tightly interlocked corporations, called the Mafia. The largest Italian city is New York, and is linked to the mainland by a highly specialised and efficient communications system, called the Mafia.

The History

Italy was originally called Rome, which came to hold power over Europe by moving into new areas every week or so and threatening to lean on them if they did not fork out tithe (L. *protectio*). It was run by a series of Caesars (Eduardus Gaius Robinsonius, Georgius Raftus, Paulus Munius, etc.) who held sway until the Renaissance, when Leonardo invented the tank and the aeroplane, and thus ushered in modern Italy (in World War II, the Italians, ever brilliant, possessed the only tank with a reverse gear). In the 1920s, the Caesars reasserted themselves in their two main linear branches, the Caponi and the Mussolini, whose symbol was the fasces, which signified "United We Stand", but they didn't.

(Alan Coren: *The Sanity Inspector. "All You Need To Know About Europe"*)

REPUBBLICA ITALIANA

1991 population estimate: 57.772m; a Republic.

1 TV set per 3.8 persons; 1 telephone in use per 2.0 persons; newspaper circulation (1989): 142 per 1,000 pop.

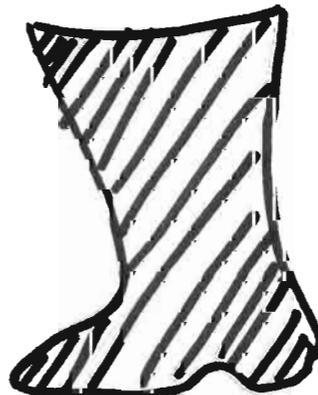
Life expectancy at birth (1991): 75 male, 82 female. Infant mortality rate (1991): 6 per 1,000 live births.

ALL FAKTS CORECT FOR A CHANGE

ITALY
POPULATION 58m.
ETC. ETC. ETC.



AREA OCCUPIED BY
THE MAFIA



★ (FORMERLY KNOWN
AS NEW YORK)

TWO COUNTRIES...

S V O'Jay

America and Britain were once described (sadly, I fail to recall by whom) as "two countries divided by a common language". Some, perhaps many of the following may be familiar to you; some may not.

ARSE / ASS; As far as I am aware, the former spelling is unique to the British (and Australians). (cf "TITS")

BOLLOCKS: As documented by Jasper Carrott and others, a word unknown in the US. This has, of course, been done to death, while everyone appears to have ignored the equally baffling (to Americans) *wank*.

BRACES: In the US, generally refers to corrective bands for the teeth (this definition also applies in Britain). The other main British usage refers to wholly or partially elasticated bands designed to keep one's trousers (US: *pants*) from falling down. These are referred to in the US as *suspenders*, the British usage of which refers (usually in a titillating context) to an item of female underwear designed to hold up stockings (US: *garter belt*). It would be satisfyingly apposite if braces (for teeth) were known in Britain as "garter belts", but regrettably this is not the case. (cf "TIGHTS").

BUFFER: In Britain, an older person of ruddy complexion, probably wearing tweed and carrying or reading a copy of the *Daily Telegraph*; in the US, the only usage I am aware of is the one to do with trains. (cf "GEEZER")

CAPILLARY: An example of simple pronunciation difference (this one happened to arise as a result of a direct question from a colleague). In the US, stress the first syllable (*capillary*), in the UK the second (*capillary*). (cf "HERB") Incidentally, have you ever considered the possible pronunciations of *Radio Times*, especially if considered as a single word. Try this: Short *ra* (as in "raccoon"), short *di* (as in "dispose"), short *ot* (as in "hot"), short *im* (as in "him"), *es* pronounced as "ease".

CARRIAGE: In Britain, that part of a train referred to in the US as a *car*. *Carriage* is more likely to crop up in America as a *baby carriage* (Britain: *pram*). For those unfamiliar with this British term, it is a contraction of the original *perambulator*, from which, of course, derives by translation the other American term *stroller*.

COACH: In Britain, a mass transit motor vehicle, the specific term implying more comfortable travel than on a regular *bus* (the US designation of all such vehicles), though having been from Birmingham to Bristol (in England) at the mercy of National Express "Coaches", I fail to see how any semblance of comfort can be attached to a seat with less room than on a regular British Airways flight (referred to as flying *coach*). In the US, *coach* most usually refers to the person in charge of a sports team (in Britain: *trainer* or *manager*) except in baseball whose teams have a *manager* in charge of their play who is senior to the *coaches*; this is not to be confused with (American) football, where the *coach* is still in charge of play but there is also a *general manager*.

GEEZER: In the US, specifically an old person. This definition also applies in Britain, but is more usually adjectivally qualified ("*old geezer*"); the application of the term to

TWO COUNTRIES...

any male is unheard of in the US, Americans being especially confused by the complimentary usages of the term ("Geezer!"; "Diamond geezer"). (cf "BUFFER")

GROUND FLOOR: In Britain, the floor of a building which is normally at "street" level. Floors are sequentially numbered above this, and in many places negatively sequenced beneath. The usage is unknown in the US. With singular lack of imagination (or some would contest, blinding logic), the lowest floor in a building in the US is the first floor (designated '1' in the elevator). Levels above this are sequentially numbered, though most (if not all) have no floor 13. US hotels may differ in that there may be a lobby level L, with floors sequentially numbered above this; any below will be designated LL1 (lower level 1), LL2 and so on.

HERB: In the US pronunciation, the 'H' is silent. To the unfamiliar foreign ear, this sounds rather weird the first few times it is heard (or eard).

HOOD: In the usage referring to the lid of the engine compartment of a motor vehicle, this does in fact seem to be generally replacing the old British term *bonnet*.

LIFT: In the US, something inserted in a shoe to give the illusion of extra height; in Britain, a device for transporting people vertically between floors of a building (US: *elevator*).

NATTY BO: No British equivalent, just an excuse for a little tourist information for those visiting Baltimore. Known (somewhat sarcastically by the rest of the country) as "Charm City", Baltimoreans (*don't* call them Baltimoreans until at least 35 miles out of earshot) are a generally surly and defensive lot, especially when it comes to their sport. Few have recovered from the moonlight flit of the Baltimore Colts many years ago, and many still carp on about their loss to Namath's Jets in Superbowl III (which occurred in 1969). This chauvinism extends to Orioles baseball games, where a simmering resentment towards non-Baltimoreans (though let us be fair, especially Washingtonians) extends throughout the otherwise pleasant confines of Camden Yards. This is *not* a place to order Perrier or spritzers unless you are in a private box. The correct beverage request is "Natty Bo, Hon". You will be provided with a stubby bottle of National Bohemian beer. Just grit your teeth and try to look like you're enjoying it. "Hon" should be pronounced like the surname of Kurt Russell's significant other.

PAVEMENT: In the US, the surface of a roadway; in Britain, a pedestrian walking area beside a roadway (US: *sidewalk*)

PISSED: In the US, a mild expression denoting annoyance; in Britain it is considered a much more vulgar term and refers to a state of alcoholic inebriation. "Pissed off" in Britain implies a stronger version of the American meaning. Just to confuse you, "pissed off" is also used in the US to mean the same thing. (cf "TITS")

SODA: In Britain, a specific type of gassed-up water which old buffers (qv) still like to add to their whisky; in the US, a generic term for any fizzy soft drink.

SPELLING*: Ah, yes, a singular family. What would the West Coast soapdish be without producer Aaron and daughter Tori, eh? We digress, of course. While American spelling habits certainly caused assimilation problems for the author (a confirmed

TWO COUNTRIES...

cruciverbalist), one must admit that "color" and "saber", for example, are more logical than "colour" and "sabre". In a condition of awareness that reminds us that "centre" might as well be pronounced "sentry" for the way it is spelled, Shaw's "ghoti" (fish) is inexorably brought to mind. There are differences which initially appear inexplicable. For example, one who gambles (UK: *punter*) is known in the US as a *bettor*, and this spelling usage ("-or") can be seen to apply generally in such nouns constructed from verbs. This particular example can be seen to be quite logical in that it clearly distinguishes the noun *bettor* from the comparative *better*.

TATERS: In common with many other Cockney rhyming slang expressions, a cause of bafflement in the US (the author mentions this specific example since he uses it himself not infrequently); for the unenlightened, taters = "potatoes in the mould [*mold*]" = cold (weather).

TIGHTS: In Britain, a common item of female underwear for the whole lower body; trying to buy "tights" in the US would get you what Superman and other circus performers wear below the waist. Ask for *pantyhose* instead. (cf "BRACES")

TITS: Worth a mention purely on the basis that this seems to be a word Americans deem extremely more offensive than do their British counterparts. It is one of the (in)famous "seven words you can't say on radio or television", the subject of an hilarious routine by comedian George Carlin. For those who may not know, the other six are: Fuck, Motherfucker, Shit, Piss (but not "pissed" [qv]), Cunt, and Cocksucker. Goddamn (but not merely "Damn") and Asshole (though, paradoxically, not "Ass" itself) are also generally frowned upon. The supposed "official" guideline preaches avoidance of all genital and excretory organs and functions.

TORCH: In Britain, a hand-held illumination device, usually battery-driven (US: *flashlight*); the US definition is a verb describing what arsonists do.

TRUNK: In the US, the storage compartment of a motor vehicle. (Britain: *boot*). The definition pertaining to that part of an elephant which transfers buns into its mouth is common.

*To preclude the inevitable correspondence on spelling inconsistencies within these pages, interesting though some of it might have been (and bloody dull as most of it would have been), *Arrows of Desire* uses the following guideline: British writers' pieces (and, if such an event were to occur, foreign language originals translated by British writers) are reproduced with British spelling, US writers with American spelling. This suggestion was rumoured to have originated in the Brynna Evans Smethwick Welsh / Brummie dictionary, an object of remarkable antiquity but occasional usefulness, not unlike its author.

FUN WITH A FOREIGN LANGUAGE

Ian Sales

Author's note: all the Arabic in this piece is my own poor phonetic rendering of the actual Arabic word into the Latin equivalent. Arabic not only uses a different alphabet but is also written right-to-left (although strangely, numbers are written left-to-right).

I work in the Middle East. I thought it would be a good idea to learn Arabic - despite the fact that English is used as a commercial language and understood by everyone. But, as far as I was concerned, learning the native language was pure courtesy (and it wouldn't do my job prospects any harm, either). So I took lessons...

Arabic is a very peculiar language, one I'm not sure my Indo-European brain is correctly wired up for. The alphabet has 32 letters, some of which have no English equivalent (and one that is unique to the language). It has three vowels (although two double as semi-vowels/consonants). All are long vowels. Short vowels are represented by diacritical marks that people rarely bother writing. The short vowels can, obviously, completely change the meaning of a word, so in many cases meaning has to be guessed from context. 'Misr' means 'Egypt' but 'musr' means 'ecstasy' - a newspaper headline is hardly likely to read "Rioting In Ecstasy", although in the West that may well be the case...

Some of the consonants sound so similar, my ear can't distinguish between them - there are two letter 't's, two 's's, and two 'h's. In one Arabic lesson, I misheard these letters and, instead of writing "I travel to London at any time", I wrote "I whistle to London at any cat".

There are also English letters that have no Arabic equivalent. Arabic has no 'p' (so Palestine is known as 'Falesteen' - the same is true of Filipino, which has no letter 'f', so they call themselves 'Pilipino') but it does have a 'b'. The only difference between these two letters is that 'b' is voiced, whereas 'p' is not - the shape of the mouth is identical. As a result of this, we have 'Bebisi' and 'Bentax Cameras'. Arabic also has no 'v'. However, rather than write 'Folfo cars', Arabs tend to borrow from the Persian alphabet and use the 'v' from that (again 'f' and 'v' only differ in that 'v' is voiced). Persian also has a 'p' and that is sometimes used, but it is more common to use the Arabic 'b' instead. I have yet to understand the logic behind this substitution.

The Arabic alphabet is split into 'sun' letters and 'moon' letters. When nouns are put in the definitive, 'al' is added to the front. Thus, 'al khaleej' means 'the Gulf'. However, for Sun letters the 'l' in 'al' is not pronounced. 'Al shams', the sun, is pronounced 'ash-shams'. 'Al qamar', the moon, however, remains 'al qamar'. Hence, 'Dar-es-salam' - which is written 'dar al salam'.

The short vowels are not the only diacritical marks. There is the 'hamza', which alters the sound of 'alif' ('a'), but also affects other semi-vowels, producing half-vowels. On its own, it can be used a glottal stop. And then there is the 'shadda', which doubles the sound of a consonant. For example, 'hamam' (ie, without a shadda) means pigeon, but 'ham-mam' (ie, with a shadda) means toilet. Get it wrong and you could easily say "that toilet just crapped on me"...

When you learn Arabic, you are generally taught Standard Arabic, a dialect that is understood by the majority of Arabic speakers. But there are dialects. Lots of dialects. And some of them are incomprehensible to Standard Arabic speakers - such as Bedu Arabic, the language the bedouins speak. Dialectal differences are not phonetic, but lexical. The Egyptian Arabic for 'laundry' (I forget the actual word) means 'prostitute' in Gulf Arabic...

An example: To say "How are you?" would depend on where you were:

FUN WITH A FOREIGN LANGUAGE...

- In the Gulf, it is "khaifalik" and the answer is "zayn".
- In the Lebanon, it is "Khaifak", and the answer is "tamam".
- In Egypt, it is "zayak" and the answer is "quwa'ees".

Of course, you could reply "al humdillah" in all three places, which means "thanks be to God".

Arabic is a very courteous language. People have remarked on the US "You're welcome" reply to "Thank you." Arabic has the same: to "shukran", you say "afwan". Arabic is also the only language I have come across that has a word specifically used to congratulate people on having had their hair cut or beard shaved, "na'eeman". Two Arabs in conversation could easily spend ten minutes saying hello and how are you. If you were especially effusive, you could also double your 'hello's. So, instead of saying "marhaba", hello, you could say "marhabtain", two hellos.

Arabic has a peculiarity when counting. For instance, 'one page' is 'safha waheda' (singular); 'two pages' is 'safh-tain' (dual); three pages is 'safhat thalatha' (plural). And so it goes up to ten. And then it changes. For 'eleven pages', you use the singular again - 'safha wahed'asher'. And so on. And then there are the plurals. English has more than enough bizarre singulars/ plurals of nouns - from the back-singularisation of pea from peas (the plural of Old English pease) to the words that don't change, such as sheep, to the Greek/Latin borrowings, such as data. Arabic has regular plurals, but it also has 'broken' plurals. 'Finjaan', cup, becomes 'finajeen'; 'wazir', minister, becomes 'wuzara' (also ministry). The broken plurals are regular in how they 'break', but there are several different patterns, and you must learn to which pattern each noun belongs.

There are a number of stock phrases in use invoking God (Allah). Perhaps the most well-known is "inshallah" which means "if God wills it". It has been described as meaning "manana" but without the sense of urgency... A common phrase in the Gulf is "bukra inshallah" which translates as "tomorrow, if Gods will it", but which actually means "when I bloody feel like it". Incidentally, 'bukra' is Gulf Arabic for 'tomorrow'; the Standard Arabic is 'gheddan'.

Many words in Arabic sound so alike to a Western ear that it is easy to embarrass yourself. I have mispronounced "I am serious" as "I am a baby goat". But then I'm following in hallowed footsteps - JFK's famous "I am a doughnut" remark ("Ich bin Berliner" means "I am a Berliner"; "Ich bin ein Berliner" is what JFK said).

Many Arabic letters are similar in shape, differing only by placement of a dot. 'H' is the same as both 'j' (which has a dot below it) and 'kh' (which has a dot above it). I once wrote, by mistake I hasten to add, 'mutbaj' instead of 'mutbakh'. 'Mutbakh' means kitchen; 'mutbaj' is Lebanese slang for homosexual. So I actually wrote "my queer has a fridge in him". Fortunately, my Arabic teacher had a sense of humour...

And finally, a piece of Arabic language trivia: most country names are taken from the French - Germany in Arabic is "Almanya", England is "Ingelterra" - but Austria is "Al Nimsa" which means 'the Sleepers' and refers to a past invasion of the country when the invaders surprised the Austrians and caught them, more or less, asleep...

Despite all the pitfalls, it is not difficult to make yourself understood in Arabic. If you start out by learning the stock greeting phrases, you would be well on your way to impressing an Arabic speaker with your command of their language. It's an interesting language, and fun to learn... probably because it is so different from English. I don't regret taking the lessons, and I certainly plan to improve my fluency. Perhaps when I've mastered it, I'll try another language... like Malayalam (the only palindromic language in the world) which has an alphabet of 56 letters, each of which can form a separate phoneme through the addition of a, um, squiggle to it...

As we say in the Gulf, "ma'salam".

LUXEMBOURG

The People

There are nine people in Luxembourg, and they are kept pretty busy making stamps. It is not the smallest country in Europe: there are only eight people in Monaco, five in Andorra, and Herr J. F. Klausner in Liechtenstein, so as the fourth non-smallest country in Europe, it enjoys a rather unique position. The people are of middle height, with the small, deft fingers of master perforators, and all look rather alike, except for their uncle Maurice who lost an ear on the Somme. They are a rather arrogant people (they refer to World War I as the Battle of Maurice's Ear), but not unartistic: *My Day At The Zoo*, by the country's infant prodigy, ran into nine copies and won the Prix Maurice for 1969.

The Land

On a clear day, from the terrace of the Salon de Philatelie, you can't see Luxembourg at all. This is because a tree is in the way. Beyond the tree lies Belgium. The centre of the country is, however, very high, mainly because of the chimney on it, and slopes down to a great expanse of water, as they haven't got around to having the bathroom overflow pipe fixed. The climate is temperate (remember that ninety percent of Luxembourg is indoors) and the local Flora is varied and interesting, especially on her favourite topic, the 1908 five-cent blue triangular.

The History

Old Luxembourg (now the coal-cellar of the modern country), was founded in the twelfth century by King John of Bohemia, who wanted somewhere to keep the lawn-mower. It escaped most of the wars and pestilences that swept Europe in the subsequent eight centuries, often because the people were out when they called, and is therefore one of the most stable political and economic elements in the EEC: its trade-balance is always favourable (imports come in the at the back gate and leave by the front door as exports). Luxembourg is also the oldest ally of Stanley Gibbons Ltd., although it is probably most famous as the birthplace of Horace Batchelor.

(Alan Coren: The Sanity Inspector. "All You Need To Know About Europe")

GRAND-DUCHÉ DE LUXEMBOURG

1991 population estimate: 388,000; a Constitutional monarchy (Grand Duke Jean).

1 TV set per 4.0 persons; 1 telephone in use per 2.3 persons; newspaper circulation (1989): 389 per 1,000 pop.

Life expectancy at birth (1991): 73 male, 80 female. Infant mortality rate (1991): 7 per 1,000 live births.



THE LAKE'S PROGRESS Part 4

Ken Lake

STORY OF MY LIFE

Back to Boston, back to New York, and then via Virgin to Gatwick ("You mean you'd trust someone who never goes all they way?" ho-ho). To stay with friends in Chigwell, in the wilds of Essex, to write THE BOOK OF THE TOUR! Its title is, fairly obviously, *Take The Money And Run*, and it was my abiding passion to write it, for two reasons. It contains all the amazing stories I've omitted from this bald report (shame!) and I felt it needed to be said.

I set off on my travels with encouragement from Auberon Waugh and former *Sunday Times* deputy Editor Godfrey Smith. Both argued that most men have a deep desire to sell everything, push off, do all they want, and then die quietly when the money runs out. I'm getting close to that point, so The Book has to be written, if only as an epitaph. But those nineteen months of travel taught me more than I'd learned in the previous sixty-one years.

Look, I was eight when WWII broke out; from then until age 14, most of the time I didn't know whether I'd be alive the next day. We lived every day for itself, and I was more alive during those years than at any time since - till the day I flew to New Delhi. My life has had two peaks, with forty-seven years of dull plateau in between. So I came back and began writing.

It all went swimmingly until I reached Fiji - I mean 120,000 words, all neatly polished and pleasing. Then I bogged down. Unable to get my head straight, I sat at the computer thingie and doodled, thinking "Hey, if I knocked off what we elegant Brits call a one-handed reader - that is, a pornographic novel - maybe I could sell it and get back to The Book."

Actually it started as a short story, and - I know this sounds hackneyed - the characters took over. The 42,000 word book turned into a trilogy, and as I write this I've just finished Book Nine! Each day I sit here, with **no idea** what my characters are going to do. I live their lives and goggle at them, they constantly take me unawares. Often I have no idea what's coming even in the next para, certainly I never plan a chapter ahead, yet it all falls into place. Often hints that I've written - without having any idea why I've written them - take the book off on a new path and turn out to hold the clues to future events I've never dreamed of.

My characters make puns and jokes, have great dramatic scenes, meet and seduce people I've never even imagined, make decisions... and all I can do is sit there, bang away at the keys and watch it all happening. It's been my most exciting literary adventure - and I still haven't picked up The Book's threads again! But I have to - time's a-wasting, life is short, it must be done.

But not for the reasons I adduced in my *AoD #6* contrib. During my travels the osteo-arthritis, spondylosis and other serious problems gradually faded. Now I'm back in the UK they're returning. I need to get away again, but I can't afford it unless either The Book, or my one-handed escapades, make me enough money to escape before the climate here does me in.

FANDOM FAILS ME

Then I attended Novacon 24. OK, so I talked too much, I always do. But I had a lot of good anecdotes to impart, and it was great to be back among friends. What shattered me was the response to my story of the porno novel.

THE LAKE'S PROGRESS IV

Yes, one charming and helpful girl suggested I talk to a fan who sells porno short stories (under a penname, of course). He showed me one of his in a plush and costly magazine, *The Journal of Erotica*. Some fans showed a real interest in my description of the techniques of character-discovery that so astonished me. Fine.

But here I was, among a group of people I'd assumed to be open-minded, adult, aware of the world around them. Yet again and again they were simply shocked at the whole idea of porno writing - some even objected to the cheerful cover of *Empties #14* illustrating Martin Tudor's "The Witton Saga" frolic, which took me back a few decades to my brief student-partying days.

I mean, what the hell's wrong with fulfilling fantasies? My books have "real" characters - I see them in my mind, they act as they see fit, they react to others, and here and there you stumble over their philosophies. The books have real plots. They have a very moral message - enjoy safe sex, love, care, share, never press anyone to do anything they don't want to do.

And there, among people I felt would embrace my vision my fingers had fed into my computer, I found unthinking, knee-jerk rejection - often without any attempt to discover exactly what I'd written, and why.

Publish them? Well, dear Avedon Carol passed on the name of a publisher. I sent off sample chapters and a synopsis of the first three volumes (correct procedure, with fiction), but he couldn't hack it at all - mustn't mention underage sex, incest, the real-life side of after-sex cleaning up. I'll try another publisher when I get around to it; if they do get into print, watch out for the penname BOB LEHRER, buy, and see what you think.

And when I finish *Take The Money And Run*, do me a real favour, buy it. A borrower from the library don't net me a penny, so give me some real royalties, as I give to the authors I enjoy. You'll be reading about the events of a lifetime of nineteen months - and I hope I'm still around to read the crits, and argue with you all at future cons.

UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND NORTHERN IRELAND

1991 population census: 55,486,800: a Constitutional monarchy (Queen Elizabeth II).

1 TV set per 3 persons; 1 telephone in use per 1.9 persons; newspaper circulation (1990): 388 per 1,000 pop.

Life expectancy at birth (1991): 73 male, 79 female. Infant mortality rate (1991): 7 per 1,000 live births.

ALL FAKTS CORECT FOR A CHANGE



THE GREEKS

Graham Joyce

"All Cretans are liars." St. Paul confirmed this observation in one of his epistles. Well, he would do, because when he tried to land in Crete to persuade everyone to adopt his twisted version of the Christian gospel, the natives had the good sense to beat him back with long sticks. It was a grumbling St. Paul who climbed in his boat and sailed for Corinth, where he got a better reception and an audience sympathetic to vitriolic condemnation of the Cretans.

The trouble is, St. Paul wasn't the first to observe the slippery nature of the Cretan testimony. All that "Cretans are liars" stuff was first said by Epimenides the Cretan, which starts by putting Truth in its proper place.

It might just as well have been said of the Greeks in general. They are a nation of liars: brilliant liars, spectacular liars, breathtaking liars. And if anyone calls me racist for saying so, let me add that *they* are liars themselves. It is probably this capacity - nay, this *quality* - which makes the Greeks among my favourite people on this earth. Yes, yes, we British are liars too, we're just not so honest about it. We are sneaky liars, political liars ("Your new hairstyle looks wonderful, it really suits you", and "Economic recovery is just around the corner", and "HM Government hereby guarantees the constitution of Cyprus"). We actually expect the other person to believe our deceptions, whereas with the Greeks a good fabrication is simply an invitation to open up a negotiation on the nature of reality itself. You have to think of it like bargaining in a market place. A proffered lie is simply an opening price: you're not expected to accept it.

Greeks are proud of their ability to lie. It's in the culture and goes right back to the wily Odysseus, the trickster who achieved everything he did by brilliant deception and subtlety of mind. The moment you let your British jaw drop at the enormity of some Aegean whopper, you've lost a couple of points. The only way to play it is the Greek way, and after living in Greece for a year or so I started to get the hang of things.

I'd made the mistake of telling my landlord how happy I was with the beautiful house he's rented me. "Paradise", I cooed. "Perfect. Wonderful." I wanted to make him happy by showing how happy I was with the arrangement. Wrong. He came back the next day wanting to raise the rent.

"The currency fluctuations", he declared, waving an arm in the direction of the Olympian Gods.

"Currency? What's that got to do with it? Anyway the Drachma went up in relation to the pound!"

"Up? Down? What can we do? We all lose."

"See that bucket of jellyfish? Go stick your silly head in it."

He wasn't happy with that. The next day he confiscated the oars to my rowing boat. "They need repairs. We don't have a license. The oars are too long. The harbourmaster disapproves. There's a storm coming. You can see the oars are too short. The boat has a hole. It has to be painted this time of year...", and so on, until a struggle for the oars ensued during which a dinner plate got broken.

I charged the landlord a pound to replace the broken plate, which he grudgingly stumped up. The fact that he owned the plate was overlooked. Then a rent rise of 25p per week was negotiated, and since I hadn't told him I only planned to stay for another month anyway, I looked at the oars and he looked at the broken plate and we shook hands on that.

THE GREEKS

Not all Greek lies are motivated by avarice, I hasten to add. Sometimes Greek kindness and sympathy means that they just can't bear to tell you what you don't want to hear.

"I desperately need to go to Piraeus tomorrow. Is there a ferry?"

They stroke your arm; their eyes water with sympathy for you. "Yes, yes. Don't worry. There will be a ferry."

You've guessed it. Even at the best of times Greek ferry timetables are more speculative than any of the adventures of Odysseus. They're the most unreliable documents in the world, printed on paper which erupts into flame or on which the ink dissolves after you've booked your ticket. "Better to have a ferry and no ticket", one contemporary Aristotle counselled me, "than to have a ticket and no ferry."

I forgot to extend the permit for my car while I was on Crete. I went to the Customs official, who told me I would have big problems with the police.

"What can I do?"

"Lie to them", he suggested. "They're fools." He carefully constructed an elaborate lie I should tell the police about being out of the country by plane, thereby missing the automobile exit visas etc., etc. It made my head swim.

I went to the police. "Never mind all that", said the police official. "We'll just lie and backdate the visa." He fiddled with the date on his rubber stamp for my passport.

"What about the customs people?"

"Lie to them. They're all fools up there. This is what you should tell them..."

The best one happened while I was working for a few drachmae in the orange groves. I had to fertilise the young trees by slinging nitrate powder around the base of the trunks. Orange trees are grown in serried rows, and I had the misfortune of being partnered by the guy who was employing me.

Greeks are terrible employers. They're not happy unless they see you break sweat. This fertilising job involved filling a wheelbarrow with nitrate and walking back and forth from the trees to fill a one-litre peach can with the stuff to spread around the trees. My employer, Michaelis, was anxious that I keep up with him and work at his pace.

Only one problem: he had a TWO-litre peach can against my one-litre can. He could sprinkle two trees to my every one.

"Queek! Queek!" he squealed at me. "You must keep up with me! We don't haf all day for thees! Queek! Queek!"

I was astonished. Did he honestly think I hadn't noticed? I marched over and snatched the two-litre can, gave him mine and invited him to keep up with ME. Then I took it at a clip. Jog-jog, sprinkle sprinkle. Jog-jog, sprinkle sprinkle. "Come on!" I bellowed at him. "Let's get the job done! Keep up! Keep up! No slacking there!"

And the silly bastard actually tried to keep up with me. He was trapped. If he protested, he would have lost face by admitting that he's tried to trick me. He had to go through with it and pretend he'd overlooked the difference in can sizes. It was a hot day, and after half an hour, caked in sweat, dust and silver nitrate fertiliser he sank to his knees, panting furiously. Well, I was in no mood to let him off the hook. "Quick!", I bellowed in his ear. "Quick!"

"I haven't been well", he whined. "I've a bad wrist. I twisted my ankle yesterday. I've the flu. I was up all night nursing my sick mother..."

He paid me off after that and hired a Yugoslav.

It must be obvious by now that I hate the Greeks. That's why I keep going back there time after time, to hate them some more. Though I must say that after living in Greece for over a year I got to be able to lie just like them. I had a great time, drinking ouzo and lying my head off. A thoroughly liberating experience. For anyone interested I

THE GREEKS

recommend a package holiday, starting with a few fibs over a dish of olives, building up gradually to whoppers and Greek dancing. After a very short time you'll be proficient.

More importantly, you'll eventually get around to considering it a virtue.

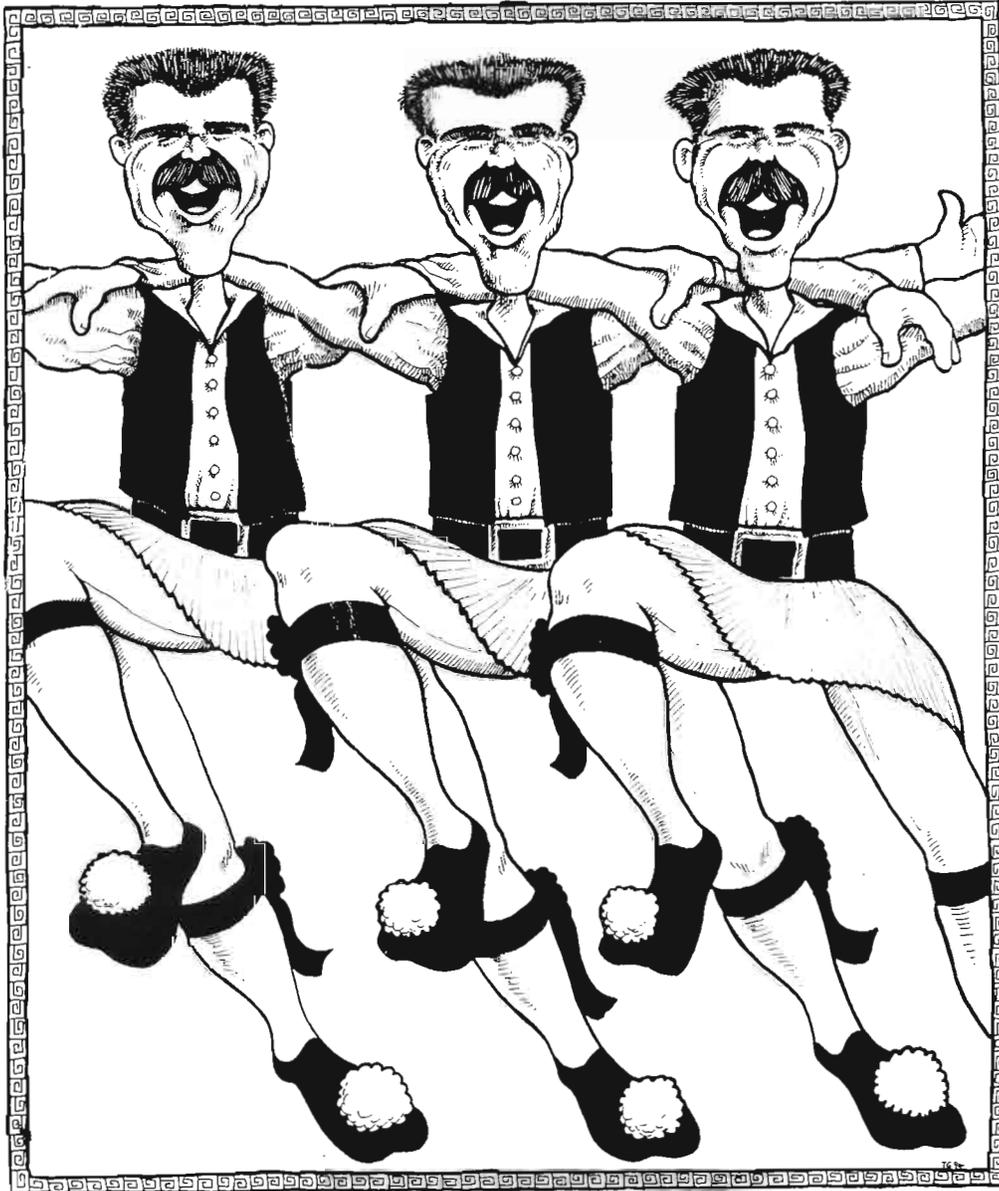
ELLINIKI DIMOKRATIA

1991 population estimate: 10.042m; a Presidential parliamentary republic.

1 TV set per 5.7 persons; 1 telephone in use per 2.4 persons; newspaper circulation (1986): 88 per 1,000 pop.

Life expectancy at birth (1991): 75 male, 80 female. Infant mortality rate (1991): 10 per 1,000 live births.

ALL FAKTS CORECT FOR A CHANGE



FANCY FREE

DF Lewis and S V O'Jay

REASONS WHY HE MURDERED HER*:

(*Beyond the mere gratuitousness of the times)

Of course, the Love-Hate relationship

Also, he had a passion for her feet

*Exposition: perhaps because he'd had his own foot
amputated during THE BALKAN WAR (2000) ; fetiche
enhanced by her feet having beautifully slender
ankles, each toenail varnished crimson...
paradoxically, he could not bear to look at them.*

Finally, he thought she aimed to murder him first.

NARRATOR: Let's put names to faces, seeing that both parties have been anonymously exhibited on town centre noticeboards in recent weeks (along with all other about-to-be-murdereds).

*Bulletin: Television and the Press in general banned
subsequent to THE PROPAGANDA ACT (2002)*

NARRATOR: Appetites have increased for scandal, smut, provocation and just plain Information Syndrome and Replacement Soap-Opera Treatment... and I'm naturally aware of the black market in such material. Not to mention the subliminal gossip columns and fiction fixes now to be read between the lines of the Political Meeting's Agenda and the Council Committee Minutes. Most people will indeed be aware of what "publications" are now available in this, our Neo-Puritan age. So yes, were it not for the static noticeboards, old-fashioned in their use of drawing-pins, their anaemic items of essential information

WATER SUPPLY

CURFEW HOURS

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION (TIMETABLE)

WANTED! FOR CRIMES AGAINST

we would not have known about [Archie Clements] and [Susan Smythe]. I believe I can be excused if I thus finger this otherwise notorious couple.

(THE ART CRITIC: "STARING EYES, MEAN LIPS, MINDS WITH MURDER ON THEM...")

*Bulletin: Following the passage of THE DISNOMENCLATURE ACT (2003)
the use of personal identifying words (names) is prohibited*

NARRATOR: They eventually declared their banes regarding the dissolution of their marriage during a period when it was difficult to find a path (Audit Trail) through the prevailing maze of Deed Polls and Powers-of-Attorney. In fact, [Archie] and [Susan] managed to squeeze the reading of their banes between that of their daughter's and future son-in-law's banns in the last church service to be held in Western Europe, if barely now under the jurisdiction of the United Nations. The next day they would have had to do voluntary community service, even to earn the right to title Mr and Mrs - simply followed by a number instead of a surname. Otherwise, they would have been abandoned simply as numbers and nothing else.

FANCY FREE

(THE HOSTESS: "MR 2748923 IS JUST SO MUCH MORE DIGNIFIED THAN PLAIN OLD 2748923.")

NARRATOR: As it was, by the skin of their teeth, [Archie Clements] and [Susan Clements (née Smythe)] were able to put the wedding in the past instead of the unmagical present, furthermore being able to retain documents proving their identities beyond that legally imposed. However, such identities did involve cohabiting till kingdom come.

Bulletin: Remember! Tomorrow is N-Day!
THE I-AM-NOT-A-NAME-I-AM-A-NUMBER ACT (2004)
becomes effective at midnight tonight!
Next: THE SELF-EFFACEMENT ACT (2004)

NARRATOR: No wonder murder rose to the top of their thoughts, floating clear of the other confusions. This is the same way death's perfect simplicity ever arose from the midst of life's entrammelled tangle. Today, not only are names eschewed but people too. The unicorn grazes in an empty field, keeping the turf at tuft level simply with the scything of its horn. In this year of 2005 there is a belief in spontaneous combustion as a new religious force, which has in turn become (if paradoxically) quite self-fulfilling. Thus the unicorn's mouth makes a smile which only other creatures of that hippic mode would recognise as a smile, not simply a snickering yawn. It's name is

SARBAN: "Though I knew it not then, my grazing area was close to the Foe Zone where a number of residual creatures once called "human" mindlessly and namelessly roamed. Turning a particularly juicy tuft of turf, I discovered a severed {¿human?} foot with {¿red toenails?}. Something never before experienced surged through me then, a {¿carnivorous?} desire, for which, from what I knew of them then, the vampires of the coastal black market would have given all they had... for fulfilment."

Bulletin: After the following enactment, there will be no further bulletins:
THE LAST HUMAN ACT (2006)

NARRATOR: The ripped stump just above the ankle seems droolingly enticing to Sarban's bestial instinct. In spite of the sleek, almost spiritual aura, this urgent snuffling at the foot is nothing of which to be proud. Yet pride was no longer a worthwhile emotion; merely a word now, as were anger, greed, lust, shame et cetera. Because myths and legends always followed reality (rather than preceding it, according to original thought), and because Sarban was simply one example of purity without puritanism, well... it is true to say that feelings like love and hate cancel each other out. Rather like Mr and Mrs 2348923.

ANNOUNCER 1: IT IS 2010 - A NUMBER, NOT A YEAR!

ANNOUNCER 2: A MURDER WITHOUT A VICTIM, A PERIOD WITHOUT PAIN, (LOUDER) A FICTION WITHOUT A FIX...

ANNOUNCER 3: (LOUDER STILL) A TALE WITHOUT AN END, A TAIL WITHOUT ITS OWNER...

ANNOUNCER 1: (SCREAMING) FOOT-LOOSE AND FANCY FREE!

HIGH WEIRDNESS IN FOREIGN PARTS

Soviet Union: In 1926 the religious texts of the Bible, Talmud and Koran were banned. These bans were followed by others on *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes* in 1929 (for the many references to "spiritualism" and occultism". The previous year all of Immanuel Kant's writings were also banned. He was one of the writers considered "disgraceful" (along with Goethe and others) in **Spain**, where *Critique of Pure Reason* was banned in 1939.

China: A law prohibits any male from looking at the bare feet of another man's wife. Men are allowed to see anything else they want (including the woman's completely nude body), but if a neighbour or relative catches a glimpse of the toes, the offended husband has to kill him. May cause problems if the Worldcon ever gets to China.

In **Middle Eastern Islamic Countries** it is a sin *and* a crime to eat any lamb you've had sex with. Also noted that in **Lebanon** it is a sin *and* a crime to have sex with any male animal. (Sex with female animals is allowed.) A little different from **Poland**, where it is a crime to have sex with any animal. Three-time offenders are shot in the head.

For foodies: the following unusual national dishes are noted. **Samoans** may enjoy Baked Bat: first the bat is torched to remove body hair, then cleaned and baked or fried with salt, pepper and onions. The **French** (who else) have a nice line in Fish Sperm Crepes, which also include mushrooms, butter and cheese. the **Chinese** enjoy Sun-dried Maggots as a snack or side dish. When in **Ghana**, why not try Stewed Cat, where the sliced animal is fried in peanut oil then simmered in a pot with red peppers. Not to leave out the English-speaking world, the larger list from which this selection was gleaned included Baked Armadillo (US), Cow Heels (England) and Pig's Face and Cabbage (Ireland).

Mundari tribespeople typically bathe in cow urine then cover themselves with powdered cow dung. Apparently, this keeps the insects away. The tribe in fact holds cowshit to be "precious" and use it for pillows and bedding, among other things. This contrasts with the subjects of our next issue, many of whom revere bullshit in the same manner.

The **Yonowama** tribe (nomads from the rain forest between Brazil and Argentina) typically engage in sexual foreplay in the open, though for the actual fucking they retire to the forest itself. Tribeswomen breast-feed puppies at the same time as their children.

A **Filipino** witch-doctor cure for migraine is to brutally amputate the end of the little finger with a knife, which would kind of take your mind off the headache.

Speaking of foreign parts, **Jean-Claude Van Damme** made number one in a 1993 survey of gay mens' fantasy sex partners. (Incidentally, Cindy Crawford topped the straight mens' list, Luke Perry the straight womens'. There appeared to be no survey of gay women.)

HIGH WEIRDNESS...

Cantonese expressions surface in the movie *Wayne's World*, of all places. The (phonetically pronounced) "Na-Ho Lang Gha" ("You look pretty") and "Zeg" ("Excellent") can be heard.

A cheerful death cult reminder: in **Guyana** on November 18, 1978, Jim Jones and his disciples committed mass suicide by drinking cyanide-laced punch. The final body count was 913, including children.

The most un-recycling country in the world is **Australia**, which produces 1,533 pounds of waste per capita per year. (The U.S. is fifth on the list, the UK does not even make the top ten.)

Back to bandom: A Mickey Mouse cartoon was banned in the **U.S.A.** in 1932 because there was a scene in it in which a cow is seen reading Elinor Glyn's book *Three Weeks*. Another cartoon was banned in Belgrade, **Yugoslavia** in 1937 for an alleged "anti-monarchical" plotline. Rome, **Italy** deemed the Mouse "unsuitable for children" in 1938. The squeaky-voiced one was also banned from **East Germany** in 1954.

By a smallish stretch, *Bloody Foreigners* might include foreign bodies like bacteria and viruses. The **U.S.A.** has suffered bubonic plague epidemics *seven times* in the 20th century so far! These occasions were:

1900 Honolulu	(Then still only a U.S. territory; thousands die)
1900 San Francisco, Ca	(117 known fatalities)
1907 San Francisco, Ca	
1907 Seattle, Wa	
1914 New Orleans, La	
1919 New Orleans, La	
1924 Los Angeles, Ca	

The most recent pre-AIDS trouble was the polio epidemic of 1952, in which (out of some 50,000 infected) there were 3,300 deaths.

The Dami Mission is a Christian sect in **Korea**, which believed that the world would end on October 28 1992. Four of the mission's followers committed suicide shortly before midnight of that day. Others sold their houses, had abortions and bequeathed their life savings to others less fortunate. (Current armageddon believers claim we are in the "Rapture", the seven-year period before the Second Coming of Christ, now scheduled for the year 2000.)

Of course, to those of us domiciled in the **U.S.A.** (assuming we survived the plagues), almost any other State is "foreign territory", quite apart from the North-South divide. Returning to a favoured subject, here are some interesting local laws on the bonking question:

Nevada: It is illegal to have sex without a condom.

Washington State: It is illegal to have sex with a virgin under any circumstances (including your wedding night).

Alexandria, Minnesota: It is illegal for a man to have sex with his wife if his breath stinks of garlic, onions or sardines.

Fairbanks, Alaska: It is illegal for two moose to have sex on the city sidewalks.

THE NETHERLANDS

The People

Like the Germans, the Dutch fall into two quite distinct physical types: the small, corpulent, red-faced Edams, and the thinner, paler, larger Goudas. As one might expect of a race that evolved underwater and subsisted entirely upon cheese, the Dutch are somewhat single-minded, conservative, resilient and thoughtful. Indeed, the sea forms their entire culture: the bicycle, that ubiquitous Dutch vehicle, was designed to facilitate underwater travel, offering least resistance to waves and weed, the clog was introduced to weigh down the feet and prevent drifting, and the meerscham pipe, with its characteristic lid, was designed expressly to exclude fish and the larger plankton. And those who would accuse the Dutch of overeating would do well to reflect on the notorious frangibility of dykes: it's no joke being isolated atop a flooded windmill with nothing to eat but passing tulips. You have to get it while you can.

The Land

Strictly speaking, the land does not exist: it is merely dehydrated sea, and concern was originally expressed when the EEC was first mooted that the Six might suddenly turn into the Five after a bad night. Many informed observers believe that this fear is all that [lay] behind the acceptance of Britain's membership, i.e. we are a sort of First Reserve in case Rain Stops Holland. Nevertheless, it is an interesting country, sweeping up from the coastal plain into the central massif, a two-foot high ridge of attractive silt with fabulous views of the sky, and down again to the valleys, inches below. Apart from cheese and tulips, the main product of the country is advocaat, a drink made from lawyers.

The History

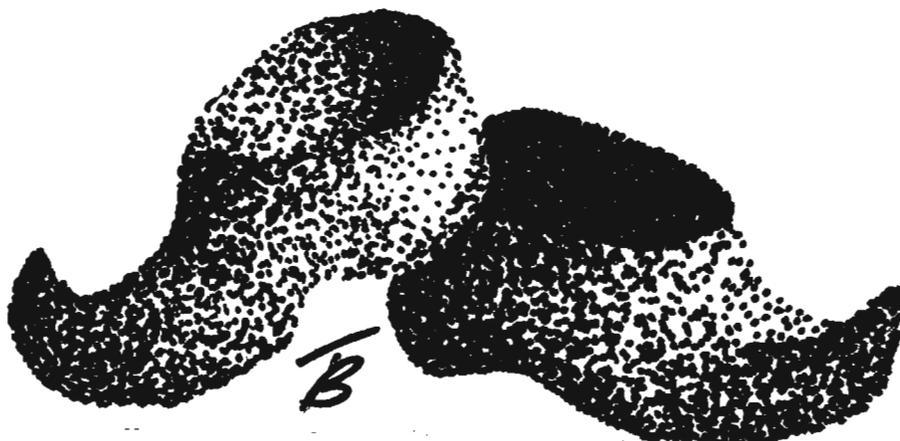
Incensed by poor jokes about the Low Countries, the Dutch, having emerged from the sea, became an extremely belligerent people, taking on Spain, France, England and Austria in quick succession, a characteristic that has almost entirely disappeared from the modern Dutch temperament. It is now found only among expatriate Dutchmen, like Orangemen and Afrikaaners.

(Alan Coren: The Sanity Inspector. "All You Need To Know About Europe")

KONINKRIJK DER NEDERLANDEN

1991 population estimate: 15.022m; a Parliamentary democracy under a constitutional monarch (Queen Beatrix).
1 TV set per 3.2 persons; 1 telephone in use per 1.6 persons; newspaper circulation (1987): 312 per 1,000 pop.
Life expectancy at birth (1991): 74 male, 81 female. Infant mortality rate (1991): 7 per 1,000 live births.

ALL FAKTS CORECT FOR A CHANGE



PLEASE, WHERE ARE BEING THE PALACE OF ROYAL?

John D Rickett

It's so easy to hide a knowing and superior smirk at the difficulties encountered by the poor benighted foreigner. Who of us, in England, has not grinned at the American cousin asking which train is the one for **Lye-sess-ter**¹ or which "Subway" (Underground) line goes to **They-dun Bwah**²? But it is pity that is required here rather than scorn. Imagine the confusion of a poor Frenchman on a London tour: they show him Trafalgar Square: they show him Waterloo station. "Mais why," he wonders, "Do you English call everything after *defeats*?" It is when he sees the theatre marquee stating: "Pygmalion - Pronounced Success!", that he throws up his arms in defeat at the impossibility of ever learning to spell the English language. Think, too, of the incomprehensible signs that adorn some places: one example may proclaim "Free Off Licence". "Hey Sue-Ellen, there's a dude who's allowed to bump people off for nothin"³.

Yet we are not guiltless ourselves. Even when the niceties of different social *mores* are omitted from the equation, the slightest move from home drops us straight into a minefield of language. Our first faltering steps, even in a language apparently close to home - like American English, for example - are likely to blow at least our boots to smithereens. As far as *real* foreign languages are concerned, the mines are bigger but perhaps less thick on the ground. I know this full well, having spent a fair old number of years being a foreigner in one place or another. The explosions can start quite early on in life, too.

Way back in 1957, it was the summer term (semester) of my second (sophomore) year studying Spanish at degree level. My university sent the whole year of honours students - all six of us! - to Salamanca University in Spain. One gal and five guys. Her Spanish was pretty good already but tended to die on her in moments of emergency or of other excitement. As an atonement for an error committed, she exclaimed "¡Que Dios me perdone mis pechos!" or "May God forgive me my breasts!". She had meant "pecados" (sins) rather than "pechos", poor thing. Made my day, though. She seemed to suffer from a breast fixation, however. On another occasion she went into a pharmacy (drugstore) to seek a remedy for constipation and emerged with a very large tube of cream for enlarging the bust. She also managed to translate the "drawers" of a dresser by "calzoncillos" or "underpants", quite another sort of drawers altogether. My giggles at her mishaps were shortly to be punished by Nemesis, as is the fate of any who demonstrate hubris. I finished my degree and got a job that sent me abroad, initially to Brazil⁴. My first posting was way down in the South, at Pôrto Alegre. I picked up the language quickly enough, living in a boarding (rooming) house with a couple of young Brazilians for company.

¹ Leicester = "Lester".

² Theydon Bois = "þ-(th' as in 'thin')ey-dun Boyz"

³ Nice as this might be, it turns out not to be the case. More mundanely it means holder(s) of a *licence* to sell alcohol for consumption *off* the premises: they are not tied to any particular supplier and so are *free* to sell as wide a range of products as they wish. Only the English could dream all this up.

⁴ My employers were mainly engaged in business in Latin America and the Iberian Peninsula. They provided an initial training course in London which included language tuition. They persuaded me that with my good honours degree in Spanish and French it would be silly for me to sit in with the Spanish beginners, so I sat in with the Portuguese beginners. So they sent me to Brazil. Only in England or in the army anywhere could this happen.

PLEASE, WHERE ARE BEING THE PALACE OF ROYAL?

I noticed that every third word in their conversations was "porra", and picked this up eagerly to show my confidence and fluency with the language. It was only after a rather deathly hush when I first used the word in a mixed gathering that I decided to find out what it actually meant. In south Brazil it means "sperm" or "semen", alas; it's not much better in the rest of the country either, although it is no more than a fairly vulgar word for "penis". The **Boom!** indicated the loss of at least one boot in the minefield. Yet, all in all, Brazil presented less of a linguistic challenge to a foreigner than was presented to me on my transfer to New York some nine years later.

Unlike many Englishmen, I already knew that their particular form of the language was a minefield interspersed with pits of venomous snakes. I was careful with the use of words like "rubber"⁵ and with phrases like "knock me up at 6:30 in the morning"⁶. I even knew that the US had Pension Plans rather than Pension Schemes as we did; "scheme" *always* means something nefarious⁷ to the Americans. But I *still* said things like Yoze-might instead of Yo-semi-tee and Bwaz Cascade instead of Boy-zee Cascade. And why the hell is it **Hew**-ston Texas, yet **How**-ston Street NYC? Have you ever done the unforgivable and asked one of New York's finest where the nearest underground is? I have. The answer, with a huge and Irish chortle, was "Under the ground, Mac!". I guess I deserved that one.

I can forgive dear Virginia, my morning waitress at that great place, the New Bambi Diner on Pearl Street, off Wall. After a couple of weeks I was a regular for breakfast: bacon, two eggs over lightly, hash browns or French fries, toast, coffee - all for a buck in those days, and the toast and coffee just kept coming for as long as you wanted. So Virginia and I became friends; she'd lend me her copy of the News, opened to the sports pages, knowing that I would have read the Times during my commute from Long Island. She wandered up one day as I was attacking my breakfast in English style and said "Gee, Mr. Rickett, but you sure eat cute." And so I did, I'm sure.

Harder to forgive were the neighbours in Port Washington who loved to trot me out at their cocktail parties. "Hey John, say 'garage'." I would dutifully utter "garridge" to the hilarity of all concerned, thinking the while: "Blimey, I'd just *love* to get you lot into an East End pub with a bit of Cockney rhyming slang flying about!".

Being a foreigner can require enormous self-control, you see. I arrived one day at Narita airport, Tokyo. I was just about to go through customs when I was stopped by a giant in a very sharp white uniform decorated with what looked like a .75 calibre revolver. "Passpol, prease." I surrendered my passport, yet again, "Haa, Mistel Lickett⁸, are you callying any dlugs or guns?" To my eternal credit I was able to answer, with a straight face, that I was not carrying any drugs or guns. He never did see the internal Mistel Lickett who was convulsed with totally helpless paroxysms of laughter. And they call the Orientals inscrutable.

My moral is a very simple one: be nice to foreigners; be forbearing with their small gaffes. If you *must* find a foreigner to mock, go look in the mirror.

REPÚBLICA FEDERATIVA DO BRASIL

1991 population census: 148m; a Federal Republic

1 TV set per 4 persons; 1 telephone in use per 11 persons; newspaper circulation (1988): 55 per 1,000 pop.

Life expectancy at birth (1991): 62 male; 68 female. Infant mortality rate (1991): 67 per 1,000 live births.

⁵ In the US, a condom; in the UK, an eraser.

⁶ In the US, "Impregnate me at..."; in the UK, "Wake me at...".

⁷ "Nefarious" has nothing whatsoever to do with the activities of one N. Farey, I swear!

⁸ I promise that I transcribe this as accurately as I can. It is *not* exaggerated.

XenoHitParade

Foreigner

Ich Bin Ein Auslander *Pop Will Eat Itself*
Cam Ye O'er Frae France? *Steeleye Span*
Something About England *The Clash*¹
Justice in Ontario *Steve Earle and the Dukes*
Warakurna *Midnight Oil*²
Green Fields of France *Trad. Irish*
Turning Japanese *The Vapours*
Lost in France *Bonnie Tyler*
Biko *Peter Gabriel*
Mama Mia *Abba*³
Je Suis Un Rock Star *Bill Wyman*
A Song for Europe *Roxy Music*
Big in America *The Stranglers*
I Walk The Earth *Voice of the Beehive*
Je T'Aime... Moi Non Plus *Jane Birkin and Serge Gainsbourg*
Seven Views of Jerusalem *The Teardrop Explodes*
Down Under *Men At Work*
The Immigrant Song *Led Zeppelin*
Give Ireland Back to the Irish *Paul McCartney & Wings*⁴
Sticks and Stones *The Havalinas*
A Song For Europe *Roxy Music*
Killing An Arab *The Cure*
International Thief Thief (ITT) *Fela Kuti*
Seminoe Wind *John Anderson*⁵
Caribbean Queen *Billy Ocean*
Breakfast in America *Supertramp*
Africa *Toto*
Diego Maradona is a Greasy Cunt and Should be Shot *Ken Woodbee*⁶
Devil's Sidewalk *Graham Parker*

¹ "They say the immigrants steal the hubcaps / Of respected gentlemen / They say it would be wine an' roses / If England were for Englishmen again..."

² "...Warakurna, cars will roll / Don't drink by the waterhole / Not since Lassiter was here / Black man's got a lot to fear..."

³ For those who feel like resurrecting what was the burning question of the day, I always fancied the dark-haired one (no - not the one with the beard).

⁴ Banned by the BBC, although they effectively still promoted the single by playing the B-side: 'C Moon'.

⁵ Not the farty pretentious git of Yes, but a bloody good country singer.

⁶ Not a real song, but a statement of editorial policy.

MOVIES FROM OUT OF YOUR POSTAL CODE

***ALIEN* (1979) Dir: Ridley Scott**

...and sequels *ALIENS* (1986) and *ALIEN³* (1992). Peter Nicholls calls this "One of the most influential sf films ever made", though "actually must closer to horror in its genre conventions". He also notes the similarities between the movie and *It! The Terror From Beyond Space* (1958), which was itself essentially ripped off from from Van Vogt's *A Discord in Scarlet* (part of the "Space Beagle" sequence), engendering a legal settlement of \$50,000. The star of the first movie is probably Giger's alien herself, though I personally found the consistent teasing shots somewhat annoying. In this respect, *Aliens* may be more instructive about Ripley (though still to a good extent an ensemble piece). In some respects, *Alien³* is superior to both, and well worth it if (like me) you are an admirer of Brian Glover.

***WAR OF THE WORLDS* (1953) Dir: George Pal**

Sadly, this seminal effort seems to have been neglected of late, perhaps overshadowed by the fact that everyone remembers Welles rather than Pal when the title is mentioned. Worth repeated viewing as a reminder of how *good* some of the fifties' sf (and Pal's in particular) was. The special effects won an Oscar.

***STARMAN* (1984) Dir: John Carpenter**

Deemed "too long and slight" by Nicholls, I would incline more toward Leonard Maltin's view of a "familiar, derivative storyline ... given a solid boost by two lead performances". In many ways this is a seriously underrated movie, for which Jeff Bridges should have at least contended for an Oscar. The fact is, he will never win one (or get a "sympathy" award at the age of 103) despite a generally sound and often excellent body of work, simply because he chose to appear in the moderately dumb *Tron*.

***VILLAGE OF THE DAMNED* (1960) Dir: Wolf Rilla**

In some ways an ideal adaptation of Wyndham's *The Midwich Cuckoos*, though I do hear tell that John Carpenter's 1995 remake is equally faithful to the original. The performances of the children are suitably chilling, and George Sanders turns in his usual sterling performance.

***THE DAY THE EARTH STOOD STILL* (1951) Dir: Robert Wise**

Universally recognized for the classic it is, though the anti-nuke message does suffer a little with time. The inspired casting of Michael Rennie as Klaatu and Edmund North's trenchant script are just two of the successful elements of this timeless movie. Klaatu's resurrection seems to parallel Christ (deliberately, in Nicholl's view, though he makes similar comparisons in *Starman*). Wise went on to direct, among others, *A for Andromeda* and *Star Trek: The Motion Picture*.

***CLOSE ENCOUNTERS OF THE THIRD KIND* (1977) Dir: Steven Spielberg**

A much better (if quasi-religious) movie than *E.T.*, which I decline to otherwise mention on the simple grounds that I hated it. Though led by Richard Dreyfuss and Bob Balaban, the cast all contribute mightily to the final impression. The film buff's amazement at Truffaut's appearance is soon overcome by his understated performance here. This remains his only not self-directed appearance. *The Special Edition* (1980) is the one now normally shown, and does contain new footage though overall is slightly

MOVIES...

shorter than the original, though certain network showings have included *all* footage. According to Nicholls, "many critics saw [the special edition] as inferior to the original..."

***EARTH GIRLS ARE EASY* (1988) Dir: Julien Temple**

Temple, long known for his punk sensibilities, chooses to portray the Valley locale as more alien than the aliens, with some success. An interesting cast headed by Jeff Goldblum and Geena Davis and including Damon Wayans and the latterly *much* more successful Jim Carrey cannot really drag this effort beyond the mediocre. Probably only worth stealing, or renting if there's nothing else.

***THE ADVENTURES OF BUCKAROO BANZAI ACROSS THE 8TH DIMENSION* (1984) Dir: W.D. Richter**

A movie I personally love, with its sort-of-shrimp-headed aliens all named "John", the fact that the good guys appear to (most) humans as Rastas and the bad guys as John Lithgow, Christopher Lloyd and others. Lithgow overacts horrendously, but appears to have tremendous fun doing it. The rest of the cast (including Peter Weller in the title role and Ellen Barkin being pretty sexy), with the possible exception of Jeff Goldblum who is curiously muted, also seem to be enjoying themselves a great deal. The movie does bear repeated viewing (and has a cult following), though nearly every review I've seen universally uses the word "incoherent" to describe it. Of course, they said the same thing about *200 Motels*...

***QUATERMASS AND THE PIT* (1967) Dir: Roy Ward Baker**

The third and final Quatermass movie in which a Martian spaceship is discovered by workers excavating a tunnel. Though no aliens actually appear in the film, the poltergeists and other paranormal phenomena let loose make a worthy (and frightening) substitute. Maltin deems this the best of the Quatermass movies (it was retitled *Five Million Years From Earth* for US release), and is in fact the only one in which an English actor (Andrew Kier) plays the title role. Comparisons with Stephen King's *The Tommyknockers* will be obvious, but I also remember the Spike Milligan's Goon Show parody *The Scarlet Capsule* (with Harry Secombe as Ned Quartermess) with great affection.

***COCOON* (1985) Dir: Ron Howard**

Well, miserable git Nicholls didn't like this much (and its sequel even less), but Maltin did (with small reservations), and so do I. Steve Guttenberg is probably the worst thing in a fine cast, and let us not forget that Don Ameche quite rightfully copped a Best Supporting Actor Oscar for this movie. Tahnee Welch is what we used to call (in those far-off adolescent days) "highly knobbable". And when did you ever see Brian Dennehy turn in a pile of rubbish, eh? Maltin's last word: "What a pleasure to watch this cast at work! Another impressive directing job by Howard."

***SLAUGHTERHOUSE FIVE* (1972) Dir: George Roy Hill**

As of writing, my favourite sf movie of all time. Exceptional treatment of the Tralfamadoreans and their planet, completely avoiding considerations of crappy make-up. The movie undoubtedly benefits from a familiarity with Vonnegut's original, but will stand many, many repeat viewings. (I must be up to 50 and not tired of it yet.) Michael Sacks is nothing less than superb in the lead role of the time-displaced Billy Pilgrim, and Valerie Perrine's bod provides a welcome occasional distraction. The movie won an Oscar for editing as well as the 1973 Dramatic Presentation Hugo.

LOCO CITATO

[S V O'Jay: Everyone else seems to be doing good stuff like splitting locs by subject matter, printing addresses at the end and so forth; that's neat, I thought, so why the fuck not. This has been a purely gratuitous use of the f-word. Pass it on. Thanks to John Dallman for passing on the LoCs from Walt Willis and Terry Jeeves, both of whom obviously saw no other address than the one in the recommendation for Attitude on page 2 of AoD #6.]

EGO TE ABSOLVO

PAMELA BOAL

Congratulations on an issue of carefully considered viewpoints, thoughtful personal experience and interestingly selected statistics; none of the dogmatic intolerance that so often mars a discussion of religion. I do hope those who loc this edition of *Arrows of Desire* do so in the spirit of the original.

JACKIE DUCKHAWK

Thanks very much for *AoD6: Religion*. I enjoyed it a good deal more than most fanzines; I think the theme idea is enormously underrated as a way of producing something coherent and interesting overall. It spurs people to better efforts. The mixture of articles and excerpts lightens the serious weight of the material too.

CHRIS MURPHY

Thanks for the copy of *Arrows of Desire 6*. I liked it, particularly the piece on "Roman Catholics Anonymous". As an ex-Catholic I found this very funny and very true. (I describe myself as ex- instead of lapsed because I've walked away, not fallen down.)

If issue 7 is as good as this it should be worth waiting for.

JENNY GLOVER

The memory I will have of you was that scene at Novacon, when you were standing proudly behind a pile of fanzines (how on earth did you bring them on the airplane?). I hope the feedback reinforces this pride you felt.

STEVE SNEYD

Interesting to see poetry included as part of the debate... and the page 35 art [*Mary Goff Wannabe*] is highly effective. Also intriguing to see fic used as a way of exploring aspects of your topic. Joy Hibbert's *Zetetic* over here a few years back conducted ongoing discussions of 'religion' with big and small r in a similar mutli-media way.

WALT WILLIS

It's unusually comprehensive for a fanzine.

TERRY JEEVES

What a massive issue, 56 pages no less. Reproduction a trifle black, but that's no fault, it was 100% legible - apart from the caption (?) at the foot of the illo on page 8 [*Cacey Goff Chile*] - I made out G * L i A R * L but it defeated me to make out what it said. [*I made it GOLiARDZ, but I could be wrong! Cacey appears to use 'z' as a plural rather than 's'.*] Sorry, but the cover illo and page 8 seemed crude. The other two illos were a trifle better but nothing to put in the family album.

PAUL DI FILIPPO

Good to see another ish of *AoD*. The delay has not staled any of the contents.

ALAN J SULLIVAN

Egotorial: Three years late, but still not a record? We'll just have to accept it as a fanzine then.

HARRY CAMERON ANDRUSCHAK

Received *AoD-6* today, although I am not sure why. I am an atheist, and simply do not comprehend what most of this zine is about. The closest I come to God is when I am playing a computer game like *Sim Earth*.

LOCO CITATO

DON FITCH

One of the most impressive fanzines I've come across in the past few years.

MAE STRELKOV

So the previous issue on DEATH was dated November 1990! That's a long time ago for us Mayflies! I suppose having pubbed that issue, there seemed "nothing more to be said" for a good while. Now No. 6 (November 1994) on RELIGION is like a rebirth. (Or is it just grubbing for tidbits in over-grazed pastures?)

Hope you do consider an omnibus reprint! I'd read it all thoroughly! I'm interested in anyone who's so questioning.

RELIGION REDUX (IN GENERAL)

PAMELA BOAL

It has been my good fortune to live in a number of places where I could observe first hand and learn from a number of religions: Eastern, Western and those Christian sects which display so much of their Middle Eastern origins. Decry, as we can and must, the horrors perpetuated in the name of religion, we can still recognise the value of art, music and, yes, science that has arisen from these institutions. While many sects ignore or distort the moral teachings of their particular faith, all do offer basic common sense guidelines to rubbing along with one's fellow man. The vast majority of fans are fortunate to be living in conditions that allow them to recognise and honour the morals without being subjected to the rule of the dogma.

[Old sixties graffito: Help! My karma has run over my dogma!]

JACKIE DUCKHAWK

DF Lewis' story was good and Haz Bond's piece on his New Religion was delicious. Michael Abbott's piece was OK but I know him too well - I knew about all that already! Nina Watson's was too personal and indirect to contribute to the theme.

CHRIS MURPHY

The items on world religions were interesting and informative. I envy Ken Lake just a little for his ability to believe in some of them, but I also consider his faith in near-death experiences misplaced. They are not necessarily evidence of conscious existence after death, any more than UFO sightings are necessarily evidence of alien activity. Dave Langford's *Tangle* is a very apt comment on the development and abuse of religious authority.

I preferred your *Virtual Jesus* to *The Raw Brain*, which dealt with adolescence rather than religion. Nina Watson gives a compelling description of the anxiety and self-pity that can descend on those who do not have a centre to their lives. The worship of God, Krishna, Buddha or even the vague deities of the New Age does provide a centre, which is why faith continues to be a force in human affairs. Barry J Bayley misses the point when he says that "it's some time since a new world religion got started". Wannabe world religions get started all the time, but they have to compete with the existing ones. What takes a long time is gaining acceptance, which is why the Mormons have a religion but the Scientologists only have a cult.

JENNY GLOVER

I found it an interesting conceit, alternating articles with a potpourri of religious facts. These I mostly skipped, except for wondering why you chose those particular ones and just what point you were trying to make. It failed in my case. The letters seemed to come out of a time machine, as they depicted attitudes (and addresses) which had mostly changed in the three years since they were written.

The mental picture I will retain from your fanzine is the mainly black pagan jumble from the anarchic artist Mary Goff Wannabe. There's more than enough symbols in the picture - an inverted cross, the hanged man from the Tarot - but flowing down from the top is a river of skulls. That's a bit too close to how organised religion can be perverted for my liking.

[Your "conceit" is what I call format. AoD has always included lists and factual pieces as part of its theme. I (and others) do find this stuff intrinsically interesting.]

STEVE SNEYD

Of the religious material: bit hard to see what you were setting out to do... seemed at a level mostly which wasn't particularly enlightening or really getting into any real questions at any real depth. Couldn't, for example, find any tackling of such prevalent and difficult matters as the way a neo-occultism is leaking onto "the scientific worldview" via chaos theory / quantum physics / the "self-bootstrapping

LOCO CITATO

universe" and other such counter-intuitives. Content seemed to be looking generally at 'conventional' religions in a pretty conventional way. The potted details of some major religions would probably be a useful initial familiarisation for a new teacher at a multifaith school, till she / he had time to do a bit of real digging, but beyond that...

Odd that agnostics don't get a place amid the table of world religions. There must be a million who, like me, accept that "you can't prove a negative" and that dog knows what's out there / in here, let alone the difficulty, a la Kardashev (and indeed Clarke and his famous 'magic' quote) of ever "knowing" if willed entities, divine relative to us, were indeed divine in universal terms and so on. So it goes.

Steve Jeffery exercised great restraint, presumably for space reasons, in his listing of Dickian 'religious' novels, since "godwork" is at work in one way or another in most if not all... *Three Stigmata*, the phone-in / bookwriting God of *Galactic Pot-Healer*, the parakeet / paraclete element in *Clans of the Alphane Moon* and so on and so on and so on. Quite apart from the way, at an embedded level, it has been noted by those far more knowledgeable than I that Gnostic structures and patterns appear in the 'deep nature' of book after book by Dick; and of course nearly every book has some neo-religion as an active or passive protagonist (Mercerism in *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* to name but one).

[Steve Sneyd is a founder member of AA: Apostrophisers Anonymous.]

WALT WILLIS

Your statistics are of real help and some of them come as a surprise to me. I'm surprised for example at the number shown as atheists. Perhaps they include the entire population of communist countries, which would be misleading to judge from the persistence of the Russian Orthodox Church.

[I believe this may well have been the case. The figures for such countries, which are "officially" atheist suggest derivation from some pre-fall-of-Wall numbers. The original source for the data was the 1992 Britannica Book of the Year.]

TERRY JEEVES

Well, you certainly crammed in plenty of variety on the religious side without covering my own atheism and Val's Christian Science.

[Joke break: A man went into a public lavatory in London, and saw another man at the urinal obviously masturbating. "Hey!", he yelled, "What are you doing?" The other replied, "I know you think you know what I'm doing, but I'm not really doing what you think I'm doing." "So what are you doing if you're not doing what I think you're doing?" "Well, I'm a Christian Scientist, and I'm screwing my girlfriend in Edinburgh."]

In my book, there is no God, but if people find comfort or solace in such a belief - or from the ritual (as does Ken Lake) - fair enough, more power to their elbow(s).

Years ago the ghastly *Reader's Digest* ran an article called "There are No Atheists in the Sky", which made out flyers are always believers. Rubbish! I had 5½ years in the wartime RAF and never varied from my stalwart atheism.

I just cannot accept that this vast cosmos, billions of stars (and planets?) was all constructed purely for the benefit of a crawling little lifeform on one insignificant world. If there was any evidence that way, I might consider it all a super experiment by a colossal being - but NO, not a caring, protective God who will give us all harp lessons when we die.

Some interesting capsule summaries of wordly religions.

The Raw Brain [DF Lewis] - sorry, but this got nowhere. Stream-of-consciousness writing isn't my cup of tea - likewise *Consider...* [Nina Watson].

Interesting to see the list of religion-related SF. No doubt careful memory-searching would add to it - I seem to recall [illegible] wrote 'I Am Not God' in the mid thirties (*Astounding*). Loved the Joke.

Barrington Bayley's opening comment was 'spot on' - if religious ideas were held by only one person, he'd be considered a nut case. Religious films missed out *The Man Who Could Work Miracles* and *A Matter of Life and Death*. *Death Takes A Holiday* might sneak in.

[Just for you, Terry: *The Man Who Could Work Miracles* was Lothar Mendes' 1937 adaptation of Wells' tale of a timid store clerk who has the power to do anything he wants. The special effects are surprisingly good, and all in all it is a fine, if neglected, example of filmmaking of the period. The cast includes Ralph Richardson. In citing *A Matter of Life and Death*, I assume you are not referring to Russ Mayberry's 1981 TV movie, the life story of nurse Joy Ufema, but rather to the 1946 fantasy about a WW2 pilot (David Niven) who claims he was accidentally chosen to die and must plead his case in a Heavenly court. This was most original for its time, as is not uncommon with the writer-director team of Michael Powell and Emeric Pressburger - my film guide rates them highly. The classy cast includes Kim Hunter, Raymond Massey, Marius Goring and Lovey Dickie Attenborough. It was retitled *Stairway to Heaven* for US release.]

LOCO CITATO

Virtual Jesus was much better than the previous two 'yarns', it had pace, a theme, a valid idea and it left you wondering. Good.

Nice collection of letters - and I go along with Andruschak's plans for cremation and into the sea all paid for by an insurance plan. Why should the living be saddled with exorbitant funeral expenses. Andy mentions a simple funeral and organ donation. That seems a good system.

DALE SPEIRS

Religion is not such a big deal in Canada; we save our passions for debates about language policy. We don't care if you're Catholic or Protestant, but mind what language you say your prayers in.

PAUL DI FILIPPO

I must confess that I have always followed Walt Whitman's advice: "Argue not concerning God", but was sorely tempted to indulge this time around. Better not...

ALAN J SULLIVAN

Cover: No punches pulled, or subtle hints about the contents, I see.

Hinduism: Strange how this example of "pantheism" has survived to a greater degree than the pantheistic beliefs. Maybe it's the point of having one "God" with many forms that has earned it more tolerance from the monotheistic beliefs than was given to religions with multiple Gods.

Consider... [Nina Watson]: This was an interesting piece of reading, compared to what you've done more recently. To say you have changed - a lot - is putting it very mildly. Certainly you seem a lot happier as you are now, compared to the pit of despair that you were clearly in when you wrote this.

Islam: It's got a lot of parallels with Christianity, this faith. Odd how two beliefs with so much in common can hate each other so much. Mind you, when you think about how the groups and sects within the faiths go for each others' throats at the slightest hint of an excuse, maybe it's not so very strange after all. Each is convinced that they are right to the exclusion of all others, some to the extent that the matter can only be resolved by incredible amounts of violence. I'd say it was a funny old thing, but it isn't. Especially not if you're one of the poor sods caught in the crossfire.

Danger: Religion [Steve Jeffery]: Some of these I've read, few have I been really tempted to re-read. Hang on, no mention of Heinlein's *Job..* ? Had a bit of a thing for putting religion in his books, did RAH. Nearly as much as his political beliefs...

DON FITCH

Your summaries of some of the major & most significant Religions is especially welcome - helps keep the discussion (and thinking) on a more realistic and factual level... something not characteristic of much discussion in fanzines, which tends to be mostly opinionation, which can be interesting, but...

Though an agnostic, I find religious discussions fascinating - probably because I'm a reluctant agnostic, forced there because none of the religions so far encountered have been adequately convincing to overcome my feeling that *wanting* to Believe is not quite enough. Most such discussions I've been having recently, however, have been on a more practical level, less concerned with Abstract concepts and "Theology" than with the swelling tide of Christian Conservatives and their assumption that religious teachings (those of their own Religion, of course, most of which they perceive as being Universal) must be introduced into the U.S. Public Schools (in order to Save Society as We Know It) and their (in my opinion totally irrational) assumption that this can be done honorably - that it isn't a major step towards the persecution of other religions (or irreligions) ...and in many cases, that if it is such a step, this doesn't matter because any good society absolutely must be based solidly on the moral principles elucidated by God, and besides, these are pretty much identical in all religions. * sigh * I much prefer to think of Religion as being an (almost) entirely personal thing, a matter of the Soul, Spirit, or whatever, and certainly not to be imposed upon others. To the extent that it influences one's interactions with other people, I feel that these activities need to be governed or limited by non-religious social principles.

[*Ways to piss off the Christian Right (which is neither): when they start rattling on about pornography, refer them to the 'Song of Solomon'; then remind them that God must be a hypocrite, because although two of his Commandments require that you "honour your father and mother" and "thou shalt not commit adultery" He (1) got a married woman pregnant (Mary) in his guise as the Holy Ghost, and if you truly believe in the Trinity, this also had to be incest.*]

Enough; I've resolved not to spend time on a soap-box, here. One minor quibble (which might help to illustrate something, though I'm not sure just what) - Jewish scholars tell me that Commandment VI, in the original, clearly does not say "Thou shalt not kill", but rather, "Don't murder". The more modern people who oppose warfare and the execution of criminals may be admirable in their goals (I feel & think they are) but might be considered a bit suspect in their citation of this Commandment as their basis. (I feel less empathy towards their opposition to suicide & the assistance in this act, and towards the idea of

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prohibiting the killing of animals for food & clothing, though there seem to be good reasons for discouraging this practice.)

BUCK COULSON

Addition to your religious stf: *The Eleventh Commandment*, Lester del Rey (novel); *A Fine and Private Place*, Peter Beagle (novel); *Job*, Robert A Heinlein (novel); *Captain Stormalong's Visit (or Trip?) to Heaven*, Mark Twain (short).

[Bet Steve wishes he'd included *Job* now. The other really obvious omissions would have to have been Simak's *A Choice of Gods* and *Project Pope*.]

MAE STRELKOV

Will there be a new religion? No. Each individual will discover his or her own truth increasingly, for we've the implements at hand to aid our search. Science, Nature, God too, ready to assist if we wake. But Churches, Temples, organised forms of worship? Fine, but mind-deadening too, all too frequently. But blind faith made the masses chant HEIL HITLER and they'd do it still, all those poor, mindless, fleshly types.

A GREAT LAKE?

JACKIE DUCKHAWK

Ken Lake wrote very movingly of his love of ritual. I am of the Sea of Faith school of Christianity which doesn't believe in anything very much except being ethical and worshipping by whatever way suits you best without apology. For me, stained glass windows and good old-fashioned hymns sung well provide the necessary beauty.

He also writes of near-death-experiences - NDEs. I am currently unconvinced by their relevance, since all reports I have seen have been from the UK or US, where long-standing cultural and religious influences could have formed the links between all these perceptions.. Do Hindus and Taoists and Buddhists see the same things? If so I'll believe in their validity. At present, I'll keep my suspicion that they are a form of dream rather than a supernatural phenomenon. After all, many of us dream about missing trains before important interviews, or being unable to write in an exam, and no-one claims this reflects any more than common anxieties and thought processes.

ALAN J SULLIVAN

If I know that I will have one regret when I die, it will be all the things I never got around to doing. I'm not sure how much sense the wording makes, but the feeling's right, if nothing else.

Acceptance of a specific belief or set of beliefs has always been a problem for me. There's always at least one sticking point.

I don't think this is necessarily a bad thing. Just because a person, or group, has found a way doesn't mean that particular way is right to the exclusion of all others, nor does it even mean that it is right for everyone. I don't accept traditional Christian beliefs in the complete and total way that the true Christian is "supposed" to do. That doesn't stop me believing in the existence of God (or something that we might as well call God, for want of a more appropriate term). Nor do I go around killing, raping, looting etc., etc. I don't go around deliberately setting out to cause harm (I *do* cause no end of harm, but I don't get up in the morning and think: "I'll go out and hurt people today."). I may be a heathen, but I try for some sort of principled behaviour. My success rate leaves a lot to be desired, but I try.

As to God, God could be utterly indifferent, looking on humanity as an experiment that is running its course, and might be interfered with now and again - just a tweak here and there to see what happens. Earth could be God's Nintendo™ or even the divine version of *Sim City*. Maybe God's a malicious meddler, playing with people's lives. We may never know. You can bet that if we find out, God will change the rules. Life's an endurance thing, and the aim is to stay in as long as you can. But that's just my jaundiced view. I'd much rather believe that it was nothing personal.

[For a jolly take on the "Earth as rats' maze" idea, see Asimov's short story 'Jokester', nestled away in the old *Earth is Room Enough* anthology.]

BUCK COULSON

Well, Ken, we're all faced with the certainty of death, if not its immediacy. I've had two heart attacks; in neither one did I think I was going to die - and I was right! As for religion, I'm basically uninterested. I'm a minister of the Universal Life Church (along with a lot of other stf fans) and unlike most of the rest, I've performed a half-dozen marriages. No funerals. I suppose I'm an atheist. I don't worry about my religious status, if any. My lifespan may be longer than yours, but when I was first considering Social Security I worked out the totals of what I'd get if I took it at age 62 or age 65 (less per year if I started at

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62, but more years to receive it). It worked out that I'd receive more total money if I lived past age 78. I considered that living to that age was unlikely, and took SS at 62. I disbelieve most of those reported "near-death experiences". Not that anyone lied, but that the mind plays tricks. I've had a lot of fun and a good 40-year marriage, and I figure that's more than a lot of people get.

MAE STRELKOV

Ken, there's NO waste in the universe... just constant recycling so God (yes, I find okay certain Bible texts till now) can really say in truth BEHOLD I MAKE ALL THINGS NEW. So I've dipped into profundities of all Earth's religions and sects and picked out the lovely tidbits that ring true, for me at least. Karma, for instance. But no ETERNAL Hell. I had that fight with the Christians' grim god when I was seven or so and had to listen to Hell Fire sermons preached in Chinese by missionaries, me being born into such a family. (Only child).

Now, Ken: you asked for prayer, and here I'm praying. "Father, dear", I say cozily, like I chat on any topic at any time. "He's a dear, Ken's a sweet person." I never knew he was over 60... good Heavens, close onto my age. So what's a few years more or less?

So your bones hurt? Vadim (my Russian-born husband from China) has arthritis too, and is very brave about it. He still does all sorts of chores, cutting wood even. Vadim is now 81 (or will be next month. We always celebrate our birthdays together.)

I do agree, Ken, that older chants and hymns move us more than their clever modern counterparts, so contrived. If you were to ask me re my favourite hymn, it's "O Love That Will Not Let Me Go". I sang it during our firstborn's birth during a terrible storm and flood on a lonely mountain-side in Southern Chile, when I nearly died. (In a little wooden cabin.) So I still avoid singing it unless I'm ready to cope with an urge to grow sad and sentimental.

Oh, yes, I wanted challenges, and challenges I've had. non-stop. My father struggled with doubt. (He was too brilliant to follow my Baptist mother's unthinking approach to Faith). But he kept reminding himself that, like a drowning kitten, LET GO AND LET GOD. And that has made sense always to me. I just float along and refuse to struggle like someone going down for the third time. Lie on my back staring up amid the waters, breathing softly, and being in bliss with all that's around. The "Arms of God" are around me because I don't nudge him (her) aside irritably and start scolding for every flaw I think I detect.

One flows with it all, come what may. I've had pain... I see same as "stoppages", almost like "attacks" of the pokey side of Nature... "Let's die and get away from all Life's churning", such pokiness seems to suggest. When the temptation comes, I float like Jesus instructed when He told us to "Consider the lilies... the sparrows" and so on. (And God counting every hair of our heads - not like some giant Computer, but helping us to keep our places in his Universe securely, come what may. (Fixing genetic problems too.))

As you say, Ken, we are "better off ignoring" the cries of anybody preaching Eternal Hell. Back in 1955, when I was still trying to be a good Catholic convert, I wrote to *Our Family*, a Catholic Canadian magazine, as per their address in my Writers' Guide I had then. I sent a piece I'd written ten years earlier called 'Faith is a Habit', about the healing from encephalitis of our second son Robert. (He died two years back; ("he'd gone far away") but we knew he wished to live again amongst us here. He's back - we all recognize his special charm in son Tony's 2-year-old, "Robertito". Several others "came back"; my mother-in-law wanted it also and back she came.) They pubbed it as 'I Bargained With God'. Nuns and priests wrote in saying I'd helped their faith, so I replied to the editor that my joyousness was due to the fact I was certain there's no Eternal Hell, just Karma. He was horrified and bawled me out and I broke up from grief. (By 1958 - Amnesia followed as I couldn't solve problems worst of which then was much Russian aged parents-in-law.) Electro and insulin shock put me back in shape, but I was a Catholic no longer. I returned to my old "Search", scanning comparative religion, devouring all I could learn on the findings of our scientists, working out a new point of view. This is it - with the help of the last 30-odd years of studying old symbols dating back to China's oracle-bone forms. Humanity's first intuitions that get amplified and revised with succeeding generations. All true... out instincts are more trustworthy than cut-and-dried dogmas anywhere, always. But we do grope painfully, don't we.

If "Mother Earth" came into the equation in the mid 1960s, that's Vadim's mystic Russian side... he, the medium till I called a halt to it. I want to go and do things on my own, no "Voices From Beyond" to prompt me, thank you. I want to be safely hard-headed, even while enjoying a constant high. (Exploring this divine love that's shed over the most pitiful as well as those nice Buddhist and Catholic nuns meditating away!)

Empirical - that's the only approach I trust, still. And never write it down as dogma, God forbid.

And yes, Ken, you face death wisely, your faith in NDE reports and your joy in the mass worship of humanity too, in their temples etc., (also at musical fests, I'm certain) isn't misplaced. To flow with humanity is good too, but you need to do your own thing as well.

LOCO CITATO

RUMPLED BY THE BAYLEY

JACKIE DUCKHAWK

B Bayley comments on the sense-of-wonder common to both SF and religion. Has he considered the many other similarities between Fandom and religion? - community spirit, fund-raising, amateur participation, sense of being part of a "better people", gathering together, regular meetings, singing (well, they call it singing)..?

WALT WILLIS

My own opinion is close to that of Barry Bayley, except that having reached an age when: "Of my three score years and ten / 75 won't come again" I would welcome anyone who could show me any reason to accept any religion. But having been a devout materialist for over 60 years I find it impossible to take seriously anything involving the supernatural. Having read through the Bible as did Haz Bond I find it difficult, as he did, to take Christianity seriously. I keep wondering how missionaries are able to convert heathens.

[Spike Milligan's scathing assessment of missionary work went something like: "They give you a vest, a Bible, one chorus of 'Onward Christian Soldiers' and they tick off another convert".]

BUCK COULSON

Since when is the Exodus a historical event? Nothing has been found in Egyptian records to validate the Jewish account, which casts some doubt on its authenticity. Tell Heather to read more widely. And the "sense of wonder" counts as a phrase thought up by teenagers to justify their unusual pursuits.

BOND - I BEACHED

[Despite the fact that I hate reminding myself how late AoD #6 was, and therefore how well-aged the material, I feel constrained to point out the following: The article 'God and Me' in that issue carried the by-line of "Haz Bond", which may well be why correspondents have used that name in their remarks. As Jenny Glover has pointed out, much has transpired since that issue was actually written, not least of which is that the author of 'God and Me' now writes as Sandra Bond. You nip out for ten minutes...]

CHRIS MURPHY

Haz Bond's history of his religious ideas is amusing and well-written. His comment on the parallel between fandom and religion makes me wonder how many people do use fandom as a focus for their existence, an excuse to be. He may be right in saying that the gods of fandom are more tolerant than the "real" ones, but many fans are as bigoted as any true believer about those who take a different path. The orthodox community condemns such dangerous sins as enjoying media SF or filking, while fanzine editors and conrunners accuse each other of heresy. Fan politics can scare up the occasional witchhunt, and people do get burned, emotionally speaking.

[I'm not sure there's any such thing as "orthodox" fandom any more. It's interesting that you omitted fanzine fans from your list of "dangerous sins", perhaps implying a belief that they are "orthodox"? A better term might be "aboriginal". Perhaps Hinduism, with its amalgam of beliefs, aspects of the one God and multiple sects and rituals is the best and closest parallel.]

WALT WILLIS

Like Haz Bond again, I tried during a holiday in Cyprus to see what it would be like to worship Aphrodite, which seems there to be quite a reasonable proposition, but like the wine the idea didn't travel. The most unacceptable aspect of death to me is not to know how everything turns out. I sometimes feel it would be quite acceptable if it were arranged that I was awakened every century and filled in on developments.

*[A nice idea, checking in every hundred years or so. See Orson Scott Card's *Hot Sleep* stories which show how this really fucks things up.]*

ALAN J SULLIVAN

I think it's a good thing when parents don't try to "enforce" their beliefs upon their offspring. As to whether or not they should provide some form of "guidance", how much and what form it should take... Well, that's a more awkward set of questions, to which better minds than mine have failed to find definitive answers. I do think everyone should try and read *The Bible* at least once in their lives. There's some wonderful stuff in there. King Solomon's chat-up lines, for example. And if you want to know how to maintain a good, healthy and hygienic camp in a low-technology desert environment, then *Leviticus* is a

LOCO CITATO

useful part to read. If all else fails, you can always read it for the same reasons W.C. Fields allegedly did - looking for loopholes. I like your point about living by an ethical code, without calling it a religion. My father always maintained that things like the Ten Commandments were pretty good guidelines, but there was always a need for common sense when it came to applications. Dunno about gods being human, but their believers certainly are - and that means that they can make mistakes with the best and worst of us.

[I was recently reminded of the following: Moses comes down from the mountain with the tablets and speaks to those assembled there. "God has given us a list of things we can't do. This is both good news and bad news. The good news is, there's only ten of them. The bad news is, adultery is still one of them."]

ABBOTTS AND OTHER DEVOTIONAL OCCUPATIONS

CHRIS MURPHY

Michael Abbott's account of his loss of faith reminded me of my own decision to quit the Catholic Church, and of my father's grief when I told him. Unlike Michael I do not believe it will be a sign of divine intervention if our world lasts for another hundred years. The millions of people who have fallen victim to plague, war and famine over previous centuries might envy us our days in paradise and wonder at our fears. Why in any case should we expect God to save us (in a physical sense) from ourselves, when he didn't save them?

ALAN J SULLIVAN

I too went through a time when I believed. Or, as I soon realised, wanted to believe - in order to belong to the group. So maybe I didn't so much lose my faith, as realise I never had it in the first place. My mind is unsure on the matter, even now, fifteen years later. I know what you mean about not wanting to upset your parents by telling them of your feelings. I have friends and relatives with strongly-held Christian beliefs, and I usually avoid the subject most scrupulously when I'm with them. Anything for a quiet life. The biggest problem with a crisis of faith, as you seem to have found out, is not so much not knowing what you believe as not knowing what you don't believe. Welcome to our land of confusion, and if you've any suggestions or ideas...

BLOODY FOREIGNERS PRESCIENCE

PAMELA BOAL

I'm looking forward to your next issue, having been a foreigner in Singapore, Cyprus, Portugal, America and very briefly Turkey. I have only been a "bloody foreigner" in Wales, Surrey, Sussex, Somerset, Leicestershire, Lincolnshire, various others, and most especially Tyneside (land of my husband). Yes, towns and villages throughout Britain can be very insular. In France and England you can be a bloody foreigner when you are visiting or when you remain at home. In America you are a visitor when there but revert to being a bloody foreigner the moment you leave. In the majority of other countries most British people are just foreigners, in some areas a matter of curiosity and in others a potential source of profit. Germans and, I'm sad to say, Americans are more likely to be bloody foreigners.

KYPRIAKI DIMOKRATIA (Greek); KIBRIS CUMHURIYETI (Turkish)

1991 population estimate: 708,000; a Republic

1 TV set per 3.4 persons; 1 telephone in use per 2.0 persons; newspaper circulation (1987): 157 per 1,000 pop.

Life expectancy at birth (1991): 74 male; 80 female. Infant mortality rate (1991) 10 per 1,000 live births.

REPÚBLICA PORTUGUESA

1991 population estimate: 10.387m; a Parliamentary democracy.

1 TV set per 6.2 persons; 1 telephone in use per 4.2 persons; newspaper circulation (1987): 76 per 1,000 pop.

Life expectancy at birth (1991): 71 male, 78 female. Infant mortality rate (1991): 13 per 1,000 live births.

TURKIYE CUMHURIYETI

1991 population estimate: 58.580m; a Republic.

1 TV set per 5 persons; 1 telephone in use per 8 persons.

Life expectancy at birth (1991): 68 male, 72 female. Infant mortality rate (1991): 54 per 1,000 live births.

ALL FAKTS CORECT FOR A CHANGE

LOCO CITATO

Perhaps your issue will give me the answer to why I so frequently find myself defending Americans. I know that you are in the majority open hearted, generous people who can be as considerate and sensitive as the next nationality. Yet so many Americans don their floral shirts and Bermuda shorts, sling their cameras round their necks and become loud, demanding and rude. They constantly disparage everything in sight, comparing (unfavourably) such totally diverse things as the Royal Albert Hall with Carnegie Hall, of course unaware that Carnegie was a Scot originally. I think your education system has much to do with attitudes. I've had a well-educated young American woman as a guest in my home, who in conversation sweetly assured me that Britain did not have science or technology. When I asked her who invented the light bulb, she naturally replied "Edison". When I told her that in fact Swan almost certainly made a working sample before Edison but that Edison had the greater entrepreneurial skills and grasp of patent law, she obviously doubted my veracity. That young woman had obviously been taught that Europe is still emerging from the Dark Ages and that every advance in science or medicine has taken place in America.

[A number of points here. I must correct a premature expostulation on your part: while it is understandable that you use "you" in both the personal and general senses when referring to Americans, I should point out that I am merely a (legal) resident, not a US citizen. There are no plans to change this status at this time. "As considerate and sensitive as the next nationality", which, geographically, is either Canadian or Mexican (make you think?). Americans tend to be perceived as damning of other cultures probably because their general experience is soured since the level of service in, say, the UK, is abysmal compared to that taken for granted in the US. Finally, as any fule kno Edison invented everything. You would be hard put to find many references to Tesla, for example (although a new biography of him has just been published). I am also reminded of an (American) textbook I came across some years ago while researching an article on spaceflight. A notable omission from this tract: one Yuri Gagarin.]

ESTADOS UNIDOS MEXICANOS

1991 population estimate: 90.007m; a Federal republic.

1 TV set per 6.6 persons; 1 telephone in use per 7.6 persons; newspaper circulation (1986): 142 per 1,000 pop.

Life expectancy at birth (1991): 68 male, 76 female. Infant mortality rate (1991): 29 per 1,000 live births.

ALL FAKTS CORECT FOR A CHANGE

JENNY GLOVER

I couldn't help noticing that the theme of your next issue will be "Bloody Foreigners", and that it will include an article by Graham Joyce on Greeks. I feel that your own position is somewhat ambiguous - as a Brit in America, won't you have joined the ranks of bloody foreigners? If you include an article on culture clash from your own viewpoint, I shall read it with a great deal of interest. However, the more I come into contact with foreigners, the more I realise how little difference there is between us and them. The differences of attitude, religion and culture became things of irritation, small negative things which were easily swamped by the more positive things.

DALE SPEIRS

Bloody foreigners are not such a problem *[in Canada]*. Albertans and Québécois are too busy fighting each other to pay much attention to greasy outlanders with cardboard suitcases. Since multiculturalism is official government poicy, with its own Ministry, arguments against it tend to veer off into how our deficit is ballooning due to reckless spending like this.

You can't have foreigners without borders, which neatly brings me to a bit of postal advice to all foreigners sending zines into Canada. Don't put those green C-1 Customs stickers on the envelopes, no matter what your local post office clerk tells you. They are not needed and only slow the mail since Canada Post diverts it to Canada Customs, who then inspect it and pass it on as they would have anyway without the sticker. Unless your cover art shows a man buggering a small boy or some such image guaranteed to attract official interest, Customs is not interested.

[Mae Strelkov also made this point.]

PAUL DI FILIPPO

Hope your adjustment period to these glorious States is now complete: gun nuts, 3lb sirloins, game shows etc. Oh, wait a minute - that's Argentina!

REPÚBLICA ARGENTINA

1991 population estimate: 32.663m; a Republic.

1 TV set per 4 persons; 1 telephone in use per 9 persons; newspaper circulation (1986): 88 per 1,000 pop.

Life expectancy at birth (1990): 67 male, 74 female. Infant mortality rate (1991): 32 per 1,000 live births.

LOCO CITATO

ALL FAKTS CORECT FOR A CHANGE

MAE STRELKOV

Re BLOODY FOREIGNERS, I've been one since birth and wonder if I'll ever be a true native anywhere. First, born in China and more Chinese at heart than white. Then marrying a young Russian and sailing to South America when I was just 19 and he 22. Still a foreigner, a "funny *inglesa*" to the Latins who could see in Vadim one of their own folk, but we English stick out like sore thumbs everywhere. Added to which I was so Chinesy in my outlook too. As a young child I've been with my parents to the USA and Northern England. Everybody saw me there as a wierdy, so queer in my ways (as alien as a Chinese).

So I'm at home with foreigners like myself, wherever I can find one. Here, they're rare. Everywhere, from my point of view, they're rare. They all belong to their own cultures, even if they're Bolivians who came down to Jujuy to work hard and hopefully get rich (while struggling along in shacks of cardboard and sticks).

But I am at home, I've always felt at home in our whole marvelous vast Universe, so it's been no problem for me. And, wherever I go, I've learned to take each individual on his or her own, apart from their culture, and find their intrinsic reality, by paying them careful attention and an effort to understand whatever hangups they'd like to hide from themselves and everybody. I see all "foreigners" (and homebodies, etc.) as fellow-citizens of this vast Creation, with me. In constant flux... constantly changing our oles willy-nilly... birth, life, death, rebirth and so on. (Uh! Yes, it makes sense that renewals and recyclings must be the theme note of Creation. It's so in the stars, they are born, burn brightly and die. We are made from the stardust - the remains - of exploded stars, aren't we?)

So I identify with those long-ago worn-out stars too, and listen for their current voices, imaginatively. Living that way has been lovely for me.

MISCELLANY

JENNY GLOVER

I see you are still using "Patrick McKay" as a pseudonym for Kev McVeigh. Isn't that a bit silly? Perhaps I'm a bit cynical but I can think of only two reasons to use a pseudonym: one is because the fanzine editor can't attract enough outside contributions and wants to create some imaginary personae, and the other is because someone doesn't have the guts to use his or her own name to support the opinions provided.

[I do not (nor have ever) used "Patrick McKay" as an aka for McVeigh. Kev himself has submitted pieces for AoD both as "McKay" and under his own name. You'll have to ask him his reasons. I would not consider either of your reasons to apply to S V O'Jay; Nic Farey has so far only been credited with one piece in AoD, on that occasion rightly so in my opinion; fictional pieces appearing elsewhere are credited to O'Jay, others (e.g. criticism) to Farey. And now, frighteningly apposite...]

MAE STRELKOV

You hide yourself in AOD, unless you're "Nic Farey", as I deduce. What shall I call you, "Dear Editor"? S V O'JAY, really? "Seven Voices of Jerusalem"? *[sic]* However did you pick such a title?

BUCK COULSON

For Harry Warner: Several living authors have already passed that mythical "three score and ten"; Jack Williamson and L Sprague de Camp spring to mind. In fans, you're past the limit and I'm getting close to it.

[In one of those strange examples of synchronicity, I transcribe this loc on the day Roger Zelazny dies at 58. Many authors surpassed three-score-and-ten before finally dropping off the twig (dear Isaac, for example, made 72 before that sad loss). Notable names still believed to be breathing: Brian Aldiss (b1925); Kingsley Amis (b1922); Lloyd Biggle Jr (b1923); Jerome Bixby (b1923); Pierre Boulle (b1912); Sydney J Bounds (b1920); Ray Bradbury (b1920); Kenneth Bulmer (b1921); John Christopher {Sam Youd} (b1922); Arthur C Clarke (b1917); Hal Clement (b1922); Avram Davidson (b1923); Gordon R Dickson (b1923); Philip José Farmer (b1918); Jack Finney (b1911); H L Gold (b1914); James Gunn (b1923); Harry Harrison (b1925); Fred Hoyle (b1915); Nigel Kneale (b1922); R A Lafferty (b1914); Stan Lee (b1922); Stanislaw Lem (b1921); Judith Merril (b1923); Patrick Moore (b1923); Sam Moskowitz (b1920); Andre Norton (b1912); Fred Pohl (b1919); Julius Schwartz (b1915); William Tenn {Phil Klass} (b1920); Wilson Tucker (b1914); Jack Vance (b1916); A E Van Vogt (b1912); Gore Vidal (b1925); Kurt Vonnegut (b1922). Judy Merril is presently starved for female companions here, though next year, all

LOCO CITATO

being well, we can add Janet Asimov and Anne McCaffrey (both b1926). Ursula LeGuin and Kate Wilhelm are a couple of years behind (both b1929).]

On to other letters. I don't really understand the concept of "getting drunk"; that is, drinking to the point of a personality change or not knowing what one is doing. I've drunk until I got sick; I've never been able to drink to the point of not being in control of myself. Juanita ascribes this to the strong asthma remedies I took as a child, which ranged from smoking Jimson weed to being injected with ¼gr. of morphine dissolved in 1cc of ephedrine. (I figure I'm just strong-minded; the drink may affect my walking, but never my thinking.) So, I smugly ascribe the personality change in drinking to a weak mind; if the schmuck had any real mental strength it wouldn't happen. But I can't say I that I know what it's like.

[Alcohol seems to be an amazing drug, in that it can cause personality changes in **non-users**; these would appear to take the form of smugness, preachifying and excessive pontification. This in turn can promote the use of the drug in others to achieve the required mental distance.]

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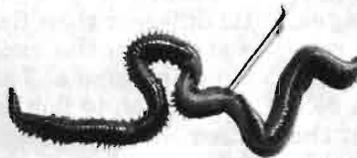
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¹ [Mr Sherwood's lengthy (and, I'm sorry to say, largely illegible) response was commendably early in its arrival. It concludes:] "Didn't write this letter on envelopes to be cute [I think] (well, I did a bit), but was out of writing paper and had to get a few (well, more than a few) thoughts down while they were fresh. The next issue will be answered in a boringly conventional manner." [I'm sorry to say that I didn't have the time or patience to decipher the entire missive, though I do refer back to it on occasion in an attempt to elicit the wisdom therein. I look forward to the promised "boringly conventional" missive in response to this issue.]

² [Mae also pointed out in her LoC that 'Strelkov' is Russian for 'arrow'. That took me somewhat aback, I can tell you!]

LIVE BAIT INFORMATION



BLOODWORM — For *Perch*, *Spot*, *Sea Trout* and *Hardhead*. Used year around, but difficult to obtain in winter months. Fresh worms are bloody when cut. They

should be rigged either whole or in sections as shown above, and they can be used on spinner hooks.

SEND THESE PEOPLE BACK WHERE THEY CAME FROM...

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Arrows of Desire #7 : Bloody Foreigners! is published by seven views of jerusalem, PO Box 178, St. Leonard, MD 20685, United States of America. Available for the usual.

Arrows of Desire #8 : Anarchy, Government, Dictatorship is scheduled to be available in 1996 (God knows when, probably another bloody year from now the way things are...). Contributions invited to the above address. Mind how you go, now.

Comments & contributions can be e-mailed to: 71155.2306@compuserve.com.



REUTERS

CAUGHT IN A PINCH

Russian President Yeltsin surprises a secretary at the opening of a news conference by giving her a quick pinch between the shoulder blades. Yeltsin told reporters that he would replace his pro-Western foreign minister, Andrei Kozyrev, and that he would cut the number of Russian peacekeepers to be sent to Bosnia. Stories on Page A21, A25.

AND FINALLY...

If it weren't for

argies

chinks

coons

eyeties

frogs

jigaboos

jocks

krauts

limeys

micks

niggers

nips

pakis

ragheads

russkies

spics

taffs

wetbacks

white trash

wogs

wops

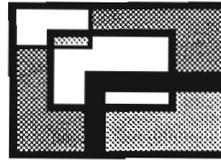
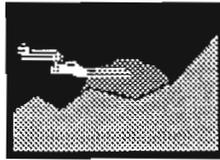
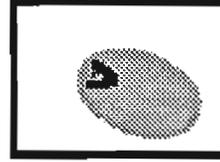
yanks

yids

Diego Maradona and Dennis Connor
there wouldn't *be* any bloody foreigners

seven views of jerusalem

publisher



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