

THE MENTOR 91

THE EDITORIAL SLANT

by Ron Clarke

Looking back at the editorial in the last issue, I gave some thought to the list I published of my “main library”. One of the things that some readers like in TM are the reviews. Over the years I have been making comments in the reviews of what I could *Recommend*, or even *Highly Recommend*. I have gone through my reviews database and sorted out the reviews of mine that I omitted of thus. The list is as follows: (The “G’s are “get it”, an endorsement that I used before I used “*Recommended*”)

THRALL & THE DRAGON'S HEART, THE	BOYER, ELIZABETH	G
MANY COLOURED LAND, THE	MAY, JULIAN	G
CAPTIVE, THE	STALLMAN, ROBERT	G
ORPHAN, THE	STALLMAN, ROBERT	G
NON-STOP	ALDISS, BRIAN	R
INFERNO	ALLEN, ROBERT MACBRIDE	R
ORPHAN OF CREATION	ALLEN, ROGER MACBRIDE	R
STAR SEED	ANDREISSEN, DAVID	R
MAMMOTH BOOK OF NEW WORLD SF	ASIMOV, I, GREENBERG, M. & WAUGH, C ed	R
FOUNDATION'S EDGE	ASIMOV, ISAAC	R
RADIX	ATTANASIO, A. A.	R
AGAINST A DARK BACKGROUND	BANKS, IAN M.	R
PLAYER OF GAMES, THE	BANKS, IAN M.	R
USE OF WEAPONS	BANKS, IAN M.	R
FEERSUM ENDJINN	BANKS, IAN M.	R
MOTHER OF STORMS	BARNES, JOHN	R
GODWHALE, THE	BASS, T. J.	R
HALF PAST HUMAN	BASS, T. J.	R
BIRTH OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUB. OF ANTARCTICA	BATCHELOR, JOHN CALVIN	R
TIME SHIPS, THE	BAXTER, STEPHEN	R
ETERNITY	BEAR, GREG	R
QUEEN OF ANGELS	BEAR, GREG	R
ACROSS THE SEA OF SUNS	BENFORD, GREGORY	R
MISTS OF AVALON, THE	BRADLEY, MARION ZIMMER	R
EXPATRIA INCORPORATED	BROOKE, KEITH	R
BORDER OF INFINITY	BUJOLD, LOIS MCMASTER	R
WILD SEED	BUTLER, OCTAVIA	R
ENDER'S GAME	CARD, ORSON SCOTT	R
ENDER'S GAME	CARD, ORSON SCOTT	R
MAPS IN A MIRROR	CARD, ORSON SCOTT	R
SPEAKER FOR THE DEAD	CARD, ORSON SCOTT	R
BEST SF OF THE YEAR 12	CARR, TERRY ed	R
MIDNIGHT AT THE WELL OF SOULS	CHALKER, JACK L.	R
FURIES, THE	CHANAS, SUZY MCKEE	R
KELLY COUNTRY	CHANDLER, A. BERTRAM	R
DOWNBELOW STATION	CHERRYH, C. J.	R
PRIDE OF CHANUR, THE	CHERRYH, C. J.	R
PRINCE IN WAITING TRILOGY, THE	CHRISTOPHER, JOHN	R
TRIPODS TRILOGY, THE	CHRISTOPHER, JOHN	R
CITY AND THE STARS, THE	CLARKE, ARTHUR C.	R
MISSION OF GRAVITY	CLEMENT, HAL	R
DYING OF PARADISE	COUPER, STEPHEN	R
FINAL ENCYCLOPAEDIA, THE	DICKSON, GORDON R.	R
LOST DORSAL	DICKSON, GORDON R.	R
GAP INTO MADNESS, CHAOS & ORDER	DONALDSON, STEPHEN	R
MORTAL FIRE	DOWLING, TERRY & IKIN, VAN ed	R
CASTLE OF WIZARDRY	EDDINGS, DAVID	R
PAWN OF PROPHECY	EDDINGS, DAVID	R
QUEEN OF SORCERY	EDDINGS, DAVID	R
SORCERESS OF DARSHIVA	EDDINGS, DAVID	R
AXIOMATIC	EGAN, GREG	R
AZTEC CENTURY	EVANS, CHRISTOPHER	R
DAYWORLD	FARMER, PHILIP JOSE	R
IN THE COUNTRY OF THE BLIND	FLYNN, MICHAEL	R
DRAGON WAITING, THE	FORD, JOHN M.	R
DRAGON'S EGG	FORWARD, ROBERT L.	R
IN CONQUEST BORN	FRIEDMAN, C. S.	R
QUARKS - THE STUFF OF MATTER	FRITZSCH, HARALD	R
LEGEND	GEMMELL, DAVID	R
GOLDEN WITCHBREED	GENTLE, MARY	R
REUNION	GRIBBON, JOHN & CHOWN, MARCUS	R
KEY TO TIME, THE	HAINING, PETER	R
NANO FLOWER, THE	HAMILTON, PETER F.	R
WAITING FOR THE END OF THE WORLD	HARDING, LEE	R
A TRANSLANTIC TUNNEL, HURRAH!	HARRISON, HARRY	R
BEST OF HARRY HARRISON, THE	HARRISON, HARRY	R
CAPTIVE UNIVERSE	HARRISON, HARRY	R
RETURN TO EDEN	HARRISON, HARRY	R
WINTER IN EDEN	HARRISON, HARRY	R
CITIZEN OF THE GALAXY	HEINLEIN, ROBERT	R
JOB: A COMEDY OF JUSTICE	HEINLEIN, ROBERT	R
MENACE FROM EARTH, THE	HEINLEIN, ROBERT	R
EXILES OF COLSEC	HILL, DOUGLAS	R
GNOMES	HUYGEN, WIL & POORTVLIET, RIEN	R
BOUND IN TIME	JONES, D. F.	R
SAGA OF ERIK THE VIKING, THE	JONES, TERRY & FOREMAN, MICHAEL	R

HANDS OF GLORY	KANGILASKI, JANN	R
EYAS	KILLAN, CRAWFORD	R
DEADLY SILENTS	KILLOUGH, LEE	R
SONGBIRDS OF PAIN, THE	KILWORTH, GARRY	R
MISERY	KING, STEPHEN	R
EARTHSEA TRILOGY, THE	LE GUIN, URSULA	R
DANCE OF THE HAG	LEIGH, STEPHEN	R
MANIFEST DESTINY	LONGYEAR, BARRY B.	R
SALT	LORD, GABRIELLE	R
A SECRET HISTORY OF TIME TO COME	MACAULEY, ROBIE	R
THIRD DAY, THE FROST	MARSDEN, JOHN	R
TOMORROW, WHEN THE WAR BEGAN	MARSDEN, JOHN	R
DEAD OF THE NIGHT, THE	MARSDEN, JOHN	R
SANDKINGS	MARTIN, GEORGE R. R.	R
ADVERSARY, THE	MAY, JULIAN	R
GOLDEN TORC, THE	MAY, JULIAN	R
NONBORN KING, THE	MAY, JULIAN	R
ETERNAL LIGHT	MCAULEY, PAUL	R
RED DUST	MCAULEY, PAUL	R
STORMING THE REALITY STUDIO	MCCAFFEY, LARRY ed	R
RESTOREE	MCCAFFREY, ANNE	R
DUNE ENCYCLOPEDIA, THE	MCNELLY, DR. WILLIS E. compiled	R
CONDITIONALLY HUMAN	MILLER, WALTER M.	R
DANCERS AT THE END OF TIME, THE	MOORCOCK, MICHAEL	R
PROMETHEUS MAN, THE	NELSON, RAY FARADAY	R
INTEGRAL TREES, THE	NIVEN, LARRY	R
FALLEN ANGELS	NIVEN, LARRY	R
VURT	NOON, JEFF	R
BYZANTIUM The Early Centuries	NORWICH, JOHN JULIUS	R
BYZANTIUM The Apogree	NORWICH, JOHN JULIUS	R
BYZANTIUM The Decline and Fall	NORWICH, JOHN JULIUS	R
WAY THE FUTURE WAS, THE	POHL, FREDERICK	R
INVERTED WORLD	PRIEST, CHRISTOPHER	R
SHATTERED WORLD, THE	REAVES, MICHAEL	R
KITE-WORLD	ROBERTS, KEITH	R
MOLLY ZERO	ROBERTS, KEITH	R
PAVANE	ROBERTS, KEITH	R
MINDKILLER	ROBINSON, SPIDER	R
ALIEN INFLUENCES	RUSCH, KRISTINE KATHRYN	R
BERSERKER	SABERHAGEN, FRED	R
KINDLY ONES, THE	SCOTT, MELISSA	R
WEB BETWEEN THE WORLDS, THE	SHEFFIELD, CHARLES	R
GREEN EYES	SHEPARD, LUCIUS	R
FACE OF THE WATERS, THE	SILVERBERG, ROBERT	R
VALENTINE PONTIFEX	SILVERBERG, ROBERT	R
VALENTINE PONTIFEX	SILVERBERG, ROBERT	R
LOVEDEATH	SIMMON, DAN	R
FALL OF HYPERON, THE	SIMMONS, DAN	R
HYPERON	SIMMONS, DAN	R
NEW MOON	SNYDER, MIDORI	R
WARLOCK IN SPITE OF HIMSELF, THE	STASSEFF, CHRISTOPHER	R
A FIRE UPON THE DEEP	VINGE, VERNOR	R
WEIRD COLONIAL BOY, THE	VOERMANS, PAUL	R
CURSE OF THE WITCH-QUEEN, THE	VOLKSY, PAULA	R
GOD'S WORLD	WATSON, IAN	R
H. G. WELLS: THE S F, Vol. 1	WELLS, H. G.	R
RIGHT STUFF, THE	WOLFE, TOM	R
CHOCKY	WYNDHAM, JOHN	R
CAUTIONARY TALES	YARBRO, CHELSEA QUINN	R
TIME OF THE FOURTH HORSEMAN	YARBRO, CHELSEA QUINN	R
WE	ZAMYATIN, YEVGENY	R
ROADMARKS	ZELAZNY, ROGER	R
TWILIGHT ZONE COMPANION, THE	ZICREE, MARC SCOTT	R
FLUX	BAXTER, STEPHEN	HR
EON	BEAR, GREG	HR
FORGE OF GOD, THE	BEAR, GREG	HR
A TREASURY OF MODERN FANTASY	CARR, TERRY & GREENBERG MARTIN ed	HR
RIMRUNNERS	CHERRYH, C. J.	HR
ILLUSTRATED ENCYCLOPEDIA OF SF, THE	CLUTE, JOHN	HR
AFTER MAN - A ZOOLOGY OF THE FUTURE	DIXON, DOUGAL	HR
FIRST CHRONICLES OF THOMAS	DONALDSON, STEPHEN	HR
COVENANT	EDDINGS, DAVID	HR
ENCHANTERS' END GAME	FRAZER, F. G.	HR
GOLDEN BOUGH, THE	GALOUYE, DANIEL F.	HR
DARK UNIVERSE	GENTLE, MARY	HR
GRUNTS	KIPFER, BARBARA ANN ed	HR
ROGET'S 21ST CENTURY THESAURUS	MANN, PHILLIP	HR
FALL OF THE FAMILIES, THE	MAY, JULIAN	HR
INTERVENTION	NIVEN, LARRY & POURNELLE, JERRY	HR
FOOTFALL	POWERS, TIM	HR
ANUBIS GATES, THE	POWERS, TIM	HR
DRAWING OF THE DARK, THE	SNYDER, MIDORI	HR
SADAR'S KEEP	TURTLEDOVE, HARRY	HR
WORLD WAR: IN THE BALANCE	WILLIS, CONNIE	HR
DOOMSDAY BOOK	WINGROVE, DAVID	HR
CHUNG KUO: THE BROKEN WHEEL	WINGROVE, DAVID	HR
CHUNG KUO: THE WHITE MOUNTAIN	WINGROVE, DAVID	HR
CHUNG KUO: THE STONE WITHIN	WINGROVE, DAVID	HR

There are some novels that I liked that I didn't *Recommend*, such as Gibson's NEUROMANCER. With some reviews I must have had a good day, and gave several novels R or HR in one issue of TM. Other times I said only that the book was excellent or 'make sure you read it'. One thing about the above books, however. None of them are duds. There are some that aren't there that now, thinking over the list, I would have put on, but they are as they are.

I haven't published a list of my "SF library", and don't really intend to, as it would fill about seven pages of the same size font as the list above. So, sorry people, but I can't let you know all the books I consider good enough

IN INFINITE NIGHT AND MEMORY

by Andrew Sullivan

Roderick Brody sat in the cool quiet of the ship's mess. The flickering line of fluoros starkly illuminated every feature of the clean whiteness. He was alone. He sipped at a cooling cup of chocolate and contemplated life. He wished Wendy was here to talk to, but she had gone away, perhaps forever. He couldn't remember what she had said when she had left, he wasn't sure when he should expect her back, wasn't sure if he should expect her back. He wasn't even sure if she had been here in the first place. His memory was failing him badly now. He hoped no one had noticed.

A flashing light caught his attention sometime later. Somebody wanting to talk to him. Brody couldn't remember what it was he was supposed to do to respond to their request. It didn't matter; Brody didn't feel like talking to anyone at the moment anyway. He ignored the light, stood and left the mess. A service robot scurried silently out of its niche and removed his cup for cleaning and sterilising. Brody never noticed.

The gangways and corridors of the ship had become lonely and lacking in life in recent times. Brody didn't know why. He thought he could remember times when the corridors had been full of laughter and happiness; people coming and going, a hustle and bustle that kept life full and challenging. Brody hated the corridors. He hurried along the darkened sections of it, not sure where he was going, not even caring. It didn't matter any more. Nothing mattered any more. He felt, in the dark recesses of his mind, that he was supposed to be following some sort of agenda, a set series of instructions, but he wasn't sure. Maybe he should ask Wendy the next time he saw her.

Brody awoke in the lounge. Some sort of recorded drama was playing on the holoset. He watched it for a few moments, not understanding anything that the actors were saying or doing. He switched it off. He saw another blinking light trying vainly to attract his attention. He watched it for a few more minutes, intrigued by the way the light seemed to flicker a moment before it went out, then, a second or so later, came back on again. He got up and went over to it. He touched it lightly with the tip of his index finger.

"-index three oh four five. Instrument table AEI, six hours forty minutes right ascension, minus six degrees declination, oh point three seven parallax. Repeat. This is Earth Station Orion', Terracon Delta Chi to solarcraft Arthur Clarke. Please respond on any available bands. Emergency uplink

to keep (the above list are the books I received as review copies from publishers).

freaks have been enabled to receive your reply. Your last reported position was at index three oh four five. Instrument table AEI, forty degrees right ascension-

Brody lifted his finger from the button and was surprised -- and pleased -- to find that the loud male voice stopped. It sounded vaguely familiar, as though he had heard it somewhere before. Brody thought about it for a moment then dismissed it. Impossible. He was the only one here, he and Wendy, and that didn't sound like Wendy. Wendy was a woman, had a woman's voice. He was sure of it. He was the only one he knew with a man's voice. It wasn't him, was it? He chuckled at the thought of him talking to himself. Only crazy people talked to themselves.

Lights in the corridors switched on as he approached them and went out again as he passed. This had delighted him at first but, as time went by, it began to annoy him. He tried to figure out how it was done and the only explanation he could find was that there was someone watching him, turning lights on and off as he passed. He spent many hours trying to find this person so he could hurt them, make them stop, but he had found no one. He gave up looking. It still annoyed him though.

He tried to imagine it the other way around, him following the lights as they came on, going off as he went on to the next one. He had done that for a whole day and had ended up almost lost in the vast warren of corridors and access hatches of the lower decks. He had become angry, had taken a sledgehammer to an innocent looking wall panel that he was sure wasn't so innocent and the lights had finally gone out in some sections of the ship. It had mollified him slightly.

Brody wandered down a particular corridor that seemed familiar to him, but he wasn't sure why. At its end he came to a door that refused to open for him. He stared at it for a moment before some dim memory from his past bubbled to the surface. He reached out a hand and passed it over the little piece of glass that was set in the door frame. The door slid open.

Brody entered the room beyond. The lights in here were always on. Brody didn't know why, it just was.

("Silly. This is where the Captain and his officers would work. The lights have always got to be on.")

Brody tip-toed across the carpeted floor. Whenever he came in here he felt like an intruder. If he had to talk, Brody felt it would always be in whispers. He tried to make as little noise as possible as he crossed to the far side of the room. Here the wall was replaced with a huge expanse of glass, or what looked like glass. Brody felt that it wasn't really glass as he knew it, it was something totally different. He looked out into the darkness beyond. He wondered, yet again, why anyone would put a window in a wall when there was absolutely nothing to see beyond. For months Brody had come to stand before the window and look out, and each time he saw the same black, featureless view. He vaguely remembered trying to put a chair through the window, to break it, just to see if there was actually anything out there and he had been very firmly stopped by Wendy who told him it was a bad thing to do. Brody hadn't tried it again, but he still wondered.

He stepped back and looked at what Wendy had called 'The Bridge'. He didn't know why she had called it 'The Bridge'; she would never tell him. He liked to sit in the big chair and watch all the flickering lights and listen to the muted beeps and buzzes. Sometimes words would appear on some of the screens and he would try to read them but it was beyond

him. Sometimes the meanings of all the weird squiggles and symbols would be tantalisingly close, just beyond his reach. It made him angry to not know what they meant.

Brody swivelled the chair around two or three times before the motion made him dizzy. Once he had spun around on the Captain's chair so fast and for so long that he had thrown up his breakfast. He had felt sick and woozy but watching the service robots come onto the bridge and clean up his mess had almost been worth it. Those little critters were just the best. He only wished they could talk. It was very lonely sometimes. He wished Wendy would come back from where she had gone.

Brody got up from the chair and saw the dark stain that had soaked into the carpet and the wall. He stared at it for a long time. He wondered why the service robots had not cleaned it up.

Wendy Madison put down the electronic clipboard. "That's it. Finally. Forty-seven frozen people." Her breath frosted as she spoke and drifted away on the slowly circulating air. The last three of the forty seven were finally in the land of cold nod and they were alone for the first time. The last happy face she had seen, apart from Brody's, had returned to Orion on the last shuttle two hours previously, leaving them to see out their last few hours in Earth space by themselves. Four weeks of final pre-flight preparation, putting crew members into Hibernation, finalising flight programs and generally feeling nervous about the flight had taken its toll on both Madison and Brody. She didn't know about Brody, but she could sure do with a holiday.

"I wish it'd be so easy for us," she said. "I could do with ninety years of blissful, uninterrupted slumber. I'm beat."

Roderick Brody grinned. "Not to mention the fact that you'd be ninety years younger than all your friends back on Earth when you woke up at the end. But I don't suppose that thought crossed your mind?"

Wendy thumped him on the shoulder. "Hardly. I'll have you know that not all women are so vain about their age. Although it would be nice to remain my present age of twenty-one--"

"Twenty-one!" Brody laughed until Wendy thumped him playfully again.

"Twenty-one!" Wendy said, glaring, daring Brody to contradict her again. "And if anyone tells you different, I'll thump you again."

"Me!? What did I do?"

Wendy smiled. "I know your sort, Mr. Brody. Like to take advantage of a poor, helpless young lass of twenty-one summers--"

"More like thirty-five," Brody said under his breath, and yelped as Wendy thumped his shoulder again. He grappled her around the waist and held her in a tight hug, feeling her warm body pressing against his through the thin material of their flight suits.

Wendy Madison returned his embrace for a moment and then twisted free in the low gravity and escaped from the Hibernation ward. She tossed an inviting glance at Brody as he shut the insulated door and said, "Come, Mr. Brody. It's time we got back to work and set sail for distant lands."

Brody leaped for the hatchway just as Wendy's enticing body rocketed upwards under her own power. "Just wait until we make planetfall at Sirius V. There's nowhere there for you to hide and the rest of my life to chase you. You have to give up some day, Ms. Madison of twenty-one summers," he shouted after her.

Fifteen minutes later they were strapped into their respective launch couches going through the final launch procedures and checklists.

"That's a roger, Orion. All fuel cells A.O.K. Launch boosters at nominal, all pre-flight completed. Time to launch window, T minus twelve minutes." Brody's voice echoed annoyingly in his own ear. He cut the echo with a flick of a switch. In his left ear Madison continued with her own pre-launch, and in his right Orion relayed an almost monotonous monologue about computer diagnostics, gravity accelerations and delta-vees, pedestrian spacecraft traffic and solar wind vectors. Most of it was just noise to him. It did not directly relate to his job so it was relegated to some other part of his brain. He commenced de-docking checks and procedures.

"Forty-seven icicles in the freezer and space for two more," said Madison. She flicked a series of switches and began the launch countdown at T minus ten minutes. "All systems A.O.K., Orion. Proceeding with ten minute count."

"Roger that Clarke. Go with T minus ten minute count. All systems check A.O.K. Good luck. We'll hear from you as you leave the system. Watch out for the hook turn at Jupiter. It's a doozyey."

Madison smiled. "Thanks, Brian. Give my love to Gloria and the kids."

"Will do, Wen. It's been great knowing you. I'll make sure my grandkids know who you are so that at least somebody'll remember you when you send back your landing message. Don't work too hard, Rod."

Brody laughed. "I won't. Live long and prosper, Brian. Make sure you have plenty of grandkids, you hear?"

"Will do. Hey, name a continent or something after me, will you?"

"We'll try, Brian. Goodbye."

"Goodbye, Brian," said Madison, wiping a tear from her eye. She paused only a moment then continued with the procedures.

"Farewell," said Brian and then his voice was lost in the white noise of cosmic radiation. There would be no more voice contact with Orion until the high energy particles of the Clarke's muon drive launch had been dispersed on the solar wind. Madison and Brody worked on in silence.

Eleven minutes later Madison and Brody were pressed gently into their launch couches as the muon drive gradually built up acceleration in the Clarke. The view outside the bridge viewport seemed to remain the same for a long time but gradually the Orion docking station drifted away to starboard and another twenty minutes later the darkness of the outer solar system was all that could be seen. Occasionally a fast moving interplanetary spike craft would flash across their path leaving a trail of incandescent particles in its wake. Brody suddenly felt disappointed that he had failed to get one last look at Earth before the launch took them away forever.

Three days later, the muon drive finally exhausted of its fuel and the Clarke hurtling through space at its final launch velocity, Madison and Brody prepared for the 'hook turn' at Jupiter. Using the gas giant's huge mass, the Clarke would follow standard procedure and allow itself to be captured for a short period in Jupiter's gravity well and then, with its own linear velocity, be hurled, like shot in a sling, out of the ecliptic plane at roughly a tenth the speed of light and begin the ninety year journey towards the Sirius system.

Wendy Madison sat nervously at the helm, her fingers poised over the manual override panel while Rod Brody manually checked the orbital equations scrolling across the computer screen, each a human failsafe against the electronic guardian that controlled their lives. Both were extremely nervous, anything that involved a delicate tango with a planet

four hundred times the mass of Earth couldn't be taken lightly (both would have given an arm and a leg to be safely frozen in Hibernation with none of this to worry about), but that wasn't the only reason they were apprehensive. They had finally reached the point of no return. Once the Clarke was slingshot around Jupiter, they would be unable to return to Earth. Orbital mechanics and restricted fuel were against them. Brody and Madison shared a look as the first tendrils of Jupiter's gravity tugged at them.

The actual event was a bit of an anti-climax. After years of training, preparing for all contingencies and emergencies, nothing went wrong, nothing had to be corrected. The slingshot went off without a hitch and both Brody and Madison let out a deep sigh as the pressure eased off them. They finished their final checks of space systems and course. They sent off final reports to Orion, received warm congratulations and well wishes and began to prepare for their own Hibernation.

They administered each other's series of injections, changed into thermal insulation suits, hugged and kissed, then lay down in the cold beds of ice. It took only a few minutes for the drugs to slow down their metabolism enough for the Hibernation cryogenic system to replace their blood with an oxygen free pseudo-blood plasma. The computer controller lowered their body temperatures to minus six degrees Celsius, matching the forty-seven other bodies in the Hibernation room. Madison and Brody both felt a huge weight lift from their shoulders as the drugs took affect and they spiralled down into the cold sleep of Hibernation.

The Arthur Clarke continued to travel on, silent and alone, carrying the unconscious bodies of forty-nine people towards an unknown star system where they hoped to start a new life.

Brody watched the KitchenMate make his breakfast. It never failed to amaze him how, no matter what he chose from the menu on the KitchenMate's touch panel, the KitchenMate produced exactly what he asked for. Once he had selected every meal available on the menu just to see if the KitchenMate would do what he asked. It did. Brody had then tried to eat it all and had succeeded only in being sick all over the floor. The service robots had come out to clean up and that had made Brody feel a little better.

Now Brody watched as the KitchenMate made him some scrambled eggs. He leaned on the counter, elbows propped, his chin in the palms of his hands, totally engrossed in the magical whirrs and whizzes that emanated from the shiny machine. He wondered where the KitchenMate was getting the eggs, because he knew that eggs came from chickens and he couldn't remember ever having seen a chicken onboard ship. Some dim memory tried to break through his dazed conscious, something about waste recycling, but Brody ignored it.

After his meal Brody wandered along the dimly lit decks. He found an empty paper cup that one of the service robots had missed. He wondered briefly how this had happened but then he found that, in the weak gravity induced by the slow axial spin of the ship, he could kick the cup from one end of the corridor to the other and watch it tumble end over end until it hit the deck. Brody spent the next few hours kicking the cup around the decks of the ship.

When he finally stopped, hot and sweaty and tired, Brody found himself on one of the lower decks, a place where he had rarely ventured since Wendy had left. It was cold and dark and this place scared Brody more than anything else on the ship, even more than that cylindrical room in the middle of the ship where there was no up or down and his stomach felt

like it was trying to force its way first out his mouth and then out his bum.

Brody shifted uneasily from foot to foot. He wanted to leave this place, he wanted to go to the toilet, he wanted to run away. But he didn't move. He looked at the cold aluminium door and slowly reached out a hand to touch it. It slid aside noiselessly. It was dark and damp inside; a cool, damp breeze drifted out over Brody. He smelled a sweet, cloying odour that raised his gorge. He took a brave step forward and rows and rows of fluorescent lamps flickered on, revealing a vast room lined on every wall with empty Hibernation cots. Brody felt a deep sadness fall over him. A tear forced itself from the corner of his eye. He didn't know why. He wished Wendy was here so he could ask her why he felt this way, and so that she could hold him tight and comfort him.

Brody stood just inside the threshold of the Hibernation room for more than half an hour, just like he had done the last time and the time before that. Eventually he grew bored and returned to the lounge area to watch cartoons on the holoset.

It was the flashing light that finally brought Wendy Madison out of her cold slumber. She knew that she must have been awake for a long time before the fact finally slipped through her frozen consciousness. Madison groaned loudly and tried to swing her frozen legs over the edge of the cot but only succeeded in moving them about a millimetre.

"Oh, shit," she tried to say but facial muscles, slack from ninety years of disuse, refused to obey. Ninety years? she thought. Could it really have been ninety years since they left Earth and froze themselves in this cryo shit? The thought made her sluggish pulse beat faster and her blood pump with more enthusiasm. They had reached the Sirius system and were on the verge of being the first humans to colonise another star system. Suddenly Wendy didn't feel so cold.

Wendy gritted her teeth, squeezed her eyes shut and dragged herself into a sitting position. When she finally opened her eyes Wendy saw the computer screen above her blinking urgently. She reached out a weak, skinny arm and tapped the respond key, a nervous knot suddenly forming in her guts. What could this mean? She tried to wrack her brain for an answer but, strangely, she couldn't find one. She didn't know what it meant. With bleary eyes she read the screen.

It took a long time for the meaning of the words to sink in. She looked around herself at the other Hibernation cots. In the dim gloom of the Cryo room the pale red glows of the Hibernation control panels confirmed the message on her screen. Where there had been healthy green indicator lights on all the Hibernation cots when she had gone to sleep ninety years ago, there were now many red and a few yellow but only a couple of green. Suddenly Wendy Madison wanted to go back to sleep. She didn't want to have to deal with this. How come she and Brody had to be the den mothers for the rest of them? How come it was her and Brody that were the last to sleep and the first to rise to prepare for the waking of the others? Madison suddenly felt angry at the people who had selected her for this job. She could still be lying asleep and frozen and blissfully unaware of any problems that had caused her to be woken in the first place. Madison glanced across to Brody's cot to see how he was coming along. When she saw that his indicator was a blinking green, one step from warning yellow, the seriousness of the situation finally hit her.

Madison forced her weak legs over the side of the cot, fighting dizziness and nausea, and finally stood weak-kneed beside it. Her head felt like a rubber balloon expanding and deflating at a great rate. In a few minutes she was able to turn her head without feeling the urge to throw up. She walked stiff-legged to the master control panel and a quick glance

confirmed her worst fears. Thirty-eight of the forty-seven crew Hibernated before launch were dead. Six were brain dead but still alive, their major functions being prompted along at millisecond intervals with bursts of electricity from the controller. Only three of the bodies around her, still in deep freeze, were alive under their own power. Three plus Brody and her. Five out of forty-nine. Something had fucked up big in the life-support. Madison didn't know what, she didn't care. Somewhere between Earth and here something had failed, the life-support computers had tried to rectify it, had failed, had talked with Orion who had recommended the Clarke computer bring her and Brody out of Hibernation early to deal with the problem, except now, after all the delays of speed of light communication, most of the problems were dead and had just about gone away. Madison felt an impotent form of anger building slowly inside her.

Brody's control panel indicated the Hibernation system had defrosted and woken him with drugs but still he lay comatose and unresponsive. The three other bodies, an orbital technician named Humphrey Bonham, and two xenologists named Claire Norton and Wilfred Jensen, also refused to awaken or respond to Hibernation drugs. They were alive, at least physiologically speaking. Madison removed them from the Cryo room and put them in their respective quarters and made them comfortable. Each quarter was equipped with its own medi-watch so Madison didn't worry about trying to unpack and set up the full medical laboratory which was intended to be used only when the crew were up and around and injuring themselves on sharp corners.

When she finally had time to relax, Madison retired to the bridge to see what other problems had arisen during her ninety year slumber. That was when she found out that it had not been ninety years since they had left the solar system; it had only been twenty. They were not yet a quarter of the way to Sirius. The vast blackness of empty space seen through the viewport was dauntingly lonely. Madison felt hot tears of frustration, anger and disappointment finally fall in low gee down her cheeks.

Over the next few days Jensen and Bonham died without regaining consciousness. Brody woke up from his comatose state, opened his hazel eyes but then settled down into a more natural sleep. Norton woke on the fourth day. Madison had just finished giving the last rites to her dead crewmates and was ejecting them from the aft airlock when her intercom buzzed with a report from Norton's medi-watch. Madison hurried to Norton's quarters and found a rather dishevelled woman sitting up in bed holding her head.

"Decided to join the land of the living, have we?" Madison asked, not even trying to hide the pleasure, the relief, from her voice.

Claire Norton looked at Madison, her eyes burning with a strange fever. She did not seem to recognise Madison despite the four years of training they had spent together. "Humjerdff gtherrew asduiddf?" Norton asked.

Madison's smile faded quickly. She stepped inside the room and closed the door. "What did you say? I'm afraid I didn't understand you, Claire."

Norton looked at Madison as though Madison had just killed her mother. "Hujjduiff hooshku kllomoin!" Norton threw back the bed clothes and fought with her frail limbs to get them out of the bed. Her movements were frantic, hurried, frenetic. She began screaming at the top of her voice in words that Madison was sure were just garbled English. They had taught her and her classmates at the Anderson Flight Training Centre in Townsville about Resnick-Simmons Syndrome; a critical side effect of early Hibernation experiments. Caused by the absorption of static Hibernation fluids by the cerebral cor-

tex, basal ganglia and thalamus, the result of inadequate cooling of the body, the symptoms of R-S were schizophrenic paranoia, memory loss, mental retardation, diminished speech capability and severe motor-neuron atrophy leading, eventually, to death, long and slow. What they hadn't taught her at Anderson was how to treat such a case. It had always been 'it is no longer a problem in modern Hibernation systems' or 'nothing to worry about, no need to feel nervous, it's a totally natural process borrowed from Mother Nature herself', never 'this is what you do if somebody comes down with R-S.' At least Madison couldn't remember there being such a lesson. She had no time to worry about it now.

Norton began to throw herself into the walls in an attempt to get away from Madison. Her left arm lay at an awkward angle at her side, blood ran in slow rivers from cuts across her face and her broken nose, yet she continued to scream and hurl herself against the wall. Her screams spiralled up through the registers until it raised hairs on the back of Madison's neck. She felt her own tears falling on her cheeks at Norton's terror. Madison winced each time Norton hurled herself at the metal bulkheads that were streaked with dark blood. She got a syringe from the med-pack she carried and tried to restrain Norton. Fifteen minutes later, covered in scratches and deep gouges from Norton's fingernails, Madison finally stepped back from Norton's bed and ran a weary hand through her hair. Norton was sedated and sleeping but she'd never set foot on an alien world as a xenologist.

Madison knew that Claire Norton was as good as dead. There was no way she could recover or be treated. Whatever had gone wrong with the Hibernation system hadn't killed Norton but had ruined her once brilliant mind so much that she could never live normally again. Despite this knowledge Madison spent the next two days digging through the Clarke's computer library for any references to the Resnick-Simmons Syndrome. She found nothing of any use. R-S was believed to have been eradicated, just like cholera, and so wasn't catered for in the library. She sent a message to Orion asking for more information but knew that the four year wait, there and back again, would be disastrous for Norton and Brody.

Four days later, ten days after he had been thawed, Brody regained consciousness. Madison had been feeling the loneliness and isolation and had found the collection of twentieth century pop music that had been brought on board at the last moment. For tens of hours on end Madison had played The Beatles, The Rolling Stones, Louis Armstrong, Pearl Jam, and Queen, amongst others. She had been transmitting a progress report to Orion when her intercom had buzzed her. She rushed back to Brody's quarters to find him sitting up and rubbing the sleep out of his eyes.

Madison entered the room warily, looking for signs of R-S syndrome before Brody became agitated, but she saw none.

"I'm hungry," said Brody. "Is there anything to eat?"

Madison felt an enormous weight lift from her shoulders. At least one more inmate on this ship of fools. She couldn't keep the broad smile from lighting up her face. "Brody! Thank God for small miracles!" She raced forward and hugged him, feeling as though something was finally going right. She wanted to squeeze him forever, careful, however, not to break his still brittle snap-frozen bones. "I'm so glad you're okay. I'm not alone any more. Shit, Brody, you don't know what it's been like, these past few days. It's like being put in solitary confinement. Oh, God, I'm glad you're alive. I don't know what I would've done if you'd died. Oh, Brody! Kiss me!"

Brody looked blankly at Madison. "Do I know you?"

"Brody? It's me," Madison said, trying to see if Brody was pulling her leg. He was always doing things like that during training; wearing false limbs during first aid training so no one could get his pulse, putting N2O into the oxygen cylinders, stupid things like that, but the bewildered look on Brody's face told her he wasn't joking. He didn't know her, didn't remember her. He hadn't survived Hibernation as unscathed as she had hoped.

"I'm Wendy, Brody. Wendy Madison. Remember?"

Tears welled up in Brody's eyes. He screwed up his eyes and began to wail in a high toneless voice. "I hungry, I want something to eat. I'm hungry! I want something to eat! I want something to eat!"

Madison took a step backwards. Her hand crept up to her mouth to stifle a scream. Brody! His wail turned into a bawl and Madison tried to shush him, placate him. In the end she had the KitchenMate bring down a meal of porridge with vitamin supplements to help him regain his energy.

That night Claire Norton suffered a cerebral embolism and died. The alarm woke Madison from her troubled sleep but she could do anything to help. The next morning Norton's body was wrapped in a white linen shroud of which fifty had been kept in the store. There were only three left. Madison wondered who the fiftieth was for.

In the following days Madison finally got Brody to trust her enough, and her to trust him, to let him out of his quarters. It chilled her sometimes to hear the once cynical, intelligent and eloquent Brody speaking in words of two syllables or less, mostly about what he wanted or how he felt. Madison unpacked and set up the full medical lab during the long hours of nothing between waking and sleeping. She had it run the gamut of psychological tests that it had on Brody. The results weren't very heartening. Brody had the intellect and mental age of a six year old. His memory had been badly impaired, his ability to learn things was now only a small percentage of what it used to be. She now had to tell Brody things five or six times before he remembered even the simplest of tasks. The prognosis was not good. Brody had the rest of his life to live out all his six year old fantasies. And she had the rest of his life to be the mother she had never been. Madison couldn't stop crying herself to sleep at night.

The days dragged on. She found things to do, things to fix, things to clean. Brody was always under her feet even though he was twenty centimetres taller than she was. The inquisitive manner that had made him an astronaut in the first place was cute at first but the constant stream of "What's that?", "Why?" and "How come?" gradually wore down her patience until she had to restrain herself from slapping him and telling him to act his age. Those nights she cried more than usual. Just the waste of such a brilliant mind infuriated her. I'll get over it, she thought.

She was wrong.

Brody found the endless silence depressing sometimes. To break the monotony he would occasionally scream and carry on for hours at a time. The service robots would scurry out to see what was wrong, then, when they found nothing to clean up, would return to their hidey-holes. With his throat red raw he would then sit happily in the lounge and watch the reruns of the Road Runner or Tweety-Bird that Wendy had found in the archives.

Sometimes the computer would speak to him in funny bursts of beeps and burps and indicator lights would flash, trying to attract his attention. Brody would stand and watch the pretty patterns, unaware of the requests being made of him. The patterns would play for a few minutes and then a human voice, transmitted two years before from Earth, would

ask him to report his position, to respond with some message. The first few times Brody had been stunned, alarmed, to hear another person's voice on the ship. He had run away from the voice, had hidden deep in the lower decks until he was sure the strange person had left. Later on he had answered the voice, telling it in very simple terms that his name was Brody and that he was very happy thank you. The person didn't seem to hear him and Brody repeated himself until finally he gave up in disgust. The next time the voice came back asking for someone to please respond on all emergency frequencies Brody had blown a raspberry at the speaker and had run off. Now he just ignored it, as it ignored him. Sometimes he wished it could answer him, just to relieve his boredom.

The night periods were the worst for Brody. The ship would shut down deck lighting to simulate night and Brody, huddled in his little hidey he had made between two processor-control units on the deck below the lounge and snuggled up with blankets and things he had found in the empty living quarters, would start awake in fear as something, somewhere on the ship made a noise. All sorts of mysterious noises would emanate from the aft section of the ship in the still quiet of the night period. He thought sometimes it was just the service robots cleaning something up but then, other times, he felt as though there was somebody down there, moving around, waiting for him to come down to take a look so they could catch him and eat him. Brody would shiver in his self made fright and would lie awake until finally exhaustion claimed him.

The daylight period hours were spent wandering the length and breadth of the ship, except for the dank lower decks where machinery whirred constantly and water seemed to drip endlessly, playing with whatever took his fancy. The computer once told him in a loud voice that it was shutting down and detaching the fourth zone reactor core because of fuel depletion and shielding compromises. Brody had just nodded his head and continued with his game of marbles with bearings he had found in a dead service robot.

Sometime later, his beard grown nearly ten centimetres since the last time Wendy had shaved him, Brody felt a shudder course through the ship as the aft section containing the agricultural greenhouses that would now never be used was detached and abandoned by the Clarke computer on instructions from Orion. The reduction in momentum, it was theorised by Orion, would allow the Clarke to be captured by any heavenly body it happened to pass by. It was hoped that this would stop the Clarke from spending the rest of eternity travelling out of the galaxy. Brody knew nothing of this. The computer told him what it was doing but he hadn't understood. He left those sort of things for Wendy to worry about. He wanted Wendy to return from wherever it was she had gone. He had begun to cry himself to sleep at night, waiting for Wendy to return. He started a sort of ritual, standing in front of the bridge viewport calling for Wendy, hoping she would hear him and come home.

The dark stain on the floor and rear wall of the bridge still puzzled him, He tried getting one of the service robots to clean it but it wouldn't listen to him. He took to staring at it for hours on end, trying to hear what it had to say to him. He didn't know why.

They hardly spoke to each other now. Wendy Madison felt that if she opened her mouth all she'd hear would be abuse of Brody and Brody, sensing Wendy's hostility, kept to himself. Wendy felt as though she was on the verge of tears all the time now and she hated that feeling. The psychology application in the Medi-lab tried to tell her that her reaction was

to be expected of any adult in long term contact with a juvenile. She tried to help Brody with the Psych-App, tried to heal him with psychiatric therapy but it was no use; it was a hardware problem with Brody, not a software one. There was very little that could be done for him, except sedate him when he became too much to handle.

Most of the time Wendy forgot that Brody had once shared her bed during training, had been nominated once for the Nobel Prize for Physics for his work on non-linear gravity physics. But when she did remember, when she remembered that she had ejected the bodies of forty-seven of her crewmates, that she was doomed to spend the rest of her life on this spacecraft, then all her built-up frustration, all the tension, all the anger and boredom would flood back into her and she would take it out on Brody, yelling, screaming, hitting. She hated it, she hated herself for doing it, but she couldn't help herself. She took to spending hours upon hours in the gym, working out her boredom and frustration.

Fourteen Earth months after they had been rudely awoken from their cold slumber, the Arthur Clarke became the farthest travelled manned spacecraft, outdistancing its sister ship, the Lucy Sussex, which had set the record thirty years earlier on its maiden voyage following an elliptical orbit back to the Solar System. The event passed with a message of congratulations from a bored Orion who had still been unaware of the catastrophe when they had transmitted the message. Neither Wendy nor Brody felt much like celebrating. Brody had become increasingly irritable. It seemed to Wendy that the old Brody could see what the new Brody was like, how much of the old Brody had been lost, and was pissed off. Sometimes Brody would practically glare at her for something he imagined she had done. She talked to the Psych-App about it and it just told her what it always told her: Don't worry, this is to be expected of later stage R-S victims. Bullshit! What later stage? Who had ever lasted as long as Brody had with R-S for it to compare against? Wendy knew it was just trying to make her feel better, repeating medico rhetoric centuries old. Things couldn't get much worse. Or so she thought.

She sat tiredly in the Captain's chair, which would never feel the butt of a real captain, and stared out the darkened viewport. For longer and longer periods Wendy found herself just staring off into space, inner or outer depending on where she was. It disturbed her. Her memory lapses were becoming more and more frequent and she knew that she hadn't escaped from Hibernation without a visit from the dreaded R-S man. It was no use submitting herself to the psych tests; she knew what the results would be. It wasn't hard to imagine her and Brody a few years down the track totally unaware of who they were, where they were going or what they were supposed to be doing. Just a couple of overgrown children who had strayed too far from home. Wendy wrote a series of programs for the command computer and its subordinates to follow should she become so incapacitated by the R-S syndrome that she could no longer make decisions. Once that was done all there was to do was wait for it to happen. Some days that didn't worry her as much as it used to.

Brody found her on the bridge falling asleep in the Captain's chair. He didn't want to disturb her so he kept as quiet as he could as he wandered from console to console, seeing all the pretty lights and buttons. In his left hand he held to his chest a little teddy bear that Wendy had made for him from bits and pieces of the mass of clothing left by their dead crewmates. His face and hands attested to the fact that he had just come from the mess, fragments of sweet, sticky food clung to his fingers and palms and his face. His shirt front was a conglomeration of the leftovers of his past meal. Brody

wandered around leaving sticky finger prints on the surfaces of the bridge controls.

Brody saw one button flashing enticingly and couldn't stop himself from reaching out and pressing it. Wendy had warned him of what might happen if he should touch anything on the bridge. He glanced cautiously over his shoulder to see if she was watching and pressed it anyway. Nothing happened. He thought that maybe the floor would open up and swallow him but it didn't. To Brody it seemed as though nothing had happened but something must have, because suddenly Wendy was awake and looking at him.

"What are you doing?" she asked, a blade of anger slipping into her voice. She sat up and wiped the grit from her eyes.

Brody swung around guiltily. "Nothing!" he said too loudly and quickly. "I'm not doing nothing!"

Wendy looked at him tiredly. "Sure, kid. And I'm going to win the Mother Teresa Award for putting up with you for the rest of my life. I've told you before, Brody, you're not allowed up here under any circumstances. You hear me?" Brody shuffled his weight from foot to foot. "Do you?" Brody nodded his head, his eyes burned with hot tears of frustration. "I said," shouted Wendy, her patience now lost and broken, she knew, which made her angrier, "Do you hear me?!"

Brody started to whimper, his breath hitching in his chest, on the verge of tears. He began slapping his free right hand against his thigh and his left hand squeezed the neck of his teddy bear until the stuffing began to dribble onto the floor. A service robot scurried out of its niche to clean up the mess.

"I asked you something, mister. Answer me, dammit, or I swear I'll smack you across this bridge. You hear me?!"

Brody fought back his tears, something deep inside him began to rise up, to fight the bindings which had been inflicted upon him during Hibernation. His anger began to boil and he slapped his thigh harder and harder. "Yes! Yes, mummy!" he cried, his voice booming with all the resonance of his thirty-eight year old vocal cords. This shocked Wendy, who had grown accustomed to his meek whispers and high-pitched whines. "I hear you!" He slapped his thigh hard and suddenly shrieked in pain. He brought his hand up in front of his face and saw it dripping with blood, his blood. He screamed.

Wendy stared dumbfounded at the blood on Brody's hand. Where...? How...? She suddenly felt guilty about shouting at him, for upsetting him. Oh, Brody, she cried. She got up from the Captain's chair and went to comfort him, to put an arm around him and hold him close until he calmed down enough to get to the med lab.

"Get away from me!" he screamed. Brody threw the ragged teddy bear at Wendy. His hand leaked blood but now Wendy could see that his hand itself wasn't bleeding. She looked down at his thigh and saw the growing red stain there. Brody followed her gaze and saw it too. He reached into his pocket and drew out the butter knife that was coated in ersatz peanut butter and honey. It was also bloody. He held the knife in front of him and stared at it dumbly. Wendy moved forward to relieve him of the knife. "Get away from me!" he screamed again.

"Please, Brody," she said softly, soothingly. "Give me the knife. You've hurt yourself, you silly duffer. I have to get you all fixed up before you bleed all over the ship. Come on."

"GET AWAY FROM ME, BITCH!" Brody swung the knife with a backhand motion. He felt it connect with Wendy, saw Wendy go down to her knees clutching at her throat. She tried to scream, to say something, but nothing except a gurgle came from her mouth.

Brody watched her die. She tried to climb to her feet, to get to the med lab but she couldn't move. She slumped over as her blood gushed over the carpeted floor. Moments later she died, wondering how Brody was going to live without her, wishing she could have lived a bit longer to look after him. She wanted to say she loved him.

He watched her body for a long time. He waited for her to get up. A long time later the dull throbbing of his thigh made him go look for a band-aid or something. When he returned the service robots had removed Wendy's body. He watched, fascinated, as they wrapped her body in the third last linen body bag and took her down to the B deck airlock and left her there. Soon after, her body was ejected out into the limitless space. Brody did not cry. He simply thought she was going away for a little while.

The dark stains on the floor and wall of the bridge seemed to hold Brody's short attention longer than anything else. He felt a sense of sadness whenever he looked at them. He wanted to know why he felt this way; he would ask Wendy the next time he saw her. She would know, she knew everything.

There was something about the stains that reminded him of Wendy. He didn't know what. To his flighty imagination the stains looked like splattered globs of blackberry jam, the patterns made looked like bunny rabbits or dogs or elephants. Not Wendy. He would lie on the floor and stare at them for hours on end. Wendy. The stains. Wendy. There was a connection there somewhere. What was it? He didn't know. His foggy brain grasped at images, pictures but could make out nothing. He so wanted to know. Unlike other things, Brody couldn't easily forget about the stains.

He missed Wendy terribly. He felt it was his fault she had left and wanted to say he was sorry, to tell her that it was all right and that he wouldn't be a bad boy any more. He wanted Wendy to come back.

When Wendy Madison returned it took Brody a long time to recognise her. Time had lost any meaning for Brody. Each waking period was a new day; everything he did, everything he saw was a new experience. He had wandered ceaselessly about the Clarke, finding things to do, things to occupy his vacant mind, something to fill the time between waking and sleeping. As the slow years passed he became less and less able to remember anything of his life before, so, when Wendy did finally return, he found himself momentarily unable to remember who she was.

Wendy was young, like she had been when last he had seen her. His hair had greyed and his long beard was salt and pepper but Wendy's hair was a dark luxurious black. Her eyes glittered with a mischief and glee that brought tears of remembrance to his eyes.

"Hello, Brody," she said.

Brody blinked away a tear and smiled. He had the feeling of a coil of hot wire unwinding in his gut. He fought to remember how to speak. "Wendy?" he croaked finally. Was it really her? Somehow, he knew it was.

"I've come to take you home, Brody. Away from this horrible old place."

"Home?" he whispered. "Home?"

Wendy nodded eagerly, her face lit with a radiant smile.

Brody began to chuckle. The chuckle turned into a laugh. "Home!" he sang. "Home!". He wanted to reach out and touch her, hug her, hold her tight. He wanted to be a good boy, to make up for being bad. He wanted to say he was sorry. He reached out a hand to feel her warm skin but Wendy backed away. She laughed and ran down the corridor. Brody happily watched her go, his heart was full with the sight of her. He began to run after her, still giggling with glee.

Brody chased her lithe form along the still, silent corridors of the Clarke. At one point he lost sight of her around a bend in the corridor and he slowed, uncertain as to what it was he was doing. But then Wendy's clear, sweet voice floated down the corridor to him: "I love you, Brody," and he set off again, excitement pounding through his veins.

Brody slowed as he reached the end of the corridor. He stopped and stared at Wendy through the small glass port in the door separating them. How did she get in there? he wondered. And so quickly? He walked forward but the door did not open. Absently he reached out and touched a panel with his fingertips. The door slid noiselessly aside and a sign above the door flashed almost angrily. He could not read what it said. Brody hesitated in front of the open doorway, feeling a sense of foreboding. He couldn't remember ever having come in here. What was it? But then Wendy smiled and the foreboding was washed away by her love. He crossed the threshold and entered the tiny room beyond.

Wendy beamed at Brody, her face glowing with a luminous beauty that teased at Brody's memory, and Brody felt happy, happier than he had for such a long time. Wendy had returned for him. He knew she would. Wendy never forgot about him. He knew she would come back for him when the time was right.

Wendy reached out and took his hands in hers. Brody tried to say what he felt, that he loved her, that he wanted to be with her forever, but he had forgotten how to speak; words like that had long since evaporated from his vocabulary. Instead he began to laugh, a high cheerful chortle. "We're going on a ride, Brody. Hold on tight." Wendy reached out and touched the outer airlock panel. A high pitched siren shrieked a warning, lights flashed danger, a heaviness seemed to fill the room. Clarke tried to override, to close the inner door, to lock the outer door but there was no response, backup systems failed. The sounds of the Clarke's panic were drowned by the scream of a gale as the outer door opened and atmosphere met vacuum. Over the sound of escaping air was the fulfilled, carefree laughter of Brody. He was happy. He was free. At last.

The End

THE COMPLETE HISTORY OF SCIENCE:

REVISED, UPDATED AND
GENERALLY REFURBISHED.

by Darren Goossens

Part IV

Isaac Newton: The year Galileo died, Isaac Newton was born. A year later, he had his first birthday, establishing a pattern which was to remain with him all his life. Isaac Newton is best known for three things: Inventing calculus, making up his three laws (thus revealing Kepler's influence), and inventing apples. He therefore opened a rift between science and religion, as the Church insisted that the apple had been invented by the snake - a dubious proposition indeed.

The discovery of the apple was of considerable gravity. Newton thus called it his theory of apple gravity, though this is generally shortened to the theory of gravity, a meaningless contraction. In the theory, the attractive force between two masses is inversely proportional to their separation squared and proportional to whether one of them is ripe or not. Newton's greatest leap was to say that this 'apple force' also acted upon the moon and other celestial bodies, allowing us to conclude that the moon itself is an apple - presumably very old and, therefore, wrinkly and discoloured.

His three laws were all to do with force. The third one (the important one) states that for every action there is an equal and opposite reaction, a principle that rears its head in business and politics as well as physics.

Newton, however, was also an alchemist. This is a black mark against him. When added to all the extra work that high school students have to do because of him, it becomes doubtful whether he was, after all, a benefactor of mankind.

Lastly, Newton set the trend of having a measurement named after him - the Newton, the unit of force. This is nothing like the 'Nightstick', which is the unit of 'Brute Force'.

Edmund Halley: Edmund Halley was a friend of Newton's. His invention of comets ("hairy stars") was a breakthrough. So much so that one was named after him - though comet Edmund was never seen again.

Leibniz: Though less famous than Newton, Leibniz was still famous enough to also invent calculus.

After Newton: After a flurry of activity, science slowed down for a while due to a lack of historically notable figures. Britain in particular suffered, since they'd been letting Newton do all the science and he was dead. In America, Benjamin Franklin connected himself to lighting via a kite. Simultaneously, he: 1)

Proved that lightning was a form of electricity and; 2) Invented the 'perm' hairstyle.

In Europe things soon picked up again. Mathematics was very popular. In particular, a Frenchman called Lagrange formulated the principle of least action. Like Newton's third law, this also has been co-opted by politicians.

Great strides were made by the chemist John Dalton. He is, however, best known for his chemistry, in which he resurrected the ancient Greek idea of the 'atom'. He also invented symbols for each kind of atom:

Though his framework has remained largely intact, a number of his identifications have been called into question. And the proposal of naming an element 'Dolt' in his honour has floundered.

But it was good to have atoms, because now people had something to be made of. Also, it would give all those atomic scientists something to do during World War II.

After Dalton came his children. In science also things were picking up. The publication of Frankenstein, by Mary Shelley, gave great impetus to biology (and the odd corpse), and Gregor Mendel (a monk) invented genetics, something which gave all sorts of people excuses for being the sort of people they were.

Faraday & Maxwell etc: Inextricably linked in the history of science are the names Faraday and Maxwell, who between them invented electromagnetism.

There was a lot of quantifying going on. Faraday and Faraday quantified electricity, Mendeleev quantified the elements, and Arthur Wadsworth-Smith quantified garden gnomes, though this is sometimes seen as a lesser achievement.

Charles Darwin: No figure stands taller in the annals of nineteenth century science than Charles Darwin, father of evolution. Above all scientists, he really got up God's nose. His proposal that mankind and the apes had a common ancestor - whom he tentatively dubbed 'Hubert' - gave many cause for alarm, all the more when he revealed that a beagle had given him the idea. However, he received quite a bit of support from the wives of boorish men, as these ladies found that his theory dovetailed nicely with their own observations.

Darwin wrote two great books. The Origin of Species, in which he explained evolution, and The Descent of Man, in which he described man's descent from noble savage to tax collector. Objections came from all directions, generally from people denying that they were related to tax collectors.

Edison: Meanwhile, in America Thomas Edison was busy inventing the twentieth century. He was in a bit of a hurry, since he was working to a deadline. Amongst his inventions were the electric light, the phonograph, and the Spud-O-Matic, though the latter never really took off.

So at the End of the Nineteenth Century: So at the end of the nineteenth century, they thought they knew it all. Newton had worked out Newton's Laws, Maxwell had worked out Maxwell's Equations, Mendel had worked out Mendel's Rules, Darwin had worked out Darwin's Theory, and Alfred Nobel was making things blow up and giving out prizes.

But then the Universe started obeying quantum mechanics, and all that went out the window.

CHILDREN OF THE ATOM

by Andrew Darlington

*"It's 8:15, that's the time that it's always been.../
This kiss you give, is never ever gonna fade
away"*

("Enola Gay" by O. M. D. - 1980)

PLANET OF THE APES maroons astronaut Charlton Heston on what he thinks is an alien world, where gun-toting gorillas and scientific chimpanzees lord it over debased and passive human slaves. He escapes on horseback, riding north along the seashore. It's here he discovers the huge skewed Statue of Liberty half-buried in sand and forgotten. It's only now he realises - collapsing into the surf, his craggy face wracked with guilt and dread, "oh my god. I'm back. I'm home". This is no alien world. He's been cast forward in time, into a post-Nuclear War future. The final long-threatened East-West atomic armageddon has wiped human civilisation from the face of the Earth. "We finally really did it. You maniacs, you blew it up. Damn you, god, damn you all to hell".

The film, based on a Pierre Boulle novel, came in 1968. At the height of nuclear paranoia. Shocking up in movie-myth what we all knew. That at any moment, without reason or warning, by accident or political blunder, the nukes could fall. Ending everything. More universal than AIDS. More indiscriminate than cancer. More complete than the Black Death. Nuclear War would roll the final credits on the human race.

And it all began at 8:15 on 6th August 1945, when the Enola Gay - a B-29 Superfortress in U. S. military silver, dropped a single bomb called "Little Boy" on Hiroshima, south-west of Tokyo. To J. G. Ballard "Uncle Sam threw a piece of the sun at Nagasaki and Hiroshima. Killed a million people". An act that ended World War 2, but was also the opening shot in the new war already in progress, a down-payment on a war by instalment plan. Ballard's alter-ego in EMPIRE OF THE SUN "knew that he'd seen the flash of the atom bomb at Nagasaki, even across the 400 miles of the China Sea. More important he'd seen the start of World War 3, and realised that it was taking place around him. The crowds watching the newsreels had failed to grasp that these were the trailers for a war that had already started. One day there would be no more newsreels".

That first nuclear shriek was a firebreak in history. You had to have been born on the wrong side of it to understand.

To be born into the 1950's and 60's was to be born into a Cold War at the end of the world. Time-slip a late-1950's S.F.-literate teenage kid into the beating heart of a modern Shopping Mall, and he'll instantly understand. This city of roofed warrens in this 1990's future exists in a subterranean complex, with the rest of the world's surface a post-

Holocaust radioactive wilderness. He'll nod in a grim and knowing satisfaction that the pulps he's so avidly devoured have been so accurately prophetic.

The Big Bang - so long promised, has happened.

THE DAY THE WORLD ENDED - a low-budget Roger Corman quickie, his first S.F. Horror film (shot in less than a week for under \$40,000) opens with stock shots of atomic explosions, while the narrator's cold impersonal voice intones "T.D. Day is here. Total Destruction by nuclear weapons. And from this hour forward the world as we know it no longer exists...".

Hiroshima was the start of World War 3. We are all it's victims. We are all Children of the Atom.

The crucified Statue of Liberty is the perfect icon of a Cold War nuclear nightmare that began in 1945, and only melted in the warmth of Mikhail Gorbachev's smile 45 years later. A Cold War "Bomb Culture" that dominated, shaped and poisoned the lives of all the millions who lived through it. A deep and permanent fear of Einstein's Monsters that eventually percolated all levels of society, insinuated itself into all forms of art and infected every aspect of Pop culture.

"The present is all there is" writes Martin Amis (in LONDON FIELDS). "Everything else can be eradicated at the push of a button. It's hard to love when you're bracing yourself for impact".

We've escaped just in time! The atomic war has started! All life on earth will be destroyed! Now we scientists must find another planet and begin civilisation anew... one of peace, not war"

- the last spaceship leaves an exploding Earth on the cover of WEIRD SCIENCE #5 (Jan/Feb 1951).

Nuclear weaponry has long been part of the Science Fiction repertoire. S.F. is the only literature that has the vocabulary of ideas to tackle it. The fabulous megadeaths and overkills of thermo-nuclear threat are too big to comprehend. The only way it can be understood is through the wrong end of a telescope, picked up by the eyebrow tweezers of fiction and shoved safely into the matchbox of paper armageddons.

Langdon Jones' story I REMEMBER ANITA appeared in the September 1964 issue of NEW WORLDS, and was subsequently reprinted just about everywhere, including a soft-porn girlie magazine the name of which I forget. "This story may shock you. It's meant to" warns the blurb. Deceptively simple in construction there's only the occasional pretentious arty allusion to disrupt its emetically-charged first-person narrative. Boy meets girl. They establish their mutual need. But the logical development of love gets grotesquely amputated by the sudden totally irrational intrusion of nuclear holocaust. Detail is horrific, "you were naked, save for the concealing blackness of your blistered flesh... as soon as I touched your flesh, clear liquid began to flow from the spot, to run down the craggy surface of your body, and to collect in the little pool of urine that was beneath you". The subtext is clear. The characters lives have nothing to do with whatever political lunacy is occurring half a world away. Nuclear weaponry is monstrous, totally beyond reason and understanding. And there's no escape.

It's like Martin Amis says, "nuclear war is seven minutes away, and might be over in an afternoon".

It's like Bob Dylan sings it in "Talking World War 3 Blues", "The whole thing started at 3 o'clock fast/ it was all over by a quarter past".

In the decades since Hiroshima, readers of SF were

already coming to terms with atomic conflagration. It may seem bizarre to claim greater clarity of vision for the day-dreaming four-eyed spotty adolescent pulp readers of garish STARTLING STORES, AMAZING and ASTOUNDING SF, but at least they were juggling concepts of "the planet" while their contemporaries were still limited to ideas of patriotism and the nation state. Even in the decades *after* Hiroshima, people - ranging from tabloid readers clear on down to politicians and the military, continue to regard the Doomsday option as merely a bigger club with which to blitz the bad guys. But since at least the 1920's the SF community was dealing with world-wreckers and planetary exterminations. A small step. But an evolutionary one.

The potential of Einstein's equation linking mass and energy ($E=MC^2$) was quickly seized on by fantasists as a means of deriving limitless energy sources from the annihilation of matter. And as early as 1914 H. G. Wells' THE WORLD SET FREE was envisaging its downside, in civilisation's complete destruction by atomic bombs. The Armageddon Circus was already on the road. A story by otherwise unremarkable Science Fictioneer Cleve Cartmill predicted the atomic minute of the bomb so closely that the FBI famously raided the New York offices of ASTOUNDING SF. It was March 1944, and the detail in his story DEADLINE seemed to the Military Intelligence of the time to be so accurate that inside information *must* have been filched from the Manhattan Project, the secret think-tank working towards America's first A-Bomb. Cartmill's vindication was seen by smugly gloating SF readers as authenticating its claim to be a genuinely prophetic literature. Perhaps, for a while, it was. Perhaps, for a while, this subterranean cult buying trash magazines, was on history's leading edge, the only section of the populace familiar with concepts as vast as global destruction. They were the first Doomwatch team.

It was not to remain so.

"It's good news week, someone's dropped a bomb somewhere, / contaminating atmosphere and blackening the sky"

- ("It's Good News Week" by Hedgehoppers anonymous - 1965)

Watching the first nuclear tests resulting from the Manhattan Project, J. Robert Oppenheimer "Father of the Atomic Bomb", quotes the Hindu Bagavad-Gita - "Now I am become death. The destroyer of worlds".

Hiroshima takes humankind over the edge of the precipice. We've been falling towards impact ever since.

THE COSMIC MAN is a 1954 film directed by Robert A. Terry, from an Arthur Pierce story. John Carradine plays Doctor Carl Sorrenson, who shapes Oppenheimer's private angst for mass B-movie consumption. "How would you feel if you were the man responsible for such a weapon (the A-Bomb)?" he demands. The military cipher answers pragmatically, "I believe it's a question of which team you're on". But the famous astrophysicist, speaking for us all, gets in the killer punchline - "there's only one team now, Colonel, ever since Hiroshima". The Cold War was already hotting up. Unpredictable so.

To poet/artist Jeff Nuttall "with the post-Hiroshima teenager disaffiliation was always automatic rather than deliberate.... No longer could Teacher, Magistrate, Politician, Don, or even loving parent, guide the young. Their membership of the H-Bomb society automatically cancelled anything they might have to say on questions of right or wrong". It was Nuttall who coined the term "Bomb Culture". By that he meant that, although the metaphor of science fiction had seized upon

the awesome significance of what exactly had been unleashed by the Enola Gay, that awareness had now entered the popular consciousness. And lodged there.

"When the button is pushed, there'll be no running away,/ There'll be no-one to save/ with the world in a grave". A No.1 hit form 1965, EVE OF DESTRUCTION by Barry McGuire. A more abrupt and less subtle facsimile of a Bob Dylan lyric, but it feed off the same source as "you've thrown the worst fear / that can ever be hurled,/ fear to bring children / into the world" (MASTERS OF WAR).

Beat poet Allen Ginsberg razors it all down to the even more precise "America, go fuck yourself with your atom bomb". No nukes, he says, is good nukes.

On 1st March 1954 America explodes its second H-Bomb at Bikini Atoll, unleashing 600 times more power than that of the Hiroshima A-Bomb (equivalent to 12 million tons of TNT). A Japanese fishing boat called "The Lucky Dragon" is 70 miles from the test site and well outside the U.S. designated exclusion zone. Yet it gets caught in the resulting drift of white powdery rain. Within days the crewmen begin suffering from sickness, dizziness and burnt flesh. Within a year they're all dying of incurable cancers.

Indian President Nehru calls for a halt to the build-up of nuclear arms. But U.S. President Eisenhower's top-secret response is to order "greatly increased production of (atomic) weapons". The race is on.

"The atomic bomb proved as adaptable as the wrath of God"

- Brian Aldiss in S.F. ART)

In Lindsay Anderson's IF, a bratty Malcolm McDowell muses about "black brittle bodies peeling into ash". By the end of the 60's what had been a scenario of stark horror to Langdon Jones' ANITA, has now become merely the subject of morbid fascination.

Stanley Kubrick makes DR STRANGELOVE, OR HOW I LEARNED TO STOP WORRYING AND LOVE THE BOMB, in which reality has become so ludicrous that the only response is (literally) hysterical laughter. The movie, with Peter Sellers in multiple roles, is allegedly based on the character of Hermann Kahn, the man who wrote THINKING THE UNTHINKABLE about thermo-nuclear war. Its subject is accidental war. WHOOPS APOCALYPSE!!!. But its tone is the blackest of black humour as an American strike force mistakenly A-Bombs Soviet Russia to the strains of Vera Lynn singing "We'll Meet Again". Thinking the Unthinkable? - but one slight nervous step from the Cuba Missile Crisis, where American Defence Secretary Robert McNamara later claims (on BBC2-TV) that "if we carried out an attack (on Cuba) there was a 100% probability of nuclear exchange". Not 50%. Or even 99%. But no uncertainty whatever. And that "nuclear exchange" is polite politico-speak for T. D. Day - Total Destruction Day.

"The TV announcer said "here comes the President,/ but first this word from Pepsodent -/ 'Have whiter teeth, have cleaner breath/ when you're facing nuclear death'" (Phil Ochs TALKING CUBAN CRISIS).

The Atomic Bomb hadn't come with a Government Health Warning. But it was at our collective nerve-ends.

It said the present is all there is. All else is cancellable.

There was nihilism. The Beat Generation's We-Didn't-Ask-To-Be-Born existentialism grew in the shadow of the mushroom cloud. Christopher Logue's poem TO MY FELLOW ARTISTS laments that soon all serious poetry, art and

sculpture will be destroyed by the "on-coming megaton bombardments".

And there was protest. More powerful than the skewed Statue of Liberty was the CND symbol. A motley coalition of churchmen (Canon Collins), philosophers (Bertrand Russell), Lefties (Michael Foot), Beatniks and Trad Jazzers led the "Committee of 100" to Aldermaston. And each step took them nearer to the mass rejectionist Alternative Counterculture. Its Play-Power insurrectionist Revolution-For-The-Hell-Of-It as much the product of fast-breeding Bomb Fever as it was the product of LSD or Vietnam.

THE WAR GAME was a shock documentary produced by the BBC in 1965, and then banned by them when they got cold feet. It was subsequently shown as a CND promo at Art Labs, Folk Clubs and Colleges. An agit-prot movie, it shows in clinical detail what Langdon Jones had already fictionalised, "the blast-wave from a thermo-nuclear explosion has been likened to an enormous door slamming in the depths of hell". But its measured tone is no longer the only voice. Military tacticians sketch out Domsday First Strike/Second Strike scenarios. They use a self-contradictory terminology of Pre-emptive Retaliation, Neutron Bombs, and Strategic Battlefield Atomic Weaponry (filched from Space Opera's regalia of nuclear bazookas and atomic handguns). While others discover that you can dance in the Fall-Out. The Children of the Atom have O.D.'ed on serio-horror factoid shock-fictions. The catastrophe awful-warning theory has almost become mainstream entertainment.

Nevil Shute, a writer with only a tenuous connection to S.F., writes ON THE BEACH (1957). The world is in the process of self-destruction. As yet uncontaminated, Australia alone waits for the radiation clouds from the devastated continents beyond to finally engulf it. Walter M. Miller's A CANTICLE FOR LEIBOWITZ (1960) fast-forwards into a more distant post-Holocaust future where a new monastic society is dedicated to suppressing all traces of the technology which it holds responsible for Einstein's Monsters. John Wyndham's THE CHRYSALIDS (1955) uses the mutagenic effects of radiation positively, its young rebels in their dour conformist future society have developed psi abilities.

Beyond them, Brian Aldiss' BAREFOOT IN THE HEAD (1969) psychedelically transfigures Europe into a travelling Armageddon circus. In Harlan Ellison's A BOY AND HIS DOG (1964) a scavenger in the radiation-ravaged wasteland co-exists with a wise telepathic mongrel. And Michael Moorcock uses nuclear meltdown to wipe out history so he can build magical skewed empires beyond the firestorm, or else uses it playfully as a Day-Glo backdrop to his Swinging London in extremis "Jerry Cornelius" experiments. Stories that Dance as the Strontium 90 pellets of poison swirl and billow.

"Don't say you're easy on me, / you're about as easy as a nuclear war

- (THE REFLEX by Duran Duran - 1984)

The post-Holocaust future can be a new radioactive frontier, acrawl with Special-FX Muties. A rad-wasted Theme Park of hideous thrills dressed up in new Skip-Culture barbarism. Mutational fiction, once the literature of angst, becomes an entertainment sub-genre. MAD MAX 3 maps out the terrain. Australia a glowing desert of neo-tribal savagery. JUDGE DREDD got in there before him. The "Cursed Earth" outside the fortress walls of Megacity One is an endless desolation of monstrous mutation and bizarrely comic-strip deformities. While Roger Zelazny's DAMNATION ALLEY (1969) precedes them both.

Nuclear war becomes a smart couplet in a Duran Duran Pop song, or the exploitational theme to a Frankie Goes

To Hollywood video - their "Two Tribes" has to be the last great Cold War hit record! But oddly this coincides with a mass revival of CND protest, and two major TV sequels to THE WAR GAME. America's THE DAY AFTER gives nukes a Soap Opera sheen that enables the message to penetrate to audiences who'd previously have switched off. While the starker British THREADS introduces the concept of the Nuclear Winter - suspended post-Holocaust atmospheric dust layers shutting out the sun and ushering in new Ice Age conditions.

And even Reagan, who admitted to believing that the literal truth of the Biblical prophecy of Armageddon would happen during our lifetime - instigated by the benevolent nuclear apocalypse, plunders the S. F. image-bank for the Cold War's final countdown - the "Star Wars" project. Reagan's vision is of an invulnerable dome of force surrounding and protecting America. An old ASTOUNDING S.F. idea. The fact that its implementation in reality is totally beyond the technological capability of the U.S. Military-Industrial-Scientific complex is an irrelevance. Reagan is detached from the real rational world. He believes in such fictions. And that's enough. Its threat forces the arms race escalation one ratchet higher than the Soviet Union is prepared to go. Mikhail Gorbachev smiles. The Cold War melts.

I'm sitting here with a headful of ideas that are driving me insane. Sitting in the beating heart of a modern Shopping Mall where it's easy to imagine that this roofed warren is part of a subterranean complex from a 1950's S.F. novel, with the rest of the world's surface a post-Holocaust radioactive wilderness.

It's fifty years, almost exactly, since Enola Gay delivered a megaton kiss that's never ever gonna fade away. Its ripples and aftershocks continue around the Mururoa Atoll where France's Pacific Nuclear Tests are scheduled to begin....

"If it's not love, then it's the Bomb that will bring us together"

- (ASK by The Smiths - 1986)

Science Fiction frequently saw the atomic threshold as a survival test for humankind. Alien intelligences observe, from a distance. Anticipating the Big Bang. If so, by a hair's breadth, and more likely by luck than political skills or vision, we've scored a sneaking pass-mark. In George Pal's 1960 movie of H. G. Wells' THE TIME MACHINE, war from atomic satellites destroys London on 17th August 1966. An old guy heading for the Fall-Out Shelter warns the time traveller "hurry, or the mushrooms will be sprouting". Well - August 1966 came and went. We're still here.

Chernobyl. Three-Mile Island. Selafield. Hey - Blow-Ups Happen!

But the Atom-Geddon recedes with the implosion of Communism. Nuclear terrorism persists. The Mafia sell off the former USSR stockpile to the highest Third World bidder. France mutilates Mururoa in pursuit of its own independent deterrent. But the full End-Of-The-World Superpower atomic confrontation conflagration depends on the existence of two (more or less) equally balanced powerblocks armed to the teeth and primed for M.A.D. (Mutually Assured Destruction). That situation no longer exists. When the Cold War melted in the warmth of Gorbachev's smile, we crossed over the alien's racial survival test. The clarity of vision of the day-dreaming four-eyed spotty adolescent pulp reader of STARTLING STORIES, AMAZING and ASTOUNDING S.F. has been vindicated.

"The Bomb, so long awaited, is gone" says William Gibson.

Chances are, on a cosmic scale, in the technological development of all sentient species, there must come a point where they can access into sources of power so vast that it threatens their own survival. If not nukes then it would have been something else. Something perhaps we've yet to stumble across. Matter and Anti-Matter fusion? Dylithium Crystals? Whatever. We've passed that first test. A small step. But an evolutionary one.

And as we shamble collectively towards the millennium, Armageddon has been postponed.

Temporarily....

- Andrew Darlington

**THE FINAL COUNTDOWN:
STEPS ON THE ROAD TO THE END OF THE WORLD**

- 17 July 1945 - A-Bomb Test in USA.
- 6 August 1945 - Hiroshima bombed.
- 9 August 1945 - Nagasaki nuked.
- 25 July 1946 - US detonates "Baker" Atomic Bomb at Bikini Atoll
- October 1946 - ACTION COMICS #101 - "In This Issue! Superman covers Atomic Bomb Tests!"
- 30 October 1948 - HOTSPUR #630 - cover story THE SILENT CITY blurbed "the last man alive when the Atomic Bomb strikes New York"
- 29 August 1949 - USSR tests its first A-Bomb.
- 19 October 1950 - General McArthur requests A-Bomb support following US troop reversals in Korea.
- 3 October 1952 - Britain tests its first A-Bomb off Monte Bello, Western Australia.
- 19 June 1953 - Julius Rosenberg and wife Ethel executed in Sing Sing New York prison for Atom Spying.
- 1960 - USSR shoots down American U2 Spy Plane and captures pilot Gary Powers.
- 1961 - Berlin Wall erected.
- 1962 - Cuban Missile Crisis; USA demands USSR remove

missile bases from Cuba or face the consequences. Khrushchev backs down at the 11th hour.

- 1963 - Nuclear Test Ban Treaty signed by USA, USSR and UK.
- 1966 - A US B-52 crashes near the Spanish coast, "losing" four H-Bombs. The last is only retrieved from the sea three months later
- 1967 - China explodes H-Bomb
- 1968 - US explodes H-Bomb underground, 100 miles N.W. of Las Vegas
- 1971 - US Atomic Energy Agency explodes H-Bomb beneath Amchitka Island, Alaska
- 1973 - Leonid Brezhnev and Richard Nixon sign treaty designed to limit nuclear proliferation
- 1974 - India becomes 6th nation to explode nukes. UK, France and China also conduct tests
- 24 August 1978 - Aldermaston Atomic Weapons Research Establishment closes down its plutonium facilities until staff are checked for contamination
- 28 March 1979 - Disaster narrowly avoided at Three Mile Island nuclear plant, Pennsylvania
- 18 June 1979 - Jimmy Carter and Brezhnev sign SALT-2, Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty, in Vienna
- 1983 - President Reagan calls USSR "the Evil Empire" opposes Strategic Defence Initiative ("Star1313,I")
- First US Cruise Missiles arrive at Greeham Common
- France tests Neutron Bomb
- 1985 - Mikhail Gorbachev achieves power in Moscow
- 1989 - Berlin Wall comes down (November 9)
- 31 December 1991 - Soviet Union ceases to exist. End of Cold War.

-----oooOooo-----

Poetry, Too

[UNTITLED]

by **Graham Stone.**

To probe 30 Doradus, or Mira?
Which of these would you say looks the queerer?
But the Treasury's paying
For stellar surveying,
And Wolf 359 is much nearer.

As for Wolf 359, you can't see it.
The Schmidt camera sows it, albeit.
Maintain your composure,
Try a longer exposure.
Hey Presto! Indeed, Stalla fiat!

O Wolf 359, dim red dwarf,
You celestial gerontomorph.
I don't know where to look --
Need to check in the book --
Where to find you, to South or to Norf

Wolf 359's a very faint star,
Only found because not very far.
Any planets must be
Too damn frigid for me,
Or for any life forms as they are.

So why study with Wolf 359?
Well, basic, research, yes, that's fine.
But Pleiades, Auriga,
Antares or Vega
Would, I suggest, be more condign

The naked eye can't see the shine
Of the dim red star Wolf 359.
Here's a cheerier sight
For a dark cloudy night:
You show me yours, I'll show you mine

**SPACEQUAKE/FOR THE S.F.
WRITERS OF THE 30'S GOLDEN AGE**

by **Andrew Darlington**

you thought
you held the
keys to the future

but time
changed the locks

TO GROW BOTH STOUT AND WISE

by **Bridh Hancock.**

Where the universes meet,
Where metal, mortal and Mattel mesh,
To another world I flee
Hoping respect from things of flesh.

Oh could I chainj the fate of mine:
Of endless rounds with witless foes;
Of kill-or-be-killed, yet no-one dies,
Never to win nor ever lose;
Of slorter, slorter, and liv in dred
Of recycled venjful ded;
Of mutant cyber-frogs and such,
Whose costumes don't amount to much.

Is this life? I swear by Cain:
I shall not liv my life in vain.
Comic violence, the classfyd C,
Attacks us all thru fantasy,
And is not nice. Take my advice:
Do not classify it G.

I want to bild a world of love,
Where hawks are but a kind of dove;
Where grass is sweet beneath the feet,
And potential may become compleet,
Safe from Sega malcontent,
To gaze at length into the skys,
Feel the breeze, sniff the scent
And, wistful, grow both stout and wise.

Enuf of macho histrionics,
Of foolish fiction and brutal bionics.
How nice to take my rest from training;
No more sweting, streching, straining,
Exceeding the peak of perfection,
Petrified of inevitable detection.
To rest at last, that would be nice;
To dream the dreams of gods and mice.

I wish to join the world of men;
To go and play with Barb and Ken;
To laff, as shoud the very young,
Cairless of all and everyone.
Sing, sweet birdys in the trees;
Delite me while I take my ease.
An eye of fire in the sky
Glides across. I wonder why.
When it goes, then follows nite.

Whence comes the stars so many and brite?
Oh what a wonderful world is yours;
Or do you deem that notion trite.
Let trumpet & drum sound their alarm.
Let those who wish to come to harm.
I was a wild-child, but, woud you know,
I've grown to like Barry Manilow;
But if I must be a warrior,
Ever in a mitey raje, then
Let me fite that foe of yours
That thretens from a future aje,
Not that hord, all fang & claw,
Agents of Kaos with sord & stave.
By all that is good, I will be more
and not Amusements's sorry slave.

The gods who write my script perverse shall die.
Master of my Universe am I.

MIRAGE

by Richard Reeve

As a child, prenatal mind was born
demanding more than a child or humanity could give
and in it's birth, the natural mind subjected
To its horrors to be held like a shield,
To be pushed at people.
And the bloody head as a new born fetus hid,
Hiding from men yet seeking forth;
Feeling out for it's like but to find none
And in it's loneliness to become like an old maid still using
the natural mind like the armour of the ordinary.
And the devil sends his demons to torment
And God in the high heaven sits in his pompous place nod-
ding,
 Good will out
 Good will out
And the new mind searches for guidance
where there is none to teach.

THE GLORIFIED MIND

by Bill West

Crystal panes where colors go
And glaze all with a transparent glow,
As if to see what all could be,
If it were distilled into a rose,
Into a rose turned into attar,
To see beyond the farthest star
And find relations everywhere,
Until the universe were joined
And all drawn in,
As if it balanced
On a pin,
But then the balance goes askew
And all the parts shake loose
And scatter everywhere once more
Just to be gathered in anew.
So, out and in and in and out,
Defining all that every might be,

Understanding and erasing,
Pushing off while still embracing,
Ever casting and retrieving
In a Mind That's everlasting.

DO NOT MOURN FOR THE BURNT METEOR

by Richard E. Reeve

Do not mourn for the burnt meteor
For it did not last
But look and wait for the new star
which shall light the heavens,
Burning a trail of understanding,
Lighting the sky so the pigs may eat
and the Devil will quake,
The throne of the pompous God will quake
For they shall not deny the feral child.
Tonight I have seen the way to go.
The black hand of death,
Was offered me
But she who loves me still does not understand
And I must live to teach her this
Though I would sooner be gone.
She must see that I am no more of her kind
But another species with no meeting point
Only the feral child will understand
And feel no sorrow
Knowing that I have bequeathed to her the agonies.

THE LAMP WILL GRIEVE

by Richard E. Reeve

As the last lamp splutters
I see the long endless guttered ones.
Those that had not the capacity
For I have demanded more light than any can give.
As the last lamp splutters to die
I shall see no more
For the darkness which is already inching in
Will come and I shall be blind.
I, the eater of lamps,
Am deserving of this blackness
For I was born with my eyes open
And forced to look upon the light.
In the darkness the lions will come
Though I have fought them.
They will come in safety now
To take my bare and puny body.
My mind which has held them at bay
Will struggle wearily and uselessly
For I will not see them come
And the guttered lamp will grieve.

WHEN NOTHING COMES TO MIND

by Richard Reeve

When nothing comes to mind
And the dormant tissues of the brain lay sick

With worries and thoughts of today
And death stands above
Like a referee grimly counting time.
The body calls, I am done, I am done,

DOWNTIME

by Brent Lillie

WHILE OGILVIE PRESSURE-SEALED his body-armour, an ammotech snapped on the rocket launchers, one for each shoulder. After double-checking the mountings, the tech gave Ogilvie the obligatory slap on the back. There was just the noise, and a faint, disembodied impact that Ogilvie knew must have hurt the slapper a lot more than it hurt the slappee: hopefully, the armour would prove to be equally as effective against Tyrannosaurus fangs, although the way things were going, he'd probably never get the opportunity to find out. What one could term a mixed blessing. The tech slipped a neurohelmet over Ogilvie's head, lowered the visor and fastened the neck clamps.

"Is that comfortable?" he asked.

It was extremely uncomfortable, as a matter of fact, and the tech knew it, but Ogilvie just nodded his head and flashed him a tight, tolerant smile.

The ammotech beat a hasty retreat from the chronosphere, rammed the hatch shut and then went to stand behind the shielding with the others. Ogilvie could see Jocumsen at the panel, through the small, circular viewport at the front of the sphere.

"You okay, Leon? Can you hear me in there?"

Ogilvie gave Jocumsen the thumbs up.

"I can hear you just fab, Jock."

"Right then. Here we go. Good hunting."

Time blinked. Zap. The scene beyond the viewport changed from the bland interior of the time transference facility to one of trees and flowers and bright, buzzing insects. Same old story. Things here didn't scuttle and lurk, they fluttered and chirped, so it looked as though it was going to be yet another exciting instalment of Davy Crochet and his Mild Frontier. Swearing under his breath, Ogilvie unbuckled his harness, leaned forward and checked the instruments. The readings always went haywire around 50BC, and this little jaunt had proven to be no exception. The chronosphere had ended up in exactly the same place it always did.

Just to be on the safe side, Ogilvie decided to lug around one of the rocket launchers as a hand-held, because there was always the slim chance that T-Rex could be wandering around out there somewhere, hunting up a meal. Besides, the launchers were too cumbersome to cart around on his shoulders in the dense undergrowth he knew existed beyond the viewport. They kept getting snagged on the vegetation. Brilliant innovation, shoulder hardware, simply bloody

Then lay aside the pen.

brilliant. Hungry carnivore comes ambling up and proceeds to chew off your legs as you dangle helplessly from a tree like a Bratwurst sausage. Instead, he clipped on a recorder. It was lot smaller and a hell of a lot less awkward. The techs had come up with a new method of strengthening the sphere's temporal anchors, so he'd have more of a chance to look around - an hour out, and an hour back, double the time he'd had on the previous trips.

Ogilvie exited the chronosphere and activated the defraction field. He lashed out at the sphere impulsively with a booted foot that vanished momentarily as it veered into the field. Damn it, was he ever going to see a dinosaur in the flesh? Standing hunched over in his armour and helmet, Ogilvie bore an uncanny resemblance to some grotesque genus of upright, black crustacean. He examined his surroundings and sighed: butterflies and birds, flitting aimlessly about the place. Flowers. Lush grass springy beneath his feet. Lemony light filtering down through the branches into the small clearing where the chronosphere, now concealed within the defraction field, had downtimed.

It was all very beautiful and idyllic, and Ogilvie despised every beautiful, lush, bird-infested, butterfly-ridden, idyllic inch of it.

"Pulled up short again, by a couple million years," he said out of the corner of his mouth, into the recorder. "Finished up in the same place. I'll head, uh..." Ogilvie activated his mental password and then desired a compass reading. A directional heading transcribed on the upper-left corner of his visor. "South-west. Nothing to go on, really," he shrugged. "Just a hunch." After desiring a systems check on the launcher, he looked to the right, then left, before striding across the clearing and into the trees.

As he walked, Ogilvie began to mellow out a little. All things considered, the place was kind of...peaceful. Lush and supportive. He recognised about twenty different kinds of tree, many of them richly laden with ripe fruits, and most of the insects and birds. It wasn't jungle, or rainforest, exactly, more a combination of English glade, South Pacific Island and Swiss high country, with a bit of Aussie Daintree thrown in for good measure. Pausing at a narrow, swiftly flowing stream, Ogilvie raised his visor. Up until now, the neurohelmet had been feeding him a filtered version of the outside world, but the time had come for the crustacean to risk sticking it's head out of it's shell.

The sun was warm and liquid on Ogilvie's face, the air deliciously pure. And the birds, Jesus. They sounded like a mixture of church bells and wind chimes and someone scraping food scraps off a china plate, but the problem of where he was kept chewing at him. It was all too familiar, in some vague, intangible way. The neurohelmet couldn't give him a fix - he'd tried that before and come up blank. Somewhere around 50BC, the techs kept hitting a temporal Bermuda Triangle that friggged up their readings royally. One thing was obvious, nuerotronic hardware didn't belong here, nor did time machines, or sophisticated body armour.

If the truth be known, Ogilvie had to keep suppressing an overwhelming urge to cast off his trappings and go skipping naked through the trees. He wanted to pick wildflowers and scream primal things at the sun. Probably would have if there'd been enough time. But there was no chance of him

sharing that particular snippet of information with the crew back home.

Laying the launcher beside him on the grassy bank, Ogilvie removed the glove from his right hand and scooped up a handful of water. It tasted even better than it looked. After slaking his thirst, he waded across the stream and climbed a small rise. Some energising essence in the air that made him feel as though he could keep on walking forever. The idea was tempting. A man could make himself a fine home here.

Empty, unspoiled past compared to a hectic, overcrowded future. But the future was a wily angler, and Ogilvie merely a shiny, metal lure, wriggling on a line. That was his personal metaphor, and it worked. Tait had spent too long uptime once. His temporal anchor had dragged loose and they'd lost him. The techs didn't know his fate; all they could do was guess, something along the lines of being dragged forever upward through a tapering hole lined with razor blades and sandpaper, until only the shredded remnants of your consciousness remained. You eventually got reborn if you overstayed your welcome downtime, along with full awareness, and as enlightening as the experience may be, it wasn't Ogilvie's idea of fun. But loosing it uptime would be much, much worse, because on top of all the indescribable agony there would be the awful knowledge that you were never, ever coming home.

Ogilvie was about to turn around and head back to the chronosphere when he heard the voices. In one blurred, cat-like movement he dipped into a low crouch, lowered his visor and raised the rocket launcher, bracing it's metal stock snugly against his hip. He edged forward, taking advantage of the shelter of a clump of dense flowering shrub that lined the top of the embankment. Cautiously, he parted the foliage. There was a clearing on the other side, about the same size as the one he'd downtimed into.

Two people stood at the far end of the clearing, under a magnificent tree. Ogilvie desired a times ten vision enhancement and the neurohelmet instantly complied. A male and a female. Young. Twenty, maybe. Both of them were beautiful, like Greek statues come to life, and they were naked. They seemed harmless enough. The woman, small-breasted and slender, had something in her hand. Ogilvie zoomed in and everything abruptly fell into place. No wonder it had all seemed so damned familiar!

Ogilvie broke his cover and ran towards the couple, frantically waving his arms in the air.

"Stop! Don't eat it," he implored. Only when he was finally standing in the widespread shadow of the tree did he realise that he had just broken the first rule of time travel, namely, Let It Be (Ogilvie had come up with that moniker, and as a reward had received a complimentary trip downtime to watch the Beatles perform live at Shea Stadium. He'd neglected to wear body armour. Biggest mistake he'd ever made).

Even if he'd successfully downtimed to the Cretaceous Period, common sense stated that one should never interfere with the inhabitants. His mission had simply been to get 'em to say 'cheese', then leave. His sophisticated weaponry and body armour were for self-preservation only. But this was different. Something beyond his control, something intuitive, had made him burst from those bushes. He'd gone completely nuts for a second or two.

"If you eat that," explained Ogilvie. "You'll ruin everything." The man and woman stared at him, gorgeous in their nakedness and dewy-eyed innocence. There followed a brief moment of awkward silence.

"Jesus," Ogilvie muttered under his breath. Maybe he'd misread the entire situation, maybe these two were just a

couple of kids who...an alarm screeched in his ear and the neurokinetic circuitry in his armour kicked him sideways.

Something huge and sinuous dropped out of the tree and flopped squarely onto the piece of dirt where Ogilvie had just stood. A snake. The biggest frigging snake he'd ever seen. Some kind of mutant anaconda, sixty, maybe eighty metres long. Ogilvie prided himself on his quick reflexes but the snake was on him before he'd even had a chance to raise the launcher, squeezing him so hard his armour started to pop at the seams.

"Feel the awesome power of my deadly embrace, Dark Angel," it hissed in his ear.

"Feel the awesome power of a thousand megawatts of juice," Ogilvie parried, flooding the armour's external grid with electricity. The charge knocked the python halfway across the clearing. It reared up, raw hatred dancing in it's black, hooded eyes.

"I know who you are, Gabriel. I heard you implore your master's name."

Ogilvie flashed the snake the finger.

"Go exfoliate, you slimy hog-muncher!"

The snake blurred, warped, and became a massive bat that traversed the clearing at incredible speed. It raked it's long, razor-sharp talons across Ogilvie's visor. Firing the rocket launcher was simply a reflex action. Instead of blowing up the tree and everything underneath it (well, if you're going to mess with the past you may as well go the whole shebang), the rocket hit the bat squarely on it's guano-encrusted backside. Trailing smoke, flames and a long rope of sizzling entrails, it crashed headlong into the ground and dissipated into a fine, red mist.

Ogilvie held out his hand. Eve relinquished the apple with a minimum of fuss and Ogilvie held it in front of his face, turning it slowly in his hand. Christ, he mused, what kind of ripple effect is this going to cause? More like a freaking tidal wave! The visor flashed up a warning: less than half an hour to get back to the chronosphere.

He made it with eight seconds to spare. After clambering into his seat, Ogilvie tightened his harness and barked out the return code.

"So much for carbon-dating," Ogilvie muttered as he opened the hatch and stepped back into the present. Jocumsen was waiting for him, as naked as the day he was born. The project director strolled over, unmentionables swinging merrily in the breeze. The rest of the staff dutifully followed him, like the members of some nude and benign Inquisition, they flopdanglequivered.

Ogilvie glanced down at the apple in his hand, shrugged and took a bite. He slammed the hatch shut, then draped his arm around the bare shoulders of an attractive tech he'd had his eye on for the last couple of months.

"Hate to be the bearer of bad tidings," he declared to the gathered throng. "But there's absolutely nothing back there that could be of any possible interest to anyone. Oh, and sorry, Jock. I lost the recorder. It...er, got snagged on some vegetation." Everybody made disappointed sounds and shuffled their feet. When the tech shuffled, Ogilvie noticed, it involved a good deal more than her feet.

Ogilvie gave her shoulder a gentle squeeze. "Hey, how about giving me a hand to get out of this body armour and then we'll go down to the rec room and have a couple of drinks? Say.." he added, as an afterthought. "You wouldn't

happen to know what the word 'sin' means, would you?" The tech frowned and shook her head.

"Shame? Guilt? Private parts?"

More negative responses.

"That's too bad." The look of pure, unadulterated joy on Ogilvie's face was something to behold. Whistling Sexy Sadie to himself, simply because it seemed apropos, he pro-

pelled the tech gently towards the exit. The apple core he threw into the bin on the way out.

- END -

So what are the people here really like? Can our minds - brought up to think in an English manner, with the aid of English textbooks and sermons and all the rest - ever feel at home in a place like the one I've been describing? Do I feel "at home"? (Not as I'd feel at home anywhere in China, certainly. That Chinese always saw in me one of themselves, and whenever I met a Chinese abroad, they responded as well to the "Chinese" in me.)

But do I feel at home among the peoples of Latin America? I am at home in their scenery, such wonderful mountains, forests, rivers and so on. I tried to acquire a sense of being at home in their culture years ago, by "joining" their Roman Catholic religion, but I found that my Protestant background made it impossible for me to desist in my querying and "protesting" constantly. I've turned rather syncretic... selecting bits out of all the world's Faiths; I avoid dogmas, and cannot be called, today, either "Catholic" or "Protestant", still less "pagan". I don't know what I'd be labelled, and remain vague when people ask, but I hint I'm *evangélico* (because of my parents), for that's the word they use for Protestants here.

To be a proper True Believer here you'd also have to take *curanderos* and *curanderas* seriously... the witch-doctors who work their spells with all sorts of aids, including the prayers used by Catholics, known to all (there's a famous one many hours away by truck. Thirty local sick folk at a time load themselves on to it - it has no sides - and off they go on a terrible journey to this curandero, reciting Rosaries en route. It's wonderful, but oh so strange, to me!). (There are even more shocking spells like a certain prayer to the "Most Holy Skeleton, the Holy Spirit", and I've a clipping from an Argentine Folklore Magazine giving the exact magical words you must repeat in Spanish when you need help from *Him*, evident God of Death and Ghostliness! The prayer is for your enemy to be "tormented forever more".)

Ah, one brushes it all away, like persistent cobwebs obscuring one's view while still they remain clinging to one's features. "Most Holy Skeletal Ghost", (Third Person of the Blessed Trinity, here). No, I cannot pray to *that!*

Incidentally, it is very curious that the oldest meanings for a "dove" are linked with death. And Jonah ("dove") symbolised the grave, you now. (Not just Biblically, but in many echoes I've come across in my studies.) The Dove of Peace suggested once the Pax of Death. Baptisms represents a dying, too.

But let me not turn "learned" suddenly, not in this story concerning a bulldozer (and other bulldozers preceding it), out to cut trails for timber-men, to cause the last lovely cedars to disappear from our heights. And I think of bulldozers as extensions of the old ox-carts, also!

A heavily-loaded ox-cart creaks through a winding, muddy trail, carved through the dense rain-jungles. You can still hear it creaking, but perhaps it is but the wind in the boughs of the trees overhead. It is seeking its way

through the mists of the region's history, avoiding natives, avoiding other enemies in some internecine war amongst the Spanish conquerors. It carries treasure; as much gold as it can transport.

What sort of gold? No one here remembers, though the story of that vanished ox-cart laden with gold no one has ever ceased to recall. The winding road of that era can still be seen in places... it also coils through our land, and lies just above the straight, modern highway; and our fences follow its ancient meanderings.

Where was the ox-cart going? Perhaps to El Fuerte where a fort once reared to hold the natives at bay... but this was very long ago. And what sort of golden treasure did it transport?

If this were the Land of Paraguay, we might guess that it was Jesuit treasure. In the legendary *comunero* wars some years before the Jesuit Exile of 1767, there was an instance when the Jesuits had to flee, with a long trail of ox-carts so heavily loaded their axles snapped in more than one instance. The *comuneros* and their Franciscan friars had to watch it all without butting in, for ahead of the ox-carts the Sacrament was carried, so they all had to remain kneeling till the caravan went by.

I read it all in the two-volume history of Fr. Lozano. S.J. Fr. Lozano indignantly denied, of course, in his reports, that those ox-carts breaking down from the weight of their contents, had been carrying treasure.

I often think of the ox-cart laden with gold that vanished around where we live now, here. It sunk into a quicksand, or so the stories go. Well, right now there's no quicksand that we know about, here, anyway. Not nearby, normally. In terribly rainy seasons, the earth here does turn into one great quaking bog, to be sure!

Ah, but I do know how to evoke ox-carts in my mind. I followed one on horseback for three whole days (and a fourth day, later) when in Southern Chile in 1937 Vadim and I were bringing his protesting parents who'd just arrived in Valparaise from China, south to the Province of Cautin, and we went north to fetch them. My Aunt Mary in the U.S.A. had offered to finance us if we were willing to try farming, so as to "teach those Latins the value of hard work". She was already sending me funds regularly.

To be sure, my penniless in-laws were of the lordly classes of a bygone Russia and did not feel like turning themselves into mere *muzhiks*, nor did they intend to allow their son to become one. But they decided to stick it out, nonetheless, until they could cure me of such wild ideas.

At any rate, the sight of the poor old dears clinging for dear life to the sides of their lurching ox-cart, under the shelter of a hoop of hide, would have turned the stoutest heart to pity. The natives where we stopped each night (there were nice little wooden houses along the way, where old ladies catered to passersby like us), they all joined my in-laws in loud moans at the sufferings they must endure because of their crazy new daughter-in-law. ("All our savings", wept my mother-in-law to them, "she's making us waste it all on this.")

Everybody glared at me. I tried to be unconcerned. Still, now I'm old enough myself and tending towards a certain creakiness, I am able to pity my poor old in-laws more, in my memory. I only wish they hadn't been such fibbers! That spoils my mood, to recall!

Well, we managed that journey to the end... all the way from the railway station of Pitrufoquen, westwards to the coastal town of Tolten, then further south to the fishing-hamlet of Queulle; (it is all on the maps of Southern Chile, if they're old enough, for seaquakes have done great harm to Queulle and Tolten read later). And from Queulle it was a five-kilometre ride up the Valley of Piren and then up a mountain-side to where we'd bought a little cleared place, with rain-forests high above us. (The trouble had been, there just weren't good pieces of land of the right size available for purchasing.)

And there, on a night of storm and flood, when I nearly died, I gave birth to my firstborn, George, in 1938. Only my mother-in-law helped. She had practised mid-wifery in her past.

We only stayed there a couple of years. Finally the endless wails of my poor in-laws made me give up, for we'd never have made a go of it. It took me months even to convince them to allow their son to buy a tool of prime necessity - a spade! They only encouraged me to lavish money on tasty tidbits. And only when I accepted their challenge to "help poor Granny dig a little ground with her hands to plant a few beans" did we get a space at last, when fingers failed. They thought I'd refuse. I didn't. I joined her in digging with my hands, to see how long the charade would continue. For myself, I enjoyed the rare sunshine and lovely air while we worked. Her whimpers as her nails cracked were scarcely a distraction.

At last the old man attacked me, "Stop making poor Granny dig with her hands. Have you no mercy?"

"It was your idea," I replied. "All I wanted was that you let Vadim buy a spade at least." (They were our bankers; Aunt Mary's money had ended up in their control!)

So they gave in and we became the proud owners of a new spade, that we later left behind us when we moved away.

Oh, I could tell story after story of that time. Nobody'd believe it. I used to tell a tale or two to my friends, and I watched them eyeing me sceptically: "What a liar you are!" I saw they thought. So I gave up telling such tales; though, "cross my heart and hope to die", the worst tales I've even made myself forget. It was weird, being the daughter-in-law of arrogant old Russian refugees! And their son, so blindly loyal and obedient to their every whim! He had the hardest role to play.

Still, I learned so much, and today I recall even them both with pity and a poignant sense of life's tragedy. (Such a mess, people end up, thanks to their cultural backgrounds!)

As I rode, back in the late 1930s, through the glistening wilds of Southern Chile, glimpsing afar both the Pacific to the West and "Seven Smoking Snowcapped Andean Volcanoes" at one glance, to the East, I learned the meaning of an ecstasy purely spiritual. I might be weeping within myself over the actual situation and problems I for one had not the ability to solve, (for what child can cope with old proud Russians schooled in manoeuvring anybody they wished; and I was but a child).

But my schooling in ecstasy continued through it all... I blocked out grief and dismay and rejoiced in lovely Nature, and thus my stronghold within remained impregna-

ble, whether I lived or I died. And Vadim learned early that I was unconquerable, even as his poor old parents came to recognise too. I could be destroyed; but not broken in, as fillies are broken in by bridle and lash.

And among my most precious memories remains: ox-carts, "over the mountains wild", where no car can travel, they always find a way. (Save for the legendary one here, overladen with gold, lost in some bog that can no longer be located.)

Throughout our years in Latin America I collected my imperishable treasures... the shine of sunshine on raindrops trembling on transparent green leaves; the rush of waterfalls; the roar of storm winds; memories... memories. They are painted on my soul, engraved there. I see them still, just as you'd turn the pages of an album to remember the past. And, interspersed with such memories, ox-carts span vast distances with a stubbornness on the part both of the oxen and their drivers, which I find exquisite to remember. And other gems are in my treasury... gleaned during my years of reading up on Latin America's pre-Colonial and Colonial history while we lived in Cordoba, Argentina. The "Search for Linlin", for example... Ponce de Leon's search for El Dorado is a nothing to match the two-century-long Jesuit hunt and stubborn campaign to conquer that Southern City of the Star-Gods, also called the "City of the Caesars" and Elelin and Trapalanda. (Surely the Tlapallen of Quetzalcoatl of Mexico.) It still flickers in and out of existence and will return, say the natives, "on the Last Day".

But, no, I am not going to talk about every last detail of that (so convincing, yet all-forgotten as a people's memory was erased in a couple of generations) and the books removed from circulation (I obtained them by loan, by my wheedling of librarians, most beguilingly, who fetched such volumes for me from out of forbidden store-rooms.) I mention it as another treasured "bauble" out of my past, in Latin America. All its wonders... memories too, of our sons climbing the haunted Andean Famatina peak; that, I recall with a shudder, yet also with pride. Brave, they all were and are. Our third son with a heart ruined from nephritis, dying while scaling an impossible cliff in Cordoba, rope-climbing with friends. And then the friends conquering a hitherto inviolate Andean glacier to have it named officially after Danny.

Painful but lovely things, all....

The combination of Vadim's Russian heritage, and my sturdy British-American one produced fantastic daughters and sons, I think. I have no regret....

So I *am* Latin America's and I do belong to everyone and everything here and to my sons and daughters and their father, Vadim, (*of course I do, dearest Vadim, always*). It is just that I do belong to *everything*, not just "this one" or "that one", and if I loan myself out (as it seems), it is not because I will one day take myself back, in a niggardly way.

You *can* belong to everyone and everything if you know you belong also to the Creator, our Father!

There's a game that can also be used as a test, where a person says one word and the other person must answer at once with another. As you can see, the word "ox-cart" for me evoked "golden-treasure", "golden-cities", and then - suddenly - the forlorn images of two little old

people on an ox-cart who came to Latin America expecting to find an El Dorado, and only found the first of the steps in a long journey that I led them all over Latin America in the years ahead. I was forever hitching our family wagon to a star, though the one city I never wished to go to was Buenos Aires - it was my in-laws' choice. And the years we spent there, I spent clinging to a hope to "escape back into the wilds". (Which we did, repeatedly.)

Oh, we lived a year in Tucuman, in Western Argentina, for instance, (back when there was only one child in our family; George, born in Southern Chile). There, in Tucuman, Vadim worked in an Experimental Station, for he'd hoped to continue his favourite bent, entomology, there. The pay was so poor I returned to Buenos Aires to work in a sort of branch of the U.S. Embassy, as the war was in full-swing. The babies continued arriving, once Vadim brought his parents and first child back again to join me there. I was henceforth always to hold down very good jobs. Vadim got a job firstly as factory manager, there; also as a laboratory technician and entomologist, in an American (U. S.) insecticide firm, where he worked all the years we lived there and till we moved to the Argentine Delta of the Rio Parana in 1953 to try tree-farming. (The floods of 1959 made it impossible to remain.) And all the time, he and I were "growing-up" till at last we could free ourselves from the thrall of "Mozzer Rooshia", which had had such a strangle-hold on our home, thanks to the old folks' loyalty to a vanished era. After all, we were in Latin America and must adjust to Latin American ways! And once we learned that adjustment, "all was safe". Our children could grow up, untorn, undivided by opposing loyalties. No more was the heritage of the Baryatinski family recalled in our home. Vadim had relinquished his old pride at having been a descendant of a real Russian prince. I had relinquished my nasty habit of teasing them by adding "And I am so proud of my father's father who was a coal-miner in Newcastle-on-Tyne". (Supposedly, he was a mining-engineer there, actually, but I refused to soften that detail, that so distressed my Russian clan, formerly.)

Oh, I was terrible. I told you, I have a slashing mind, and it's hard on my dear ones, believe me. Am I proud of it? I am comfortable with it, that is all I can say. It was most uncomfortable, back when I used to try so hard to be "saintly"! I was a mere plaster saint! And God never meant us to be other than we were born to be; and the spunkiness of a coal-miner on my father's side, and the stubbornness of pioneers and missionaries on my mother's, still governs me. It's a fighting strain, pacifist though I may seem.

I allowed myself to mention that little scene of "digging with our fingers" because it illustrates so starkly, indeed cruelly, the sort of life I had to learn to take in my stride, even before the birth of our first child, in 1938, when I was just 21. To be a "Russian exile" pining forever, isn't fun!

I am not pro-Communist, but neither can I ever mourn the vanishing of the former Tsarist Regime, as described nostalgically by my in-laws. The Mills of God still grind, and oppressive minorities meet cruel justice in the end, apparently. At times, the transition can be less stark... what is happening in Argentina may be an example of that, where those oppressive minorities still fare well.

Countless victims were tortured and hidden away; no actual open "civil war" disturbed, however, the populace save temporarily in some regions. And now a more mature people longs to live sensibly, though dissident factions (oldsters and youngsters with oldster mentalities) still resist this advent of law and order.

I place my bets on the truly young.

Summing up, then, the years gone by ("shadow ox-carts" on winding trails, and all) I often recall an old snatch of poem I made my own when still not quite out of girlhood, and right after my early marriage:

"Some there be that shadows kiss,
These have but a shadow's bliss."

Shadows have kissed me, all the way back to my birth beneath the Shadow of Buddha at Mount Omei. But with sorrows came that instant and enduring sense of "Cosmic ecstasy", let me call it that... a preview of what the Beatific Vision will yet come to mean to us all, when the time is ripe. "A shadow's bliss" is a very fine thing. For are we not all shadows, just whirling electrons in patterns most wondrous and intricate, inhabiting a lot of "empty space"?

The "Shadow of the Almighty" contains us all!

Yes, if Creation is the "shadow" or "reflection" of a Creator, we have to learn to live with all that exists in a certain symbolic harmony. I do not see how ticks, for instance, would fit into that pattern and be welcome additions to the scenery. (They're not so, here.) To be sure, because of such items as ticks and vipers here, the lands are cheap, the taxes low, and really "civilized" people, (accustomed to luxury and culture), would never dream of settling here; so perhaps the ticks have played an important role in defending the wilds.

It would take a lot of figuring out to see all the "why's" of everything, and I shan't run on about it now. I've accepted "everything" by Faith, meanwhile, and respected each symbol represented. (Even scorpions are very symbolical, and play most striking roles mythologically and even philosophically, as I found in my study.)

But laying the topic of ox-carts and all they suggested aside, there is still one last "pot of gold" to be discussed. It was found right near us when they were digging for the new highway, some years ago. The pot was full of pounds Sterling, all with the same date - 1870 or so, (I forget exactly). No doubt the gold was either to pay some huge bribe to some general, (the Spaniards even when calling themselves "Argentines" were ever fighting their regional wars, as I recall from reading it up in works of history here). Or perhaps the gold was just to pay the soldiers, though I somehow doubt that.

The gold could not have been part of the treasure on that lost ox-cart... one envisions the ox-cart as having belonged to a still earlier period during the "Golden Colonial Era". The same date on all the gold coins (and the fact that they were British pounds Sterling) forms a clue that takes the mystery more mundane, perhaps.

At any rate, whoever hid the big clay jar there near where the Pedregosa Ravine opens into the Santa Rita River, he never returned (or did "he" return as Ibarra? - see ahead) and the treasure awaited the next finder, apparently nearly a century later.

It is said that "an emanation" rose up from the pit where the gold lay hid and felled the workers and one died. (True or false? I do not know.)

What is well known is what happened next. A certain Ibarra (who had opened an *almacen* or grocery right nearby) came up and convinced (perhaps by "might-is-right") the workers that the gold was his, all his; and he was henceforth a very rich man.

Ibarra lies buried today in the cemetery at the foot of the property near where Morla dwells. He sleeps there with all the other country gentlemen and *damas* who lived and died in this same region. The last to be buried there died just recently, and his funeral was attended by some two-or-three-hundred descendants from all over the province. The family asked Tony to fetch the coffin in our pick-up as the grandfather had died elsewhere while visiting some descendant. This, of course, Tony did willingly.

Vadim and Tony also attended the actual burial at the cemetery. (The wake at the family's place, earlier, had been a lively one, plenty to eat and drink, good cheer amongst the family members who recognised that the poor old man had been ailing and rather weary of his aching bones and glad to go.) When the coffin had been lowered into the grave, each mourner in turn poured a little water down upon it. Hundreds were presented so it took some time. When Vadim told me, I said, "I suppose it was holy water. There was no priest?"

"They don't come for mere burials. It's too far. It would cost too much to bring one."

We thought, but didn't speak about it, *We'll be buried there in turn (how conveniently near!) but our customs will seem as alien.* For the children will probably sing "Forever with the Lord", which I learned as a child and taught them, and that will be it. No holy water. Very heaven of us!

But the history of the whole region lies "resting" there at that little riverside cemetery. It is flooded each rainy season; the weeds grow rank, the crosses tilt crookedly, (though I'm imagining this, I haven't gone down to see it). But twice a year they cut the weeds, spruce up the graves, and everybody goes there to feast and gossip and reminisce, and play knuckle-bones.

I've read of a Latin American custom (still found in remote regions of Mexico) where arches of branches are raised above the graves, and candied figures (skulls, skeletons) hung temptingly. That *is* old... I could point to old Chinese glyphs that seem to illustrate it. But this is not the book for that.

In the olden days All Souls and All Saints Days here were lots more fun, they say. That was when the mill at the bottom of our land was still grinding nicely, complete with a mill-house and mill-wheel and a miller employed by old Ibarra. But even the oldest residents around here have told us "the mill was always there". An old mill dating back to Colonial times, it must have been. and now it's gone forever.

All the people used to come from far away with their harvested bags of maize to be ground there early, in time for making into chicha to be drunk at the cemetery on those Holy Days. "What fun it used to be," we're told. I look at this valley land of ours now where our horses gallop or graze, and I can almost evoke those noise joking

crowds in my imagination; they are looking forward to a great reunion and drinking-party with their dead, playing knuckle-bones in the bargain (once used for divining, now just for a gambling game.)

And the procession of shadow-folk seems to stretch interminably in my mind....

But since the mill got washed away, years ago, and the Space-Time Highway penetrated these fastnesses, everything has changed. But the former collapsed *volcan* (causing mudslides and floods) that washed away the mill was but a harbinger of the new mudslides and floods that almost wiped out or new Space-Time Highway for good, that March of 1984. To repair that, it took the road-building machinery, sent in to tidy up, over half a year just to push all the huge boulders and tree-trunks aside, along two kilometres of roadway (between the Pedregosa crossing and the bridge that got washed away). But even now, the road is "only patched" till the next floods. There were five old and new watercourses now to be spanned, using culverts and soil heaped high, that will only serve till washed away again with the next heavy rains.

Old residents tell us that formerly there were few insect pests up here. The region was just too remote. Ibarra used to make a three-day journey to San Pedro by ox-cart, every fortnight, to bring back great stocks of wine and flour and sugar and oil and other staples. He was the valley's link with the world outside. But today with trucks and cars passing continually, the insects ride in, and the fruit is now worm-eaten before you know it, and you can't sit outdoors sometimes for the many types of flies and gnats.

I think of the problems between continents as jets fly back and forth constantly, and how difficult it must be to keep out unwanted pests and germs. It's amazing that no plagues have resulted in any astonishing way.

Benicio (whom I've mentioned as a very dear and flawless soul, who helps us work this property sometimes) remembers Ibarra. He worked for him as a farm-helper when a lad. Benicio is now over fifty.

"Ah, that was a man!" he says. "He even got the better of your next-door neighbour." (I'll stick with the nickname we've been using: "Mudwall".)

"I can't believe it!" we gasped. "How was that done?"

"Well," the story continued, "you see, Ibarra wanted to buy this property that's yours now, but the Mudwall brothers didn't want to sell it. It was part of a huge piece, already divided up between the three brothers... five or six big lots side-by-side, of which you now have these last two. So they didn't want to sell, as I say. So Ibarra gave them unlimited credit at his *almacen*, though he made them sign for what they took out. But they were sure he'd never try to collect, they were important people and he - he'd just suddenly appeared out of nowhere. Nobody, nobody knows from where he came!

"But," the tale went on, "one day Ibarra threatened them with the Law if they didn't pay up, and of course who, here has any ready cash? So he told them, 'No problem', he would fix it up for them very nicely. And he took them all the way to San Pedro, put them up at a good hotel, and fêted them, gave them good wines to drink, and then brought his lawyer with papers for them to sign. A bit

drunk, they signed whatever the lawyer said they must. All their debts were cancelled. Then Ibarra brought them back here, and only then did they realise they'd signed away the rights to the two lots you now have...."

"Oh, they got their own lawyers, but it was all so legal, nothing could be done. They tried next fussing over the boundary-lines, at least, and Ibarra got in surveyors. Still they rejected the findings, so he got in a new set of surveyors. And then he marked out the boundary-line, cutting down every big tree in a space two metres wide all the way up to the Pedregosa, so there'd be no mistake. And that is why these new surveyors sent in by the Courts have found that your boundary lines are exact. Ibarra made very certain of it."

"So our boundary-lines have been measured by three different sets of surveyors?"

"Indeed. You were lucky!"

"Well, that explains why our neighbour is always saying the boundary-line between us is wrong. It's an old feud, long before our time. He should have taken it up with Ibarra's heirs when Ibarra died."

Our informant shrugged. "They were never around, they were too busy spending the wealth - a real fortune in properties and cattle - left by the poor old man. They were only his step-children, anyway. They had no interest in farming. *He'd* kept *all* the valley land planted, always. And he had other properties elsewhere, where he kept his animals."

And I thought, *Ibarra, hard-headed fellow - where are you?* One thing I do know... he's not one of the "Shadow-folk" here.

What does "Ibarra" mean? I don't know, but I think of the Hebrew *ibhri*, "he who came from across (the river)", and I wonder... "Which river did Ibarra cross to get here?" (And why was he so sure all those golden pounds sterling were his?....)

Such a lot of symbolic "points-of-interest" were coming to our attention. The "Space-Time Mill" (that no longer turns as if announcing that the "Millstone turned by a donkey" mentioned by Jesus had finished its task. The symbolic donkey got returned to the Pope when he visited Brazil in 1980, by a strange Brazilian, who by 1982, when the Pope still hadn't taken delivery announced, right in Rome, "This is something between god and the Man", or words to that effect. We found that bits of news in a Buenos Aires paper, very eerie! I'd been studying millstones right then, symbolically, you see.)

As for the Hill or Ridge of the Wild Pigs obscuring our western view, (so that only when it dips to the south do we get a peep of the towering Plateau of the Condors which is also our property, seven kilometres away as the bird flies,) I do feel it equally symbolical, as already mentioned.

It was very touching when recently, the Arena boys who were doing the felling of the *quina* for Leon in 1983, told Tony sheepishly, "We were cutting your wood up on that ridge when you first arrived! Did you know? It's still there, at least 30 cubic metres, maybe 50, already cut and a lot more good quina still standing. We worked for a full month and were never paid a centavo, when Leon got cold feed."

"Well, I shan't pay you for the cutting now, but you might take me up there and if we can bring it down, you'll get something for it when it's sold," Tony grinned. They are good friends, after many a game of football and volleyball. Indeed, Tony's hired them to clear one sector of the remaining jungle still left on the 10 hectares, the part here below, which we had to plant with all those tame saplings of eucalyptus by the start of 1987, or preferably earlier. It's their dad who still keeps his cows up on the Plateau of the Condors. They know we know, but that we are not going to make any fuss. And if we ever require that plateau in some future time, they know it'll be painless for them, somehow. We'll find a way to take it over gently, and only when it's really needed for reasons I cannot envision right now. For the moment we've enough to do right here, below. (Since then we've decided to send our extra horses up there, when the grazing here gets poor during the winter.)

Well, the Arena boys are really looking forward now to helping Tony get that *quina* down one day. It'll have to be with oxen, for there's no winding timber-road up that way, though Tony and I, on a walk the other day, found a faint, ancient trail along a rising ridge, with a wonderfully gradual and easy slope up, all the way. It'll have to be cleared, shortly. The fellows laughed, "We always used oxen formerly - there *were* no tractors! And we used real axes, not power-saws like now. But nowadays people think they can't do anything without all the new mechanical things!"

It is a relief to the collective conscience here that we know about the *quina* up there. They all felt so bad that "generous friendly people" - namely ourselves - had nearly been cheated of what were our rights. Even Mudwall has secretly been relieved, though he still puts on a brave face to it when arguing, "If it's proved your land is my land, you're keeping a record, aren't you, to pay me back for the wood you've cut?"

On the 'today' of the retyping of this chapter, the truck-man who is gradually carting away the logs for us being cut by the river below, told Tony, "I've all the equipment needed for harnessing oxen, for bringing down that *quina* you have on the ridge above here. I can borrow some oxen and get it down for you." He got lost somehow. He's the man who earlier refused to buy that wood from Mudwall. (They only work here when *really* broke.) So our Barbara's friends have loaned us a yoke of oxen, and Benicio drives them, and we're clearing away the timber below, across the road, with their help, still lacking a tractor as hiring one is too costly.

Poor Leon, seeker after El Dorados! A whole month's work on the part of two peon's (the Arena brothers, now our friends and helpers), was put in there, by his order, in mid-1983. And now we are reaping the benefits! We might have decided to cut those trees ourselves, right now....

Though, as for reaching the Forest of Forever, this coming season (1986) - or not - I hopefully suggested we might let a year pass before trying it again, but Tony (he's the boss) says firmly, "No, I want to try it again this coming season." (Everybody in this whole region is interested in whether it can ever be reached, finally. He gets a lot of encouragement on all sides.) As of mid-1986 the problem was we had been told that Leon had *hundreds* of cubic metres of pine and cedar cut up there in secret in mid-1983, sure he could get away with it, but he found he couldn't. So we'll *have* to open the road up or that vast amount of precious cedar and pine will finally rot, and that would be wicked! This is the "Forest of Forever" I'm discussing....

The young trees still grow, but if every cows find their way there (now it's more open), alas for the young trees. Oh, we've problems, if we save that Forest!

- Mae Strelkov.

THE YANKEE PRIVATEER

by Robert Coulson.

My job as a manuscript reader didn't last long; evidently I didn't do it right. Still, it was an interesting experience.

Elli the dog has adapted completely to Juanita and I. Not to anyone else; she hides in her doghouse when there are strangers around. Walking the dog stopped during spring and summer; either it was pouring rain, or it had just quit pouring rain and we had to get the lawn mowed, or it was 90° (and we had to get the lawns mowed anyway.) Some of the grass we mowed in late spring was 3 feet tall because of constant rain. (Some of it that we didn't mow is now 6 feet tall.) Elli gets off her chain when I'm putting mail in the box, getting mail out of the box, collecting the morning paper, dumping cat sand, taking trash out to the trash burner, etc. She also rides in the back of the station wagon when we go to town, and loves it; I've never owned a dog that didn't enjoy riding in the car.

The heat actually isn't the main problem; it's heat combined with humidity. Most days in summer you can see the humidity; it hangs in the air like a thin fog. Not noticeable when it's close to you, but you can see it in the distance. The mosquitoes loved this spring, even though we didn't. We have airborne mosquito defenses; Barn swallows on the day shift and bats on the night shift, but they're not making much of a dent in the population.

I spent some time earlier this summer re-reading my copies of BLUEBOOK. This was, like ARGOSY, a general pulp magazine, including science fiction, fantasy, westerns, mysteries, adventure stories, historical fiction, and true adventure stories in places that most Americans of the time never got to see. My collection is small; the earliest issue came out in 1933, and is specified as "Vol. 57, No.6", and my last one is Oct. 1960 and is Vol. 100 No. 1, which is not the final issue, but the trend toward articles instead of fiction had begun, and it didn't last all that much longer, as I recall.

The adventures in strange places included Australia, New Guinea, and assorted islands in the general vicinity. Mostly these were fiction rather than fact. The primary author of these stories was Beatrice Grimshaw, who was also the only women author in any of the issues I own. Australian, perhaps? I don't know, but she had a fair number of stories included, set in various islands, New Guinea, and Australian Northern Territory, most of which I liked very well. Has anyone down there heard of her?

The primary science fiction author in the magazine was Nelson Bond, who wrote mostly science fiction but threw in a fantasy now and then. Heinlein's BETWEEN PLANETS was a 2-part serial in the magazine (the hardcover edition says 3 parts, but it's wrong).

Most of the issues I have are bedsheet size and 144 pages; a bit thicker than the bedsheet ASTOUNDINGS of the same era. A few other science-fictional names showed up; Fletcher Pratt co-authored an article about WWII intelligence in Iran, Eric Frank Russell had a short science fiction story for the first 1952 issue, Richard Matheson sold them a western, John D. MacDonald has a mystery, and then in 1954 there was a Mack Reynolds sf story.

Louis Kaye wrote THE STORM STRIP for the Feb. 1951

issue. "A drama of the Australian desert frontier", according to the blurb. Conflict between sheepmen and aborigines in the Northern Territory. Accurate? How should I know? But interesting. Another Australian story came in 1951, by Mackenzie Cottrell, "illustrated by his fellow-Australian Percy Leason." A better than average illustration, too; the illos were one of the weaker parts of the magazine. No Finlay or Lawrence in here. An oddity was that individual illos might be tinted pale green or brown or yellow or blue, but never more than one color per illustration. Never more than one color plus black, and never a mention of interior color, so I have no idea what the publishers thought they were doing.

I'd particularly like any information about Beatrice Grimshaw; definitely an early female author in a man's field.

Our most recent convention was Rivercon, in Louisville. Pleasant, as usual. I was on one panel with Mike Resnick, new author Diane Thornley, and fan Ann Carrico. One of the more interesting things about it was that Mike didn't do most of the talking. I never care if he does take over a panel; he has a vast store of usually quite funny stories, and I can usually get in if I want to. He may overawe some of the new authors, though. Juanita and I took in our usual cash, though once or twice we had so many people standing around in front of the table talking that customers had a hard time getting through. Roy Tackett flew in from New Mexico, his fare partly or entirely paid by the apa he's in. He had 3 strokes not all that long ago, and was in a wheelchair, but knew more about recent fandom than I did. Juanita and I hadn't seen him in years, and had never met Eleen at all, so we got an intro to her. Dave Locke was there on Saturday; he and Roy and I have a 3-way correspondence going - or did have, before Roy's strokes. For awhile, we could have our discussion in person. Gene and Rosemary Wolfe showed up; possibly at the last minute because while Gene was on some panels, he wasn't listed among the "celebrated" attendees. Juanita and I got to talk to them for an hour or so Friday night at the "reception", possibly because nobody else recognised them.

I ordered L. Sprague de Camp's autobiography from Don Grant as soon as I found out about it, and got a reduced rate for my advance order. It showed up shortly after Rivercon. Huge book; Juanita had trouble reading it because with her arthritic hands she had trouble holding the thing. It weighs 3 pounds, partly due to the heavy paper stock and partly because de Camp has had a long and interesting life. A very satisfactory book. At Rivercon I picked up a copy of FIRESHIPS, the final volume of David Drake's trilogy about the exploits of Sir Francis Drake translated into space battles. I'm not an expert on Sir Francis, but the books were entirely accurate to what I do know about him, and the period. (I really wanted to get the small press edition of THE MINOTAUR TRILOGY, by Thomas Burnett Swann, but I just couldn't force myself to pay \$50 for a trilogy that I already have in pb.)

Otherwise I've been reading or re-reading my usual assortment of military history, westerns, mysteries, an occasional romance, and whatever else looks good. Currently I'm perusing a history of the Miami Indians, who used to own most of this area, and who still live here, though most of them have intermarried with whites by now. Since they were a farming people, they fitted in better than the plains hunters, though they were dispossessed of most of their land. (First, though, they inflicted the worst defeat ever suffered by an American Indian-fighting army, "St. Clair's Defeat". Custer lost part of a cavalry regiment, but he did it in an era of good communications, so he became famous. St. Clair marched into the Ohio-Indiana wilderness with 1200 men in 1791, and managed to get back to Cincinnati with 6 unwounded troops. Total deaths

several times what Custer lost, but it was easier to cover up military disasters back then.)

LAMENT OF THE MAKARIS

by William Dunbar

(translated by Julie Vaux)

(This is a translation of William Dunbar's LAMENT FOR THE MAKARIS in a more modern form of English - perhaps more a paraphrase? The original poem was in the mediaeval French kyrielle metre modelled on ballades. My form is more ballad like - there are alterations where such would have made the meaning clearer to modern readers.

One day I would like to do a - could one call it a metamorphosis - of that other neglected masterpiece THE KINGIS QUAIR, from mediaeval verse into Modern English prose. While Dunbar's Scots often seems Chaucerian or courtly in mode and form it would be interesting to know to what extent if any Dunbar is also very much European and an example amidst poets of the "International Gothic style". In many ways this very Scots poet is one of the most European of English or British writers in English dialects of the late middle ages.

The Death Dunbar refers to may be the Black Death or Death in general.)

I who was in good health and gladness
Am troubled now by a great sickness,
And made feeble by infirmity
Timor mortis conturbat me.¹

Our mortal pleasures are all vainglory,
This false world is but transitory.
Flesh is frail and the Fiend sly!
Dread of death disturbs me!

The state of man does change and vary,
Now sound, now sick, now blithe, now sorry,
Now dancing merry, now like to die:
Timor mortis conturbat me.

No earthly state lasts past the morrow.
Surely as the wind moves the willow,
Ever shifts this world's vanity
Dread of death disturbs me!

Unto Death goes all estates,
Princes, prelates, and potencies,
Both rich and poor of all degrees.

¹ Timor mortis conturbat me - The latin refrain translated at the end of alternating stanzas of this poem "Fear of Death disturbs me"

Timor mortis conturbat me.
He takes the knights amidst the field,
Armored with helm and shield.
Victor is he in every melee.
Dread of death disturbs me!

That strong unmerciful tyrant
Takes from its mother's breast
The suckling baby though innocent.
Timor mortis conturbat me.

He takes the champion amidst battle's danger,
The commander enclosed in the tower,
The beauteous lady from her bower.
Dread of death disturbs me!

He spares no lord despite his political sense,
Nor scholar of (high) intelligence.
His awful stroke may no man flee.
Timor mortis conturbat me.

Artists, magicians, astronomers,
Logicians, theologians, orators,
Their skills proved not helpers!
Dread of death disturbs me!

In medicine there are no surgeons,
Specialists, doctors or physicians,
Who themselves from Death could free
Timor mortis conturbat me.

I see that makers amongst those left alive
Play out pageants and do not thrive
None are spared to survive
Dread of death disturbs me!

He ever pitiless devours
The makers' finest flowers
Chaucer, the Monk of Berry, Gower.
Timor mortis conturbat me.

The good Sir Hugh of Eglinton,
Ettick, Heriot, and Wynton,
He's taken from this country!
Dread of death disturbs me!

Like a scorpion's bite, they've felt his effect,
Master John Clerk and James Affleck,
Balladmaking's loss tragicomic.
Timor mortis conturbat me.

For Holland and Barbour we're bereaved.
Alas that we must be so grieved
For Sir Mungo Lockhart of the Lea!
Dread of death disturbs me!

The Clerk of Tranent likewise he's taken
Who wrote the adventures of Sir Gawain,
And Sir Gilbert Hay slain.
Timor mortis conturbat me.

He has Blind Harry and Sandy Traill,

Slain with his shot of deadly hail,
And Patrick Johnson could not flee.
Dread of death disturbs me!

He has indicted Mercer cruelly
Who on love wrote beautifully
in short swift sentences stylishly!
Timor mortis conturbat me.

He's taken Raoul from Aberdeen,
And gentle Raoul of Corstorfin;
Two better men did no mortal see!
Dread of death disturbs me!

In Dumfermeline he whispered
and Master Robert Henryson felled
Sir John Ross embraced lethally
Timor mortis conturbat me.

And now he's taken, being cruel,
Quentin Shaw, and good Stobo gentle,
Whom of all this world were worth pity!

Dread of death disturbs me!

Good Master Walter Kennedy
Lies at the point of death sadly,
So sad that this should come to be!
Timor mortis conturbat me.

Since all my brethren have gone,
He will not surely let me live alone.
It's necessary I his next prey be.
Dread of death disturbs me!

Since for death there's no remedy
Its best for it we be ready
That after death live may we!
Timor mortis conturbat me.

Futurian Ob- server

by Ian Woolf & Peter Eisler

TECHNOLOGICAL SINGULARITIES & FUTURE SHOCK.

We apologise for the shortness and incompleteness of this report. However we lost our notes and waited a month before trying to remember what happened, due to last minute polishing of the freeform game we designed and ran for the highly successful and entertaining Sydcon Role Playing Game Convention. Kyla Ward, Peter and Dr David Bofinger the unbeliever were interviewed about the convention by Maynard, as featured recently on Foxtel in Australia, but unfortunately nobody we know gets Foxtel, so nobody saw it.

Inventex Inventor's exhibition will be on 22nd to 25th August 1996 at the Sydney Showground, Hall #3, contact (02) 810 6645 for more details. (Don't miss that). The Australian Skeptics will be holding their annual convention on September 21 and 22 at Monash University in Melbourne.

Reverend Doctor Garry Dalrymple then scared away a stray woman who nearly made the mistake of unintentionally joining our meeting, to the regret of the other members. He then gave a sermon on the subject of British Israelites. Apparently many subjects of the British Empire felt that there was no question that the British were God's Chosen. Therefore, with inexorable logic, they decided that the British were in fact, the Biblical lost twelfth tribe of Israel. Unfortunately for them, the lost twelfth tribe has been discovered in Ethiopia, still prac-

ting Judaism as it was practiced at the time of King Solomon, and have been repatriated to Israel, where they are known as the "Felasha". David revealed that at present they are being bled at blood donor stations, but the blood is being thrown away because they are at a higher risk of HIV. Apparently this is intended to make them feel more like they are contributing to society.

Daniel Jacobs opened the topic with his personal

interpretation of a technological singularity based loosely on Frank Tipler's ideas of a point where a cosmic omnipotent computer incorporating all the matter in the Universe arises. This idea is explored in Tipler's "The Physics of Immortality", Moravec's "Mind Children", Ed Regis' "Great Mambo Chicken and the Transhuman Condition", Fred Pohl's "Gateway" series, and Greg Bear's "Eon". In Dan Simmons' "Hyperion" a computer which makes teleportation possible borrows human brains during the brief moment of transfer. In Isaac Asimov's "Question", the multivac computer grows through human history, until it becomes God in the process of answering the question. In Frederic Brown's "Answer", a computer grows to enormous size, and becomes God in the process of answering a question.

David violently disagreed with this definition of the topic, as did Ian. However both Ian and David disagreed with each other, and David also disagreed with himself. David defined a technological singularity as the point where technological advance increased so rapidly that humans could no longer cope with the influx of information. More inventions and discoveries are made more quickly, until it is all happening at once, and everything has been invented.

Ian mentioned a story called "Slow Tuesday Night" by R. A. Lafferty, wherein people can have four or more intricate careers within an eight hour period after having a mental block removed by "metasurgery". In rebuttal, David quoted Vernor Vinge's prediction of ever increasing returns, increasing in geometric progression of infinite steps. Graham Stone declared that it would be a case of diminishing returns. Ignoring this David emphasised that you couldn't have a story near the singularity or at the singularity because it was always an infinite number of steps away. David emphasised this point in close to an infinite regression. Ian then mentioned some of

Vernor Vinge's stories which feature post-Singularity humans. "Original Sin" features post-Singularity humans evading capture by use of a tool that can cause an effect very much like extremely bad luck.

Ian proposed a definition based on a related concept of geometrically progressing technology and society, but with the Singularity being the point at which human society changes so much that present-day humans cannot imagine what they will be like. This was Ian's understanding of what Vernor Vinge meant by the term. Cordwainer Smith's "Norstrilia" series has humans so far changed from modern people, that we have more in common with the animals of the time.

REVOLTING SCIENCE FICTION

One of our members explained that the Crusaders were repelled by sheep. Apparently an entire castle was manned by sheep, fooling the Crusading knights into a prolonged siege. Wayne Turner reported his WA trip to SwanCon. Among the SwanCon special guests were Terry Dowling, Neil Gainman, Jack Dann and Storm Constantine. Garry Dalrymple reminded everyone that Star Trek Voyager was starting to be screened.

There.was.great.enthusiasm.

Sliders was also coming to our screens that very night, nobody had remembered to tape it. Bugs was also starting. Brian Walls reported that TV series based on a toned down Mad Max was in the works, so look out for Mild Max. Babe of course was the toned down version of Razorback. Manga animation "Ghost In the Shell" was showing at the Mandolin theatre and the Valhalla Cinema. Aliens 4, starring Wynona Ryder and a clone of the late Ripley is also in the works, and will hopefully stay there. Strange Days had started the night before and was highly recommended. A feature of the movie is millennial celebrations being held a year early on December 31st 1999, the writers apparently missed this point. Brian mentioned that the technical term for Russian scientists entering Chernobyl for pre-retirement study, is "stalkers" taken from the Strugatsky novel "Roadside Picnic", released as the movie "Stalker". However as most scientists read science fiction, this is not surprising.

Ian then proceeded to some scientific tidbits culled from New Scientist magazine. The painkiller ibuprofen, found in such over-the-counter drugs as Nurofen, and Naprosyn has shown an ability to help prevent Alzheimers disease and is useful in treating the illness. Unfortunately it has such drastic effects on the stomach with long-term use that it is unusable. Rock-eating bacteria with no reliance on sunlight have been discovered living happily 1000 metres below the Earth's surface in conditions similar to Mars. This means that either similar organisms may be discovered on Mars, or failing that, that these bacteria could be introduced in a terraforming effort. The sub-surface lithoautotrophic microbial ecosystem is known as SLIME for short. They subsist on hydrogen generated in a reaction between water and ferrous silicates. NASA is preparing to protect itself from lawsuits from green-exploiting anti-technology eco-luddites for its upcoming Martian missions. They are carefully getting lawyers to scrutinise their two dozen failsafe quarantine systems for bringing Martian soil back to Earth for study. Earth First representatives are believed to be carefully holding several meteorites for questioning. Star Trek tricorder-style scanners have been developed to detect jaundice in babies so that they can be properly treated with the conventional blue and green lights. Against traditional wisdom, it has been discovered that human nerve cells can be induced to regrow after damage. Statistically, people who drink coffee have a lower suicide rate. A new no-risk treatment for short-sightedness is to mould the eyes into the required

shape instead of putting lenses in front of them or cutting them with blades or lasers. New nappy linings made from sugary hydrogel can hold more than 1 litre of urine. The politically-correct self-censoring Internet software service "Surfwatch" banned the entire Whitehouse domain due to the evil actions of the Clinton's cat Sox on his Web page. The web page contained the naughty word "couples", so it was banned, as is this article. This same action of banning material based on automatic keyword searching has led to America Online pulling the plug from the International Breast Cancer Support group discussions. Clinton's staff called the Surfwatch company and the Whitehouse was given a special exemption from the consequences of Sox's crime. This appears more than hypocritical in light of Clinton's recent Communication Decency Act.

The Easter Long Weekend saw the SydCon roleplaying game convention. Peter and Ian co-wrote and co-ran a comedy troll freeform game, and won trophies for another game. The UNSW Unisearch House second-hand booksale was on the following weekend [yes you missed it, and its only on every two years]. Ian produced his certificate of Sainthood from the Universal Life Church. Peter's was in the mail.

Having learned his lesson from previous meetings, Peter opened the topic of Rebels and Revolutionaries in science fiction with the observation that Steve Perry's Matador series is the thinking man's Star Wars. Whereas the rebels in Star Wars relied on mystical powers and a magic knife to win when the badly formed plans failed completely; the revolutionaries in the Matador series rely on skill and detailed plans that work. Peter then continued his list of appropriate titles. Lloyd Biggle Jr's "The Still Small Voice of Trumpets" and "The World-Menders" both have a Galactic Government agency set up to foment revolutions that end in democracy, but which have a strict code of secret subtlety, because "DEMOCRACY IMPOSED FROM WITHOUT IS THE SEVEREST FORM OF TYRANNY". F.N. Busby's Tregare series has a rebellion against a tyrannical Earth-based government. C.J. Cherryh's Alliance-Union-Cyteen series involves a civil war between the tyrannical Earth-based government and the rebels over hundreds of years and several worlds. Robert Frezza's "Small Colonial War" involves rebels fighting a Japanese-culture Earth-based tyrannical government, where the government troops choose to side with the rebels. Simon Green's "Deathstalker" has a military hero leading a rebellion against his Empress' Earth-based tyrannical government. Frank Herbert's "Dune" concerns the drug-based rebellion against the Galactic Imperial tyrannical Earth-based government. Elron Hubbard's "Battlefield Earth" features humans rebelling against an alien tyrannical Earth government. Michael Moorcock's Runestaff series is about a hero who fights an evil tyrannical Earth government despite his headaches. "Fallen Angels" by Jerry Pournelle, Michael Flynn and Larry Niven features organised science fiction fans rebelling against an evil green-exploiting anti-technology eco-luddites American-based tyrannical government. Voerman's "Weird Colonial Boy" rebels against a British-based tyrannical government by being silly.

Brian reminded us that Star Wars had rebels, too. And so did Total Recall, Johnny Mnemonic, and Logan's Run.

Ian brought out his list. Earth, by David Brin features physicists rebelling against United Nations restrictions to bottled black hole research. Kurt Vonnegut's "Player Piano" has people rebelling against an automated tyrannical Earth-based government. "Lord of Light" by Roger Zelazny has people rebelling against a tyrannical Hindu-based government. "Software" by Rudy Rucker is about Lunar robots that rebel against a tyrannical Earth-based government. "A Gift from Earth" by

Larry Niven is about colonists who rebel against a tyrannical organ-transplant based government. "Footfall" by Larry Niven and Jerry Pournelle is about science fiction writers rebelling against an alien tyrannical Earth-based government. "The Space Merchants" by Cyril Kornbluth and Frederick Pohl is about a rebellion against a tyrannical advertising agency government based on Earth. "Bio of a Space Tyrant" by Piers Anthony is about someone who rebels against a democracy and

sets up a Jupiter based tyrannical government. Garry explained that Piers Anthony has owned a Basenjjs.

[The above two articles are from the SYDNEY FUTURIAN, which I edit for the Futurian Society of Sydney, to give you some idea of what Sydney fans are up to. The 57th anniversary of the FSS was in November last year.. - Ron.]

THE TRAVELLING MUSCOVITE

by Pavel Viaznikov

First of all, there was Seoul....

For quite a long time, we here did not know much about it. Mostly, the information(?) we had was coming either from our *Pravda*, or from *Korea Today* - a monthly issued by Pyongyang and, naturally, describing the Southern brethren in the most unattractive manner. Oh well, I thoroughly enjoyed the *Korea Today* - it was fun. So unpretentiously naive, so luxuriant, so cutely translated into Russian... "She ran through the enemy positions with a kettle of hot soup on her head", for example. The stories were that Seoul was a dirty, polluted, poverty-stricken city, with no trees at all, but with lots of police. Well, the police and security guards were abundant - a VVIP was visiting Seoul at the time; some places (like markets) were quite dirty, while others spotlessly clean (like parks, for example).

Parks were nice; Kyongbokkung Park, behind the National Museum, has several very nice pavilions, though also there are quite a few boards informing that "there used to be a bridge here (or a pavilion, or something else), destroyed in the year so-and-so by the Japanese occupants". Judging by those boards, the Japanese has a special hobby of destroying Korean monuments and places of interest! The park also has several ponds, inhabited by extremely lazy, fat fishes. They never move, it seems: why should they? Everybody visiting the park buys a packet of fish food and feeds them; so the fish prosper, thanks to the tradition. They say that Piwon - the Secret Garden - is even more beautiful, but on my second day in Seoul, heavy rains started and only a mad amphibian could enjoy parks in such weather. But there were always ways - I was told about an interesting place in the the Lotte World Duty Free building - not the one in the centre of the city but the bigger one on the South-Eastern outskirts of Seoul, in Song'pa-Gu. Don't miss it if you ever come to Seoul; the shop's big and nice, though I didn't buy anything there - they sell mostly expensive famous brand-name stuff, and it doesn't help much that no duty is imposed (but it you're looking for such goods, it could be for you); the place also has a hotel and - what was important for me - a very good museum of ethnography, with real things, models and moving dolls, with folk music in the background, etc. and I spent a couple of hours with great pleasure. Attached to the museum are several shops and national cuisine (of different regions of the country) restaurants; those are built in the resemblance of traditional Korean houses and make a small village - all indoors, on the 4th floor of the building. And next to it is quite a big indoor amusement park, complete with a stylish merry-go-round, roller coaster, skating ring, theatres and etc. I was happy as a child and enjoyed several rides on a raft, on a roller coaster and on a mock

balloon (actually, a monorail high at the ceiling). I returned to my hotel by metro, and I should note that the Seoul metro resembles the New York subway by the simplicity of design of the stations, but it is also very clean and very efficient. It took me 2 hours to get to the Lotte World by taxi through the busy traffic, but the return trip underground was 45 or 50 minutes only. Thus, when you come to Seoul, it would be a good idea to use the subway (you will have no difficulty in identifying the stations, as not only are the names written in both Korean and in Latin letters, but the stations have numbers which make your navigation very easy). Also, the people are eager to help, many speak English, and the security seems efficient.

Another good experience was the Korean beer by the OB - the Oriental Brewery. It's not strong, but the taste is nice and rich, milder and subtler than Western beer. Don't have it at your hotel - it will be expensive there and in an unsatisfying small glass; also, in the hotel they will bring you nuts or chips for appetizers, which is the same everywhere. Rather, go into any small bar with the OB letters on the window, but check if they have only bottled beer or if it's on tap; naturally, chose the latter (oh, yes, they serve beer from bottles at hotels, too). The waitress will also bring you, most probably, a sweet salad of fresh cabbage, which goes surprisingly well with beer, but if you want something better, ask for a dried squid (well, *drawa* squid - even *you* can draw a something with tentacles!). The squid will come sort of burned on its sides, which makes it (a bit) more chewable, and served with ground-nuts, mayonnaise and pepper-paste, which makes it a delightful beer appetizer. Better still, find a Korean-style grill - most probably, there will be a picture of a chicken, - and enjoy yourself.

Unfortunately, I was on a business trip and could not see all the city, though luckily, I had about three hours a day free which I could devote to sightseeing. I even tried to climb one of the hills (Paegnyonsan, 216 m - judging by the map, the top is the highest point of Seoul), but wandered aside from the tourist path and sort of lost my way. Of course, going up the slope all the time could do the trick, but I had only one hour left and didn't want to take the risk. Later, when I found myself near the skyscraper of the International Business Centre, I couldn't help getting to the observation floor of it, hoping to get a bird's eye view of Seoul. Alas! It was a rainy day, so even with binoculars the city was invisible behind the veil of rain. All I could see was a relatively small area around the building, and the Han-gang river. My friend managed to spot the 'OB' letters on a window of a building across the street, some fifty floors below. So the excursion to the observation floor was not totally fruitless: in fifteen minutes we were sipping beer at that place. A Korean joined us at our table and tried to make an acquaintance; he asked us if we were from the USA, and, when we later asked if the Koreans liked Americans very much, he said, "It is not exactly that we especially like Americans. But we remember that it is about one or two hours from the Demarcation Line - from North Korea - to Seoul by car. Or by tank."

Next, I went to Bombay. This was my third visit to this city; I was there in 1987, as a student - first on a study tour and then as an interpreter of the Moscow Circus. This time, I was on business, but had quite a lot of free time, and much more money than when a student. We lived in a hotel which used to be Grand at the time of the Raj - that is, under the British; by now, it's no longer so grand, and had certain drawbacks. For example, the room has AC, but it's only switched on when you enter your room and insert the key into a slot of the main switch. As a result, the room is hot when you come in, and it takes the AC about 30 minutes of roaring to make it comfortable (oh well, when I was a student, I stayed at a 4-star hotel, though). Also, the bathroom wasn't conditioned at all - which

made it a steam bath. OK, washing in a sauna is one thing, but answering to your physical needs in a sauna makes all the difference. Anyway, the hotel was very conveniently located; besides, we only spent nights there, so why bother?

Since 1987, Bombay became bigger, more crowded, dirtier, and also, there were no ads for foreign goods back in 1987, and now you cannot escape the omnipresent Coca ads. Cursed be the name of this drink in a country where you can get a mango or a coconut juice, a sugarcane drink (only it's not recommended in the streets), or a lime soda. Or a beer. Indian beer in general is bad and gives you a heavy head and a hangover (and the appropriately named 'Thunderbolt' is the

nightmare for a coffee lover), but makes a delicious fragrant coffee, light in colour and rich in taste. You could try to ask for a Mysore style coffee in Madras and Bangalore, but I cannot guarantee the results. The point is that India grows quite good coffee, but they spoil it in the process of brewing.

On the other hand, India has some very good rum and gin. Ask, for example, for the aged Old Monk rum and for Calcutta gin. But, back to the subject...

It was quite hot, +46°C, in the daytime, so we longed for sea bathing, - but an Indian friend forcefully advised against it. When we saw what passed as water in the ocean, we real

ized that he was right. Only once did we see three little boys - poor fisherfolk - bathing at Chowpatty Beach, where everybody goes in the evening when a breeze from the ocean brings blissful coolness and the temperature falls to a pleasant and refreshing +30°C. Nobody bathes, people just walk, ride people-driven merry-go-rounds, eat snacks or ice-cream, and enjoy the weather. On the second day, the Indian friend who wanted to please us, took us to a place where he usually angles for fish, and said that since there's fish here, it should be more or less safe to bathe here. Alas! we lacked courage for encountering the ominously brown water.

I wouldn't describe places of interest in Bombay, as most of them are well-known: the Gate of India, the Prince of Wales Museum (it has good collections of art and handicrafts), the Towers of Silence (anyway, I didn't see the towers), the haji Ali Mosque about 1 km away from shore (the saint's body was put into a boat and set on the waters, and where the boat stopped at a shallow place, a tomb and a mosque were built - only accessible at low tide via a walkway) or the caves of Elephanta island.

Well, when we went to Elephanta to enjoy climbing up the kilometre-long steep stairs to the caves (in the midday heat!), we also managed to almost miss the last boat to Bombay - nobody warned us that on that day the last boat took off not at 6 pm, but at 5.30 pm. We had to run a bit. On the boat, an Indian started talking to me. - he wanted to tell me the story of Mumbai (by the way, the official name of the city is Mumbai). When he asked my name, I told him that my name is Pavel or Pasha, whatever is easier for him. He laughed and asked why I am calling myself bad names; he

thought that I was pulling his leg, as he decided that I had said 'paal' (fool in Hindi) and 'pashu' (beast). He thought that my English sounds funny; well, perhaps it does, but you should listen to him! Once I saw a copy of the *Far Eastern Economic*

CHOWPATTY BEACH - Nobody swims!

WALKWAY TO THE HAJI ALI TOMB - at low tide.

worst and the most popular Indian beer), but Bombay makes good beer, too. Perhaps the only place in India for a beer (just by the way - the best coffee is made in Mysore, where they don't add spices (a heavily spiced cinnamon coffee is a

Review where I found a very funny dialogue which perfectly imitated the Indian pronunciation (the Russian pronunciation still waits for such a description, though). I think it would be appropriate to insert the dialogue herein; no offence to the Indians meant, mind you.

IN AN INDIAN HOTEL

ROOM SERVICE: Morny, rune sore-bees.
HOTEL GUEST: Oh sorry, I thought I dialled for room service.
RS: Rye, rune sore-bees. Morny. Jewish to odor sunteen?
HG: I'd like some bacon and eggs.
RS: Ow July then?
HG: What?
RS: Aches. Ow July them? Pry, boy, pooch?
HG: Oh, the eggs! How do I like them? Scrambled, please.
RS: Ow July thy baycome? Crease?
HG: Crisp would be fine.
RS: Hockey. An Santos?
HG: What?
RS: Santos. July Santos?
HG: Ug... I don't know... I don't think so...
RS: No? Judo one toes?
HG: Look, I really feel bad about this, but I just don't know what judo-on-toes means. I'm sorry.
RS: Toes! Toes! Why Jew don Juan toes? Ow bow eenglish mopping we bother?
HG: English muffin! I've got it! Toast! You were saying toast!
Fine. An English muffin would be fine.
RS: We bother?
HG: No. Just put the bother on the side.
RS: Ward?
HG: I'm sorry. I mean butter. Butter on the side, please.
RS: Copy?
HG: I feel terrible about this but...
RS: Copy. Copy, tear, mill, Jews. Plane'otter. Woodoo want sum?
HG: Coffee! Yes, coffee please. And that's all.
RS: One Minny. Ass rune torino'fie, strangle aches, crease baycome, tossy, eenglish mopping we bother honey sigh, and copy, Rye?
HG: Whatever you say.
RS: Hockey. Tenjewberrymud!
HG: You are welcome.

But anyway, I like India very much.

We also managed to see the Training Ship Raha-man, which is not a ship at all but an island with a private merchant marine school. Now they start preparatory marine classes for 14-year old boys, too. The island is nice and well-tended, well-equipped and clean. And judging by what we saw, the school gives good education.

In the summer, I spent some time just walking around Moscow. There are places which I like very much. One of them is Kolomenskoye - an ancient residence of the Tzars, before Peter the Great moved his capital to the newly-founded city - St Petersburg. Unfortunately, most of the Kolomenskoye buildings no longer exist - they were made of wood and time or fires destroyed them; and the Bolshoy Terem (the Big Palace) was destroyed by order of the Empress Katherine as she wanted a new palace there but later changed her mind. Anyway, three nice churches are still there, recently two of them were re-opened and re-sanctified, while the third one was never closed. There's the stone wall, the stone gates with a clock-tower and two attached wings (the wings house a museum), a cellar serving honey, tea and pancakes; several wooden houses - Peter the Great's house, a barn, the gate of

a log fortress, - were brought here to make an open-air museum. Also there are big orchards around - since the 16th Century they have been growing fruit for the Tzars here (still bigger orchards were in another Tzar's residence - Lzmailovo, where talented gardeners were growing not only apples, plums, or pears and other fruit ordinary for our climate, but also water-melons, peaches, pomegranates, lemons, grapes, etc.)

Another attraction here is a picturesque ravine with water-springs, which are rumoured to have water with healing properties. This is hardly so - Moscow is too polluted, but people come here to drink and collect water. The place is very nice, and I like to come here in different seasons, usually with my camera, as the photos are usually very good.

I often spent my summer Sundays in Serebryany Bor (Silver Forest) on the Moskva River. It is supposed to be the cleanest bathing-place in the city, and this summer was sooo hot! Usually I went to the nudist beach. The reasons are: here you don't risk an encounter with a drinking company (the nudists don't drink strong alcohol), they do not approach you unwanted, and they keep their beach cleaner than the other beaches here. Besides, the nudist beach occupies the prettiest place in Serebryany Bor. Well, the first time I came here just because I couldn't buy swimming trunks - it was in 1990 or 1991, at that time goods tended to disappear from shops all the time. Normally I keep a bit aside - I am not Apollo, besides, the nudists play volleyball all the time and jumping naked men and women are not a pleasant sight, even if otherwise they are good-looking. But why I started to tell about this beach is because I once saw an armoured vehicle here - an old one, with two high cylinders for machine-gun towers, the 1914 model. The vehicle bore a word in a laurel wreath and a big black-and-red V - the emblem of the Volunteer Army - one of the White armies during the Civil war in Russia. On the windshield (the vehicle had a front glass which could be covered with a metal screen) there was a permit to enter the rest-zone. Atop one of the towers, legs inside the hatch, was sitting a corpulent and muscular guy, dressed in camouflage pants and a peaked cap, with a heavy copper crucifix on his hairy chest and with Monton Macout sunglasses. The guy was calmly sipping kefir (a kind of yogurt) from a bottle and eating a big bread stick, paying no attention to several naked girls (quite pretty, I should admit), attracted by the unusual machine. Yess! to impress a girl you don't need a fancy Mercedes 600 or any other luxury limo, as after all they are usual, if expensive. Get a tank - they'll be fascinated!

Suddenly, a mounted patrol appeared. The policemen (well, one was a policewoman, so what should be the plural? Policepersons?) were riding on traditional saddles, blue horse-cloths decorated with huge red stars. The big guy on the armored vehicle chuckled, stared at the riders and ominously slapped the barrel of the machine-gun. The patrol came up to check his permit, driving license, etc, and the sight of two uniformed guards - in modern uniform, but on Red Army saddles, near the White Army vehicle, surrounded by naked girls, was worth seeing. (The vehicle belonged to an ad agency - they were making a clip not far from the place). By the way, the police are sometimes funny: the nudist beach is 'wild' and has no fences or anything like fences; sometimes a nude girl or a guy on a windsurfer would approach the self-declared 'border' between the nudist beach and a normal one, and if a policeman happens to be near, he would warn the nudist not to cross the unseen border. No matter that behind the imaginary line the "decency violator" can be seen just as clearly. (By the way, at first I was a little ashamed to undress, but very soon realized that where everybody is undressed,

nobody is naked. You forget about everybody's - and your own - nudity in no time).

Another place I visited was New Jerusalem, about 50 km from Moscow. It's a big monastery, with an impressive high and massive temple of unusual conical shapes. The place has an interesting history. In the 16th Century, during the reign of Tzar Alexey and Patriarch Nikon (the Tzar gave to his friend and adviser the same title as he had - the Tzar's, so Alexey was 'Tzar and the Great Prince of Russia', and Nikon was 'Tzar and Patriarch of Russia'. Later, the Patriarch reformed the Russian Orthodox Church (naturally creating a schism), edited many books, especially prayer-books, and started to take more and more power - which led to his fall and exile). Well, when Nikon was at the top of his power, he decided to find or found holy places not far from Moscow. Now, very soon one of his reconnaissance parties reported that there was a place on the Istra River where the geography miraculously coincided with that of Jerusalem: the bends of the swift, cold and narrow Istra were just like the curves of the Jordan, the hills were where they were supposed to be, even water springs were in their place, and a small forest substituted for the Gethsemane Garden. The Patriarch sent a mission to Jerusalem with an order to get drawings of the Jerusalem Temple and of the surroundings. The delegation brought back not only the drawings, but also a scale model of the temple. The New Jerusalem temple was basically planned in accordance with the model (a church was built below ground level to represent the Chapel of the Savior's Grave, the altar was built with a passage behind it, which is in fact against the Russian tradition, etc); but there were also some more changes made, to give Russian features to the temple.

KOLOMENSKAYE MUSEUM

A monastery grew around the temple; soon, it flourished, fed with crowds of pilgrims. Before WW2, the Communists closed the monastery, and organized a museum there; during WW2, the Nazis first used the monastery with its high, strong walls as a military object and, during their retreat, mined the temple. For many years it remained partly ruined (and the belfry was totally destroyed). The surrounding monastery buildings served as a very good museum, showing old icons and church vessels, handicrafts, antique house utensils

and other objects; among others, there were the fetters of the Patriarch Nikon, which he wore to mortify his flesh. An open-air museum of wooden architecture was founded near the monastery walls - it showed a chapel, a church, a barn, a couple of houses, a bath-house and visitors could see the interior of a rich peasant's house, too. They even bought a stone building which served as the exiled Patriarch's cell, from Northern Russia. (This 'cell' is rather a 3-storey house with its own chapel incorporated into it). Nearby are the springs - they are considered holy, and the people never stopped coming here for the holy water. Some also bathed, even in winter - it was believed that bathing (not in the springs but in the Istra River; well, some springs are on the river bottom here, too) could heal the body and the soul. Well... I guess anybody who practices bathing in ice-cold water in winter should have excellent health. A couple of years ago the monastery was returned to the Church, but the museum still shares it with the monks. A very interesting place.

And one more place was Tzaritsino - 'Queen's (town)'. This beautiful palace residence in the old Russian style was built for the Empress Katherine by the architect Rastrelli, the great master of 'stone music'. But when the palaces were built, the Empress suddenly decided that she didn't like them - and they were just deserted. The place became known as 'accursed', and the palaces stood empty and deteriorating for long, long years. Until recently they were used by mountain-climbers for practicing; two years ago, restoration work started and now some buildings are reconstructed and look just great. And the surroundings are favored by Muscovites as a place for walking and bathing - a chain of circumjacent ponds is overgrown with weeds and reed, but the biggest one is deep, clean and nice. I though, tried a different approach to the palace - 'cutting corners' - and found myself in thick reed, with slurping swampy ground under my feet, and had some trouble finding my way.

Oh, about swamps. This September and October were really glorious 'golden autumn', and I decided to take several photos in a small swamp not far from our country-house. The place is truly beautiful - because people rarely walk in, though it's surrounded by country-houses ('dachas'). It wasn't half beautiful there! You could imagine yourself miles and miles from anything inhabited, with birches and firs, ferns and moss. Get the picture? But to take pictures, I had to undress, though it was a bit cool (about +8°C), and even so, not only my underpants, but my belly and chest were all dirty with sticky mud - a couple of times I managed to slip into mud-bogs. Once I even started

to imagine how I would drown and get preserved by peat, and in a couple of centuries my body would be discovered by the scientists who would see an almost naked body, pickled brown with peat and water, with an ancient Samsung camera on its neck. It would have been an interesting discovery, I think. But, alas for the future archaeologists, the pit wasn't very deep, and I only got cold and muddy, and had to bathe in a tiny lake in the middle of the swamp.

Well, I guess that's all for now. Bye! - and a merry Christmas and a very happy New Year to you and the TM readers.

CONSTITUTIONAL GOVERNMENT

by Brad Row

Part Two

*"English feudalism was the product of the chaos into which Western Europe was plunged by the decline of the Roman Empire. No such catastrophe has befallen the modern world, and no analogy drawn from modern times can serve to illustrate its social consequences. The disappearance of the Roman Peace was not a local event, the downfall of one state amongst many; it was a dissolution of the whole conception of government. Nor was it a sudden loss of equilibrium, capable of restoration while yet the memory and methods of order remained fresh in the mind. There was, instead, a gradual weakening of authority, lasting and increasing during many centuries, so poisoning the mentality of succeeding generations that the habit of law and order ceased to be the subconscious basis of their daily life and of their expectations for the future. The disorganisation of all social ties which this change of outlook implied was the cause as well as the effect of the waves of invaders which swept over the ruins of the old Empire."*¹

It may seem strange that I should commence an article about constitutional government with a potted dissertation on the emergence of English feudalism but what has to be remembered is that it was from feudalism that our modern institutions of representative government essentially sprang.

Somewhat contrary to what the quoted passage suggests, however, the seeds of feudalism lay within the Empire itself. The formation of a single political unit stretching from modern Scotland to Mesopotamia brought about an enormous and quite unprecedented level of economic expansion. We can see as early as the second century BC the formation of large agricultural estates known as *latifundia*. The extensive

military conquests of ancient Rome permitted many individuals to become fabulously wealthy and also generated an abundant supply of cheap slave labour. Large tracts of land could be acquired by those with the capital to do so and slave labour put to work farming it. The *latifundia* were in fact a sort of capitalist enterprise, in many ways not dissimilar from the plantations of America's antebellum South.

Getting the most out of one's human property has always been a problem for every slave owner. A free worker has powerful motives to increase his productivity: the prospect of getting a better-paid job elsewhere, but a slave has no such incentive. How do you get the most out of a slave? You can threaten him but how do you know that he isn't concealing his abilities for fear that if he reveals them you will simply create more work for him - work for which there will be no reward? The owners of the *latifundia* eventually (we cannot say exactly when) hit upon an answer of sorts: you indulge a little capitalism on the part of your slave. Rather than farming the estate by means of slave teams the estate would itself be divided up into plots of land which would be allocated to individual slaves and their families². In return for this the slave would be expected to make some form of fixed payment to his owner, eg: a portion of his crop, or if the slave's holding was insufficient to provide such a surplus, to work a certain number of days on central holdings retained by the slave owner who could readily ascertain if the slave was giving the the task his best endeavours by reference to what the slave was able to achieve on his own landholding. That this expedient could indeed lift the productivity of slave labour is undeniable. Centuries later the operators of Russia's collective farms were compelled to permit those who worked on them similar rights to private plots and for almost exactly the same reason. But for the owners of the *latifundia* there were other benefits as well. As the power of the Emperors diminished and the Empire became an increasingly lawless place the capacity of a slave owner to catch a runaway slave became practically non-existent. By offering his slave a holding of his own to farm the owner gave him a powerful incentive to stay put.

By the late Empire such large estates had become a feature of Roman rural life. Other factors encouraged the spread of this system as well. In the case of the slave its existence permitted him a rise in status toward that of the free man. In the case of the free farmer or peasant, however, there were other pressures driving him down toward the status of a slave.

By the time the Emperor Diocletian assumed the Imperial purple he found an Empire whose treasuries were exhausted by more than forty years of internecine civil war and facing barbarian incursions on almost every frontier. Revenues were hugely inadequate for the military and civil expenditures he needed to incur and his predecessors had simply met the gap by adopting the Roman equivalent of the printing press: they debased the coinage³. The technology might be

² Permitting slaves to have families may sound strange but it was a virtual necessity for the land-owner. The main source of slaves in any society which permits the institution is either military victories or natural reproduction. As the Empire declined the former grew increasingly fewer and further between and so the slave-owning class had to rely upon the latter method.

³ Ie, added base metal to make the gold and silver go further.

¹ Butt, Peter: *Introduction to Land Law*, 1980, p14

more primitive but the results were the same: rampant inflation which the government was powerless to control.

Diocletian responded to the situation with characteristically Procrustean vigour and the maintenance of adequate revenues became the central focus of his administration. Taxes were increased to absolutely unprecedented levels and every device known was employed to ensure their payment. Peasants were tied to the land to ensure continuity of the revenues. If any peasant did manage to flee then his neighbours were obliged to pay the taxes for which he would have been liable. Punishments were brutal. Life was no better for the tax collectors: city councils were charged with the collection of taxes in their region and if they should fail to meet the targets the difference had to be met from their own personal resources.

In the political environment of the Empire such a system had to operate powerfully against the interests of the poorer peasants. Burdened by a crushing yoke of taxation they sank inevitably into penury. For the owners of the great estates, however, things were different. If they did not have the means to meet the Emperor's taxes they certainly had the ability to avoid them. We see today how the rich can avoid their share of taxation and it was no less true in Roman times. If they did not necessarily move in high places these magnates would certainly have friends in them and their wealth could and did provide them with the means to bribe or otherwise persuade tax officials to look in the other direction.

Wars and economic crises played their role as well in the reduction of the free peasant class. A succession of good harvests might see a peasant succeed in accumulating some store of wealth only to have it obliterated by a squatting army or falling prices. Increasingly they found themselves obliged to turn to their wealthier neighbours for help.

That help came at a price. The peasant concerned would surrender his land to the magnate and receive it back on terms similar to that of his other slave tenants. Of course in legal terms the tenant remained a free man and so did his heirs but economically his situation was indistinguishable from that of the slaves whose plots adjoined his own. The relationship was not entirely exploitative, however. The magnate could and did shelter him from the Emperor's legion of tax collectors in his own interests as well as that of the peasant. Moreover in times of civil disturbance the magnate would organise his free and slave dependents into a quasi military force capable of fending off attackers.

The relationship was by no means purely economic, either. The magnate had always held the power of life and death over his slaves: the law had given him this right since time immemorial. By virtue of it the magnate became the source of police power to whom the slave looked when disputes arose with other slaves and the right of the magnate to exercise judicial power over those on his land became a part of accepted custom. It was only natural to extend this custom to his free tenants who found that the court of their lord was often more approachable and delivered more effective justice than that of the official government. That body, its internal administrative resources strained and often totally inadequate for the task of law enforcement frequently found it convenient to utilise the situation and any want of legality in the system was often supplied by investing the land owner with the powers of a local magistrate.

As the status of the free peasant and the rural slave came to increasingly resemble that of one another the same description came to cover both: the word "*serf*", a medieval French corruption of the Latin word *servus*, meaning a slave.

As the article suggests, this process was both the cause as well as the consequence of the Empire's decline.

For a variety of reasons this process did not develop as rapidly in the East as it did in the West. We need not go into those reasons now, but their results were enormous. By the late fourth century AD the division of the Empire into West and East had become all but irreversible. In the East the Emperors found a prosperous rural population to which they could look directly for their revenues. In the West they found a patchwork of local magnates who could and would evade all attempts to tax them. The consequences were momentous. By the close of the fifth century the Empire had all but disappeared in the West: in the East it was to survive for another millennium.

The Germanic tribes who overran the Western Empire were not innovators or revolutionaries: they admired the Romans and sought to imitate them. The new barbarian kings might confiscate some of the estates and hand them over to loyal followers or chieftains; in other cases the holdings were allowed to remain as they were. If life under the Empire had become uncertain and chaotic, however, after the Empire it became even more so. The barbarian kingdoms warred among themselves and with each other. Other waves of barbarian invaders pressed in upon them as well. Compounding matters, the Eastern Empire, not content to accept its losses in the West, attempted to regain territory there. To quote Hobbes, post Roman times became a war of all against all.

The barbarian kings could and did command the armies who served them but little more beside. Central police authority disappeared completely. The Romans had built a magnificent system of roads and communications which to some extent still survived but who would venture upon them when they were infested with thieves and brigands? Trade came to a standstill and to a very large extent so did the existence of a money economy. The new kings of Western Europe sometimes found the time and resources to maintain productive mints but even when they did the gold and silver coins they issued were more for purposes of raising the status of the prince who commissioned them than ensuring a functioning system of circulating currency. Nearly three centuries would elapse before the Emperor Charlemagne finally restored some measure of fiscal regularity to the Western world by the institution of his famous penny (styled a *denarius* after the old Roman coin of the same name) two hundred and forty of which were struck from a pound of silver. In the meantime economic life fell to a purely subsistence level.

In these circumstances how did the princes of Western Europe raise and equip the armies they needed to pursue their territorial ambitions? The answer did not elude them long: if land, not money, had become the measure of wealth then land would become the means by which their military officials were commissioned and paid.

As territory changed hands so the great estates would be seized and handed over to the successful king's immediate subordinates on one condition: that they provide him with armed men when occasion required. The progression was quite natural. The feudal lords (for so the slave-owning magnates of Roman times had by now become) were used to raising quasi-military forces for their own defence and other, less legitimate, purposes. If the condition of their ownership of the land became the provision of some part of the King's army it required no great stretch of the imagination or the available resources.

As time progressed this system of feudalism became systematised. The King would parcel out large parts of the realm to his immediate circle, the great barons and earls, in return for providing an army when the king most needed it. In turn these great nobles would divide their estates among lesser nobility for the same services and upon the same conditions. The process, known as *subinfeudation*, could con-

tinue some considerable distance: frequently as many as five or six levels of the nobility might lie between the king and the serfs who ultimately tilled the land.

Like everything feudalism became surrounded by custom and ritual. The lesser lord was obliged to do "homage" to the greater lord in return for the privilege of receiving his lands. The word homage comes from the French "homme" or Latin "homo" meaning "a man": the lesser lord was said to become "the man" of his superior noble. The ritual involved the lord doing homage to kneel before his lord and place his hands between those of the latter. By virtue of the ceremony the lord doing homage was thereafter said to "hold" his lands of the lord to whom homage had been done.

The system worked, after a fashion. By means of it Charlemagne was able to raise a formidable army and after having subjected most of Western Europe to his will was eventually able to expel the Muslim invaders from the south. But the system was calculated to diminish central authority. The king might well hand over a great estate to a baron in return for his loyalty and the provision of an army in time of war but what if the baron had other ideas? Naturally the king would only reward those who had demonstrated loyalty in the past but ingratitude is not an uncommon human trait. Moreover the relationship was hereditary. King John and Baron Fred might have been loyal comrades in arms tied together by experience of both good and bad times alike but would their sons necessarily feel the same way about each other?

Even more fundamentally the system was critically dependent upon *custom*. What services and dues the medieval serf owed his feudal lord was determined by reference to ancient practice. If five bushels of good wheat had been his lawful due in his father's time then so it would be for him as well. If the services the King might command from the baron of Burgundy had been the provision of five thousand men-at-arms when invaders threatened the kingdom then what would be good for the baron would be good for his sons and heirs as well. The trouble was, however, what if occasion arose when the king might need six thousand men instead of five. Custom might well preclude it even though the noble or serf was perfectly capable of providing the service required. The king still possessed a residual power to legislate changes but the nobility might well rise up against him, claiming custom and ancient usage on their side.

The centrifugal tendencies of the system were enormous. The power to judge those on one's land extended to both free and unfree alike. If Lords Guy and John both held their land of Count Brian and found themselves in a dispute with each other then it was not to the court of the king that both looked for justice but to the court of Count Brian. If Sir Percival and Sir Francis hold their lands of Lord John then, again, it is the court of Lord John and not that of Count Brian to which both owe their suit. Neither the king nor Count Brian could lawfully interfere.

Despite its pervasiveness, however, the system of feudal tenure never became entirely universal. Land could and did remain *allodial*: that is to say, without a lord, even the king. The latter might retain sovereign power over the land as does any government today but the owner of the land would owe nothing to the king or to any subordinate lord in the form of feudal services. "Held of the sun" medieval lawyers described such land and its situation was indeed enviable.

The foregoing discussion applies primarily to Western Europe during the so-called Dark Ages. England was a slightly different kettle of fish. The Anglo-Saxons are probably the only people on this planet of whom it can be truthfully said that they do not belong in *any* of the lands where they are presently found. As a nation they have elevated into an art form

a peculiar talent for locating choice pieces of real estate and evicting the original inhabitants. Australia, New Zealand and North America simply mirror the pattern of their first and original conquest: England itself.

The original inhabitants of England were Celtic tribes who spoke languages ancestral to their modern Gaelic forms. The Romans succeeded in conquering them as indeed they had earlier done with the related Celtic peoples who occupied what is now modern France but the pattern in Britain was not quite the same. The Romans came to that island far later than they did to ancient Gaul and their cultural influence was nowhere near as great. On the continent the use of Latin completely supplanted the Celtic languages but nothing quite so pervasive appears to have happened across the Channel. When the Empire fell both provinces were subjected to waves of invaders from what is now modern Germany but the results of these migrations were completely different.

In Gaul the Frankish conquerors found a Latin speaking population which considered itself entirely Roman. Once the original Frankish king, Clovis, (the founder of the Merovingian dynasty) had despatched the last Roman governor, Syagrius, from the scene he was basically free to rule the province as he saw fit (after a few wars here and there). The Roman Emperor in the East, Anastasius, appears to have provided him with some legitimacy in the eyes of his Gallo-Roman subjects by affording him an honorary consulate. The Franks soon learned the Latin vernacular of their subjects and were eventually absorbed into the general population. No traces of the Frankish language survive in modern French, which is as much a form of late Latin as is modern Italian and Spanish.

Britain followed another course. Under the Empire the province had long been troubled by raids and attacks across the North Sea from German tribes whom the Romans knew as the *Angli* and the *Saxonici*. Left open to invasion when the Romans withdrew their legions at the beginning of the fifth century Britain represented an opportunity which the Anglo-Saxons were not slow to take. Unlike their Gallic counterparts, however, the Britons soon organised their own political leadership and fought back. We even know some of their leaders' names: Ambrosianus Aurelianus, Vortigern and one Arturius of Camelot fame.

The result of this struggle was wholesale slaughter. The Britons fought back, but unsuccessfully, and were eventually driven out of their ancestral lands. The process was a slow one, however, and large tracts of the island remained outside Anglo-Saxon control for enormous lengths of time. There was an independent Prince of Wales until the thirteenth century and in Cornwall Celtic-speaking populations remained until modern times. When the *Angli* ultimately did succeed in subjugating the country to which they eventually gave their name, England, they did not appear as another ruling class, as their Frankish counterparts did in Gaul, but simply they either killed or drove out their Celtic adversaries. Linguistic development tells the story: modern English has had many influences but the Gaelic of the post Roman British is not one of them. The Anglo-Saxons did not bother to learn the language of their British foes: they were too busy either killing or expelling them.

No sooner had the English secured control over their new land but they found themselves under pressure from even more aggressive invaders. The Vikings took territory in and around towns such as York and eventually large tracts of eastern England were ceded to the kings of Denmark as the Danelaw.

That England should have been the object of such attention is not surprising. It is in fact a highly desirable piece

of real estate. Most of its lands are fertile and well watered. While ancient Romans and modern Australians might affect to despise it, the English climate, by the standards of these latitudes, is extremely mild. The fact that England today houses nearly fifty million inhabitants with virtual self-sufficiency is a tribute to the innate agricultural capacity of the country. Australia, with more than *sixty-three* times the land mass might well be over-stretched if it could ever do the same.

The last invader to look upon England with envious eyes (and with some prospects of success) was of course William, Duke of Normandy. I need not recount the story of the Conquest here. What counts, from the point of view of constitutional law, is that he brought with him the system of feudalism which had developed on the Continent and raised it to its highest pitch. Some form of native feudalism had emerged among the English but it was at best patchy by comparison with what the Normans brought to replace it. There would be no *allodial* land in England. The Crown seized everything and parceled it out among William's marshals and retainers according to William's pleasure and sense of obligation. There was to be no estate in England which was not ultimately held of the King.

If in England feudalism was developed to its highest degree then its problems and deficiencies, to which I have alluded earlier, expanded to a similar extent. The King's capacity to raise revenues was sharply circumscribed by feudal custom and precedent. His capacity to impose his will upon the great lords of the realm was also severely limited as King John found to his discomfort at Runnymede. Compelled to sign a great charter for the rights and liberties of his subjects (most especially those of the barons and earls who placed it before him) he and his successors found themselves obliged to grapple with the political exigencies of the feudal scheme.

If you cannot dictate to your subjects then perhaps it pays to consult with them. The Kings of England who summoned the important men of their Kingdom to meet with them in *parliament* were not incipient democrats or ardent champions of representative government - far from it. They fully appreciated, however, that no wide-reaching policy proposed by them could enjoy any measure of success unless it received some level of assent from their great and influential subjects. Parliament was the political vehicle by which that assent was to be delivered. Its membership read like a Who's Who of England in its day. All the great lords and the religious authorities were entitled to attend it. The towns and cities (whose economic importance grew in importance as the middle ages progressed) also secured representation there. Eventually these two strands separated to become the Houses of Lords and Commons with which we are familiar today.

There was nothing peculiarly English about the emergence of parliamentary institutions. They were the product of feudalism and as feudalism existed elsewhere those institutions did also. The Spanish *Cortes* and the French *Estates-General* were a product of the same political forces. The problem is not to explain why parliamentary institutions emerged in England so much as to understand why they did not fall into disuse as they did in the rest of Europe.

Gradually, and by means of parliament, the kings of England began to assert a measure of central authority. The process accelerated considerably during the time of King Edward I who employed the emerging parliament as the preferred instrument for enacting the large volume of legislation which was one of the more outstanding features of his reign. One of the most important measures enacted in this fashion, in the year 1290, was the Statute of *Quia Emptores* which ultimately brought feudalism to its gradual demise. The legislation put an end to *subinfeudation*, the process by which a feu-

dal lord might create another one beneath him. Henceforward this could no longer be achieved.

The more far-reaching implication of the statute was that the number of links in the feudal chain could only decrease. If, to provide an example, Lord John holds his lands of Count Brian who ultimately holds his lands of the King there are three links in this particular feudal chain. If Count Brian dies without heirs, or his estate is forfeited for treason (a not uncommon occurrence) then that link in the chain disappears forever. It was legally impossible for the King to place any lord between him and Lord John. Henceforward, after the passage of the statute, the structure of feudalism could only simplify.

Feudalism never quite died out, however, and today it survives in vestigial form in the land law of the countries to which England bequeathed its legal system. If you own a house in Sydney, for example, you are possessed of an estate in fee simple in free and common and socage. This means nothing to more than 99.9 percent of the Australian population but to a medieval nobleman it would have been crystal clear. The word "estate" hearkens back to the fact that in English law from the time of William the Conqueror only the Crown owns land outright: the best to which any other mortal can aspire is an estate entitling you to hold the land of the Crown subject to certain feudal dues (which have now been abolished).

The expression "fee simple" means that the land is yours to dispose of you as you please, either by sale or by will. In medieval times there were other, more limited, "fees" which carefully circumscribed the people upon whom the land could devolve: usually the eldest son at the death of the holder. The phrase "free and common socage" described the nature of the services which were expected of the holder and of the powers which he was entitled to exercise in return: it comes from the old word *soke*, meaning the exercise of judicial power: the ancient right of the feudal lord to sit in judgment over his serfs.⁴

Of course King Edward I was no revolutionary, anxious to engineer the extinction of the very system which had brought him to power. His concerns in the passage of the Statute were much more immediate. The more subinfeudation that took place the further removed were the King and the great lords from ultimate control of the land and its profits. It was in their interests to limit the process, if they could.

Political systems often outlive the circumstances which give them birth and the same was no less true of parliament. If the King wished to exact more from his subjects than their feudal dues he would have had to obtain their consent in parliament. If he wished to impose laws overriding feudal obligations that consent was likewise required.

The decline of feudalism had other consequences. As trade and commerce began to extend throughout the Kingdom disputes were bound to emerge which could not be resolved in the old feudal courts: the only common lord between

⁴ For the irremediably curious socage was the great residuary tenure. The others were tenure in *knight service* (which obliged the holder to provide his lord with a fixed number of armed horsemen), tenure in *serjeanty* (which obliged the holder to provide his lord with services of a personal nature, eg: the king's butler and his sword-bearer etc would have held tenure in serjeanty), tenure in *frankalmoin* (which obliged the holder, usually a priest or a religious body, to provide services of a religious nature to the lord, eg: prayers for his soul after he died). Tenure in socage denoted services which did not fall into the preceding categories: usually they were commuted into the payment of a fixed money sum. In 1660 all the other tenures were abolished and converted into tenures in socage.

the subjects concerned would be the King himself. The amount of judicial business flowing toward the King consequently began to increase beyond the capacity of any single individual to deal with it. A special council, the *Curia Regis*, was formed to assist the King in his judicial duties and from that structure eventually emerged the common law courts of England. The judges of that council would be obliged to travel to the distant parts of the kingdom in order to perform their judicial duties. Frequently they would be requested to administer the law of the feudal courts alongside which they initially conducted their business. Their response was always that they were there to administer the *common law*, ie: the law which was common to the entire Kingdom and not the specific rules and practices developed in the courts of its feudal lords, no matter how great. The expression stuck, and to this day we speak of the English common law in a variety of contexts.

It had other consequences for the legal system. Royal judges travelling to distant towns often had little knowledge of the background to the causes which they were called upon to try and were very poorly equipped to ascertain truth from falsehood. In order to assist them in this task a practice emerged whereby twelve local citizens, of sufficient respectability, would be summoned to hear the case alongside the judge. Known as a jury they would be expected to be familiar with the litigants and could return a verdict based upon their personal assessment of their character and their general reputation. This institution was to have a powerful effect upon the development of English law, as we shall see in my succeeding essay.

[Continued p.45]

THE R & R DEPT

TERRY HORNSBY, 66 Johns Ave., Lofthouse, Wakefield, W. Yorkshire WF3 3LU, UK.

Please note that I have changed both my name and address. I was once Terry Broome of Leeds, but I am now Terry Hornsby, of Wakefield! I've also married and become the worried owner of a semi-detached and a mortgage to match.

I must once again take umbrage with your book reviews, especially the capsules, which basically paraphrase the blurbs on the back covers - anyone can read these blurbs for themselves. Give a line or two of plot and a line or two of criticism/praise. If your summery is more plot than critics, it *isn't* a review, it's an advert.

[As you remarked, these aren't book criticisms, they are reviews - my opinions, and the idea is to give the prospective reader some idea of what the book is like by juxtaposing my likes with those of the individual reader. - Ron.]

Get your tenses right. You keep using the past tense, as if the events you describe from the review books are real. Always use the present tense, to indicate that a reader new to

the story will see it unfold as it does for the protagonists, as part of their present.

MEMORY AND DREAM, by the way, is possibly magic realism, or urban fantasy. It definitely isn't a mainstream novel.

Glad to see such praise for Mae Strelkov's letters and articles. She is an amazing woman, and always engrossing. Strangely, I was watching THE SOUTH BANK SHOW's programme on Eva Peron and the original star of Evita the other night and was reminded that both Mae and Eva Peron inhabit(ed) the same country, and the one the British went to war with in the 1980's. Such amazing contrasts in life out there.

(24.7.97)

ROD MARSDEN, PO Box 19, Spit Junction, NSW 2088.

I'm beginning to believe that the new Federal government won't be happy until the Navy is reduced to one man and a row-boat. Civilian clerical positions are the ones in most danger. The "uniforms", understandably, tend to take care of their own. I can't believe that they will continue to reduce Customs staff numbers - not with the Sydney Olympics in the not too distant future. Also, with the peanut-butter scare we've just had. Sure the problem was home-grown, but it could have come from overseas.

Andrew Darlington's article on Dan Dare in THE MENTOR #90 was interesting. Did you know that EAGLE first came into being as an answer to USA comics flooding the British market? I must say, though, that they weren't much of an answer. At least not for me. I never had much time for Dan Dare but, when I was well out of my teens, I did warm to Judge Dredd. The stories were good and, at first, they had this Spanish guy doing the art who was great. After reading Andrew's poem ESCALATOR TO ANDROMEDA, I think our good friend should stick to writing articles.

Do my eyes deceive me? Bill (Dr. Strangelove) Congreve wants a nuclear accident at Alice Springs?! Yeah! Let's nuke the rock!! I suppose that's one way of getting the Aborigines living there off the dole (and into outer space), but isn't it a bit extreme? Do you think the Yanks would cooperate? Maybe we can tell them that if they heat the rock it will provide cheap energy for the southern hemisphere for yonks. Make it really glow.

I think that while there is life there's hope. Besides, I'm sure that not every Aborigine living in the Alice is on welfare. Jobs are scarce throughout Australia for Australians of every type - not just Aborigines. I'm afraid that Aborigines just like the rest of us, have to take their chances with the job market. Good hunting, I say, to those in search of work.

Bill should also note that problems with alcohol abuse are not strictly Aboriginal. There are plenty of white alcoholics around. My sympathy, as always, is with the battler. Life's too short to worry about those who have given up and won't be brought back to trying again.

Reading through the letters, it becomes obvious that censorship is on many varied minds. Robert Frew compliments you, Ron, on your courage. He mentions your Biggles collection. Biggles has been banned from some schools but the reasons, for me, seem very strange. Some psychologists read more into a work than what's really there. Is Biggles gay or is some psychologist just really nuts? Your call.

As for John J. Alderson from Victoria, I wish to throw down my gauntlet. If he can put together an interesting, informative article on censorship based on sociological research (3,000-4,000 words) I will be happy to publish it in PROHIBITED MATTER. Your letter brought up some interesting points, Mr Alderson, but *more* is definitely required. Is the challenge accepted?

I agree with Terry Jeeves. Male or female show-offs are hated. Not, however, genuine intelligence. (30.7.96)

JULIE VAUX, 2A Oliver Rd, Chatswood, NSW 2087.

THE EDITORIAL SLANT (in Mentor 90) - mmm after living in Armidale for a few years 15C seems an average winter temperature.

I can sympathize with Buck Coulson's story of Elli - I know what it's like to have a 70 pound "puppy" playing with you. At my former residence one of our neighbours further up the street "owned" an extremely independent Airedale/Alsation cross desexed female. She looked and weighed more like a malnourished undersized Irish Wolfhound! She also used to take advantage of my soft spot for dogs by "hiding" behind the bushes and leaping out at me when I was walking down from the bus stop. Probably cos she knew the worst response she'd receive was a scolding if she had muddy feet. This dog had a "nanny" mentality and was quite content to spend most of the school holidays following her "pack" of small boys around the neighbourhood but would go into a decline of depression for a few days on their return to school... One of her most amusing habits was the way she would come down to our front gate to give her respects by wagging her tail and a mutual bout of polite sniffing to our much older dachshund who she apparently "saw" as a retired alpha female. (A fairly accurate perception given Cleo's habit of dominating larger younger dogs by standing her ground and staring them "down" and occasionally baring her fangs - "YO! look what big teeth I have for a small dog - it's only my legs that are short you idiots on stilts")

On the subject of "Lifting Your Game"/Writing skills, I recommend Graves and Hodges READER OVER YOUR SHOULDER and those two unfortunately out of print classics - grrr Quiler-Couch's ART OF READING and ART OF WRITING. Although written in the twenties much of what he says is still valid today. A "classical" essay, criticising "technobabble" and jargon is Lucian's HOW TO WRITE HISTORY, whose title really should be translated ironically as how *not* to write history. Many of the points he makes about bad history writing could still be applied today to much modern journalism, poplar histories and other genre writing which is supposed to deal with the recording of the truth. Some day I'm going to translate this into modern English, perhaps as a paraphrase rather than a more strictly accurate translation which would require extensive footnoting.

POETRY, TOO. Maybe I should translate Dunar's LAMENT FOR THE MAKARIS/Lament for the artists/experts killed by the plague from medieval Scots into modern English. Timor mortis conturbat me - especially when I see phonetic spelling - Bridh? Layd and Buryd? Why not Laid and buried? or lai'd and bur'd. There's a perfectly acceptable convention of using apostrophes to represent unstressed syllables with the schwa vowel in English. If one is going to spell phonetically perhaps legend should become lejen since final d's after n are often dropped in colloquial speech in many dialects of English and a few other North European languages too.

Here's the last sentence in phonetic spelling - if 'n iz go'n to spel fonetiklee perhaps lejeud shud becom lej'n sinz final d's afta n ar of'n dropp'd in collowkual speesh in manee dialeks of english an a few otha nor' uroarpean languaj'z too! - aksos th ratha brood aksen' - back to Compromise English!

By the way wouldn't a "phonetic" vengeance be venjenz? and as for death changing to deth - er isn't the final "th" in death one which rhymes with breath and breadth hence -> "dh" dedh?

[See Julie's translation of Dunbar thish. - Ron.]

On to the R&R department. A reminder to our readers from a former postal employee - yes - barcode readers in Australian sorting machines do "read" via ultraviolet - the dye may look red to the naked eye but it is a Uv reader. Don't use envelopes in bright primary hues - it tends to read christmas covers be they green, red, blue, or purple as black. Light colours are ok. (5.8.96)

BUCK COULSON, 2677W-500N, Hartford City, IN 47348, USA.

Interesting article on constitutional government by Brad Row... Good funny article by Sergey, but I don't think I want to go to any Russian conventions (and I'm positive that I never will go to any.) Mary-Louise Stephens touches on a totally different way of life.

I agree with Jim Verran on "meaningless adjectives", *except* for "close relatives". One has both close relatives and distant relatives, depending on how many generations back the relationship began, and to some extent how much interaction there is between the families. My closest relatives are now first cousins, and I've only seen one of them in the past 10 years or more, so they aren't very close.

Underlining book passages is not vandalism *if* the book belongs to the underliner. I have passages marked in some of my books, and page numbers listed in the front for easy location of them. They're for reference, either to quote for a review or to refer to later. Of course, underlining is vandalism if the book belongs to someone else, including your local library.

I thoroughly enjoy Mae's reports on life in Argentina, and I'm glad that she and her family are doing better these days.

Enjoyed Bill Congreve's article. Most North Americans wouldn't refer to "washboard" roads, however, because few of them anymore know what a washboard looked like, and in the midwest, at least, gravel roads are few and far between. We live in a small and rather poor county, but nearly all the roads are now asphalt covered, because the "blacktop" roads require less maintenance and thus economically efficient. I wouldn't climb Ayer's Rock if the aborigines objected, but then I never bothered about doing what everyone else does, and I have as much respect for primitive religions as for any other kind (which isn't much, admittedly.)

How much female infanticide is due to favoring males, and how much to the Chinese policy of reducing the population, or are the two intertwined? One advantage males have in reducing population is that they can't bear children. Women can and do, even sometimes when they don't really want to. I've been told, Vicki, that New Yorkers walk primarily because walking is faster than driving and then trying to find a parking space in New York. True? On writing about rape, there *are* laws against "inciting to violence". I doubt if they've ever been proved against an author of fiction, but they do provide a rationale for objecting to rape scenes.

I've never met any woman who claims that females are superior to males, but I've read some of their writings; they aren't shy about expressing themselves. There are a lot of males who claim superiority; why shouldn't there be some females who do? Equal time....

Depends on what you mean by "posed photos", Mae. Juanita and I had a few done by a professional photographer - usually when the bank was offering them free as advertising and public relations, and they're dug out when a con committee wants a photo of the fan guests. (Which is not often.) But when my family used to have family reunions at my grandfather's home, someone in the group usually herded everyone together and took a group photo and sent copies to each branch of the family. Since I've only seen one cousin in the

last 20 years or so, those photos have become part of the family record and I refer to them every so often, for one reason or another. "Ignorance is the mother of devotion" - lovely phrase.

I agree theoretically with the idea that English spelling could be vastly improved. However, having learned the present system, I am bitterly opposed to learning a new one, which is probably why any changes are going to come gradually and will never be totally accepted until the older generation does off. Currently, most language changes are coming from advertising, which is the poorest way to do it. (Of course, not having come from a non-English speaking country, I underestimate the problems, because I never had them.) And I object to "gramma" for "grammer" because (A) I pronounce the concluding "r", and (B) "gramma" is my father's or mother's mother....

I agree with nearly everything in Michael Hailstone' letter - will wonders never cease? The exception is his comments to Mae Strelkov, but then I don't think he has much understanding of people. Books, theories, factual information, yes. People, no.

Pam Boal is correct about fandom. I found it relatively late; I was 24 when I attended my first convention, though I'd been reading fanzines for a year or so previously and reading science fiction for some years before that. And it really did change my life; for one thing, I found girls with the same attitude toward life that I had, and married one of them. Without fandom, I might be an embittered old bachelor (instead of a sour old married man....)

I don't know that all midwestern schools have air conditioning, but most of them do. For one thing, consolidation of small schools into large schools began in the 1950s and continued into the 1970s, and most of the large schools required new buildings. (My own school disappeared in 1966.) And new buildings, in those days, were air-conditioned. Of course, I'm more knowledgeable about Indiana that I am about other midwestern states. The consolidation was fought very hard at the time, but it was probably needed. My graduating class from highschool comprised 13 people; this is not cost-efficient.

Come on, Maria-Louise, one accident shouldn't stop you from driving. I was taught by my father (probably a mistake, actually) and had my share of problems. Once while I was learning I took a turn too wide and got a short post caught between fender and bumper (in those days, car bumpers weren't just a front-end decoration, they stuck out in front of the car). Couldn't go either way. I have no idea what the post was for; it served no obvious purpose. So my father, after telling me what he thought in no uncertain terms, walked a quarter-mile or so home, got a saw, and cut down the post. That taught me to pay attention when making turns, but I didn't stop driving.

On the other hand, I don't own a computer. If I have to get one to communicate, I will, but so far the typewriter and the US Mail have served me admirably.

Ron, MENTOR 90 arrived in an envelope with no stamps, no postmarks, and no evidence that it had ever possessed either one. You got a fix in with the Australian PO? Even when Juanita and I had a bulk mailing permit, we had to rubber-stamp the envelopes....

[No, I pay for the mailing of the overseas issues by credit card; what the PO does after that I don't know. - Ron.]

I wasn't going to comment on Laurraine's statement that California schools need air-conditioning more than mid-western ones, but Juanita said "Californians are wimps." We were out there once and Juanita and a friend toured a greenhouse - connected to a movie studio, I believe. (Juanita has no particular interest in greenhouses per se.) Anyway, at one

door the guide explained that this was the tropical plants room, so prepare to be uncomfortable. The group went in, and the Californians were gasping at the heat and humidity. Juanita took a breath, muttered "Indiana in July" and paid no further attention to atmosphere. Southern California does have higher temperatures, but it lacks midwestern humidity. Now and then we get days when it's 100° and 99% humidity, and stay indoors, but mostly it's just one of those things you put up with.

(3.8.96)

BRENT LILLIE, 10 Cherub St, Togun, QLD 4224.

TM 90 was the best issue in quite a while. It made for entertaining reading from front to back, with plenty of informative articles of varying length; in fact, the entire issue seemed to fit together neatly, like a jigsaw puzzle. Thankfully, the "battle of the sexes" theme seems to be wearing out, and it appears we have entered a travel-politics phase.

My favourite piece was Brad Row's article on Constitutional Government. Well-researched, it must take out the prize for best article in the last five issues. That's my opinion, anyway. I'm glad you kept at him to do the article, Ron, it was definitely worth the effort. The more things change, the more they stay the same, eh?

A close second was Sergey Lukyanenko's FANCON - *How It Was & Why I Won't Go To It Again*. Truly a tale of woe, but something like a happy ending, at least. Maybe Woody Allen can make a black comedy out of it and screen in on SBS. I don't blame Sergey for not wanting to go again. The small explanation at the end clears up the picture somewhat. The con wouldn't have done a lot for Lev's political aspirations. He deserves everything he gets.

Buck's contribution always makes for feet-up, comfortable reading, but it took me a while to figure out whether NOT THROUGH THE FLOWERS was fiction or non-fiction. It had a lot to live up to after the preceding articles, and paled a little in comparison. I liked it, though.

Plenty of Mae this issue, with A PLANET MUCH LIKE EARTH, plus her lengthy LOC. Thank you Andrew Darlington for ESCALATOR TO ANDROMEDA FOR A 1950s SF WRITER. Good poem.

Andrew follows up with a piece on Dan Dare, the old and the new. I never was a Dan Dare fan but Andrew always does a creditable job on his articles so it kept me involved. Question: what would Dan Dare be if he was cloned?

Next, oh no, more battle of the sexes stuff, in Alderson's TWO BRITTLE UTOPIAS. Let's more on, people. Things swing back into synch with Bill "Bush Tucker Man" Congreve's outback travel guide and book review, which, I may add, was well-written, humorous and enjoyable.

Ron, how about something on TM itself: when the first issue came out, the reason's behind it's origin, etc? I'd be interested in such a piece. I'm sure many others would be, too.

(20.08.96)

[I was saving all that for issue #100, as I've gone into it several times before. - Ron.]

JOHN ALDERSON, Havelock, VIC 3465.

THE MENTOR 90 was awaiting me when I returned home from India. I like to go there for winter because it's warmer, though I admit that so is Cairns, but the cost of hotels in Australia is such that I would be sleeping under a bridge after a couple of nights whilst in India a dollar goes nearly as far as it ought. The Guest House I stayed in at Jaiselmer cost a little over a dollar per night. However when I got back to Delhi it rained every day and my old bones ached like hell and I was glad to be away. Whilst in Jaiselmer there was an inter-

esting public er... argument. I gather that a family had been turned out of the apartment they had lived in. The old man was sitting on the road sobbing his heart out and there was much talking and milling around and the police walked about blowing their whistles, and one man had his face slapped for his part in the affair. Meanwhile I was sitting having a glass of chai with some other westerners. One London lad said something that shocked me. "By now," he said, "in London, half a dozen police cars would have been torched."

The essay on the Government of Rome by Brad Row was interesting. There are of course two views of what Governments ought to be and when people talk of an efficient dictator being the best government they mean a government which can be ruthlessly efficient with total disregard of the people, or anything else. A couple of days ago I had some visitors and they expressed their admiration of some wattles growing amongst my eucalyptus and asked if I had planted them. "No," I said, "they are prickly wattle and were until recently noxious weeds. Now the government hasn't enough money to eradicate them and so they have ceased to be noxious. Governments being short of money saves us from a lot of bastardy." The other view of government is that it's a bad thing and the less we have of it, and the less efficient it is the better. (5.9.96)

CATHERINE MINTZ, 1810 South Rittenhouse Square, 1708 Philadelphia, PA 19103-5837, USA.

THE MENTOR 90 arrived here yesterday, Friday the thirteenth. We have a local club dedicated to breaking all the better-known taboos every time Friday comes up thirteen, probably because they get their faces on the TV, and so we have the usual round of shot of people opening umbrellas indoors, walking under ladders, and breaking mirrors. As one of the newspeople pointed out, they must be right, none of this stuff is dangerous, for the club members keep coming back -

Tedious, say I.

I was much struck by Bill Congreve's comments about Alice Springs, a place I know only from the TV series, where it certainly looked horrible enough. I don't recall that aboriginals got much play, although they are, of course, a regular feature on PBS, as well as the Discovery and Learning channels.

I enjoyed Congreve's description of the busted boot tree, which as a local analog. In some neighborhoods in Philadelphia, it is traditional for high school students who get a new pair of track shoes to tie the laces of the old pair together, and hurl them up into the phone or electric wires. Some places you can see whole flocks of Nikes and Keds roosting together until the utilities have time to fish them down. Unlike the creatures in OR ALL THE SEAS WITH OYSTERS they do not seem to breed.

Having acquired a previously-owned cat in the last year, I was interested in Buck Coulson's adventures with Elli. Valentine, once Yum Yum, was owned by an older lady who broke a hip and had to go into a retirement home. He is valiantly trying to turn me into the perfect owner: someone who sits still, preferably in front of the TV. When you turn it on he comes right over and settles down to watch. Like Elli, he, too, seems to be growing younger, having discovered catnip, paper balls, and how to climb up into the bookcases. (14.9.96)

PAULINE SCARF, Sydney, NSW.

Enjoyed CONSTITUTIONAL GOVERNMENT by Brad Row. I found it fascinating that consuls could only hold office for 12 months and that it was frowned on to stand for more than one term. Pity that did not happen with modern politicians. Well, in some cases, anyway!

FANCON by Sergey Luckyanenko was interesting regarding the hazards experienced when attending a Russian fancon. What a drag!

THE YANKEE PRIVATEER by Buck Coulson. Your job sounds great, Buck. You must enjoy reading all the new SF. Good luck with the dog.

LIFTING YOUR GAME by Jim Verran - an interesting and practical array of books.

A PLANET JUST LIKE EARTH by Mae Strelkov. It gets more fascinating with each issue. Mae, you should put all your extracts together and write a book.

I also found THE REIGN OF DAN DARE by Andrew Darlington to be enjoyable reading.

Last, but not least IN DEPTH by Bill Congreve. I loved hearing about Bill's travels. Have been to Uluru myself and enjoyed retracing his steps. I agree with Bill that the Olgas are much more fascinating and full of atmosphere. (1.9.96)

HARRY CAMERON ANDRUSCHAK, PO Box 5309, Torrance, CA 90510-5309, USA.

MENTOR #90 arrived a few weeks ago with no stamps on it and a request from the Post Office for \$3.40 postage. I mention this as a caution in case you forgot the postage for other USA copies, because the envelope was also marked "return for postage". But since it was considered bulk mail, and you didn't write "return postage" guaranteed" it could very well have ended up in the dead letter office, depending on which mail clerks handled it. I guess the Torrance mail clerks are aware that I receive a lot of overseas mail and have paid postage due letters in the past. Still, if the number of LOCs from USA fans is down this time around, it may be that their copies wound up in the dead letter office rather than being forwarded for postage. Alas, these little problems do happen.

[Looks as though I'll have to have a quiet word to the Australia Post, and may have to end up buying stamps rather than using my credit card to pay the postage. - Ron]

By the way, thanks for your comment on page 37 that the Australian Post Office uses fluorescent ink to aid sorting. I wonder what the exact coding is? Here in the USA, we now not only have the bar code in the lower-right corner of the front of the envelope to sort by zip code, we also have an ID TAG in part of the new RBCS (Remote Bar Code System) that I am now learning and which is the reason this letter was mailed in Norman, Oklahoma. I am attending my 17th Post Office school here in Norman.

And of course the article by Bill Congreve grabbed my attention, when he comments sourly on tourists (like himself? like ME??)... "hordes of mindless idiots who are out to collect another experience to tell their mates in the pub back home." Well, yes, and did you read the article about my Italian vacation that I wrote for FOSFAX?

[Yes, I did. Very interesting. As are the other articles in various fanzines about travels, in both Mexico and South America... - Ron]

I should mention that my next vacation will be in November 1997, when I go on a 24 day expedition to Antarctica. I have already put down the \$500 deposit and need to find another \$4,000 (American of course) to pay for the vacation and maybe \$300 to outfit myself with the recommended cold weather gear. Still, that \$4,000 comes out to about \$200/day and after all includes air fare so I think it is worth it.

Ah yes, and Darlington sent me on a nostalgia trip with his article on Dan Dare. I can still remember EAGLE, and I looked forward to it every week, when my Grandfather would bring home the copy. And I indeed remember REIGN OF THE ROBOTS. When I came permanently to the USA in the summer of 1958, I was heart-broken at the thought of never reading

Dan Dare again. My 13 year old brain was right at the level of that comic strip.

So I must admit a certain satisfaction that the strip is now back in print as books. True, I cannot afford to buy the books right now, even if I had the room (I don't), but maybe someday I can buy all those Dan Dares and see how well they hold up after 40 years.

And let us remember the Cold War background of Dan Dare. On 4 October 1957 I became 13 years old, and Sputnik One was launched. A couple of weeks later the Windscale Nuclear Reactor Fire caused much alarm. Both the Space Race and the Arms race took an ugly turn.

By the way, congratulations on keeping your job as your department cuts back. The US Post Office is still cutting back, and I sometimes wonder how secure my job is. Probably better than that of the RBCS clerks. The Post Office want to use non-PO clerks so it can pay minimum wages of \$5/hour or less. And the managers are trying to get Mexican women to do the job via telephone, also at \$4... per day. The concept of a "living wage" has been lost in the Post Office and morale has gone way down-hill, not that it was very good in the first place.

Getting back to Congreve, I should mention that his article is the very first that I have read about Uluru. All the travel literature I have read here in the USA still refers to it as Ayers Rock. Of course the main reason I have been reading travel literature about Australia is the fact that Australia may win the 1999 Worldcon bid. If it does, and IF I can get the vacation time from the Post Office, I will have 3 weeks to explore Australia. Say one week for the Worldcon itself... that leaves two weeks to travel around. So anyhow, just what is the significance of *Uluru vs Ayers Rock*? I assume *Uluru* is some sort of native word?

As for how to deal with tourists in sacred places, who knows? On my Italian trip most of the churches had signs asking tourists to be modestly dressed. No shorts on men, knees covered for women in skirts and dresses. I was informed it was an ongoing battle, especially in summer. A somewhat different problem crops up in places like Stonehenge and other paleolithic sites in Britain, where hordes of pseudo-Druids and New Age Pagans and other fringe groups try to monopolize the sites. Exactly what is the connection between the old sites and the modern New Ager is hard to say, other than wishful thinking.

I need to break off and go into town... for an AA meeting. Oddly enough, this meeting is just a few blocks from SUGARS, a nightclub that has a large attendance from College students and Postal students due to its almost-naked dancers. They used to be nude dancers. But an angry group of somebody or the other (which may or may not have included some feminists) passed a law requiring 3 strategic coverings on dancing women. So SUGARS covered up whilst another nightclub, WALTER MITTYS, went bankrupt. Gee wiz, and I've no idea if the law covers naked dancing *men*. Probably. But this is in the middle of the Bible Belt and little overt homosexual activity is visible. Norman tries to be a respectable college town. (16.9.96)

MAE STRELKOV, 4501 Palma Sola, Jujuy, Argentina.

I used to say "I can blather away like at a party of friends". But in print my nonsense keeps existing. It didn't worry me till lately. I thought, "Nobody'll be hurt."

By "hurt", I suppose I mean "embarrassed". Among our sons, I've a Mennonite in Canada (born 1938 in Southern Chile), who came a couple of months ago for a visit with Norma his wife. They took so many videos and made copies here for us as well, it's more than one can spend so many

hours just seeing anew. I don't. Besides, it also embarrasses me to see myself being as crazy in real life as in my free-wheeling letters. I mean, joking, and startling the innocent till they learn to take it in their stride.

Our Tony's wife, Graciela, has a friend from girlhood who is the director of Jujuy-town's leading TV station. For several years Graciela has been trying to get me interested in an interview on my studies. (Especially showing how similar Quichua is to archaic Chinese). I kept putting it off. It's been fun yakking away at your cosmopolitan Mentor gang - you're all far away and who ever sees me? But this?

Well, finally, Graciela told me, "She's coming this Friday," (or whenever it was - the 5th of July, anyway.) It was too late to put it off yet again. So I dressed up fearfully, for I do usually look sloppy, as I must confess. Very elegantly, looking like a serious British lady of a "certain age" (79 and white-haired), I waited. I'd threatened Graciela, "I'll pretend to be very pious and holy so the viewers in this pious province won't be disgusted."

"You won't," grinned Graciela, knowing that when I get going, I get going and forget to be respectable.

So they came. The lady, (she's the province's Governor's wife, and he's trying to clean up all the shady doings of bygone times all around us here), she looked at me rather worried. (As she told our young 'uns later: "I didn't expect much. But I'm just delighted. We got so much material!")

Two delightful young, modern-thinking camera-men came with her, and one went off with her all over our little aldea of Villa Monte, filming (with a video of a powerful type) all the local folk, our friends. The grade-school also.... the scenery. (It's so spectacular, the three plan to return in spring and go up the trail to the top - where the tapirs live in unreachable canyons and a reedy lake - and film it all for her station.) Meanwhile, the other camera-man was filming our life right here - the tapir, now very big already and friendly. They've already put on TV the tapir sequences in their program on Ecology. The locals who work in making things out of leathers, woods, etc, especially one of our favorite neighbors (Benecio) they've also put on TV. All the harmless stuff. Even a bunch of local teenagers in costume dancing the native dances on our lawn.

Then came my inescapable interview. Before that, the camera-man who'd stayed here, (don't let him film all the pigs, it's not properly organized yet!" cried our young 'uns running after him, kind of flapping their hands helplessly but he ignored them, video-reporters do! and I'm sure the happy, fat pigs got into the TV program somehow (even if their surroundings are primitive still). Well, the charming young man told me, "Now walk towards me. I want to have you by yourself walking forward."

"Graciela, come!" I cried, and grabbed her around the shoulder. "I won't walk by myself," I told the nice young man. "I want to have all my friends with me, and she's a very favorite of mine." Graciela, in a long poncho being very native, was pleased, and we walked towards him cheerfully. (But I didn't see the red light wink on the video - the bigger one he carries on his shoulder or set up on a tripod.) He looked a bit disgusted and I was pleased. I hide myself behind my family, locally, you see. (Can't hide from you all, but then my "paper-persona" maybe fools you. I'm really *much more serious* most of the time. "The devil made me do it" goes a saying, I'll amend, "The angels make me do it." Or maybe the gnomes Vadim used to see in the 1960s when we studied the pictographs in Northern Cordoba. (Plus Pachamama and her peers. Till I said, "Enough! This isn't a serious approach." I mean, I may be crazy, my friends and even my hubby may get

these dreams and semi-visions, but I wade through it all sternly, *grimly* "sane". Hopefully!)

So, anyway, the directora returned with her cameraman ever so cheerful, and told Camera Man One, "Get them all walking forward together. There's still enough light for a few minutes more outdoors."

We tried rounding up four grandchildren who ran off in four directions, four young-uns, (Tony, Graciela, Sylvia, Carlos), and poor Vadim who wanted to beg off but I said, "Let's get it over - come on!" And I hooked him. So at last we were ready and started walking forward - though a couple of toddlers ran around and then ran off again. We walked right into a row of Potentates near the gate, or at least would-be "great local politicians" hoping to be filmed too. (They'd heard of the goings on and rushed here in their cars.)

"Well, now," said the directora ignoring them. "Come now for the interview indoors," she said to me. I'd been talking politely, friendly as always, to the would-be "politicos-on-film". So they had nothing to do but drive away.

I should add, Carlos had slaughtered a big pig and put it in our outdoor mud oven he'd over-heated and it seems it burned slowly away. I thought I saw a lot of smoke but Carlos didn't know what to do about it. So for supper our visitors had a nice burnt offering.

So we sat in the small front room on a "bed-sofa", she and I. The other half of the little room contains the huge freezer on one side of the front door, and on the other a TV topping an upended trunk my grandma had, all her years of travelling from the US to China and back. (From the mid 1800s it must date and has its own stories I'll tell some other time.)

I kind of faced her with a pious expression, my best! She started asking telling questions... in due course I had to tell her what I liked best to eat. (I thought, "Certainly not asado. My remaining teeth can't cope with that.")

Actually, my favorite excuse for putting off the interview had been, "Not while I'm nearly toothless. Wait till I get some teeth. But if I got them I'd be clicking them and sucking at them like all old people do. Besides, I don't need them. I do fine." (It's my top teeth that are gone, and the bridge I used to have when I tried it on tentatively dropped right out of my mouth when I laughed. Mind you, I really do *not* want false teeth. What's wrong with my grandmotherly hearty laughter, that fills many a family video, I fear? Alice too, on her trip from the USA five years back, sneaked up on me when I was in bed with her little boys and our bigger granddaughter, still then tiny. I was playing the small electronic organ for the kids (Ed in Patagonia gave us it when he bought a bigger one for his eldest girl.) We were singing all the nonsense songs, "There was an old man with a beard" and so on, I'd learned because my atheist Aunt Mary kept sending me music books she herself wrote and published in Boston for young pupils of hers. So I was throwing myself about freely in delight that the little boys and I knew all the old ditties, and suddenly I looked up and there in the hall Alice was filming away.

"WHAT - ARE - YOU - DOING?"

She was embarrassed to have been caught.

"She was filming you, ma," put in Sylvia.

"Can you do it in this poor light?"

"Yes."

"And the music?" I asked.

"It comes through too."

"Oh, goodness, and I made so many mistakes when I tried to remember all the tunes."

"Well, let's try again. This time you'll remember."

"Absolutely no." And that was that.

Funny thing, Alice later wrote from Canada, "Whenever we play that scene, Cristopher - age 3, he was then - 'won't let anybody talk.' It seems I must be listened to 'reverently'."

So much for my toothless old-lady-type laughter! Children love it, I see. I'm just like my own grandma save she kept her teeth in even when she laughed her head off. They were "proper persons" in those days! Kept their hair up, too! I think I enjoy mocking my old age. I used to have a sexy way - just the way I laughed and talked and walked. Could get any job I wished in Buenos Aires, well paid and all. But when some boss tried making a pass, I put on my missionary face and froze them without any word but a mocking grin added when the trick worked. As it always did. They didn't sack me. I was a high-speed stenographer and translator. Wrote the bosses' letters in English for them too, for the poor dears wrote such flowery Spanish, it simply wouldn't do, as I made them see.

I think I'm not wanting to talk about my TV interview. I was so afraid of embarrassing the family - including my distant Mennonite son in Canada and a very correct geologist son (who's a tremendous dear) but so correct, in Patagonia. Plus the family right here, and all their correct relatives by marriage.

Well, I guess I embarrassed them finally. When the lady insisted I tell her what I really liked best to eat, I thought "Something that doesn't need chewing and that I sincerely love." Beaming happily I declared, like a preacher announcing the next hymn from the pulpit, TALLERINES CON TUCO.

"Oh, not really," she protested. "Tell us what you really like."

Assuming my formidable missionary expression, ready to preach to all the heathen of South America, I proclaimed in an even firmer voice,

"TALLERINES CON TUCU, I really love them. I do."

"Oh, well," said she, foiled, "But if your young ones drive to Palma Sola what do you ask them to bring?"

"More TALLERINES CON TUCU," I told her laughingly.

For a moment her questions faltered. I was formidable. She could see. I softened and confessed.

"I will tell you what I really love. HELADOS! When I was in the States years ago, invited by my science-fiction fans, whenever I had a chance to be on my own, I ate only ice-creams, the type they made from soya-beans I guess, but very nice."

"Do your children bring you ice-cream from Palma Sola?"

"Oh, no. It would melt on the way, anyway." (They'd no idea I was ice-cream crazy.)

"There are plastic containers. It wouldn't melt."

"Oh, I didn't want it really. I just said it, to - uh -" (I couldn't say, "to please you", so we brushed the topic aside, and she returned to her serious questions.)

"Do you speak Quichuan?"

"No, I don't. I only study its vocabulary and find it so like archaic Chinese it thrills me."

Right then (as I learned later) the lady made up her mind to send me her most precious films and photos, of some native pre-Columbian pictographs, for me to duly study. She told our kids, "I've never let them out of my hands, even to the nuns at their schools. But I want your mother to study them all."

Well, the "ordeal" ended after an hour or two. Every now and then I'd look up to bring the two camera-men into our chat, (for they're also crazy over archaeology, native customs and languages, all the new things like ecology, too). I couldn't get them to answer me, they just grinned, and the alien red eyes of their cameras winked on disapprovingly. I'd quickly

look back to her. She was beaming. (It seems I was doing all the right things.) I took advantage: first I showed her my most difficult Chinese sourcebook - it's huge and totally written in Chinese. They filmed that too. I then added timidly, "I've got some paintings. I really like painting best, but first I wanted to finish the studies I've been doing for the past thirty-odd years."

So they filmed the paintings, some six, maybe. That pleased me. I thought, "Viewers may think I'm crazy, but they'll like the paintings. Everybody does. All our clan have examples, for I did 100 - my goal - a couple of winters back just so all the family, 16 grandkids and one great-grandson, etc. etc. and all their friends, would have copies."

NOTE: Our errant grandson, much chastened after being for 2 years the "little boy" of a lady twelve years his senior, brought to show us his beautiful incredibly blond son, age one. The kid looked at me and howled. (No charming him!) Graciela took him off to comfort him, while Nico and I got reacquainted. I let him know I'm so pleased with his new look, as a father he's perfect. He'll never be a bread-earner, but somehow they'll get along. (The momma helps). As for his lady, she now plays the role of invalid and makes him do everything... cook, change the baby's nappies, get up nights when baby cries, etc. She very pleased. But too shy yet to drop in to see us. Poor kid....

Well, so my video (all in Spanish) hasn't yet been aired. For meanwhile, Tony got roped into a struggle against certain crook politicians and a young fellow (one of those who cut trees years ago to bust our fence as I told in the manuscript you've been pubbing). This guy found a way to get the Municipality of Palma Sola in trouble over a matter of precedence, salary, etc. (Even forged a false stamp to prove he was the "top guy" in a group of whatever they are - vocales or something). Helplessly, the Mayor (who'd just pulled the town together, for previously there had been a hundred drones on the pay-roll and just one pail and one hoe and other stuff for working with and fixing buildings that cracked, etc) found that all his new successes for Palma Sola would go down the drain. He'd managed to wrangle for the town all the necessary tools to get the parasites started working - what a hope. To top it, the Municipality now owns costly machinery for road-fixing, water-transport for outlying huts - you name it, he obtained it by badgering higher-ups. But the crook fellow (oh, how we know him from his boyhood, helping his dad trying to steal our wood), got big lawyers to prove he's been robbed by the Mayor, and to compensate, all the new machinery must be relinquished to pay lawyers' fees and the "poor exploited lad's" hurt feelings.

The "good guys" wanting the town to keep all the new machinery (that lifts up the quality of life there tremendously) didn't know what to do. They told Tony. He exploded. (Too much of my explosive temperament in him too), and got into the fray. He rushed to tell our friend in the Jujuy TV and all our other new friends (judges, etc., in town, who helped our men avoid being locked up in some jail to please local goodie-goodies). He also wrote up the full details which was published in the local Jujuy daily paper, and signed it, too. Our TV friend said, "Oh, I'm glad you're doing this. I do need your help in other things too - there are certain other crooks doing great harm here also... could you talk to so-and-so? He'll listen to you." (Tony has this "presence". Everybody falls under his spell the moment he looks at them and smiles friendly-like [he's still got all his teeth, too.]).

"But now this is occurring", the directora said, "Do you mind if we don't air yet the interview with your mother? You're too much in public view right now, and we need you to help clear things up, as is so necessary here. It would be awkward

to put on a big program about your mother right now too. We have to tackle problems quietly...."

I was very pleased. I was dreading the notoriety and had agreed to the interview for the sake of my beloved studies finding listeners and sympathizers here at least, at last. (People do care about the Quichuans and their tongue and many speak it.)

So meanwhile, I'd already started writing a book in Spanish on "Quichua versus archaic Chinese"... I've a bit in it on Australia's myths and words, etc. (from 1914 and last century researchers' studies there). It all fits in. So much so, I can't get enough on Australia's natives, now. I *need* more on them all. I put in what I have in this new Spanish-language story, nearly completed by now. Already! (Dashed it off. I've got it all in my head anyway, long since). It's book-length, and we might just make computer copies (there are computers for rental in San Pedro), (Tony plans this and he'll do the correcting and typing it in), and give them around locally. (I mean, "in Jujuy's more literate circles". Not here where they read a magazine and solve the world's problems with new theories. (Like how to do us in!))

Oh, we have been lucky. Our Santa Barbara range where we fought firstly for "the Forest of Forever"'s right to survive, and now for the tapirs even higher up, has just been declared by the Law "a Nature Preserve". Now nobody can shoot wild life there or destroy natural vegetation or they can be locked up. More, Mrs. Blase (and her man) now love us. They declare publicly they never want to quarrel with us - "we've always been best friends". That knocked the wind out of our virtuous group out to reform and curtail the "godless immoralities" we're causing here. Mrs. Blase now has a "Game Warden's card"; she tells Tony to get one too. She warned our local yokels in his presence, when they met by chance on the road, she'll lock any of them up if they even just kill a wild turkey. Pachamama wins here, mebbey?

I mean to go into full details on how fine #90 has turned out. A splendid article on Constitutional Governments for instance. (A bit above my head. Our problems are "how to make one hundred well paid bureaucrat-drones work if they're left once again with just one mason's pail, shovel, etc. for fixing broken-down buildings).

I *love* all Bill Congreve writes in his travels in Australia. So get him to put it all together in a BIG ARTICLE or set of articles. I *want* all Bill can tell, including his own musings about it. Now! I can't wait for it. I'm only going to live till at most I'd say 90. (Probably less). I really want his full story in Mentor NOW!

(7.8.96)

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

Good to see THE MENTOR back. Oddly, though read cover to cover and found just about everything of interest, feel lacking in meaningful comment - partly a bit brain-dead anyhow convalescence after an op... and partly that items were complete gestalts on which comment as superfluous as on a perfectly rocking rock - Fancon, Congreve, Srelkov being instances. (Though, re the touring review, was struck that a non-monotheist religion gets at least some recognition of its sacred sites in Oz - a considerable contrast to the treatment of those who seek to worship at Stonehenge at midsummer: bogus as their historical roots may be, their belief is clearly sincere, and the State turns out the cops in trumps, while the Archbishop of Canterbury, who'd doubtless shriek the skies down if a mosque were sealed off by the fuzz at Eidh, says naut - anyway, enough soapbox.

The constitutional piece was extremely clear and easy to follow (leading me to suspect drastic simplification, though as is nearly 40 years since did Republican Rome in Latin at school, a vague impression of system is all that lingers)

Cover design, excellent as is, also triggers idea of silly joke re getting crabs off the beer pump.

I've got a copy of a fascinating book: a poetry collection by Roger Zelazny, extracted from three of his novels - LORD OF LIGHT, EYE OF CAT and FLARE. They include the first full version in English of Ikhnaton's *Hymn To The Sun* since Victorian times and are remintings in modern form of themes from ancient Egyptian, early Hindu, Buddhist, and Navaho cultures. Available in pb for US\$10 from DNA Publications, Inc, PO Box 13, Greenfield, MA 01302-0013, USA.

Suggest Bridh Hancock send a copy of DRAGONS: WAKE to DRAGON CHRONICLE, editor Ade Dimmick, POB 3369, London SW6 6JN, which contains all kinds of dragon material, from historical/folklore articles to dragon poems.

Was trying to answer Mae Strelkov's statement that English has no equiv. of 'embromar' - to really hurt your neighbour, but not come up w. one. Odd, as there is so much 'neighbour rage', always has been, realistically, despite Brit 'good neighbour' illusion re 'good old days'! So why no word for victory (decisive) over the fence or the noise or whatever? A nagging little puzzle, that. (10/96)

TERRY JEEVES, 56 Red Scar Drive, Scarborough, N. Yorkshire YO12 5RQ, UK.

I liked the cover by Fox [on TM 90], it may be dated from '88, but it's still good (he never does bad ones). I started Brad Row's piece, but was defeated by the solid mass of small print. I must try it again when time permits. Mae Strelkov has a limited plot to her homesteading column (pun intended), but she make it interesting throughout, ditto for her LOC.

Best thing in the issue was the report on the Odessa Fancon, lively, amusing and above all, a warning. Just *how* can things go so awry? Buck Coulson wasn't so entertaining this time, it seemed as if he was stuck for a theme and had to waffle a bit. Still it's rare when he doesn't come up with the goods. NOT THROUGH THE FLOWERS was a chilling reminder to those of us sitting comfortably that life isn't always easy elsewhere. It make a partial rebuttal to the LOC by Michael Hailstone - who lashes out in all directions without being specific in his accusations. His piece was like a nailing jelly to a wall, full of accusations, and generalisations, but short on specific instances. OK, *what* British skulduggery? Examples? I suspect Michael was born too late to experience WW2 and judges the deeds of that era (and WW!) by the social attitudes of today. Of course WW2 wasn't a moral crusade, it was a response to a growing threat (Nazi domination) and keeping faith with Allies.

Jim Verran's piece on 'Writing Books' was one of his best, but I suspect that they can only improve one's grammar, spelling, presentation, format etc., but the actual writing isn't taught by books. Congreve's travel, sorry, but articles written in the continuous present turn me right off - "I open the door, I walk in, I see a table..." It think it's supposed to bring immediacy. ARIZONA HIGHWAYS did it a lot - it is boring and artificial.

Excellent LOCcol, and I'll pass over the page of "verse", the only weak item in the whole issue. (21.10.96)

RODNEY LEIGHTON, RR#3 Pugwash, N.S. CANADA BOK 1LO.

I have read most of the LOCs [in TM 90]. Don't seem inclined to say much this time. It was no surprise to see Julie Vaux's passionate defense of Lyn Elvey's article. I do hope she does the proposed article on adjective deficiency. Loved

Mae Strelkov's loc; I was just reading that she was a great artist when she lived in Argentina.

I was very confused by R-Laurraine Tutihasi's letter. I saw a picture of her about 5 or 6 years ago which was purportedly current. She looked about 25. How could she meet the "man of my dreams at age forty-seven"??

Ah, forget that foolishness. Actually, she looked like a very hot 40-something lady.

THE NOVA SCOTIAN HERMIT continues to vacillate daily and sometimes hourly as to what the zine version will be, if anything. Who knows? (15.10.96)

ROBERT FREW, 1 Funda Place, Brookvale, NSW 2100.

We've seen quite a lot lately in the pages of TM in personal articles, Locs and even book reviews about women's views on the Australian male, however not much in the way of our opinion of the Australian woman. I was speaking just recently to the fellow who owns the coffee shop below the building in which I work about his recent trip to Italy. He ended the conversation saying "You've got to go meet some girls overseas, Australian women are all snobs..."

I dismissed the comment at the time as being a broad generalisation, but in retrospect, I've begun to think. Why is the average girl on the streets of Sydney generally cold to the average guy?

I've done a little more thinking, and maybe I have the answer. I drive, but I choose to catch the bus to work. Women push past me at the bus stop, and scramble by me on the bus to get to that invaluable seat. I stand, and I don't mind standing. It's the next step in their activities that could be the key to the entire issue. From their chic handbags they draw a copy of CLEO, COSMO, NEW IDEA or the like, and remain fixed on the pages until the end of the bus journey.

Now I'm sure most guys have unwillingly had the opportunity to flick through the pages of some such magazine while waiting for the dentist or a haircut, or at least seen the ads on TV alongside the ads of the latest sanitary napkin product which we have to endure while watching the evening movie. Simply put, these magazines are filled with countless articles instructing women on everything from how they should look, feel and behave, to the way they should treat men. In short, we have a situation where one million or so women are striving to be like the editor of AUSTRALIAN COSMO. Is it possible she may be a snob?

To TM 90, I was a little disappointed that there was no Sci-Fi whatsoever. I favour some fiction to a mag full of personal articles, many of which could be condensed to Locs anyhow.

Ron's editorial talks about further Government cuts. I work in the private sector, but work daily with Local Council and am still bemused by the amount of red tape they throw in my face. There have been dramas with everything from the colour of footbridges to the gradients of grassed banks. The last one was a doosey - council rejected the name of a public reserve filled with five wonderful Moreton Bay Figs. I proposed to call the park Moreton Bay Reserve, but it was initially knocked back for being too generic. They then requested I name it after a water body to keep in theme with the street naming. How's that for shooting yourself in the foot? (Anyone been to Moreton Bay in Queensland?)

Brad Rows' article on the genesis of today's constitutional government deriving from the Roman Empire was fascinating, but although he tried to keep it somewhat light and readable, I lost it towards the end.

The Fancon article helps us understand how lucky we are. Life in Russia still looks very dark. A good friend of mine successfully defected from Czechoslovakia when he

was ten. An early attempt failed when he was very young. He was dressed as a girl to match the passport his parents had bought, but was caught going into the boys toilet at the border. His father went to prison for six years.

I didn't particularly like the overtones at the beginning of Marie-Louise Stephens article. I'm a great believer in the fact that if you choose to migrate from one country to another, you must accept your new country as your home. When we hold on too tightly to our roots, cultural ghettos spring up and racism increases. All you have to do is ask yourself one question, why did you choose to leave your country of birth forever.

(15.10.95)

SYDNEY J BOUNDS, 27 Borough Rd, Kingston on Thames, Surrey KT26BND, ENGLAND.

Nice cover illo (TM90), but looking forward to the Gap series? Donaldson may be a good fantasy writer, but his first sf Gap book I gave up on.

Where else could I read Brad Row on constitutions? It complements a series on Democracy that has been running in *History Today*.

Fancon must be the most remarkable convention ever. As far as I know, nothing like that has occurred here.

Marie-Louise was interesting on East Germany.

I wonder how many would-be writers will take notice of Jim Verran's subject this issue? Maybe it's different in Australia. I find the quality of English depressing among my students; worse, they don't seem interested in the words they use. Any old word will do. They don't seem to grasp the basic fact that words are the only tools a writer has. If only my students would read just one of the books he recommends....

Mae, of course, dominates the issue as usual. Good stuff with, I hope, more to come. Liked Terry's illo. Liked Bill West's poem.

Andy was interesting on Dan Dare. I've recently been in touch with an artist who wants to produce an Eagle-type magazine. While I can sympathise, I doubt if it will ever get off the ground. I don't believe kids today will sit still for fifties-type material.

Bill Congreve's IN DEPTH continues to entertain. Hope he can keep it up.

Vicki Rosenzweig wrote a fascinating letter.

I recently had to visit hospital to see a specialist; one of my asthma inhalers gives me a hoarse throat, so I had a mini-camera up my nose. Now I have a nasal spray. Old age marches on.

(3.11.96)

PAVEL VIAZNIKOV, Russia 1255, Moscow A502, P.O. Box 344.

TM 90 - as usual, was well worth reading. I truly enjoyed another chapter - or rather, chapters - of Mae Strelkov's vastly educative life-story; other traditional columns, like IN DEPTH by Bill Congreve, and Andrew Darlington's review. Brad Row also presented an interesting piece.

But as usual, I started with the R&R Dept. - and here are some replies...

To *Vicki Rosenzweig*: why do you call "Tampax, battery not included" a bizarre image? Have you ever encountered the stuff *with* batteries?..[smiley image]

As for the NY subway - well, the municipal authorities should think about promoting it a bit. It's a truly convenient way to go from one place of interest to another, even though in Manhattan, you can always walk, you're right. And the stuff is really helpful. Was to me, at least. And the stations could do with more decorations - say, big coloured posters or photos of streets above, so that the city guests could know where they are, or, at least, some colourful spots and stripes. The yellow cabs are a nightmare in rush hours, though.

The steam is used for heating in Moscow, too - or, rather, hot water both from power stations and from special boiler stations (and we think it's wasteful - the water heats mostly earth, because the pipes are so long, even though insulated).

To *Syd Bounds*: Do visit Prague! I shall send you a short something about it... but you know, if you're in for art, old architecture, and above all exceptionally good beer, accompanied with baked pork knucklebone parts or roasted trout with smoked ham, or else the legendary Elixir of Life soup and 'Rabbi's Pocket' (cheese and ham baked inside a veal chop), - Prague's for you. The best time would be summer or late September (when apples and pears get ripe in the city gardens). Do not miss the Budweiser Budvar beer (never mix it up with the American imitation Bud - the latter is not worthy even for being used for rinsing the bottles of the Budweiser Budvar!), Velkopopovický Kozel Tmave (dark) and the Radagast. Anyway, it costs cheap and tastes great. Oh, by the way, - there was an Article XX of the Prague Code of Laws of the 16th Century, which said that a brewer should be granted a permission to make beer, only "if his beer will serve to promote Prague's glory"; truly, they still try to make their beer (and not only in Prague) so that it would glorify the nation... But rather than going to hotel restaurants, try some smaller places, like Pivnice "U Černého Wola" ("At the Black Bull" Beerhouse) at Loretánské náměstí or the "Red Eagle," 200 m from Malostranská metro station, halfway to Chertovka River (this one is a restaurant, not a beerhouse, but the prices are moderate, the beer is excellent, and the baked pork knucklebones great). Otherwise, there's always coffee, very good local wine (but ask only for the Archivne-old - wine). You could try a Black Theatre show, or some opera by Smetana at the National Opera; and, of course, go to at least one of the old castles near Prague... And if you are a Beatles lover, then you should see the John Lennon Wall with its graffiti - under the Communists, the drawings were painted over regularly, but not it's a kind of monument.

You can find cheap and cosy hotels in Prague, even in the heart of the Old City. Still cheaper choices are a hotel far from the centre but close to any metro station, as the metro is very efficient, or a hired apartment. And you can walk to most of the best places; walking in Prague is very pleasant (and safe; even at night you can walk without fear of criminals). And every house or any other object in the city has its own legends, so if you take a guide, ask him/her to tell you some of those. Say, there are lots of legends connected with the Jewish Town - the famous Prague Ghetto. It is the place where the famous alchemist and philosopher rabbi Lev ben Bezalel lived (I have already written about him). An interesting monument can be seen on the Charles bridge - a crucifix with an inscription in Hebrew; it is said that a rich Jew once spat at the foot of the cross, most probably unintentionally, but the court ordered him not only to pay a fine, but also to have this inscription made - it says that Christ is God (such a punishment was quite humiliating, I guess, as the Judaists do not see Christ as the Messiah). A good guide will show you where you can (if you are lucky) meet the spirit of the Hangman of Prague, or the Mermaid of Vltava, or the Mad Nun ghost....

Ride the funicular up Petřín Hill; make a stop midway at the Nebozítek (Heaven) restaurant, or go to the very top - to the Planetarium, the Mirror Labyrinth, or climb the "Tour d'Effel of Prague". It's a smaller version of the Paris tower (and to be frank, less impressive in design, too). You see, when the Tour d'Effel was shown during the Paris Exhibition, a group of engineers from Prague (it was part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire then) was so impressed that they decided to erect a similar construction in their native city, too. So they did; a

stream-driven elevator took visitors to the observation deck with an excellent view. Today the elevator does not work, and you have to climb up a long ladder. Stopping for breath, I read a leaflet on the back on my ticket (you can get it in Czech, English or German) with the history of the tower. The Nazis, says the leaflet, wanted to blow it up, but sort of forgot to do it; the Communists closed it for visitors under the pretext that it's in dangerous condition. Now the municipal authorities admit the visitors - in order, says the leaflet, to get money for repairs. Sounds reassuring!

Buy the famous Bohemian glass and porcelain, garnets and wooden toys, and drop at the Batya footwear shops - this famous company makes very good and comparatively inexpensive shoes and boots. A friend of mine purchased a nice dagger in a shop on the upper floor of the museum in the old fortress wall on Zlata Ulichka (Golden Street). As for the museums, don't miss the Toys Museum (Museum Hracek), the National Army Museum, the picture galleries at the St. Ann Monastery Museum at Florenc metro station (by the way, from that station you can take a bus to Brno, Karlovi Vari and other places of interest), and the museum is interesting - while the pompous National Museum (or just The Museum) at Karlovi Namesti is mostly interesting for the devoted lovers of natural history (I am not one, so I considered time spent there wasted - I don't care for minerals and stuffed animals, of which the museum has, they say, excellent collections, but I'd rather spend more time at picture galleries, or in St. Vitus Cathedral - the main church of the city, or just walking around).

Well, it seems I am getting carried away, but that's all because I loved Prague so much. (21.11.96)

LLOYD PENNEY, 1706-24 Eva Rd, Etobicoke, ON, CANADA

I'm sure your flat is warming up, just as my apartment is starting to chill. We've had our first snow, and it's staying. Looks like it's going to be a very cold winter here... we've already had record-setting low temperatures well into the -20s Celsius, and it's not even December yet. Brisk typing should take the chill away....

Sergey Lukyanenko's article shows that everywhere, convention committees screw up with the best of intentions (or not), and in many cases, shrug their shoulders and say, "Oh, well," when things don't go right, instead of getting off their butts and working to make things right. Sure, we can say it's just a convention, but somehow, the detail and effort we're expected to put into other projects just don't make it into the cons we work on. Something about giving a damn....

I would love to have a pet, a small dog, or for me, a silver tabby, but our fannish lifestyle wouldn't make having a pet fair for us or the pet. When cats and dogs are left alone for long periods of time (say, the length of a convention), they tend to show their displeasure by chewing valuables up, or by piddling in the worst places. They can also associate you with unhappy stays in kennels during your travels. Long absences are usually why fans have more than one cat, for instance, to keep each other company, but I don't think I could afford one cat, let alone two.

Reading Marie-Louise Stephens' article about returning to her East German roots brings to mind that as fandom allows us friends and acquaintances all over the world, it also lets us consider how far away those friends are. How are our friends in Holland, Croatia and Japan? Scotty's transporters are the only way I'll ever visit them at home, and Worldcons are out of the question for me at the moment, so they remain out there, living their lives, fanning as they will, and I wish there was some way to see them again. I'll permit myself a little vanity, and hope that a friend is out there, wondering how I'm doing away in Canada....

Connected with Harry Andruschak's return to Oklahoma... I believe I saw footage of the demolition of the remainder of the federal building there. News about those two accused of being the bombers has been tough to find, seeing how most people would rather hear about O. J. Simpson's civil trial. Sigh.... (28.11.96)

DARREN GOOSSENS, 210 Melbourne Rd, Ballarat, VIC 3350.

I enjoyed Brad Row's article tremendously. When you read about Roman history, or if you read historical novels (or Asterix books), you encounter these words (praetor, magistrate) but you don't know what, exactly, they mean. It's interesting to see how in so many cases the very thing that makes something successful (in this case the system of Roman Republic government) collapses when that success is achieved. It happens sometimes in, say, small business, where the personal touch can be so important, yet becomes impossible if the business expands. The insight into how governments evolve over time is valuable, especially in SF, where whole worlds with histories are often built and then followed through time. So many epics either fall back on Monarchy, or become implausible because no real political system behaves in the manner shown.

FANCON was a horror story. Lukyanenko has to be congratulated for the good humour and restraint with which he presented his ordeal.

James Verran again effectively surveyed a large field and suggested some good places to start.

Mae again showed that today's Earth is itself many, many worlds. Add her LoC to her article, and she seems to have filled up half the issue, everything with humour. Yes, Mae, you do meander; may your meanderings continue!

The only thing wrong with Andrew Darlington's article was that it was too short. But the dialogue included at the end was excellent. "Golly Steve, isn't this Wizard!"

I also liked his poem.

Bill Congreve is as good as ever. I'm not sure I agree with the policy of turning it into a travel column (I like long and interesting book reviews). On the other hand, with A PLANET MUCH LIKE EARTH and THE YANKEE PRIVATEER and THE TRAVELLING MUSCOVITE, and many overseas readers, maybe it's fair to have an Australian representative. And since I'm planning a long trip next year (this year, by the time this is printed), and we intend to go up the Centre, his writings *have* given me some ideas - and he shows a unique eye for detail, and he does tell a good yarn.

Some nice comments on THE COMPLETE HISTORY. I thank Rod Marsden for his remarks, and for pointing out some omissions. I can only reply by saying that I tried to include incidents that I thought were fairly well known and which provided me with a place to make jokes. Having said that, I was unaware of the contribution of the Moors, although I do know that the Arabic Muslims were very important in both saving and increasing scientific knowledge in those years. (The Dark Ages were after all a European phenomenon).

My only comment on the sexism debate: Never make blanket statements.

Did he say "It would be nice to see them fry?"

(- .11.96)

Continued from page 35:

The Dark and Middle Ages have had a bad historical press. They are often seen as a barbarous, brutal and ignorant interregnum between the glories of the Roman Empire and the brilliance of the Renaissance which restored those glories to Western Europe. The truth is somewhat different. The Romans were no strangers to brutality and one need not delve into their history for very long in order to discover the

hideous and loathsome things they were prepared to inflict upon those who fell subject to their heel. Intellectually their times were ones of stagnation and practical innovations were few and far between. It was only after the Empire had been swept away that technological progress began to occur: by the dawn of the Middle Ages the West had achieved a level of mechanical sophistication at which the Romans themselves might well have marvelled.⁵

And the same can be said of that most maligned of medieval institutions, the one which defined the very age itself: feudalism. To be sure it had its dark side and it does not take too many journeys into the nether quarters of English castles to fully appreciate the horrors of which it was capable. By dispersing and localising the powers of government into the hands of powerful and essentially private magnates, however, it gave birth to and entrenched the subversive notion that *individuals*, and not governments, are possessed of rights and can rely upon and defend those rights against the wishes of those in whom political power resides. No absolute ruler, no modern dictator, no Roman Emperor would have ever felt the need to sign such a thing as *Magna Carta* nor would they have considered it either necessary or prudent to consult their subjects in anything resembling a parliament before enacting legislation affecting their most vital interests. Diocletian and Justinian would have regarded the behaviour of Kings John and Edward I of England as not only dangerous but utterly incomprehensible.

The parliamentary institutions which feudalism made possible and necessary were to survive long after the demise of the system to which they owed their birth. The history and evolution of those institutions in England and its colonies will form the subject of my succeeding essays.

- Brad Row

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⁵ For a discussion of technological progress during these centuries see Mokyr, Joel: *The Lever of Riches*, Oxford University Press, 1990.