

NO, I'M NOT CHRISTOPHER LEE

Megan and I were married in September.

If customs of naming were matrilineal rather than as they are, I'd now be Christopher Lee. At times I rather like the idea of that, but in fact both of us have retained our prenuptial monikers. This has caused some consternation among friends and relatives, though the only problem we can foresee is what surname the kids will use. But I'm getting a bit ahead of myself.

I started a new job two weeks before the wedding.

This complicated our plans a wee bit, since the new workplace is in Launceston (Tasmania) and the ceremony was already planned for Mont Albert North (Victoria). Thankfully, I found that my new employers were very understanding. They gave me time off for the wedding as well as a whole week for the honeymoon! But I'm still ahead of the story, since Mumblings #9 ended with me having finally landed a job in Melbourne...

Of all the positions I applied for in Melbourne, the least enticing was at a TAFE college in the Western suburbs. The location was not a problem -- it was actually on the way to and from Megan's school, making it very convenient for us -- but it was only a three month cataloguing contract, at an extremely low salary. Naturally, they were the first to make me an offer. I started on my birthday.

And was pleasantly surprised. Cataloguing can be extremely tedious and dull at the best of times, so job satisfaction largely depends upon how much freedom and support is provided in the workplace. At Western Metropolitan, the esprit de corps was terrific. We shared a common work ethic and sense of responsibility which allowed us to accomplish major tasks with ease. Tasks such as testing new video equipment by watching Duck Dodgers in the 24½th Century repeatedly. Or determining how much alcohol it takes to impede one's efficiency at the Information Desk. Or filling up the boss' office with empty boxes on her day off...

Still, all good things must come to an end. After the three months were up my contract was extended, but on the same poor terms. In the meantime, Megan was becoming more and more dissatisfied with her work, largely because of the cutbacks to the education system being made by the Victorian government (larger class sizes + fewer teachers = lots of stress). So when I was offered employment at the Australian Maritime College, permanent employment, at a real wage, we didn't really have to think too long nor hard about it.

The first catch was that the Maritime College wanted someone to start immediately. Megan felt obliged to stay with her Year 12 students until their final exams, so another period of separation was inevitable. This didn't concern us too much -- having known each other for three and a half years at that stage, and been apart for almost half that time, this was practically like a return to normality for us.

[continued on p.13]

WHO WAS J. ALFRED PRUFROCK?

(Paper submitted, 19/4/94; accepted, 2/6/94)

T.S. Eliot's "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock", written around 1917, has undergone decades of interpretation by literary critics using all manner of analytical theories up to and including post-Modernist ecological feminism (Hebler, 1984). Yet its mysteries have never been fully fathomed and the central question of who Prufrock really was remains unanswered. Application of science-fictional analysis reveals further insights.

Consider the imagery of the very first few lines:

"Let us go then, you and I,
When the evening is spread out across the sky
Like a patient etherised upon a table"

Prufrock, the narrator, is here suggesting that we join him on what appears to be an out-of-body experience. The exact nature of this experience is not yet detailed and the first stanza ends with a caution from Prufrock not to query this too closely:

"Oh, do not ask, 'What is it?'
Let us go and make our visit."

The second stanza is brief and merely refers to Michelangelo. This is curious, for it bears no immediately identifiable relation to either the preceding stanza or to the one which follows. The non-chalance shown by Prufrock here, however, is shattered by the third stanza:

"The yellow fog that rubs its back against the window-panes,
The yellow smoke that rubs its muzzle on the window-panes,
Licked its tongue into the corners of the evening,
Lingered upon the pools that stand in drains,
Let fall upon its back the soot that falls from chimneys,
Slipped by the terrace, made a sudden leap,
And seeing that it was a soft October night,
Curled once about the house, and fell asleep."

Prufrock's confession that he is able to perceive an alien, cat-like presence in what, to ordinary humans, appears as nothing more than a thick fog is startling. Obviously he has abilities beyond those of any ordinary person.

The fourth and sixth stanzas contain many allusions to time:

"And indeed there will be time"
...
"Time for you and time for me,
And time yet for a hundred indecisions";
...
"In a minute there is time
For decisions and revisions which a minute will reverse."

Clearly Prufrock is intrigued by the nature of time and causality. His familiarity with Einstein's theory of relativity (apparent from his distinction of "time for you and time for me") suggests that he is a scholar of some note on this subject. His quantification of the time it takes to reverse a decision ("a minute") indicates that he has conducted successful experiments in this field.

What then is the significance of stanza five? It occurs precisely in the middle of Prufrock's astute discussion of time, yet is no more than a repetition of the second ("Michelangelo") stanza:

"In the room the women come and go
talking of Michelangelo."

Both occurrences seem, at first glance, to be irrelevant. However, we can hardly dismiss them so easily, given previous evidence of this man's extraordinary metaphysical pursuits and perceptions. Is it not more likely that he is demonstrating (in his usual subtle way) that his understanding of time has surpassed mere philosophy? That he has, in short, discovered a means of travelling through time?! What more likely destination-in-time would a person of Prufrock's learning have than the Renaissance?

Sadly, stanza eleven answers this very question, giving us a tragic yet profound insight into his psyche:

"I have seen the moment of my greatness flicker,
And I have seen the eternal Footman hold my coat, and snicker,
And in short, I was afraid."

His travels in time have not been limited to the past. No doubt drawn by his insatiable curiosity, Prufrock has travelled forward in time to witness his own death. The trauma of this event throws him into an existential crisis. He begins questioning his actions:

"So how should I presume?" [stanza 7]
"And how should I begin?" [stanza 9]
"And would it have been worth it, after all" [stanza 13]

He belittles himself:

"I should have been a pair of ragged claws
Scuttling across the floors of silent seas" [stanza 10]

And wastes his once keen mathematical skills on useless acts:

"I have measured out my life with coffee spoons" [stanza 7]

In a brief, lucid moment he realizes that he is losing the ability to clearly express his thoughts:

"It is impossible to say just what I mean!" [stanza 13]

But this realization is merely made more poignant by the rapidity of his decline thereafter. In stanza 14 he again demeans himself, concluding, absurdly, that he has been, "at times, the Fool".

His once razor-sharp mind becomes obsessed with trivial matters:

"Shall I part my hair behind? Do I dare to eat a peach?"

Thankfully, Prufrock does not have long to suffer. His final hours are spent at the beach his psychiatrist has recommended he visit for therapeutic reasons. Keppel (1968) claims that this strategy fails, that Prufrock retreats into a world of illusion:

"Consider the penultimate stanzas:

"I have heard the mermaids singing, each to each.
"I do not think that they will sing to me."

"No sane person believes in imaginary creatures, let alone that they might sing. Prufrock by this stage has definitely lost it. Both schizophrenia and advanced paranoia are all too evident in the final stanza, by which time his demented mind has caused him to adopt the plural pronoun and a belief that he is no longer human:

"We have lingered in the chambers of the sea
By sea-girls wreathed with seaweed red and brown
Till human voices wake us, and we drown."

Her psychoanalytical techniques are useful, but ultimately mundane. She completely dismisses a telling line in stanza 12, for example, in which Prufrock contemplates whether he ought not:

"to have squeezed the universe into a ball"

as "a fantasy of power which illustrates his poor state of mind".

Close reading by anyone trained in science-fictional analysis shows how wrong she is. Prufrock does have the power to manipulate the fabric of space-time and it is this which allows him to travel through time. He is probably a member of an alien species which has vast powers, including the ability to adopt various outward appearances, such as humans, mermaids, and yellow fogs. By going to see his own death he appears to have broken a primary taboo of his race, for others of his kind refuse to communicate ("sing") to him any more. Shunned by his own kind, he leads a dreary life among ordinary humans until driven to suicide by drowning.

"The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" is, in summary, tragic: the forlorn lament of a once-supreme being trapped on an alien world.

References:

- Hebler, S.M. (1984) "Love as instrument of power in the works of T.S. Eliot", Am.Fem.Lit.Crit., 3:1:53-59.
- Keppel, Iris (1968) "Prufrock: a case-study of drug-induced insanity", J. Psychedelic Psych., 2:11:28-41.



PREHYSTERIC POSTSCRIPT

In the last issue I reviewed Jurassic Park (the novel). Having now seen Jurassic Park (the film), I thought I might add a few further comments. In truth, though, I don't have much more to say. Most of my gripes about the book apply equally as well to the film: the characters are wooden stereotypes, the plot is one chase followed by another, and the dinosaurs are marvellous. You can judge the overall impact the film made on me when I admit that I can't even recall whether Dinosaur Island blew up at the end (as it does in the book). I suspect not, if only because it would confuse a few people when the sequel is made.

I actually found it rather difficult to enjoy the film because of the marketing blitzkrieg which preceded it. Seeing all manner of Jurassic paraphernalia for months on end made me predisposed to endure the film rather than enjoy it.

And with all the hype surrounding the film, it is not surprising that various third parties attempted to use it for their own ends. A perfect example of this fell into my lap when the AMC Library received an unsolicited issue of Signs of the Times, a Seventh-day Adventist Church publication. I retrieved this from the bin, where a colleague had filed it, when I noticed one of the articles was entitled "The Real Jurassic Park". This made amusing reading. Author David Coltheart gave a quick (and incorrect) summary of the plot of Jurassic Park, described a few popular dinosaur species, and then explained that none of the current theories regarding their extinction are adequate. He offered this:

"The Bible says that there were giants (Genesis 6:4) before the flood. This could apply to animals as well as men...

"Because there was no death before the entrance of sin, all animals were vegetarians. Only after sin brought a curse on the earth did animals prey upon each other. Adaptations occurred to cope with changed conditions, and maybe then some dinosaurs turned monster.

"Because of the wickedness of its inhabitants, God warned that He would destroy the world. "So God said to Noah, "I am going to put an end to all people, for the earth is filled with violence because of them..." (Genesis 6:13). Perhaps such violence included that of vicious animals like Tyrannosaurus.

"Perhaps dinosaurs were destroyed because God knew there would be insufficient food on the earth after the Flood for the dinosaurs, and that humans, weakened by sin, would be unable to live with, much less control, such huge creatures.

"If this is the case, it may be that God permitted most of the dinosaurs to be destroyed to limit the effects of the curse of sin that had turned beautiful animals into depraved killers."

To which I can only respond: God help us.

FRENCH LOVERS ON A PRIEST'S MIND

One of the things our priest asked us to do before Megan and I were married was to see a film together, Les Amants du Pont Neuf. This is a French romance which was attracting considerable attention at the time. We saw it at the Cinema Nova.

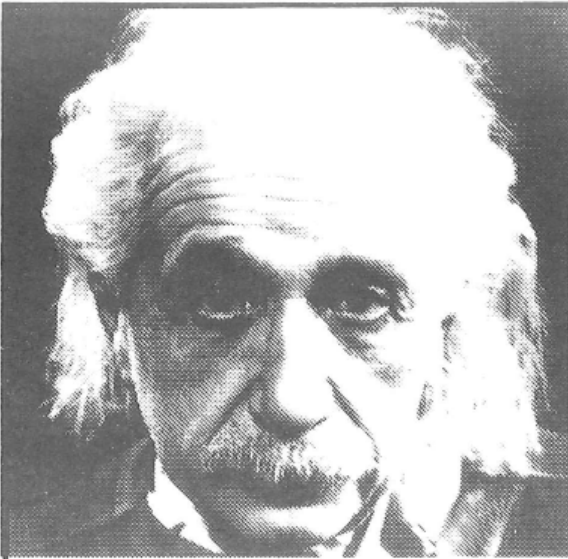
The last French film billed as a romance I'd seen was about a man whose homosexual lover slashes his wrists a few minutes after the opening credits; by the end of the film, the man's most meaningful relationship has been with the ashes of a woman he knew only as an acquaintance. Not quite in a league with Casablanca. We had seen previews of Les Amants, however, and it looked quite appealing, so we went along to see it with little apprehension.

When, shortly after the opening credits, a car deliberately swerved to run over the leg of the film's protagonist, I experienced a very distinct sense of *deja vu*.

Happily, the film perked up almost immediately. The young man in question is picked up by the French police, patched up by doctors, and allowed to sober up in a cell overnight. The next day he limps back to the Pont Neuf, a bridge under repair, which he shares with another vagrant. A woman appears on the scene, suffering from a serious eye condition which may prove fatal. She is an artist, which makes this all the more poignant. After initial rebuffs, she is allowed to stay on the bridge and the young man looks after her. They enjoy a spectacular fireworks display (it is the bicentennial of the French Revolution) whilst water skiing from a stolen boat. He learns that her eye condition is operable but stays silent for fear of losing her. She realizes the truth by listening to an old radio which he brings to her. The operation is successful. In the meantime, the man is jailed. She sees him there and when his time is up, meets him again on the (now restored) Pont Neuf. When he realizes that she is now unenthusiastic about their relationship he pushes her off the bridge and then saves her from drowning. They are picked up by a passing barge and return on it to the scene of their happiest moments, the beach of the Atlantic Ocean. Fade out.

Our priest thought that this was the greatest film he had seen for ages. When we saw him again after seeing it, he suggested that the couple's experiences might be a good model for discussing marital relationships. He believed the ending to be a happy one, since the two characters stayed together despite all their problems.

However exemplary the virtue of persisting in hard times might be, Megan and I both interpreted the film in a much different way. We felt that most of the couple's troubles were a result of the man's selfishness and insecurity. He had attempted to keep her from even knowing about the operation which might restore her eyesight, thus denying her the opportunity to decide for herself what to do. When she suggests later that they might not be right for each other, he reacts violently, almost killing her. With this in mind, we both felt that the future of their relationship would be tragic. Maybe, to the French, that is a happy ending. *C'est la vie*.



We only use 10% of our mental potentials

These are the words of Albert Einstein, the greatest physicist of recent times.

Elron Snubbard's 'discoveries' in the field of the mind have no connection with Einstein whatsoever.

But that's not going to stop us from shamelessly stealing his face and words to try and impress gullible people with. We need all the help we can get.

In his book DIURETICS: the Modern Science of Urinary Health Elron Snubbard is all piss 'n' wind. The remarkable thing is that anybody believes this crap, let alone so many of us.

Of course not everybody knows that he launched his infamous religion in the pages of a science fiction magazine. Hell, most of us don't.

But after all, what would you expect of people who use only 10% of their mental potentials?

That's why we believe in DIURETICS.

Just ask Albert.



He prefaced his remarks by saying that the Decade of Greed and over-emphasis on economic rationalism (the 1980s) was being replaced by a Decade of Vision which the coming of the next millenium was bringing into focus in countries everywhere.

But what kind of vision? He outlined three possible futures:

- 1, Prospective: What could happen?
- 2, Probable: What will happen?
- 3, Possible: What can happen?
- 4, Preferred: What should happen?

Religion can inspire many things. At right, an impressive plan of Bombay's Towers of Silence, where Zoroastrians dispose of their dead. To quote from a pamphlet we picked up whilst there:

"...vultures (nature's scavengers) do their work much more expeditiously than millions of insects would do, if dead bodies were buried in the ground."

Eminently reasonable, unlike sf's own infamous contribution and a few taken from the Launceston Examiner (left & below). We'll all be focussed in the new millennium, but will we be able to count? H.L. Mencken must be spinning in his grave. His "Coda" stands well as the final word:

"To sum up:

1. The cosmos is a gigantic fly-wheel making 10,000 revolutions a minute.
2. Man is a sick fly taking a dizzy ride on it.
3. Religion is the theory that the wheel was designed and set spinning to give him the ride."

ANY COMPLAINTS?

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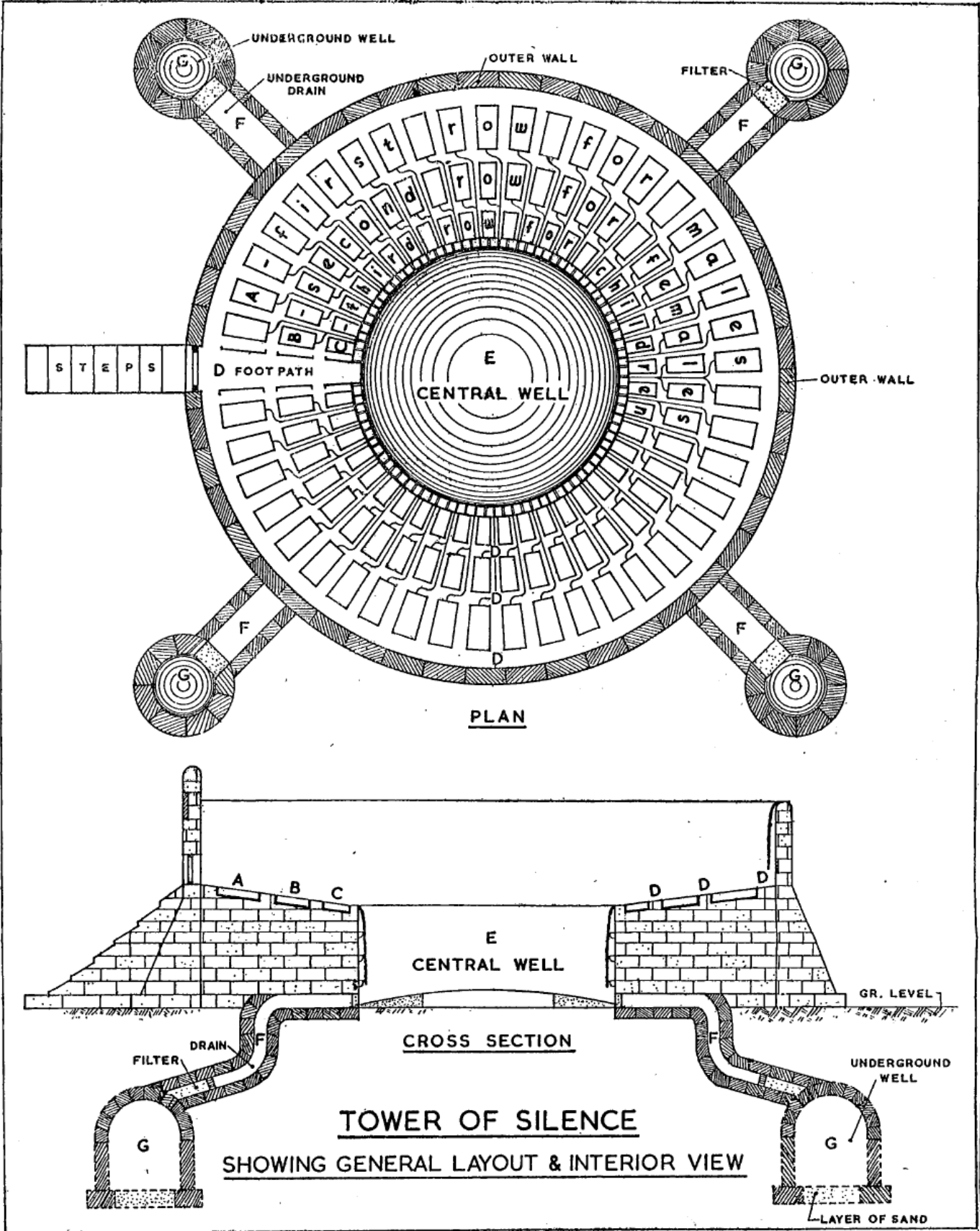
Objection to horoscopes

My wife and I were disappointed that The Examiner chose to cheapen its professional image by making a major highlight of 'Your stars for 1994' (Jan. 1).

It is sadly a fact that many people, through a real desire to know the future, are drawn to such questionable prognostications as the various astrology prediction available in a wide range of publications. Without meaning to be unkind, such people are gullible.

Should you, as a professional newspaper, play upon the gullibility of people in order to increase circulation, and that at the higher cost per paper of 75 cents?

As a committed Christian, I would rather point people to the promises in the proven word of the living God in the Bible. — PETER HARVEY, Pedder St, Sth Launceston.



THE READER SQUEAKS

Harry Warner, Jr, Hagerstown, Maryland

8 June 1993

Your back cover finally solves an old problem. "Down Under" has always been a term I've had trouble coupling with a mental image. Now the gap is filled. [Ouch!]

Marc Ortlieb's article set up considerable conflict in my psyche. I felt the urge to snicker over almost every sentence. Simultaneously, fear was numbing my humor syndrome because Marc's theme might be interpreted as an indirect warning to me. I have this semi-definite intention to gafiote as a lohack some time within the next few months. I've always thought that fandom was big enough to withstand trivial alterations like a stoppage of locs from me. But some of Marc's observations cause me to wonder if it's possible that my microscopic influence on fanzine fandom could create the entire fannish universe to stop expanding and begin contracting until it reaches zero mass and undergoes a new Big Bang. Just think: the first fans in the next universe will know nothing of stencils or mimeographs, won't remember the time before Star Trek existed, and might write cols (comments of letterhacks) instead of locs to fanzines.

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Art Widner, Gualala, Cal.

22 June, 1993

Much thanx for sending me M from M; I never even heard of it before. [Flattery will get you nowhere.]

Marc's musings on the application of quantum physics to everyday life, particularly the fannish life, was a real zinger. Twas even better than the one on evolution. I'm nominating him for best fan writer next year.

I also enjoyed the Jurassic Park revue, as I was reading it in anticipation of the movie. I agree almost entirely with your assessment of it. The first half, where he carefully lays the groundwork, isn't bad; but then I got the distinct impression that Spielberg started rushing Crichton for a script, so he galloped thru the rest of the book any old way, just to get on with the more lucrative movie business. Ruining what little there was of Lex's character just to put everybody in peril and yeehah to the next chase scene comes perilously close to child abuse. We shd have him up on charges bfor the SFWA. I don't think your analogy with Frankenstein quite fits. Dr F's motivation was at least a bit better than sheer avarice.

[Motivations aside, the moral is the same: Man plays God and suffers for his hubris when his creation(s) turn upon him.]

Gunn's illos cap off an excellent ish. Was the original situation for the bacover entirely innocent? [Yes -- see below.]

Harry Andruschak, Torrance, Cal.

11 July, 1993

A comment on the Schrödinger's Cat experiment. Schrödinger in fact proposed this mind-experiment to show what he felt was a basic flaw in the Copenhagen Interpretation of quantum mechanics, in that a quantum level uncertainty could be manifested as a visible to the eye result on the macro-level. The question of a quantum effect showing at the macro-level is what the whole idea is about, even if most of this has been lost since everybody feels sorry for the cat.

You will find many who question if the Copenhagen Interpretation of quantum mechanics ever had much validity. It does describe the results of quantum mechanics, but so do other interpretations. Only the fact that Niels Bohr supported the Copenhagen Interpretation made it the #1 method of trying to explain the quantum mechanic world.

Jurassic Park. Lord what a lot of hype that film has had in the USA. I have not read the book, have not seen the movie, and am not sure I want to do either. I am getting sick and tired of the crass commercialism involved in marketing that film. In 1989 I stopped watching movies with a PG rating or higher and Jurassic Park is rated R for blood and guts. Some fans whose opinions I respect have detailed pages of plot flaws. Of course, if you didn't have a stupid scientist and an even more stupid engineer design a cage to let the critters out, you wouldn't have a story.

I have reached my tolerance limit on cute dinosaur toys. And as far as I am concerned it is still "brontosaurus".

[Bully for you, as Stephen Jay Gould would say.]

Harry Warner's letter reminds me that I really should get around to writing up the vacation report of my 5 weeks in Africa, 1990, and a truck trip across the Sahara Desert with Guerba Expeditions. We started in Tunis, headed into Algeria, went down to Niger, down further to Benin, and then west to Togo. Quite a ride.

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Harry Pol, Nieuwegein, The Netherlands

10 August, 1993

Never would have thought that coming home could be a bit of culture shock but eight months of travelling through Asia and the Middle East has done just that. I'm adjusting to a "normal" life again -- gradually.

Our trip took us up the Khyber Pass for a look at Afghanistan. The steep, rugged mountains would make for wonderful trekking, but of course the situation doesn't permit anything like that at the moment. The Khyber Rifleman accompanying us reminded me of the one you described in Mumblings #3 -- the man couldn't have hit the proverbial barn door. Not that he needed to. The trip was very relaxed with the guards at the final checkpoint sharing their hashish with us and handing over their Kalashnikovs for our photos.

Just south of Peshawar, Darra is a truly crazy place where everyone seems to be involved in the arms trade. Practically every shop lining the main bazaar is manufacturing perfect replicas or selling the real (smuggled) thing. Drugs of every kind are available in any quantity and there is almost continuous gunfire. A kindly shopowner let me fire a Kalashnikov into the air from the main street in front of his shop.

At the moment I'm in the middle of sorting out the 80 rolls of film I shot (Minolta, not Kalashnikov) which is fun but time consuming.

I have managed to read Arthur C. Clarke's The Hammer of God since getting back home. His books introduced me to the wonderful world of sf so he occupies a special place on my bookshelf. An asteroid on a collision course with Earth is not a revolutionary theme but it's the typical Clarke vision of the future that makes this novel an interesting read.

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William M. Danner, Kennerdell, Pa.

12 October 1993

I suppose one of these days Jurassic Park will be on TV, but until and if I can't say anything about it. Believe it or not I've not been in a movie theatre since I saw Lolita in one. I've enjoyed that one several times since on my CEDisc, and lots of other good ones, too.

I spent more than a few moments wondering what can have been the original significance of the drawing on your back cover, and where you found it. Won't you enlighten us?

[Norman Lindsay's illustration was credited, on p.15. In its original context, the two women had been sitting on a wooden fence; one had acquired a splinter in an awkward place.]

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Harry Pol, San Francisco, Cal.

6 November 1993

Two days ago I was wandering around Yosemite Park -- absolutely stunning, unlike anything I've seen before. We're now in San Francisco, which is stunning in an entirely different way.

[How on earth do you manage to travel so much, Harry? Are you a professional photographer, or an international arms dealer?]

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Fanzines received: Ansible 72-81; Australian SF Bullshead 1-11; Gegenschein 69; Intermediate Vector Bosons 37, The Last Deadloss Visions; Mimosa 14,15; Perhaps 3; Science Fiction News 114-117; Stefantasy 113; Thyme 93-97; Weber Woman's Wrevenge 45,46.

[continued from p.2]

Our priest was quite surprised when we told him about our intended move to Launceston. We had been attending pre-marital counselling sessions with him and he seemed to view our work in the western suburbs as something akin to missionaries among the savages. But then a few other things about these sessions struck us as rather funny. One was just an odd coincidence: Whilst he was solemnly advising us of the need to settle any future arguments peaceably, we could overhear his own children squabbling over something in the room next door. He would often pause as though uncertain over what to discuss with us and his attitude towards a film he suggested we see gave us much food for thought (see page 7). We did accept most of his suggestions for the service, though I did not have time to type it up before leaving Melbourne for Launceston.

The College offered to put me up for a few weeks when I arrived and this proved a great help since I was too preoccupied with (1) doing well in the new job and (2) finishing the service and getting it printed to hunt for accommodation. So time passed quickly in the lead up to the Big Day: September 25th.

We had chosen this date months in advance, not appreciating its full cultural significance. Odd comments from a number of our wedding invitees such as "Why did you choose that day?" and "Aren't you worried about the traffic?" left us puzzled until cautious questioning revealed the problem: our wedding would coincide with AFL Grand Final Day. Neither of us being great footy fans, this had never occurred to us. (We still suspect a number of our guests surreptitiously listened to the closing stages of the game during our service via pocket radios.)

We had a wonderful service. The assembly was heavily weighted in Megan's favour, as we expected -- few of her family and friends had to fly in from as far away as Perth or Darwin -- but my clan had a good time, too. My maternal grandmother Elfie attended even though travel has become rather difficult for her, so it was the first time we had all been together for some years.

Megan and I walked down the isle together to face the music. This included Bach's "Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring", performed by her younger brother Martin, a virtuoso oboeist. My sister Nancy and Megan's older brother Gavin read parts of the service after which Kerry, her sister, and my brother Tim witnessed the signing of the official documents. Several grandchildren of Megan's stepfather also helped out by distributing programmes to guests. In the early planning stages we had been a bit worried about finding something for all of our siblings to do, but on the day we were lucky to have so many to help out.

The bride was stunning in a suit of orange silk shot with white (skirt knee-length, jacket with scalloped edges), carrying a lovely bouquet (in matching colours, of course). The groom wore a navy blue double-breasted suit with a brilliant red rose in his lapel. (Yes, I know this amount of detail is tedious but it was cause for much concern at the time.)

The only glitch in the proceedings occurred as our minister was reading a standard prayer about sexual love. He paused for just a moment, apparently in embarrassment. Not so. In typing up the service in Launceston I had altered a few lines; our priest simply lost his place when the prayer in front of him failed to match the version he knew by heart. Another of the prayers we included I liked for the futuristic idealism of its end:

In all of us is a longing
for a life that has not yet come,
for a world that is free and just,
a dream of hope for all people.

The bash afterwards was at the home of Megan's mum. By all reports the food provided by our caterers was excellent. This was good to



hear since I had favoured them mainly on their name and logo, shown here. No self-respecting fantasy fan could pass that up. Megan and I were able to sample the fare, but in truth the whole reception was something of a

blur. One minute we were greeting guests at the door; in what seemed like another we were seeing them out again. In between we somehow managed to grab a bite and mumble a few words over the wedding cake -- a delicious fruit and custard job called a mille feuilles (yes, I know it sounds like a rock band).

Our honeymoon was spent largely in national parks amid the Otway Ranges west of Melbourne. We enjoyed walking a number of tracks to reach some spectacular destinations such as Erskine Falls. This was a particularly appropriate place to go, it turns out, as it was a very popular setting for newlyweds to have their photographs taken in around the end of last century. We maintained this noble tradition by nabbing an innocent passerby to snap a shot. A number of other trails also ended at lovely falls. Lorne, where we stayed, is on the coast and along the Great Ocean Road, so we had no end of panoramic views and scenic sea sites to see. Not that we spent all of our time outdoors, you understand.



Erskine Falls.

Returning to Launceston after this was something of a shock to the system, in more ways than one. The parochialism of Tasmanians can be quite a jolt to those newly arrived from the Mainland. Ask anyone born here whether they are Australian or Tasmanian and many will answer with the latter. But wait -- there's more! (No, not a free set of steak knives.) There's actually a running "Northern versus Southern" feud over which half contributes most to the state, very reminiscent of the rivalry between Melbourne and Sydney.

As an example, colleagues at work were discussing footy one day but none of the team names were familiar to me. "You must be talking about the TFL," I ventured. Came the icy response: "No, the NTFL, actually". While teams from the rest of the country now compete in the AFL, Northern Tasmanians still treasure their own bush league.

Megan joined me in January.

She found work in February.

We bought a house in May.

Obviously, if we're doing all this, things can't be all bad in the Down Under part of The Land Down Under. And they're not. Quite the opposite. The cost of living is less than any other place we've been in Australia and the quality of life is extremely high. Nowhere is very far from anywhere else -- Hobart is only a few hours drive from Launceston -- and Melbourne is less than an hour away by plane if we feel the need. I've seen more wildlife here than ever before (albeit much of it as roadkill) and we have many and varied opportunities for bushwalking.

Ironically, Peshawar has been the most stable address I've had for Mumblings from Munchkinland to date. That looks like changing now.

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With D-Day commemorations in mind, both covers this time remember the man who made it all possible. The front cover illustration by Julian Krupa originally appeared not in Fantastic Adventures, as my mockup might suggest, but in its longer-lived Ziff-Davis stablemate Amazing Stories (Nov. 1943). Lawrence's more solemn work on the back cover is reproduced from Famous Fantastic Mysteries, September 1945 (where it illustrated Joe Archibald's "Heaven Only Knows").

The effect of paper shortages during the war and the involvement of a handful of sf writers in the forces are quite well known. I'd be interested to hear more about the experiences of others -- writers, artists, fan or pro. Any takers?

The mermaid (p.5) is from a book entitled Fictitious and Symbolic Creatures in Art (London, 1906).

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Will any fen read #10? I'll never know unless you send a LoC to:

Chris Nelson, 23 Henty Street, Invermay, Tas. 7248
- AUSTRALIA -

Anyone interested in seeing previous Mumblings should also drop me a line. The issues published in Pakistan are in short supply but the parcel from New Delhi did arrive, eventually, so I have some of #7 as well as those I've done on Australian soil.

