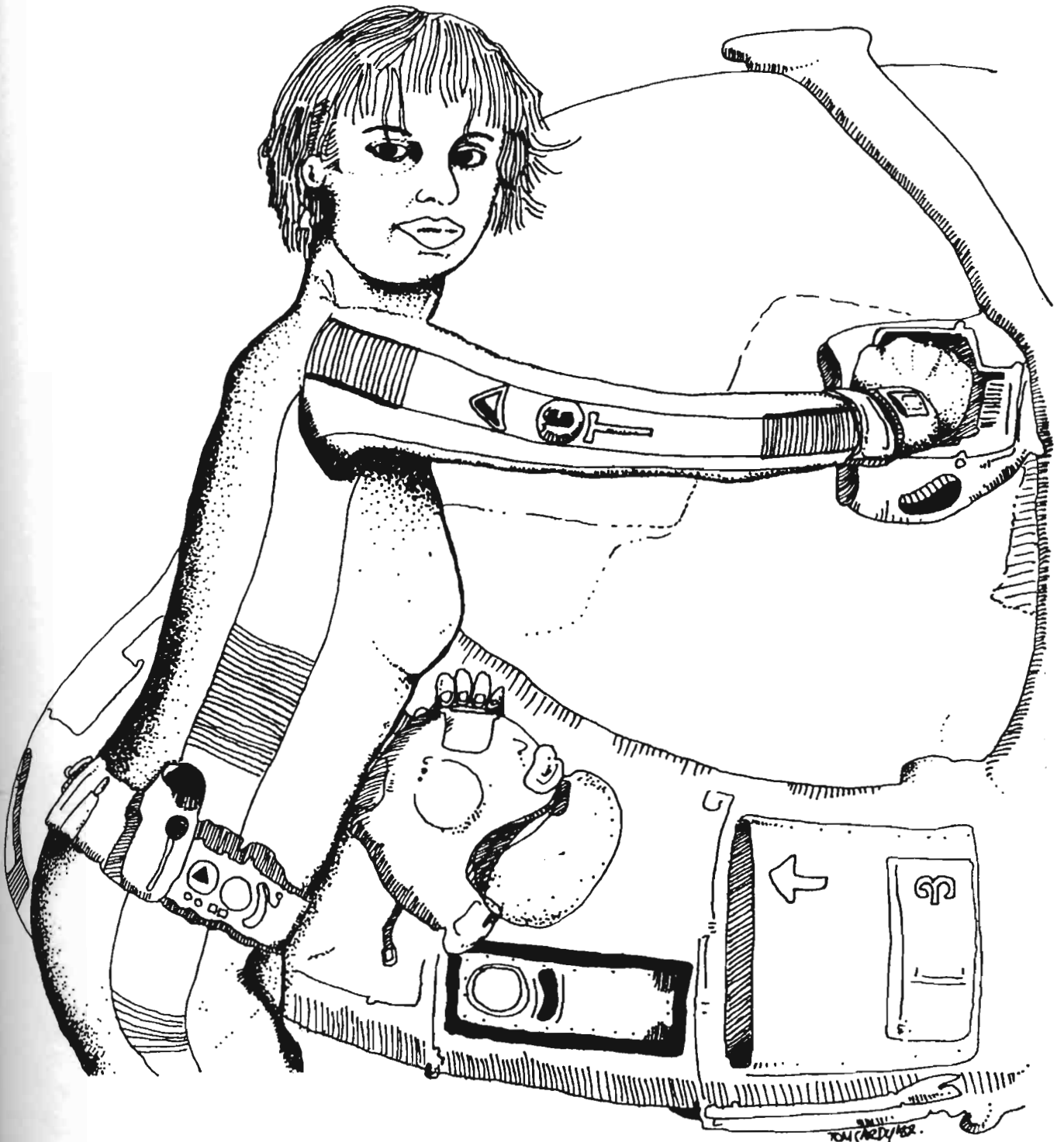


Weber Woman's Wrevenge

Volume 2, Number 3 November 1982

Registered by Australia Post, Publication No NBH4389



WEBERWOMAN'S WREVENGE NINE

(Volume 2, Number 3, November 1982)

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Jean Weber, 13 Myall Street, O'Connor ACT 2601, Australia.

Overseas correspondents should send non-first-class mail (fanzines, for example) to me c/o CSIRO, PO Box 1800, Canberra City ACT 2601, Australia.

COA COA COA COA effective 1 December; all mail of any sort should go to the CSIRO Box number. Just to further confuse things, however, you have a choice of addresses for letters, or for fanzines from within Australia. These can be sent to me c/o CSIRO, Box 333 Wentworth Building, University of Sydney, NSW 2006. When in doubt, however, the Canberra City CSIRO address is a good one; they'll find me. Weberwoman will be 'of no fixed address' so to speak starting from mid-December. (I think I know where I'll be, but not just when.)

WEBERWOMAN'S WREVENGE is available for trade, contribution, letter of comment, artwork, or A\$0.60, \$US 0.80, or equivalent per issue. I accept uncanceled stamps from US, Canada, or UK in payment, as well as money. I prefer personal response, however.

Electrostencils by Ron L Clarke, Faulconbridge (they may be a few leftover ones done by Richard Faulder, Yanco, as well). Cover printed offset by Ron L Clarke. An ISOPRESS Publication.

Publication dates are January, March, May, July, September, and November. Registered by Australia Post, Publication No. NBH 4389.

THE COVER

By New Zealander Tom Cardy this time. Sent with no explanation or 'story'. I'm not quite sure what the woman is doing, and she looks a bit odd anatomically to me, but never mind. I am not terribly fussy, and I do thank Tom for sending the drawing. Several people responded to a recent plea in Applesauce for artwork, but not all of the drawings are usable. Some have too many large black areas, and Ron tells me his offset has difficulty coping with these. And some just don't appeal to me (I am somewhat fussy).

THIS FANZINE SUPPORTS

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*
* MELBOURNE FOR WORLDCON IN 1985 *
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* * * * *

THE RUBBISH BIN

by Jean Weber

Recently I've received several letters containing some very constructive criticism of this fanzine. Most of what the writers say, I agree with; however, I'm unlikely to expend the energy required to make major changes in the material I contribute. Some of the comments were complicated by the fact that the writers are also members of one or more of the same apae as I; thus some of the 'personal' material (and the items on rape) are repetitious to them. I can see no real way around this problem, unless I don't talk about my private life in this zine (or in the apae). To me, a diary of sorts is the most appropriate thing for an apae; but if I leave all that out of Wrevenge, other readers won't know anything about my life, and from the great majority of letters I get, I gather people are interested. Judith Hanna does make one very good suggestion: "... work up some particular aspect of what you've been doing lately into an anecdote, dressed up with style and personality and all those literary-type extras, rather than simply printing it out as a catalogue of events. Had your editorial (in #7) for instance, enlarged from that presumptuous male who tried to fondle you when you gave him a lift, to other personal experiences you or friends of yours have had, to an introduction to your Very Serious paper on rape, the issue would have balanced better." I agree with Judith; but, as I said above, if I'm honest with myself I know I'm unlikely to expend the effort to write that sort of editorial. Sorry, group.

However, one thing that won't take a lot of effort (and thus is far more likely to occur), is a shift from the

overly serious emphasis of the last few issues, to a more balanced mix of serious, faanish, amusing, and so on. This will, to some extent of course, be dependent on what articles and letters come in, but I expect to put more effort into asking people for material rather than just using what I get unsolicited. Those of you who like the serious discussions needn't worry that they'll disappear; I've received so much mail expressing delight at a zine that obviously fills a gap in Australian fandom at least, that I won't be likely to change that aspect -- particularly not when it interests me very much too. But even I found #7 a bit too 'heavy' for my taste, so I'm hardly surprised others felt the same way.

BUT, I think the things covered in this zine are important; so, although I'd like to approach them in a less didactic way, I think they need to be discussed -- and so, evidently, do a lot of my readers. One who does not is Joseph Nicholas, who writes: "Although it hardly behoves me to second-guess the reactions of others, I suspect that a great many other British fans to whom you intend sending future issues may be similarly unmoved to respond. And not only because of the dullness of the writing; I really hate to say this, but there's something awfully American about your fanzine, with its earnest didacticism about the mores and attitudes of contemporary society and agonised belabouring of such emotionally charged subjects as rape; an approach that many British fans (no doubt due to their cultural upbringing) find extremely distasteful (and would prefer to discuss the matters in private amongst their immediate friends

anyway). " Joseph has touched upon one of the main reasons I publish this zine: I think certain topics should be discussed publically, in addition to private discussions with one's friends. One's friends are more likely to agree with one's own opinion; more diversity may be anticipated in a more public forum. If Joseph or anyone else, chooses not to read (or reads but doesn't enjoy) this zine for the reasons he states, fair enough. But the overwhelming majority of my mail suggests that he's in the minority. Of course, maybe those who don't like it, don't write. Also fair enough. Long ago I learnt that no matter what you do, someone will complain; so you might as well do whatever you like.

Aside from that, I do appreciate Joseph's comments because they made me stop and think just what I was doing and why, rather than continuing merely out of habit.

We really must talk about science fiction and fantasy more, though. Why? Because I'm interested, and I assume many of you are, too. A non-fan acquaintance who reads sf asked me, upon seeing this zine, what rape had to do with sf. I pointed out all the rubbish sf with emphasis on violence, s&m, bondage, rape, etc, and mentioned that even the better stuff often contains these elements (more so in the past). A lot of the other subjects we've discussed are also treated in sf, at least that part of f&sf that deals with people's reactions to technological changes. Some of this gets covered in book reviews, but I (or other contributors) really ought to work it into an article now and then. Just for a bit of balance -- I still want the emphasis to be on personal experience and feelings, rather than theory; but an author's treatment of a sociological topic also interests me greatly.

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THE DIARY BIT

The 'highlight' of the past two months occurred last weekend: the 10th anniversary National Conference of the Women's Electoral Lobby. By my own choice, I worked the registration desk, ran various errands, and then found myself in charge of the photocopier. I had not wanted to listen to the serious discussions, and was quite successful in avoiding them. I had, however, anticipated more chance to natter with other women as they wandered in and out of the formal sessions; but the auditorium was rather far from the registration desk and most people didn't wander that far. Still, I had a chance to see various friends, and also went for drinks and dinner with some of them in the evenings. By Tuesday (it was a long weekend) I was exhausted; if I hadn't been so busy at work, I might have taken a few days off.

Meanwhile the contractor was building new side fences on my property, and my retired neighbour was 'supervising' -- very critically! Each day when I arrived home, I first got the contractor's version of the arguments, then (after he left) the neighbour's. Fun & games. Anyway, the fences are now done -- and quite an improvement, too!

Out of sheer boredom, I made one trip to Sydney for 'no reason at all', and Tony Power organised a small picnic on that Sunday. I found the drive pleasant, after a couple months' break from the frequent trips earlier this year, and enjoyed seeing many friends again.

I've found another woman to rent my house while I'm away; she's already moved in a roomful of possessions, so that arrangement is less likely to fall through than the previous one. And now I've got two families vying for the privilege of taking my cat Stuart -- I should have an auction!

10 October 1982

ONE MAN'S VIEW OF LIBERATION

by Samuel Wagar

((This essay was originally published in Sam's fanzine, 'The Freefan Journal', No 3, May 1982))

I've been spending a lot of time thinking about the traditional male roles that I've been trained for, and the possible avenues for my liberation from them into new areas of feeling and experience that aren't contained in the possibilities currently available to men or women.

My soul is split into impulses I can feel and those I can't, into 'proper' and 'improper', into 'male' and 'female'. Artificial antagonisms have been built up and carefully nurtured, initially by parents and school and church, until the internal mechanisms were constructed to take over. Conflicts especially between my way of loving and yours, my 'maleness' and your 'femaleness'.

I was taught to distrust my smallest impulse towards pleasure, to cringe at a beautiful poem, to stunt my aesthetic and emotional appreciation to just about zero (I sometimes think that the evilist thing that this late capitalist civilization had done to men is destroy our sense of beauty), to grossly overdevelop my logical and reasoning capacity to the point of enjoying analyzing sunsets and the moon, and never to feel anything as fully as I would be able, not even the feeble traces of anger and lust left to me.

I'm finding the true source of my strength as a man not in the oppression of women but within myself,



and I'm coming to live more in tune with this well of power.

I know that this power exists because of the few times when I've felt free and alive, walking down the street feeling as sexy and attractive as hell, alive and healthy, in those times the way I think and feel about women has none of that 'feeling-sick-excitement' that I get when I dream a socially approved fantasy of domination in my unfree normal self.

I am powerful and I am clean, sexy and strong, integrated on many levels and not afraid.

I am trying to expand the moments of freedom until they are my whole life.

I resent it when my strength is attacked by people who see it as coming from my participation in the oppressive relations between men and women. I resent not being able to feel pride in my self-confidence and courage, when it is so hard to feel self-confident and courageous; or, especially, being told that my sexuality is tawdry or 'dirty' or oppressive when it is the deepest source of my pride and my connection to that inner strength.

My anarchism seems to come from the same place as this need to feel deeply and develop new ways of being. At their finest my political beliefs reflect my best needs and my most caring self. Also, it seems that the institutions that attack me in one area of my life are the same ones or connected to those that attack me in other areas (ever notice how people who hate gays also hate Commies, also want subservient women and blacks, also support religion and Law'n'Order?).

I have found that the more loving I am, the more open I am, the more power I get from the people around me and the more I can give them... but I am trained to close up quick and it takes a lot to break those 'masculine' controls enough to love freely, for awhile.

The thing I think that has us all trained to hold in our energies, to be closed, weak and partial, the thing that has set up all of these rules for us to live through, rather than permitting us to live as we choose, through our own experience, is that need by the rulers of our society to maintain their control -- if part of our energies are spent in holding ourselves back from full feeling and experiencing, then our power to act will be lessened, part of ourselves will be keeping us unfree.

A fully uninhibited person can't be given orders, she won't be intimidated because she is undivided in her self. She'll be powerful in her self rather than through that power over others we're taught is power.

So, I talk a good fight, though I'm very tentative in my conclusions, really, some vague outlines of my needs. It's not enough to just want something, though that has to come first. You have to start making it real and act, no matter how unsure of everything but the need to realize

your dreams. You become clearer as you follow your ideas into the world.

So, my radical life is my way of trying to become the person that I want to be, through changing my day-to-day circumstances and continually testing myself in action...

I see myself as involved in building a supportive environment for anarchists and non-traditional women and men to explore new means of relating and of revolution (bet you thought that revolution was not the hard core of what I am doing and saying). And so, I'm a social as well as political activist.

I can't really see an easy solution to the need to be strong and self-determining and male without the socially approved models of 'macho' or 'tough' or even 'normal dominant male' getting in my way. This seems to be true also of the gay men I know who, after all, are men too-- whole group of things like different games of power, dominance and submission, that seem to be integral to whatever male role, and not just to male/female games.

As the New York City Dolls said, "Only a man like me could love a woman like me", and loving and recognizing the absurdity of the dichotomy, gaining power from both parts and choosing which will exist, there is my hope.

((I have been corresponding with Samuel for several months, and find his views on such things as child-raising and interpersonal relationships, to be very refreshing. He describes himself as a comuno-anarchist. The impression I get is that his communism springs more from a belief in the ^{voluntary} cooperativeness of people -- something I consider a fantasy on any scale exceeding that of the small group.



THE INSCRUTABLE SMILE OF THE SPHINX

by Marc Ortlieb

It was a pure white room. Pure white. As white as a baby's nappy. As white as a lily. It should, thought Beiltro, at least have black curtains, or perhaps pictures of Lily. Who? Cream? White as... Beiltro sniggered to himself. This was not the same Beiltro as the one that had only days - if time had any meaning here - before found himself ordered to report to the head executive of The League For Fannish Decency. There had certainly been some ch-changes since then...

It was a stern visage that greeted Beiltro as he strode manfully into the Chief's office. He did not invite Beiltro to sit, and so the crack TWAGA agent stood stiffly to attention, wondering what he had done to cause this rapid about face in the Chief's attitude toward him.

'Beiltro,' the Chief said, his very words dripping icy cold disapproval, 'you have been summoned to answer some very grave charges. It pains me to have to do this, but, until these charges are cleared, I am obliged to suspend you from active duty. Give me your pass.'

Horrified by the gravity of the situation, Beiltro passed his card, which fell with a leaden thud onto the desk. In return, the Chief pushed a folder across the desk towards him.

'This isn't strictly permitted,' he said, 'but you have been a dedicated and loyal agent, and I feel that you should be given the chance to cleanse this blot from your escutcheon, though I must warn you that, considering the evidence against you, a guilty verdict is virtually certain.'

Beiltro could almost, if he really tried, imagine a smile buried deep in the Chief's stony intransigence.

'Thank you sir,' he said. 'I appreciate your help, and, despite your pessimism, I'm sure I can prove my innocence, no matter what the charges.'

It hadn't been that easy though. Beiltro looked once more at the white walls that surrounded him, and it was almost as though each had been transformed into a movie screen. A montage of his efforts flickered across his eyelids, each segment on a never-ending loop leading him right back to his starting point - guilty as charged.

He saw the basic charge, that he had, on several occasions, forfeited his TWAGA membership while on detached duties in North America, paraded before him. The list of his accusers stretched out before him, and yet every time he discredited one, another two would spring, hydra-like, into that one's place. The flickering frames traced his path through fandom,

deprived of his LFD aides and accoutrements, and yet still having his training to fall back on. It saw him hunting through long forgotten issues of THYME and ANSIBLE, striving for the merest hint that would set him nearer to his goal of exoneration.

It finally saw him, late one night, brain numbed by frustration, and lack of sleep, tumbling upon the one thread that tied together all of the multitudinous damnations of his character. Here was the piece announcing Weberwoman's move; there the copy of SUPEREIGHT's damning movie footage; and here yet again the accounts from the access files of The Program-mer. Everything pointed to the one place. True, it had been considered to be the LFD's one bastion of righteousness in the area of licentiousness known as Sydney, but what better place to hide a conspiracy of monumental proportions. Beiltro smiled ruefully at the thought of the triumphant grin that had split his face as he'd bought his train ticket to Faulconbridge. Had he known then what he did now, he would never have made that decision.

Beiltro allowed himself a tiny inner smile as he patted the file carefully sewn into the lining of his greatcoat. Looking back on it, the solution had been absurdly simple. After all, had it not been the evil genius of the Programmer that had recruited Granny herself, setting the stage for the depravity of Le Trek, and his Sydney minions? The train sighed to a halt as it pulled into Springwood Station. Beiltro grabbed his bags, and then froze. Something in the back of his mind told him that things were amiss. There was a subtle stillness in the air. The stationmaster's office seemed strangely deserted, and there was the matter of the forty piece brass band, festooned with 'GDAY BEILTRO!' banners. As the band struck up a tune clearly identifiable as THE BALL OF KERRYUIR, he realised that his visit had been anticipated.

There was only one option left open to him. He scuttled down the corridor, bowling over the conductor, and a platform guard, who'd barely had time to mutter 'Not while the train is standing in the station' before he's locked himself into the cubicle marked Gents. Even that though was not good enough, he realised, as he became aware that he was not the only one in the cubicle. Glancing towards the ceiling, he noted the dreaded red stripe of his arch-enemy WeberWoman. 'So', he hissed, not yet willing to surrender, 'There was a redback on the toilet seat.'

'Shame on you Cram,' said the femme fatale, lowering herself to the floor by the chain, 'I wouldn't have thought a decent LFD agent like you would have known a lascivious song like that.' She flicked the door open. 'Okay, fellas,' she shouted, 'I've flushed him out.'

Until she delivered that line, Beiltro had almost been willing to admire his captor. He noted though that she at least refrained from tying his hands.

Beiltro gazed blankly at the white walls, which did the same in return. Even his mental pictures refused to refrain the indignities which he'd been forced to suffer at the hands, feet, and other bodily parts of the Faulconbridge conspiracy. He had found himself escorted to Medlow Bath, which, as LFD Intelligence had already ascertained, had been taken over by the dreaded semi-bee, known to some as Eric. The stories about Medventions being cancelled due to price increases had been cunning attempts to cover up the takeover by the Faulconbridge-based cartel. There he was held until a full meeting of the coven could be convened.

His tortured mind refused to run through the programme, featuring the cunningly carved polystyrene devices of the Puppet Master, and the unwholesome uses to which the flexible plastic frisbees were put. Although his mind could juxtapose

the terms 'abseiling' and 'flying fuck', his brain refused to supply a picture for the caption. It had been at this point in the proceedings that his brain had snapped, and he had been unable to follow the labyrinthine twistings and turnings of the cave system which had led him to the white room which he now occupied.

'It's almost womb-like,' he whispered to himself, and the room reverberated to his echoes, with each sound reminding him that, had he not been so thoroughly mind mangled, he would never have come up with the image.

As if his words had provided some sort of cue, there was a shimmering, and the wall at which he had been so intently staring irised open, to reveal a circular passageway, where stood a figure clothed in white from head to toe. The garment was so constructed that Beiltro could not gain any hint as to the wearer's identity. True the figure was short, which, to Beiltro, hinted that it might have been a woman, but it spoke not a word, merely beckoning. Beiltro followed, too astonished to make a sound himself.

He was led into a large circular room, where were seated twelve figures, similarly clad in white. His guide sat, and became the thirteenth. Beiltro found himself at the focal point of their gazes, and yet the white masks shielded their eyes from



his gaze. Just as the heavy silence had started to press upon him, there came a voice, emanating not from the group, but from a speaker set high in the ceiling.

'Well Beiltro, do you know who we are?'

Beiltro smothered a shocked gasp, for the voice was that of Bill Wright, a noted supporter of the LFD, and certainly not the sort of person he would have expected to find mixed up in anything like this. 'Bill?' he stuttered. 'What are you doing here?'

The voice chuckled, the laugh starting as Wright's, but somehow fading until that of Leigh Edmonds.

'Come now, Beiltro, you don't really think that we'd go to all this trouble to shield our appearances from you only to give ourselves away with our voices? Credit us with a little sense. Our voices are being processed by computer, and we can, if we wish, use any of the voices of Australian fandom to converse with you.' Even as the voice spoke, it switched from Edmonds to Herman, to Frahm, to Foyster, finally settling on Beiltro's own intonations. 'Mind you,' it continued, 'there are those who would look at you somewhat askance for talking to yourself.'

The penny dropped. Beiltro looked calmly at the thirteen and said, 'You're the Secret Masters of Fandom aren't you?'

The voice reverted to that of Peter Darling. 'Yes, as a matter of fact, we are, and we feel that it's time we explained why we brought you here. After all, we can't afford to waste too much time on you. The universe is a big place to run. And you haven't been making our job any easier. Did you and your TWAGoid mates really think that Granny and Le Trek would be able to get away with what they were doing without the support of the Grand Council of SMOF's?'

'But I should go back to the beginning.'

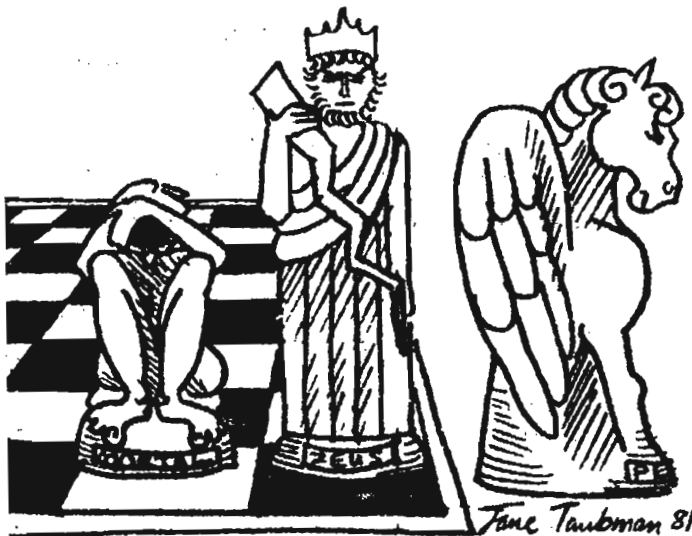
You realise, of course, that we SMOFs are deeply concerned by the declining quality and quantity of fanzines.'

'Yes,' interjected Beiltro, 'but how does encouraging that... that... that sort of behaviour help that?'

The voice sighed. 'An understanding of that is what distinguishes between you and us. It's really quite simple. What was needed was a new incentive for fanzine production, and can you think of anything better than by establishing strong social groups, and then spreading the members of those groups to the four corners of the globe?'

Though not convinced, Beiltro started to see pieces of a puzzle fitting in to place. The Dormouse had moved* to Faulconbridge. Granny was in Adelaide. 'Jack' Frost was in Melbourne, and then there were the continental interchanges across the Atlantic, resulting in hybrid cultures of American and British fen. As for the way that American and Canadian fans buzzed from city to city, cross pollenating their respective fandoms, the less said the better.

* to London, at the instigation of the Human Canvas. Weberwoman had moved... ((sorry, left out a line))



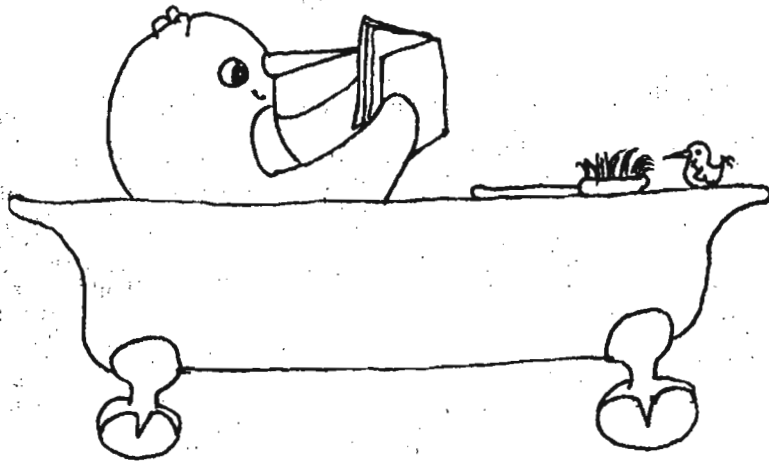
'Yes, it was only in Australia that fans tended to sit tight in one place, and thus allow their cities to become stagnant and dead. So we felt that we should stir things up a bit. The 'immorality' that you saw in Sydney and Perth fandoms was actually an important step in establishing the conditions necessary for that cross-pollenation to occur in Australia.'

Beiltro frowned. 'But if this is true, then everything I've worked for has been in vain. What then is there left for me? Can I join your great cause?'

There seemed regret in the voice. 'No. I'm afraid that isn't possible. You are too set in your ways, and would never readily embrace our cause. You will continue as basically dull and puritanical, but, perhaps, with a little more understanding of that road which you yourself cannot follow. However, we will grant you one favour. So that what must be done in Adelaide fandom will not excessively distress you, we will move you to surroundings more conducive to your way of thinking. True, we will have to change Melbourne eventually, but, since it is not so dear to you, the changes won't hurt you so much.'

So bleary-eyed was Beiltro that he didn't notice as they tied the rope to his waist and lowered him through the hole in the centre of the room. He didn't regain full consciousness until his bottom bumped on the hard floor of a rock pool just down from the Medlow Baths. Though winded by the drop, he had the sense to cut the rope and stagger away from the place before the cold wind could rip into his thin clothing. He started walking south. Melbourne's a bloody long way, he thought. FINIS

((First published in Applesorcery 19, Marc's zine in the Sydney-based apa, Applesauce. Reprinted with permission.))



BOOK REVIEWS

All reviews by
Jean Weber,
unless otherwise
indicated.

WHY CHILDREN?

edited by Stephanie Dowrick and
Sibyl Grundberg. Women's Press,
1980 (my copy by Penguin Books)

Eighteen essays by women, discussing their feelings about children and motherhood. Some are mothers; some wish to be; others have no children and do not want any. A wide range of ages is represented, and there are lesbian as well as heterosexual women.

The main thing that struck me about this book is that one woman's "reasons" for wanting or not wanting children, though of vital importance to her, are quite irrelevant or even negative "reasons" to another woman. Presumably if men had been in the discussion, there might have been more points of view expressed, but this essential dichotomy would remain. It is most pronounced between the "yes" and "no" groups. I read this book while a debate was raging in the pages of ANZAPA, the Australia-New Zealand APA, over "reasons" for having or not having children, and I commented there:

"I have long thought that parents who preach parenthood as somehow superior to non-parenthood are trying to convince themselves more than they are trying to convince me... I often say that I can't think of any reason why an intelligent person would want to raise a child. This is said only partly in jest, because I don't really think reason has a great deal to do with it. Although of course people now are seeing that child-bearing is a choice, not an inevitable thing, the choice itself is based upon desires and feelings that don't translate well into verbalised "reasons". At least not ones that have any meaning for someone who doesn't already agree with them. And why should they? Unless you're a devotee of the Vulcan Philosophy, perhaps."

This book gives a good insight into the desires and feelings that motivate people to choose to have, or not have children. It also makes the distinction (though not always explicitly) between the desire to produce children and the desire to raise them. To me this is an extremely important distinction, as even I (a militant non-parent) have in the past desired to experience pregnancy and childbirth -- but I've never wanted to raise a child... nor did I feel that having a child 'for the experience' and then giving it up for adoption was a suitable choice for me. That always struck me as the epitome of selfish behaviour. This book is high on my 'recommended reading' list.

ALL THAT FALSE INSTRUCTION, by Elizabeth Riley, Angus & Robertson, 1975.

Subtitled 'A Novel of Lesbian Love', this book about growing up female in Australia in the 50's and 60's contains no more (and possibly less) sex than a comparable book about a heterosexual woman. Personally, I would consider the main character, Maureen, to be bisexual, but since she clearly prefers sex with women to sex with the incompetent louts she knows among men, she considers herself 'lesbian', and those amongst her family and acquaintances to whom the idea of females making love with each other is sinful, unnatural, and numerous other shock-horror type reactions, she's a deviant all right -- and lesbian is the word they use.

Besides her sexual "deviance", Maureen suffers from a condition that I suffered from in my late teens and early adulthood -- the things she wants to do, enjoys, and is good at are not acceptable for a woman, and she worries about the fact that she should be worried about not being normal. She has male friends, but finds males hopeless as lovers; she feels she should make love to men, so she does, but she doesn't like it much (that's not the part I relate to). Consequent on this, and for other reasons (like lack of help in raising children, and the impracticability of combining childraising and a career, and basically not being terribly thrilled with babies and children -- all this I did relate to), she definitely doesn't want to marry and be a mother. Actually, her decision on this came very early in life, as she observed her mother's situation and resolved that she'd never let that happen to her.

Her childhood battles with an overbearing, harpy-type mother are frighteningly depicted. When she decides to leave home, it's easier for her than for her friends, to defy their families, because she's been on the outs with them for years. Her parents have definitely made her feel that no matter what she does, she's wrong -- so she decides she might as well do what she likes, rather than try to please them. Things can't be any worse. Turns out she's right. She goes off to Sydney University, where she falls into a "typical" student lifestyle that shocks her parents (who only know the half of it); she lives for awhile in Women's College and then moves into a group house in Newtown. She hitchhikes, waitresses on trains, studies, discovers sex with men and further pursues her interests in women, is nearly blackmailed by the mother of one of her female lovers, and eventually comes to accept herself and her lifestyle -- through the help of a sympathetic guidance counsellor. Well written and fast moving. Recommended.

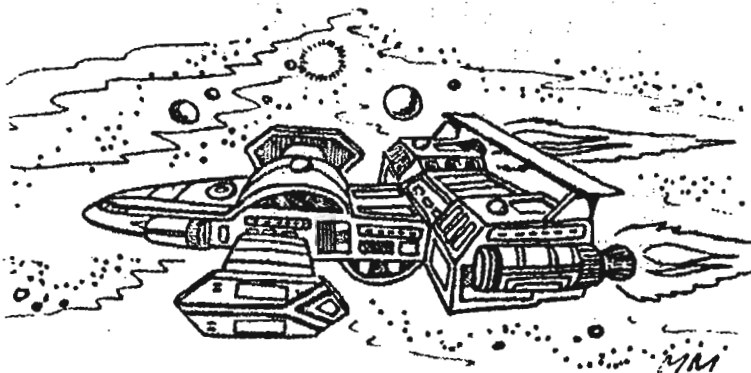
THE SARDONYX NET, by Elizabeth A Lynn, Berkley, 1981.

One of my quibbles with Lynn's earlier works was her style of using short, choppy sentences. All the time. This book marks a welcome departure from that style; now it doesn't interfere with the story, but rather enhances it. The story itself is more complex than her previous ones, too -- involving more interconnections between the characters and events.

Once again, Lynn concerns herself with topics that are rarely seen in sf or fantasy: homosexuality, incest, and sadism. Dana Ikoro, a smuggler, is caught and sold as a slave on Chabad. He joins the household of Rhani and Zed Yago. Zed is master of the space station/ship which brings prisoners to Chabad for sale at the annual Auction. His sister, Rhani, tends to the other matters of the family, of which she is the head. Drugs are used to keep most of the slaves docile; the Federation cops have been drying up the drug supply; the Yagos want to either obtain more from the smugglers or get the formula so they can manufacture their own. They do not see these drugs as an evil, especially as they consider the alternatives worse. Dana, once a smuggler, is to get information allowing the Yagos to purchase drugs.

The topic of slavery is discussed frequently in the book. Here it is used as an alternative to prison, or 'brain-wiping' or other forms of punishment against convicted criminals. Each criminal has a 'contract' (sentence) to be served; once served, s/he is free; wages credited to the slave's account during servitude are available at its completion to allow return to a legal life and employment. Although the institution of slavery-as-punishment is seen mostly from the point of view of the enslavers, we also get a few glimpses into the slaves' view, primarily through Dana. Quite a good story, I thought.

As usual, of course, I have a some quibbles: a character who figures prominently in the first few pages, never appears again, though I kept expecting her. Was this deliberate misleading on the part of the author? I figured out fairly early who the saboteur was, though Rhani didn't catch on till nearly the end; well, I know I'm usually rather dense as to what's going on around me, and Rhani was portrayed as a woman who'd never seriously considered her life to be in danger and took a loong time to get used to the idea, so perhaps she wouldn't have been sufficiently suspicious to figure it out, but... On the other hand, Rhani's tendency to ignore any unpleasanties (such as the fact that her slaves might prefer to be on the tranquility drug so that they wouldn't feel the distress of enslavement, while Rhani considered it far more humane to allow them to be free of the drug; or the way she refuses to think about her brother's sadistic methods of obtaining information, and getting his jobs).



CHRYSALIS 8, edited by Roy Torgerson, Zebra, 1980.

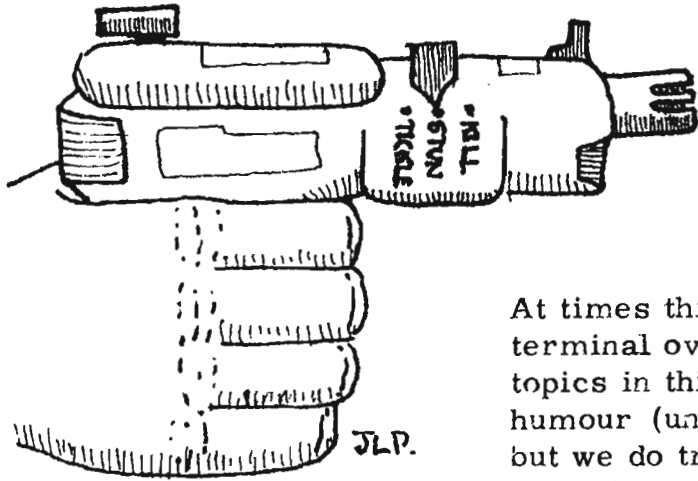
An excellent collection of stories, including 'Barrier' by Leanne Frahm, who manages to pack an incredible variety of material into 16½ pages and emerge with a consistent whole. Other stories include Tanith Lee's 'You are my Sunshine,' a slightly silly but well-written and enjoyable tale; Mike Resnick's 'Beachcomber', a 5-page robot story with a difference; Jayge Carr's 'The King is Dead', which impressed me particularly because it took me the longest time to figure out which sex the first-person narrator was, and each time my assumption changed, my whole image of what was happening changed too. Aside from that, it depicted a rather surprising 'solution' to several societal problems, including the one that's been getting a lot of space in this zine recently, rape. Orson Scott Card's 'Hart's Hope' is a novella-length fantasy, well written but not (to me) exceptionally impressive. Too long, in my opinion, for this volume, though I did enjoy it. Margaret St. Clair's 'Wryneck, Draw Me' is another somewhat silly story, of a type I would have expected to see in 'Dangerous Visions' some years ago: the sexual imagery was so silly that I thoroughly enjoyed this one too. There are other authors and stories in this volume t

WILD SEED, by Octavia E. Butler, Timescape (Pocket Books), 1980.

Although written several years after 'Mind of my Mind' and 'Pattermaster', this novel takes places well before those two. It features Doro, a 4,000-year-old 'man' who has been gathering together and selectively breeding people with various mental powers, for most of that time. The first part of this volume takes place in 1690 in Africa, when Doro discovers Anyanwu, a 300-year-old woman who can change her shape at will and is a skilled healer. He takes her to a colony he has established in New York, and begins searching for her descendants, many of whom have been sold as slaves. Most of the people he collects and breeds are black, though increasing numbers are Caucasian or Amerindian. Un fortunately, the traits he's breeding for seem associated with undesirable traits such as cruelty in all its myriad forms. This is largely due to the inability of the people with 'special abilities' to be able to control those abilities. Many do literally go mad. Many kill themselves.

One thing that distinguished this book from the two earlier ones, for me, was an increasing emphasis on a distaste for indiscriminate killing. Anyanwu, in particular, is distressed at Doro's apparent enjoyment of killing, as well as his lack of concern about his victims. She loves people, especially children, and does not appreciate his attitude of 'weed out the unfit'. Doro is able to blackmail her into obedience, by threatening her children, but otherwise he cannot control her as he controls the others. She realises how valuable she is to him (she's the only other 'immortal' he's ever met) and presses her advantage when she can. Both of them develop as personalities during the course of this book, though my memory of the Doro of the earlier books (later centuries) does not quite tally with the Doro depicted at the end of this one. Well, Never mind. Taken on its own, this is a well-crafted book which fascinated me so much I not only 'couldn't put it down', but I didn't skip passages as much as I often do. Recommended.

Also recommended: Donald Kingsbury's 'Courtship Rite', serialised in ANALOG earlier this year.



LETTERS

At times this lettercol seems in danger of terminal over-seriousness. Some of the topics in this zine don't lend themselves to humour (unless, perhaps you're Marty Cantor) but we do try to balance it a bit. Fortunately, some letters are amusing, too -- though it's not always easy to tell at first which ones...

KEVIN DILLON
PO Box K471
Haymarket 2000
Australia

((Kevin sends me thick envelopes of clippings, some of which get incorporated into this zine; others I just read and enjoy but don't have the space to share with you.

These clippings are generally accompanied by scraps of paper bearing tiny printing, which when deciphered turn out to be LoCs. --JHW))

You're getting a nice mixed showing of writers, though I'm curious just what other selection of letter you get. Glad to see Neville being personally drawn out a little more. It suits him better than the publically limited view more often seen in Applesauce ((a Sydney-based APA-JHW)) and his own publications.

((The letters that I don't publish fall into several categories; those I would consider a breach of confidence even when not marked DNQ; those which repeat something several other people have said, which I've already typed up, or which was better phrased; those which may praise the zine but don't really say much anyone else is likely to be interested in. Most letters are a combination of publishable and unpublishable material. I think the balance of pro/con letters on a given topic is usually about proportional to what I've received. Another category are very long letters (Diane Fox is a well-known example) which are very interesting but just far too much to use; occasionally one of these has a long enough section on one topic, that I can turn it into an article, like Judith Hanna's piece on housewives awhile ago. --JHW))

OMNI April '82 has male pill article much 'humourously' treated on TV lately. Doonesbury has ERA mirth in children trying ERA fast.

((In response to my hitch-hiker story)) It's bad enough that I have to not try to hitch rides from nightshift from women drivers (too many of whom panic even in daylight at mere sight of scruffy looking me, with poor eyesight and a need to be at least close enough to car to try to identify sex of driver), so I didn't need too much detail of your hitchhiker, Vera's and other stories, and my own problems avoiding troubles with enforced hitching, to go with what you've put together so far on all this.

...human non-responsible thinking is too much to blame for the staying power of the myths on rape. At our lowest level, especially in the media, 'humour' reinforces so much non-responsible individual thought,

from mothers-in-law, vapid femininity, strong (dumb) 'maleness', to legal irresponsibility. Sorting out legal definitions of 'power' vs 'sex' won't be easy in a world so uneducated in self-responsibility that it forfeits decisions increasingly to either computerised bureaucracy or authoritarian religiosity or whatever excuse. You seem to have arranged the feedback well. John Newman would seem over optimistic if that were all he were asking re '13-year-old girls' but, of course, as well said as all the writers make it, the biggest battles are always ahead of us, mainly because of the ever more painful to observe, accumulation of old, old problems competing with increasing newer ones for claims to attention, energy, legal work and cost, cost..

David Grigg's reference to Legman's book shows just how much double or more confusion there is as part of popular 'informed' opinion. Witness 'Wonder Woman' -- comic with bondage prevalent, but psychologically 'suitable' for identification with 'heroine' for young girls.

jan howard finder
PO Box 428
Latham, NY 12110
USA
26 April 82

Try this on some blokes. I used it at work and got some strange looks: some of my best friends are women...I'd even let my daughter marry one; after all, it is her life.

...may I recommend two books which you and your readers may find of interest: Love & Limerence by Dorothy Tennov, and The Cinderella Complex, by Collette Dowling. One is on romantic love and the other is on women's attitudes.

...I give a mean backrub/massage...I find that I feel better after I give a backrub, than before. It is hard work. I have also found that my subjects lose their headaches, aches, pains, etc. I, too, have never studied massage, tho I would like to. I find much of what Peter says corresponds to my own experience. I don't use oils, but would like to look into using them in the future... If I get over in '83, I'll be most happy to do a massage workshop with Peter at the National con. That would be fun. I'll bring over my mitt. .. which has rabbit fur on one side and velvet on the other. It is amazing what velvet will do to certain parts of the anatomy, hee hee (howe ver, being a gentleman, I only go where I'm invited.) I've had fun selling the mitts..at cons with the money going for DUFF. It helps to have a model to ~~give~~ glove while auctioning them. So if you wish to experience the famous 'Wombat

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Behind almost every woman you ever heard of stands a man who let her down.

-- Naomi Bliven

Backrub', then help me with DUFF. Bring the Wombat home.

Open invitation to any Aussie or Kiwi coming up-over. My messy Marsupial Mansion, aka the Wombat's Warren, is available for crashing. Just let me know well in advance. I tend to go to a lot of cons and might not be home. Lots of floor space, even a couch...

((Jan is standing for DUFF 1983. I am tempted to support him, though I've never met him in person. He's certainly done a lot for DUFF and A'83, and is now putting a lot of energy into the '85 Melbourne bid. Those backrubs sounds interesting, too... On the other hand, I have met Jerry Kaufman, and he's a bloke worth importing to Oz for a visit too. I don't think Jerry's been here before, but Jan was here in '75. I think I'll sit on the fence awhile and support them both!

By the way, Jan Finder's 'Guide to Australterrestrials' is worth buying, and a new book, an anthology called 'Alien Encounter', is now out. \$13.00 will bring you a copy surface mail direct from Jan, but I'm sure Space Age and Galaxy will be stocking it too. And by the way, anyone contemplating taking him up on the crash space offer, be warned that Jan keeps a non-smoking household.



WARREN NICHOLLS
PO BOX 146
Burwood, NSW 2134
Australia

On Australian FGFSF: if you want barbed comments, try Russel Braddon's Year of the Angry Rabbit. (I suggest you ignore the film made some-

what loosely from the story -- it completely missed the point of the book.)

I liked the advertisement ((for housewife)); after the last ten days, Im beginning to think it doesn't go far enough. ((Warren & Margaret's first child had been born just before he wrote this note))

Frank Macskasy seems to be forgetting that medicine, like other things, does change. Babies that would have died some years ago can now be saved. For what, is of course something else. The rest of his letter seems to be a little disconnected. It is not the actual experimentation on dead foetal tissue that the Right to Lifes object, but its purpose; given their basic premise that life begins at the moment of conception, their attitude is, on the whole, quite logical.



He is a politician. He has spent the best years of his life in an endeavour to make the world safe for stupidity.

Margaret has a nice anecdote about some relations (?) of hers. It seems that when their first child was several years old, they discovered he was extremely bright. Super-genius level, as a matter of fact. So they decided to treat him like one; it worked fine. The kid was going great guns, until he reached the age of 7; then he discovered football. The result is he is now going on more or less as normal as any other kid. The point being that whatever you try to do to the child is question will turn out to be somewhat self-correcting.

LESLIE DAVID
PO Box 5057
Fort Lee, VA 23801
USA

8 June 1982

The latest Army policy is to take a giant step backwards and segregate Basic Training and AIT (Advanced Individual Training) companies by sex. This decision was heralded by a story

in The Army Times with the title 'Basic Training to be Integrated'. Someone should send these people a dictionary. So men and women will now train separately in a farce that's known as separate but equal.

Speaking of Star Trek, I just saw Star Trek II and while the uniforms are much more practical, I was slightly upset to see that the writers couldn't come up with anything newer than the old gag of Admiral Kirk being nervous because a woman driver was going to take the Enterprise out of drydock.

In Arizona a few years back, CASA (Center Against Sexual Assault) had been opened not too long when they received a call from a man who had been sodomized and was having the same troubles dealing with it as a woman after rape. It's not just women who get raped, though theirs are the ones which are reported. ((In some States, it's not legally 'rape' if a man is the victim, one of several things rape law reformers want to change --JHW)). I really can't believe that women are so low as to want to use a rape accusation for revenge. I don't think any slight would warrant that. ((Some do, though I get the impression the motive is often to escape any responsibility rather than 'revenge' per se -- if you're a member of an ethnic or religious group that requires its females to remain virgins until marriage, and your father or whoever finds out you're no longer a virgin, you may find it easier to say you were raped, than to face the familial wrath. And it's quite amazing to me what either sex will do at times; a false rape accusation strikes me in somewhat the same category as deliberately getting pregnant to force a man to marry you. To me that's bizarre; but it's a common practice -- or was; probably still is in some circles.--JHW))

ROBERT CLEMENTS
8 McMillan Avenue
Dolls Point, NSW 2219
Australia

...a year working with lawyers and their kind has instilled in me a contempt for anything (or anyone) that treats political argument seriously.

This year (fueled, clearly, by those rather bizarre rulings in England) the big issue is rape; next year, who knows? The liberalism line is as faddish as the Paris Fashion look. ...While I have no great disagreements with most of your arguments, this habit of the human race of picking relevant issues of the day (one a day) tires me immensely as well as frightens me terribly. Hitler, the Ayatollah -- they all rise up with the tide of political awareness. (Signed, your average, disenchantad, unemployed youth)

-- Nancy Boyd (1892-1950)

DEBI KEAN
47/94 Dominion Road
Mt Eden, Auckland
New Zealand
22 June 1982

... Reading a book at the moment that I'm not sure I like. By an American woman, Professor of English at Wellesley College. The book is called 'The Female

Imagination', by Patricia Meyer Spacks. I can't quite suss out whether she is a feminist. The book is dated 1976. It's a literary and psychological analysis of women's writing, and grew out of a course she taught. I think it's the psychological analysis that bugs me... but she likes George Elliot, whom I've just discovered through one of my English courses. I am considerably impressed with Eliot.

In the other English course, we're currently 'doing' Adrienne Rich, the sole woman writer in that course. One poem of Rich's 'Translations', I find incredibly painful. It's about, essentially, woman's lack of solidarity. The lines I can't handle, relate to my own experience so closely... Robert Graves is otherwise my favourite poet in that course. He relates as directly to me as does Rich.

The tutor is a feminist, and a writer herself, doing her PhD. A brilliant woman, and with a very strong personality. She did yesterday's lecture on Rich. The lecturer, Roger Horrocks, was a Big Name Fan of the '50's, I'm told, besides which, he is as sympathetic to feminism as a man can be. His lectures show it, and not only the ones on Rich... which is why, I think, he felt it important to have Cathie (the tutor) do that lecture.

Regarding Alethea Raspa's comments on Ms, I've noticed that Ms often is used as a substitute for Miss. Notice coupons in advts, that give the options Mrs/Ms/Mr. The university bookshop has just two options on its invoices: Ms/Mr. Great! ((I'm surprised they don't also have Dr--JHW))

PS--Sincere thanks for the moral support and encouragement from Alethea Raspa, Chris Callahan and Diane Fox. I'm pleased to know I have that support!

JACK HERMAN
Box 2/2, Wentworth
Building
University of Sydney,
NSW 2006
Australia

I concur that 'Chair' is the only reasonable choice. Unfortunately, the Education Department has decreed 'Chairperson' as the nomenclature of Debates' controller -- Chairperson is one of the

clumsiest neologisms ever coined, along with the equally silly 'spokesperson' (why not 'representative' or 'speaker').

Latest information seems to support the concept that circumcision may, in fact, be dangerous, at least in the first 3-5 years of life. Later, non-circumcised men may be more likely to contract certain cancers (but, apparently, the risk early outweighs later gains). On the other hand, just because it has become attached, naturally, does not necessarily imply the foreskin is indispensable, or even serves a purpose. It may have served its evolutionary purpose and be hanging around still awaiting a favourable mutation or something.

There is not much more I can add to my previous comments on your (rape) article... Diane is way off base when she asserts that prostitution or masturbation can be seen as safety valves through which sexual

relief can be obtained. There is, firstly, the social stigma that attaches to both outlets... Secondly, neither allows for satisfaction of 'forbidden' lusts (father-daughter; sister-brother, etc). Thirdly, under peer pressure in a group of 'frustrated' males, neither is regarded as a satisfactory or acceptable outlet. She might as well suggest homosexuality as a viable solution and get the same response from those who want the sexual satisfaction society has promised.

Vera not only suggests prostitution as an answer but asserts the plentiful nature of available women. That may be so but not as perceived by the frustrated young rapist! The very fact that rape is often accompanied by overt violence (but not always) shows that there is a sexual as well as powertheory involved.



CHRISTINE ASHBY
PO Box 175
South Melbourne
Vic 2205
Australia
13 August 1982

Peace, peace! I promise to avoid Getting Serious, and henceforth I will steer clear of moral philops by, bio-medical ethics, feminism, human relations and any other topic upon which I might hold conscientious opinions. That still leaves plenty of light-hearted topics like politics and science fiction.

((Oh, Christine, don't do that! You've listed most of the topics this zine concentrates on. Just because we disagree, or misunderstand each other -- please don't stop writing in your conscientious opinions. It would be a dull zine without such contributions.--JHW))

And rape. Your article is a pretty good precis of Brownmiller's book, and you have mercifully spared us her more extreme views... What the whole notion of rape revolves about, of course, is consent. It is no defence to any other kind of assault that the victim consented, because it is generally thought to be a Bad Thing that people should clout each other. Sexual intercourse is of course generally thought to be a Good Thing, but only in certain circumstances -- basically ... between consenting adults. Whether the woman is consenting may of course be open to interpretation:

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Women in America too easily accept the idea of their inferiority to men -- if not actually, then in order to curry favour with men, who imagine it easier to live with inferiors than with equals. --Pearl Buck

'She never said a word to stop me, yer Honour -- she was too busy staring at the knife.' Likewise, 'She's me wife, isn't she?'

So, how about this little story with which all law students are entertained (when they can tear themselves away from the snail in the bottle of ginger beer). Miss X hadn't been in Australia very long, and she didn't speak English. She met Mr P, and after a whirlwind courtship, he took her along to the Registry Office, along with an escort of aunties and cousins. Various papers were signed, and he congratulated her on becoming his wife. The happy couple then moved to a furnished room, and sexual intercourse took place on a number of occasions over the next four days. Mr P then shot through. Sure enough, it came out that they had only signed preliminary forms, and weren't married at all. Mr P was rounded up and charged with rape. What do you reckon was the final outcome?

((Well, I'm not sure about the laws on fraud, but I thought that one of the ways a rape charge would be made was if the man tricked the woman into believing he was her husband. However, I suspect the man in this case would have got off free, though I also suspect that if she had relatives, they would have taken some action over the matter, never mind the law.--JHW))

PETE PRESFORD
'Ty-Gwyn'
Maxwell Close
Bwcle, Clwyd.
North Wales, UK

...one thing that does drag a bit with WWW is this 'man: woman', 'who does what' argument. And in the context of it in the home/married life; outside that you can debate all

you will. Any couple that get together should know from the start they must share things/inter-change house tasks; and not make any firm promises on any of them until they know how they are going to work together. 'cause if you don't make promises you don't fight over breaking them. And even then I'm over simplifying things somewhat. You can't expect a man to be keen on 'washing & drying' all the time if his wife won't let him cook the odd meal. And neither can you expect a woman to just cut the grass if he won't let her tend the roses or cut her own beg.

((I couldn't agree more, Pete; but the sad fact is that many people still marry with assumptions about what men and women should do. They don't make overt promises, but the promises are implicit (or they think they are) in the marriage vows. I had not looked upon the discussion in WWW as an 'argument'; I'm interested in what individuals do with their own lives. I have no quarrel with any domestic arrangements so long as the participants are in agreement; what distresses me is the number of women I talk to who are unhappy with their domestic arrangements but whose men are unwilling to consider any change. Okay, in a sense it's none of my business -- but in another sense women and men should provide moral support for those among us (of either sex) who are uncomfortable with certain traditions. Fortunately, fans (in my experience) seem far less bound by domestic traditions than many segments of society.--JHW))

Kids.. who can tell? Or maybe we should say, parents, too often we hear 'just look at kids today', when maybe we should be saying 'aren't we parents a load of crap today?'

If you don't mind me saying, I think the words 'self-expression' are the best words I know. Because no one I know can really handle them in context with someone else. And that's what it comes down to when people say they are frightened/don't want children. Don't you think Anita and I were a little scared of if all... but we hit it with an open mind and not any preconceived ideas. Teach a kid honesty and self-cleanliness and you can't go far wrong. Because underneath it all is another adult waiting to get out. And with the two items mentioned there are good offshoots. With Justine now moving towards 14, it's great to see her turning a woman. Mark close on 17 is force to be reckoned with at tennis & cricket (or I'm slowing down); and keeping his hands off me ome-brew. Pain & tears yes (any parent that loves their kids can give you the stories); but all well, well worth it in the end. If there ever is an end to the story.. for through your children you do gain a strange type of immortality... don't you? and there's been many a good parent who's had bad kids; and lots of stinking parents who have great offspring. Sure we all know cases like that. Yer pays yer money and takes yer chance... that's life Jean....

((Thank you, Pete, for those personal thoughts. However, if you don't mind, I'd rather spend my money, and my life, on something else. If I enjoyed the little buggers, it might be a different story, but I don't. Nor do I apologise for it.--JHW))

((From time to time I get comments on the art work I use, especially the covers, but I rarely publish the comments due to lack of space. This may be a bit unfair to the artists, and I do apologise. John Playford's cover on #6 brought a lot of response, however, so I'll share some of it with you--JHW))

MARGARET SANDERS
3.34a Belmont Rd
Mosman, NSW 2088
Australia

Well, John Playford still has to do an 'heroic female figure'. What's so heroic about killing animals? If you're killing them for food, then it's necessity not heroics, and if you are killing them for any other reason where is the heroics in that?

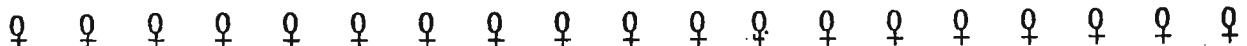
((Have you considered self-defence, Margaret?--JHW))

JESSICA AMANDA SALMONSON
PO Box 20610
Seattle, WA 98102
USA

1C August 1982

Well I don't think John Playford captured a feeling of a strong woman at all. First off, she has killed a sweet-eyed critter that looks big and slow and stupid somewhat like a stegasaurus, and furthermore it looks like a baby one. And the woman seems to have scratched herself killing the poor harmless monster. Furthermore, the woman seems to be suffering from anorexia, thinner than a fashion model. Also, she wouldn't have to wipe the sweat from her brow like that, after killing some poor baby monster, if she didn't pluck her eyebrows, eyebrows being nature's way of keeping salty sweat out of one's eyes. Finally, our scrawny would-be strong woman has gotten tattos on her legs which look less like snakes than spermatazoans crawling under her tight panties. All in all, you friend John failed his assignment! Better luck with your next fanartist!

((I doubt you'll like this month's cover either.--JHW))



Habit -- is the chloroform of love -- is the cement that unites married couples -- is getting stuck in the mud of daily routine -- is the fog that masks the most beautiful scenery -- is the end of everything.

--Genevieve Antoine Dariaux

SKEL
25 Bowland Close
Offerton
Cheshire SK2 5NW
UNITED KINGDOM
15 August 82

Julie Vaux's piece, 'A Summer's Day...' was rather good. She successfully conveyed the mood inherent in the title. Her drawings of the various races of her imaginary world also seem to be improving. In earlier examples

a lack of photographic verisimilitude seemed to be the result of clumsiness or even a lack of ability, whereas now it seems a positive attribute of her style.

I've always been a little wary of people who throw themselves so whole-heartedly into creating a single, consistent fantasy environment, an environment which seems almost to become an obsession as time goes by, to the extent that some people even start to 'write' themselves into their own fantasy, even in their day-to-day existence. The prime example of this is of course Taral (what was his original name?), but it seems to me that this is only an extreme version of what Julie and many others are doing. Their 'worlds' are usually simpler and better, even incorporating some of the benefits of modern technology, simply tacking it onto a more 'primitive' culture without the rigour of thought to realise that such innovations must bring social change in its wake and any social change is resented by the old order. This desire to 'go back' to a better society (instead of onward to a better society) seems to me to be a characteristic of people who I can only describe as Luddites of the Imagination. Odd that there are so many of them in what we like to think of as forward-thinking fandom. To be so concerned with a fantasy, sometimes at the expense of reality, seems, to put it bluntly, a bit sick. I suppose the reason I'm wary of such people is simply that I don't understand them. Maybe this would make a good subject for an article for WWW, especially by Taral who is much further down one of these roads than anyone else.

They take their creations so seriously, but then I suppose you have to if you're prepared to put in the effort and consistency required to 'create' your own world. I mean, if you criticise some aspect of one of their societies, or more particularly the reactions of one of their characters, they leap to his/her defence, telling you it isn't so, that you've misunderstood, that that's not the way it is. The way it is. It's as if it's all real to them, as if it's all just a different level of reality. Well, maybe it is, for them. I don't know... I would like to understand, if someone would care to explain. This is not meant to be in any way an 'attack' on either Julie or Taral individually, rather a questioning of some attitudes that they, and others, exemplify in varying degrees. I'm not looking to fall out with anyone, just explaining my attitudes and seeking enlightenment, is all.



In letters to me Julie has enthused over 'Elfquest', as have many others in various fanzines... I recently got the chance to see the book in question, a review copy sent to Dave Langford. I thought the drawings were twee, banal and, more importantly, simply not very good. I couldn't understand it. Every review I'd seen had been a rave. Had I lost touch with sanity? Had I slipped un-noticed into a universe in which this junk was considered worthwhile? The baric of reality rippled and wavered for a moment. Mega-galaxies hung in the balance.

'Awful, isn't it?' said Dave, echoing my own reaction... and the shimmering around me ceased and our Probability Continuum was saved. It was close here for a moment though.

* * * * *

I liked the idea of the advert for the post of 'housewife'. It reminded me of when I first met Roy Sharpe. I don't recall exactly how it came up, but I asked him if his wife 'worked'.

'Yes', he replied. '...she's a housewife.' It was the first time I'd realised that in this context I was saying one thing and meaning something else entirely. It seems to me obvious that in our family 'fir m' Cas and I both 'work'. Currently I'm in the Export Department, getting in currency from the outside world, whilst she is employed in a Service department (Administration, Maintenance, etc.) providing the essential backup without which the Export Department couldn't function. To be more accurate, at the moment the Service Departments are getting more in government subsidies than the Export Department. So what? Once you're married you become a family unit, a united front against the world, and it does not matter who contributes what providing that the arrangement is equitable in the long run. Marriage is a partnership, an equal partnership... the formation of a gestalt entity that is stonger/greater than its constituent parts. Too many people still get married out of a failure of the imagination, because it is the custom, because they like the tickly sensation at the end of their cocks so much that they feel they should sign up for it on a long-term contract, because they quite 'like' their partner, in a vague, un-tested way. There's no real commitment, no realisation that the undertaking of marriage is an acceptance of the submergence of selfishness, a selfishness which has been beneficial to the individual up to that point.

When you get right down to it, marriage is such a big and complicated thing that only mature and wise people over sixty years of age (and experience) ought to be allowed to tackle. When you look at it in this light it is no longer amazing that so many young marriages fail. The amazing thing is that so many succeed!

((Skel has quite a bit more to say, but I'm saving it till later, or possibly to use as a short article.--JHW))

BEN P INDICK
428 Sagamore Avenue
Teaneck, NJ 07666
USA

1 August 1982

Some of the letters in #6 remind me of my experiments when I was younger and still virile. Oh, I don't mean with men, women, children, and such, not even with dogs, sheep and ducks. Plants. That's what I mean. There was nothing as exciting as inseminating a violet or a tulip. You think an unclad female, a jock-clad jock or a somnolent ewe is something, let me tell you, a tulip in heat has 'em all beat! I felt caught as in a primeval force, the image of Pan beyond my peripheral vision laughing -- whether at me for my lust or at the flower for its courageous but vain efforts to defend its unsoiled purity, I cannot say.

I had my way in those days because I was strong and determined. In the end, however, the following spring, the bitter laugh was on me, for when the bulb germinated, there revealed within the precious cup was a homunculus, with a head much like my own bald top, and ears protruding at right angles to its veiny cranium -- but the eyes! They were laughing at me -- they were those of Pan!

I recall how I fell back, aghast, sick, and then the little being hurled itself from the flower and vanished. I gave up thereafter completely on sex (with flowers -- I still enjoyed, although only rarely nowadays -- encounters with dogs, cats, rats, giraffes, goats, sheep, swallows, worms, bugs, automobiles, door-knobs, and sometimes, human beings).

((Thank you, Ben, for that bit of personal history as a break in our heavy serious philosophising--JHW))

I liked the 'Position Vacant: Housewife'. It is true, I must admit, although I sense loss here, for the values which so many women held for so many years, and which not all of them found demeaning. Then again, daytime television would not exist if it did not have an audience sitting around watching, would it? In my own wife's case (if that possessive sounds repugnant, let me add that I am 'her' husband, and such a possessive doesn't bother me), she has spent only spare time for years on her Art, while growing a family and caring for the house, cooking and also working. Now, the kids out, she still wishes to work, but has cut it to three days a week, with four consecutive free days for her art. I am glad for this, but I guess I'll never write my plays, since I am still working full time as I have for thirty years at a job which gives me a pain in the ass. There are bills, after all...

Be a mother, Jean. Indeed, I am sorry we stopped with just the two kids...

(N. B. That last paragraph: My wife is not necessarily sorry.)

((Ah, what a punch line! Says a lot -- JHW))

mrmmapson
40 second ave
kelmscott, WA 6111
Australia

Anyone who doesn't value their own life can not be expected to judge the worth of others' lives. In this matter I take a buddhist stance: when

you kill (even if you are executing a murderer) you become yourself a murderer. This does not mean I am an extreme rightist (I am certainly not), but it does mean that I don't consider myself as holy as to be able to determine who shall live and who shall die. In primitive societies the disabled were unable to fend for themselves, and, when they could not be provided for, died (if they weren't killed at birth); but we have facilities to cope with such things, and many disabled people can lead relatively separate lives. My father is blind, and has been since birth; going by your ideas I shouldn't be here now, as he would have been 'put out of his misery'/'put down'/etc. Such an idea is open to the grossest forms of abuse, of which Nazi Germany was a slight example.

((You have misunderstood/misrepresented my ideas. I do not make any statements about who should live or die, just that there should be a choice. Also, I most emphatically do not think any and all 'disabilities'

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"No one can make you feel inferior without your consent."

--Eleanor Roosevelt

make one a candidate for death. Of course many 'disabled' can live full, independent lives. It is the ones who cannot, or who are unlikely to be able to,*who should have the opportunity to die. Especially in the case of an adult -- his or her own values should be respected. I find those who force others to live, against their will, just as reprehensible as those who would force others to die. Enforced 'life' is just as open to abuse as 'euthanasia' is. --JHW)) *or who simply don't want to

Re Julie Vaux's comments in her letter: has she stopped to consider that the male dominators she is so upset with are just as much under the control of preconditioned stereotypes as she felt they are judging her by? It can be very dangerous to assert any sort of individuality, thus courting an ostracism without actual physical removal from the group (whatever that group may be).

((I'm sure Julie is well aware of what you say. It still doesn't give men an acceptable excuse to be bullies. One must be responsible for one's own behaviour, regardless of one's 'conditioning'--JHW))

AVEDON CAROL
4409 Woodfield Road
Kensington, MD 20895
USA

19 August 1982

...why don't we just admit that raising children and maintaining the family are too complex and important to be left to one person,

and cannot be done properly without the cooperation of the other family members? I don't think that children benefit much by having their fathers so removed from the family, and in fact I'm sure that it causes a lot of problems. It sounds good to say that women have a right to be housewives if they want to, but that usually means that men are being given license to disregard most of their non-material responsibilities to their families, and I don't think that can be good for them or for the kids. As it stands, the only role model that the average male child has for 'being a man' is a negative one -- a man is different from a woman, and a woman is the person he sees all the time, so that's the model of what not to be like. (Seems like the worst thing a mother can do if she's trying to raise a decent human being for a son is to present a decent role model.) And I think that that is what trivializes the female role and the housewife's duties. We allow men to be 'above' the real business of maintaining a family when we take over all of those duties for ourselves -- and I don't think men really like finding themselves at such a distance from their kids, either, but most people instinctively tell themselves that the things they feel they can't be a part of are not worth having (as a defense mechanism).

Chris Callahan mentions George Gilder's anti-feminist theory (that women must be a softening, feminine influence on men, because men are innately violent and anti-social -- I'm using his own words, not my own, by the way). You know, Valerie Solanas once advanced the same theory (that men are violent and anti-social), but came to a different conclusion -- that men shouldn't be allowed out to behave like that. Interestingly, people tend to call women 'man-haters' when women happen to suggest that these qualities are innate in men, but I have not noticed any men jumping on the bandwagon to identify Gilder as a man-hater (despite the fact that he aired this point of view widely on talk shows and in Playboy magazine, as well as in his books). What I've always wondered is how Gilder expects to convince women to be attracted to men at all once he manages to convince us that they have so little to recommend themselves. Do these men really want to encourage us to think of all men as nasty little ill-behaved boys who don't know how to act? Does he want us to think of them just as meal tickets? Because God knows there isn't much other use for anyone who fits that description.

((More from Avedon in the Great Castration Debate-JHW))

BT(TERRY)JEEVES (230 Bannerdale Rd, Sheffield, UK S11 9FE) writes along much the same lines as Skel, about couples or individuals deciding for themselves what 'roles' to play, and as Pete Presford, and also mentions how annoying it is for anyone to suggest everyone should be a certain way.

JOHN NEWMAN
P O Box 4
Thornbury, Vic 3071
Australia
2 October 1982

I particularly enjoyed Marc's article on the Dragon Stories of Anne McCaffrey, all the more as I am, of course, a Dragon* and wish to see more public recognition of the relevance of our kind in and to SF. Marc's analysis is sound, but does not sufficiently explain the role of the Dragon.

The Dragon is a fantasy creature, a being of Magic and Mystery. Marc identifies the Dragon riders with authors, so I suppose that the Dragons themselves can represent the works these authors create, the milieu they create and the spirit of Science Fiction.

As Marc points out, the Dragon is a figure of power. A portal to, as even Merlin knew, the basic stuff of reality. Associated with the element FIRE, Dragons are also representative of great destructive ability. The duality is perpetual in an intense battle between creativity, life and strength on one hand, and tumultuous death and destruction on the other.

How is this relevant to SF? Well, this creation/destruction interface is exactly where the best of life is to be found. The important stuff, the reasons and concerns of life. That which is interesting, and that which entertains.

Let's take some examples. Many people have bemoaned the fact that so much popular fiction is to do with war. Areas of conflict, tho, seem to be where creative expression flows freest. What author has made successfully stories where nothing goes wrong, no-one is upset, everything is fine. No, there is always conflict, be it between the influences in the mind of a psychotic protagonist (at one of the scale) or between interstellar governments (at another) or between two people who later live happily ever after, and just need to get their 'love' established. Conflict.

So the Dragon is a symbol of life, in all its power, potential and contradiction. Surely what SF is about.

* I was born in the year of the Dragon (Chinese horoscope-wise), and have adopted the image as my own ('a boy's got to model himself after someone'). Better a Dragon than a Sheep, hay?

((Your leap from 'war' to 'conflict' is a little too quick for my taste, John. Certainly there is a lot of conflict in life, but war is an extreme example of attempting to resolve conflict through violence, whereas there are far more ways to reach a resolution. Those who object to an emphasis on war, I think, are not objecting so much to conflict per se, but rather to the mind-set which automatically looks at the use of force to resolve that conflict. The same attitude that resolves the 'problem' of disciplining children by thumping them, and which really can't conceive of any other effective way to handle the situation. --JHW))

JUDITH HANNA
22 Denbigh St
Pimlico
London SW1V 2ER
UK
23 Sept 1982

I found out most of what I know about Dorothy Parker in 'The Portable Dorothy Parker'... She was one of the members of the Algonquin Round Table set, which contained such other prominent New Yorker literary

figures and wits as James Thurber, Robert Benchley, and Shirley Jackson, back in the good old glamorous prohibition days. She wrote a lot of witty poems about

suicide, and wrote depressing and superficially superficial New Yorker-style short stories about booze, suicide and pointlessness, and lived to a healthy, if depressed, old age. The general opinion is that her survival was rather inartistic and inappropriate, and a more fitting end would have cut off a lot of tedium... if she's only had the will-power.

KIM HUETT
GPO Box 429
Sydney, NSW 2001
Australia
31 August 1982

...As far as I'm concerned the importance of various jobs can be much more accurately gauged by considering how long the society that contains them can survive with nobody filling that

position. This method will put those jobs supplying essentials at the top of the list while any monetary-based measurements will tend to give luxury professions the highest positions.

I would also agree that the job of housewife compares pretty favourably when the sort of jobs generally available to women entering the workforce is considered. The only thing Judith does not seem to have taken into account in her comparison is the importance of the pay packet. It is certainly true the sort of jobs that Judith is talking about are irrelevant to the worker's personal existence. However, the receiving of a pay packet in return for this labour is very important to most people's personal existence. This money gives a certain degree of freedom to most people that they would otherwise not have had.

As far as I can see the main argument for not interfering with other cultures is that they are perfectly happy as they are and introducing Western methods will leave them with no cultural identity. This attitude may be the best one, but in a situation such as Aboriginal arranged marriages it becomes a bit doubtful that the women at least are happier with the situation as it exists. Personally, I see repression as repression whether it is in Western Society or some primitive tribal situation that some groups seem to believe should be preserved simply because they are primitive. As far as I'm concerned something is only worth preserving if it has a positive effect on people.

ARTH SPENCER
1296 Richardson St
Victoria, BC
Canada V8V 3E1
25 August 1982

Your zine even looks pointful, which is a nice change.

For a variety of reasons I have played with a worldview in which some people, like myself, have arrived at the wrong plane, and find humanity inexpressibly weird. Assuming that this thought-model has not already occurred to you, I offer it in the hope that you might find it useful. ((It's one I often use myself--JHW))

Within this more-or-less neutral model, I get the impression that some issues, like abortion or welfare policies or how to deal with pornography, can only be resolved after one first makes some arbitrary decisions. ... in Canada, if either spouse is employed, then the other can collect unemployment benefits. This contrasts with Pete Presford's report on the British policy (men only) and your comment on Australian policy (neither). In the absence of sufficient hard information, policy-setters are basically making arbitrary decisions...

You humans, as I see it, have a strange way of organizing your public life. Maybe it's a game you play? The games and jokes I understand are, for example, Canada's Rhinoceros Party (which wanted to change over all the roads so we'd drive on the left), the Kingdom of Loges des Corbeaux (between Alberta and BC) and the Universal Life Church.

Do not believe anything you hear about Canada.

((Driving on the left is very logical.--JHW))

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ADDRESSES OF CONTRIBUTORS

Sheryl Birkhead, 23629 Woodfield Rd, Gaithersburg, MD 20879, USA
Tom Cardy, 783B George St, Dunedin, New Zealand
Roelof Goudriaan, Postbus 589, 8200 An Lelystad, The Netherlands
Mike McGann, 194 Corunna Rd, Petersham NSW 2049, Australia
John Packer, 12 Charles St, Northfield South, SA 5085
Margaret Sanders, 3/34a Belmont Rd, Mosman, NSW 2088, Australia
Jane Taubman, PO Box 338, Nedlands WA 6009, Australia
Julie Vaux, 14 Zara Rd, Willoughby, NSW 2068, Australia
Sam Wagar, 861A Danforth Ave, Toronto, Ont. Canada M4J 1L8
Marc Ortlieb, PO Box 46, Marden, SA 5070, Australia

Quotations at bottom of some pages are taken from "The Wit of Women", compiled by Lore & Maurine Cowan, Leslie Frewin, London, 1969.

FANZINES

Alert readers will have noticed that lastish did not include a list of fanzines received. I have decided that a listing of titles and editors, without addresses, commentary or other information, is a waste of space, having little or no useful information beyond alerting editors to the fact that I've received their zine. In most cases, they'll know this anyway because I've LoCced it.

From time to time, however, I still intend to mention the occasional zine that strikes me as unusual, or just those which have only recently come to my attention that I enjoy. This time it's Eve Harvey's "Wallbanger", from 43 Harrow Road, Carshalton, Surrey SM5 3QH, UK. Issue 6 recently arrived. Eve is the first female fanned from the UK who has come to my attention; I assume Judith Hanna gave her my address. Her zine's fun; thish includes several items on British rail services, amongst other things. Avail for usual.

My next 'find' was "Shards of Babel", from Roelof Goudriaan, address above. If you're interested in what's going on in fandom in non-British Europe ("on the continent"), this is the zine to read (it's in English). Available for a complicated list of monies, which does not include cheques. Australians might ask Roelof what he'll accept from here, though I suppose a few International Reply Coupons (from the Post Office) wouldn't hurt.