

Weber Woman's Wrevenge

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LOVE, POWER, & SUBMISSION

by Paula Johanson

What do I know of power games? Hmm, let's talk about my previous love interest, prior to Bernie my ain true love. Both myself and the chap in question were young, virgin, high IQ, good grades in school, read SF, enjoyed outdoors, space and conversation. I have a younger brother, he had two brothers and two sisters, and was sixteen years younger than the last sister.



Glowing picture: we dated the two years of my high school, steamed the car windows at local beaches, finally actually had sex before graduation, and went to University together. A Renaissance couple, we conversed with people on topics from math to Greek history. A computer dating program rated us as the most compatible couple (but then, it also rated me as Miss Congeniality, compatible with most of the males in the program), yet we had our separate interests and friends within limits that had been determined in high school. We were going to be married when I got my degree, a year behind him; he would give me the engagement ring when he graduated.

I can see the power games as they were played. We had separate interests, provided they were the ones I had shown during high school (when I learned to crochet in University, he resented it and tried to stop me). He was in control of the ability to make me pregnant, not the pill or Julius Schmidt. Each time I tried to get him to agree to use birth control, he used the old standby reply: "If you are so worried and don't trust me, we won't do it any more." We avoided vaginal penetration - and though he was usually careful to ask me if oral or anal sex was hurting very much, I felt they were a poor substitute for contraception. When he finally used the old standby reply for the last time and added, "Well, maybe we shouldn't get married," I should have walked out of the car and gone home. But I was crying, it was 12:45 am, raining and snowing in the dead of winter and I was six miles from home and miles even from a pay phone...

Two months later he bought me a birthday present that cost all the money he had saved for the ring. I developed migraine symptoms for the first time in my life, and settled into a month-long migraine. By three months of this, I couldn't sleep, and one night called him at 8:00 to ask him to please come over. My brother was sound asleep, mom & dad out of town and there was no way I could stand to be alone. But he'd already arranged to spend the evening playing backgammon with MaryAnne, a school friend, and he wouldn't come over. I called a male high school friend who sat and talked with me,

drinking tea until six in the morning. When I called my boyfriend that morning to tell him that I was feeling better and a friend had sat up with me all night, he thought that was nice, until he heard who the friend was. Furious, he made the "natural" accusations, as he put it, and I never heard from him again, nor got a letter or note. He never emptied the locker we shared at the University, and let four years of shared activities, friends and belongings fall where they might.

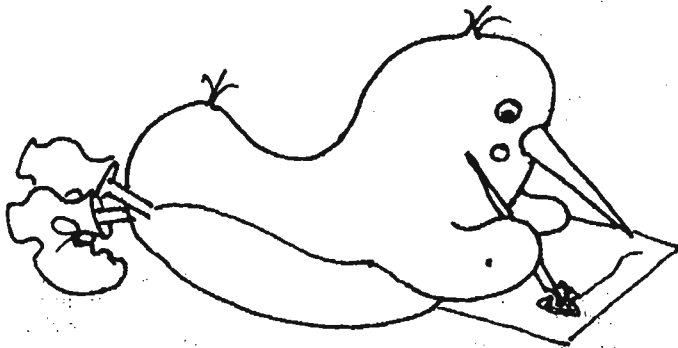
What is my shame about the whole matter was how accommodating I was, and acquiescent; not the anal sex, but the fact that it was only to allow him to hold me without use of birth control, not the two years of worrying about pregnancy, but knowing that contraception was only being avoided because he felt that if I was on the pill, I could sleep with other guys and he'd not need to know it, and the other methods were messy. What hurts to recall is that I was intelligent, informed as to matters of contraception, aware that in sex, the main perversion is coercion, and able to pick among at least four other men -- and I stayed for four years in a sexual relationship that was exclusive, coercive, painful, restricting and which I ultimately had no power to control. There were orgasms aplenty for me, I could initiate intimacy whenever I wanted (provided we were already in bed or alone), but I could never say no.

I thought the only women who were submissive were uninformed, unintelligent, naive or lazy. Loneliness when he won't talk to you or touch you is a good reason to be submissive; when your dearest friend and lover is so sweet and kind you can be very accommodating in order to keep him in a good mood. If you are empathic as I am, his anger and frustration are doubly painful and you do anything to soothe him and make him feel better. The role is very virtuous - you get to be nice to him. You get to be thoughtful and sensitive and considerate for him. In my case, he never learned to be considerate for me. A rose and candy is no substitute for a tender moment while making love, when I could feel embraced and valued as a person, not as the source of his orgasm.

I never cried because he was gone, but because he had never valued me. I never felt used or ashamed, just compromised -- I had abdicated my initiative and my control. It nearly killed me as an empath (the first imperative for an empath, in order to keep sane, is to know whose feelings and drives are being perceived). I had to tune out others' feelings for so long, build up my own strength of purpose and quit being so damned virtuous and solicitous for others.

Then I met the man I am now married to -- he didn't have imperatives for me, he just felt nice to be near to and touch. He has never demanded that I submit, but has only inspired the sympathy that anyone can feel for another. And I don't confuse orgasms with being held and appreciated. We have disagreements and arguments, but never on the order of "do what I tell you." Sure, in five years I may thrump him across the head, take my typewriter and go live in a hermit's cave -- but it'll be because I reject the human race, not because he's playing mind games. He's had more pain than I have, and the one thing he'll never be is coercive in love. I guess I've never met anyone else who rejects playing the power games, while still valuing people and what they do -- and who starves without respect, instead of power.

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DIARY NOTES

by Jean Weber

28 August 1983. It's been a rather action-packed weekend. Yesterday was taken up with trivia like shopping, reading and typing (assisted by a chill, windy day which discouraged outdoor activities, and boggy ground following the week's heavy rains; easy to find an excuse not to work in the yard or try to get the lawnmower functioning).

Today, however, at 8:30 am a backhoe showed up, ready to rip out the concrete remains of my old garage and level the area preparatory to pouring a new concrete slab. During the destruction, several palings were ripped off the fence, great ruts were gouged in the front lawn, and a tree was knocked lopsided and threatened to fall over in a strong gust of wind, bringing down the phone wires to the neighbour's house. Other than that, it was a fairly successful operation.

(The damage to the lawn was due to the necessity to pile up the rubble in front for a few hours until a truck could arrive to carry it to the dump. I'm assured that it will all be reconstructed later; since the area was in a mess anyway, and any semblance to a 'lawn' was purely hypothetical, I'm not terribly fussed. I was rather more worried about the tilting tree, but someone came around in the late afternoon and cut it down and hauled it away -- at the contractor's expense. Pity it wasn't the tree I wanted rid of, but at least it wasn't one that really mattered.)

Under the yard we dug up some metres of drainpipe and electrical conduits (the latter not live), leading to some speculations about what the previous owners had been up to. I'm a trifle concerned about the drainage in the yard anyway, since it gets a bit swampy when we get heavy rains. (The neighbour's yard goes several inches under water.)

After all the workmen had left, I decided to try to start the mower again. During the week, I'd consulted with various people and concluded that the most likely problem was a balky valve, best fixed by jiggling and thumping everything in sight or out of it. This I did, and it seems to have worked, because the mower not only started and kept going, but cut a vast amount of tall heavy weeds without once dying. Magnificent machine.

Yesterday I pulled bits off Eric's Rex Rotary and cleaned the inking mechanism, which was so glaggy that's I'm surprised it worked at all. Sometime in the next few days I must work up the ambition to try to get the old Gestetner going. Now that I've finished typing all but 2 stencils for the next Wrevenge, I'm rapidly running out of excuses. (Most of those pages are off being electrostencilled, so that helps a bit with my procrastinations.)

Just took a break to watch two demonstrations on the evening news. One is the big gathering in Washington DC to commemorate Martin Luther King's civil rights march in 1963 -- which I remember (as I lived nearby, in College Park) but did not participate in. The other is a protest march at Roxby Downs, South Australia, a uranium mine. So far, the police and mine owners are being very cooperative, allowing the marchers (but no vehicles except the water truck) onto the mine property. Lots of banners & some singing. Hope it all goes well, without violence. I understand the organizers have been training people in non-violence to try to minimize any fukkups. There were several women from Canberra who'd set off some months ago to walk all the way to the protest; wonder if they made it? I suppose the local papers will eventually tell us.

You'll note that I did as I suggested I might: change to micro-elite type for this diaryzine. Some of you may not realise that this type size is the one that comes on the typer. It is not photo-reduced as so many fanzines are these days. It's the Real Thing.

I mentioned going shopping yesterday. One of the things I bought was an automatic toaster. One of the more primitive things about Australia is the presence of stuff I've not seen in the USA for over 20 years (it may well be sold there, but not in the stores I shopped in). One of these things was the old style toaster where you flip the sides down to put the toad in and take the toast out, and of course you always forget and it burns. Or you remember, but you're too busy stirring the scrambled eggs... Anyway, here they're still quite common, presumably due to the exorbitant price of automatic toasters. But I don't eat toast all that much, so I've had one of the older style ones for all these 8 years. Now, thought I, 'tis time to lash out and get modernized. Besides, it was on sale.

It's definitely a no-frills toaster. None of this 'electronically controlled colour' crap. It's also almost a characteristic of the toasters one still sees occasionally on comedy shows, where the pop-up mechanism sends the toast halfway across the room. This one isn't quite that energetic, but might manage a flip onto the counter top one day. None of this gently-rising-from-the depths stuff that my mother's is capable of.

5 September. It's now officially Spring (since September 1st), but I haven't been doing much gardening or other spring activities except reading. The formwork is ready for the pouring of my garage floor. At work, a bunch of us were moved into some temporary buildings, whose heating systems aren't working too well so far. Not to put to fine a point on it, the buildings are bloody cold. Otherwise, they're fairly comfortable -- we even have carpets! Friday afternoon we (the 12 or so of us in the 2 buildings) cracked several bottles of champagne and had a little party. It was also a farewell for a temporary worker who was leaving that day, and who would be missed. But he was intelligible for any of the other jobs going because he never finished

high school, and that's the minimum requirement.

I mentioned the Roxby Downs anti-uranium protest, so I'll just bring you up to date a bit. The protest lasted 9 days, as planned, and was essentially non-violent, except for a bit of pushing between mine workers and protesters (somebody got hit in the face, I think). Everybody was very restrained, as far as I could tell. Several hundred people were arrested, mostly for loitering, and let out on bail. The mine owners avoided confrontations by sneaky tricks like having the shift changes at different times, where the protesters hadn't expected them and weren't in place to blockade the workers, or letting them out a different gate. All quite fair and non-violent. Nor did the police (or the mine security personnel) do anything heavy-handed that might have heated up the situation.

I don't plan to dabble into "politics" too often in this journal, but non-violent protest is a subject of some interest to me. So is its close relation, civil disobedience. Since my basic attitude is that anyone should be able to do whatever s/he wants unless it adversely affects someone else (usually phrased "interferes with another's rights"), but I also recognize that (given the reality of the way people act) some laws need to be enforced to stop those who do insist on infringing others' rights, I find this sort of situation very interesting from a philosophical point of view. In this case, I think both sides of the issue had a fair go: the protesters made their point (and got a lot of fairly good publicity) but the mineworkers weren't prevented from doing their jobs. The uranium issue, of course, is made more difficult depending on how one feels about the mining and export of uranium. A complex topic which I won't delve into here!

Anyway, more than enough of that. Eric was here over the weekend, and the typers kept running hot as we ripped through a stack of our joint apa memberships. It rained on Saturday, so I didn't feel too bad about not getting any yard work done (I didn't feel like it anyway), but on Sunday we did a few minor chores and cut some masonite for the backs of the two new bookshelves I'm going to build. Fortunately Eric is suspicious about trains, and phoned to see when his was leaving -- to discover that on Sunday there are two evening trains to Sydney, and he was booked on the earlier one, half an hour before he'd been told. If we hadn't checked, he'd have missed it. So we zipped out to the station where we found an appalling lack of posted information, and many even more confused people than we wandering around. But the train left on time, and the extra half hour should have allowed him to make his connection in Sydney without any great hassles.

28 September. My, how time flies ~~when you're~~ ~~living it~~. Actually, I have been having quite a bit of fun this past month, but I've also been very, very busy, both at work and at home. Hence the gap in these chronicles. At least you've been spared the day-to-day details of a couple of projects which I will now summarize.

The garage was completed a week ago, but shows signs of a perpetually damp concrete floor. Otherwise quite nice, and should provide some much needed expansion space. Now, of course, I have no further excuses (other than lack of money, that is) for getting the driveway resurfaced, and doing a few other chores around the yard -- including a bit of "landscaping".

I printed, collated, and mailed Wrevenge. When the copies will reach their intended readers is hard to say, as there is a sort-of postal problem in Canberra at the moment, and has been for the past two

weeks. It's not exactly a strike, though it started out that way. It's a combination of no overtime (hence the backlog of articles built up during the actually strike are unlikely to get sorted very speedily) and a ban on mail coming in to Canberra from anywhere else. This latter ban will help with the backlog problem eventually, I suppose. But in addition, the mail sorting office wasn't collecting mail from suburban post offices (I suspect they had nowhere to put it), so I was warned by my helpful local postmaster (who was running out of space, too) that it could be awhile before it even left his office.

Meanwhile, I've received exactly one postcard and one fanzine in two weeks (I usually get 3 times that each day), plus an apa mailing that was sent to my old Sydney address and forwarded through the courier system at work. This is great for getting caught up on my reading, but I'm not looking forward to the inundation when the backlog is cleared -- assuming that the fanzines don't just end up binned and never reach me at all. What, me suspicious??

The apa forwarded from Sydney, by the way, was APA 69, and since it wasn't marked 'personal' on the envelope, it was duly opened by the mail sorters at work, before they delivered it to me. I hope they got a thrill; it ought to do wonders for my already bizarre reputation around the place. *giggle* (for the benefit of readers who may not already know, I'll explain that APA 69 is devoted largely to discussions of sex and related topics, and features frankly sexual covers that could possibly be seized by Australian authorities as obscene (though I wouldn't classify them so).

Most of you will already know that Australia finally wrested the yachting trophy "America's Cup" from the Americans who've held it for 124 years or so. Needless to say, the country (which is keen on any sort of sport) went wild, and yesterday was a party scene at many workplaces including my own. It was also a beautiful sunny spring day, and evidently a lot of office workers partied at some length on the shores of the lake at lunchtime (some having started at dawn or so, after watching the race on TV -- starting at about 2 am our time).

I've been having various minor problems with my contact lenses, not helped by the supplier sending me two flawed left lenses in succession. // The airconditioning in my new office at work is settling down some but still not as efficient as I'd prefer. It's a nice, quiet place to work, though, and easier to sneak in and out at unofficial hours.

The other "big event" recently has been the acquisition of a cat named Minou. She's a 1-year-old spayed female and a delight to have around, well most of the time anyway. Her people (one of whom works where I do) were leaving for 6 weeks' travel, and needed a home for her. After their return, they expect to move to another city, so they really wanted a permanent home. I've been missing the patter of little feet, so was a sucker for a hard-luck case. Eric says he'll cope.

Meanwhile, the next-door neighbours have acquired a cat (about 5 months old, I'd guess), which is very friendly and convinced that it lives here as much as it lives next door. Minou isn't too sure whether she should chase it away or not, since she's also new. The kitten's name according to its people is "Shadow", but I dubbed it "Luke Fencewalker" for its habit of tiptoeing along the top of the paling fence between our properties. It prances cheerfully in through the door or window I leave open for Minou, and helps itself to her food. *Sigh* Still, it's very friendly and I don't really mind; could be useful as a lever to convince the neighbours that they should feed Minou when I'm away on weekends, too. Scheming? Me??

Luke (The Shadow) starred in a minor drama that only by luck did not turn into a major drama. Two weekends ago, I headed off to Eric's for a 3-day weekend (no it wasn't a holiday; I was just taking a day off). I loaded the car Friday morning and went off to work. When I returned about 3 pm to check for mail before setting off to drive to Faulconbridge, I opened the front door and Luke flashed out. Evidently he'd gone inside when I was loading the car, was snooping around somewhere, and got locked in. I shudder to think what might have happened if I hadn't stopped at home before leaving for the weekend.

That was my first long trip since returning to Canberra at the end of June, and I was exhausted the whole weekend. I don't think it was entirely the fault of the drive, as I was tired before I left home; but the drive certainly didn't help. So I slouched around Eric's all weekend, reading books and doing very little else, and drove leisurely back on Monday. No, I take it back: I did type about 6 or 8 letters, and almost caught up on my correspondence pile. (Eric was rather envious.)

I also had the opportunity to check out an Apple-clone computer that Eric had imported from Taiwan. We borrowed a disc drive from Ken Ozanne and tried out a couple of word processing programs. I am very tempted to speed up my computer-acquisition program by about a year and get one now, if Eric can get such a good price on equipment (I'm not keen on the Apple per se, just that these are a good price and, of course, will run any apple program of which there are lots available. I'd been thinking of getting an Australian Microbee, but though the computer's not outrageously priced (though more than these Apple clones), other equipment such as disc drives is vastly more expensive. I just want an easier way to do fanzines, than using a typewriter! I would like to be able to edit easily (have got spoiled by these facilities at work), and might even do so if it didn't mean retyping a page or a stencil. Just think -- I could edit out all the repetitious boring bits from this diary before printing it and inflicting it on you. (Hmm, perhaps I should hint that a small donation to the computer fund would be of great benefit to all my readers, so in self-defence they should donate... no that's silly, I won't, but it's fun to think about.)

The disadvantage, of course (other than the capital expense) is a time-and-cost factor of getting electrostencils made, since Eric's printer (and the one I'm likely to get) won't cut stencils. At a time of postal hassles, this could bring my fanzine production to a halt, or slow it rather badly (but then I couldn't post them anyway...); on the other hand, I discovered with the last issue of Wrevenge that Ron Clarke's electrostencils printed better (didn't overink) than my directly-typed ones. So final quality of the production would increase all around: content, layout & presentation, and printing. Well worth it, I think, for a fanzine; perhaps not for an apazine... but I'm thinking seriously of simply photocopying those anyway. I find messing with a stencil for 50 copies or less is more trouble than it's worth. Since I'd do those on the computer too, they'd also benefit; I'd just skip the stencil stage.

Perhaps the computer will be my 41st birthday present to myself. Stay tuned.

4 October. I'm getting a trifle fed up with cats lately. Luke the Shadow is making very determined efforts to move in; Eric was visiting this past weekend, and we took turns tossing or chasing it out of the house. At times this was rather amusing, but the novelty wore a bit thin rapidly. Friday night, Minou was kept out of the bedroom and spent quite a bit of the

night rattling at the door to be let in. This was not appreciated, nor was it successful (from her point of view). Saturday night I left the window open in the lounge all night, despite the probability of Shadow coming in and causing trouble; in the morning, Minou did not come in for breakfast.

When, by that evening, she still had not returned, we began to get a bit worried. Shadow, meanwhile tried to convince us she would be happy to take Minou's place -- especially the the food bowl. Indeed, Luke was most put out that there was no food to be cringed in Minou's absence! So we left both the window, and the bedroom door, open on Sunday night.

At the middle of the night I was awakened by a heavy weight on my shoulder, and Eric's voice saying helpfully, "There's a cat standing on you."

"mmmph." (translation: I hope it's the right cat.)
"Do you want me to turn on the light?"
"Mmmm."
click
"Yep, it's Minou."
"Is she all right?"
"What time is it?"
"Five o'clock."
"She's all right." *snore*

Last night (Eric having gone home by this time), I was awakened at 3:30 -- and every half hour or so after that -- by Minou walking around on me, licking my face, and so on. I kept shoving her off the bed, but she was a bit heavy to pick up an hurl very far, very easily. It took about two hours for me to be awakened -- and annoyed -- sufficiently to get up, put her out of the house, and close the window. I was not in a wonderful mood when I got to work. (And as I was putting Minou out, Shadow was racing in under my feet.)

Anyone want a couple of cats? Intact, or otherwise?

In between arguments with the cats, Eric and I worked around the house. I took Friday off (the weather was too good to spend indoors) and went shopping, then did more digging in the yard. Saturday and Sunday we hauled gravel, sand and bricks and I made quite a bit of progress on the walks around the new garage. (Despite Shadow's "help".) Monday, mercifully, it rained, and I had a good excuse to stay inside, sew a bit, and read. My back was okay, but my leg muscles were very sore.

One of my purchases on Friday was a device to "turn your bathtub into a spa" -- a perforated plastic mat connected by an air hose to a blower device. Makes a lot of noise but is otherwise delightful to use. The main thing the manufacturer and sales people don't mention before you buy these is that the bubbling action creates such vigorous splashes that the bathroom floor was drenched before I'd finished my soak. No wonder they tell you very carefully NOT to put the electrical blower unit anywhere near the bath, shower, handbasin, etc. What they don't mention is the splash range! Well, it's probably just as well it splashes -- I rarely clean the floor otherwise.

Today was another cold, rainy day (12° after the weekend's 20-22° -- that's Celsius, chaps), so I went to work, where I ended up having to run from my new office (in the temporary buildings, remember?) to the main building, through the cold and damp, rather more often than I would prefer. Ptul.

The postal dispute continues, so I am sending my mail by courier to Sydney for posting, and trying to tell people to send mail to me that way. By the time you

read this, the dispute will almost surely be over (I won't send it out otherwise... except maybe the apocryphes), so you can ignore that as a suggestion.

10 October. My car breezed through registration again this year. I must admit that it was one of the most cursory examinations I can recall in recent years, so that might have had something to do with it. Although the work I had done on the car a month or so ago covered most of the bits (and then some) that they usually check... The inspector did however decide that the car's a 1975 model rather than a 1976 model. Guess it sat around on the showroom floor a bit longer than I had thought. Oh well, it's in even better shape than I thought, then!

Speaking of machinery (well, at least it's not computers)(shut up, Eric), my lawnmower is performing well beyond the call of duty these days. Following its refusal to start at the beginning of the season (and who can blame it?), on its 3rd outing (this past weekend), I had it chewing up waist-high grass... not exactly with ease, but with some success. You see, I decided it was time to trim the fringes of my back yard. Does this conjure up images of hand clippers, snipping off the grass the mower couldn't reach? Well, in my back yard the fringes are about a metre wide and waist-deep. They're in a position that's difficult if not impossible to get the mower into, due to the number of vines, trunks, partially-buried bricks, an intervening concrete 'wall' along part of the distance, and a very uneven surface. I did get the mower into much of this (after checking a bit for the buried bricks), and then drawled around ripping up the residue. I didn't finish the job, but I sure did make a lot of headway. Quite a satisfying job it was, too.

After finishing as much of that job as I could face, I did a bit more work on the brick paving around the garage. Eric was a great help here, hauling bricks for me. I discovered this past week, after 3 days of heavy rain, that much of what I put in last weekend will have to be pulled out... and drains put in underneath. *sigh* Can't say I'm really surprised, though.

Yes, Eric was here this weekend again, despite an impending rail strike that threatened to prevent him from getting home again (I gather this prospect did not distress him overmuch; I suspect he was rather looking forward to phoning in to work today and pleading being stranded as his excuse for not turning up). Anyway, we had a pleasant weekend, with beautiful weather, and I got a bunch of letters ready for him to take back to Sydney to mail (usually CSIRO is the courier, but this time it will be Eric). Friday night's news said the strike had been changed from midnight Sunday to midnight Monday, but Sunday's paper said it would start that night as originally planned, and when we got to the station, a sign there confirmed this. Eric had been unable to get a booked seat on the early train, and knew that the later train would leave him no chance of making his connection to Faulconbridge -- if, indeed, any trains were running that late at night (when a strike is called, usually any train which will not reach its destination by midnight is cancelled, but sometimes the mountain trains run to an intermediate stop, and we were hoping that would be the case this time.)

I just phoned Eric to find out what happened. Firstly, I'd known he decided to get on the early train despite not having a seat, and try to bluff it out. Apparently the conductor only chuckled when he checked Eric's ticket, and didn't hassle him at all. The train was late, however, and Eric would have missed his connection anyway -- except that it turned out the train he wanted had, indeed, been cancelled. The irony of this, however, is that by 7 pm the strike had been

called off -- but that was too late to keep the Sunday night country trains running. I was a bit annoyed at the TV news last night, as the announcer kept telling people "the strike is off", but did not even consider that -- although most of his listeners, commuters who only wanted to know whether they'd be able to get to work in the morning (which is fair enough)-- thousands of people had already been affected on Sunday night by the non-strike, by not being able to get home; Eric got a local train part of the way (to Penrith, for those of you who know the area) and hitched the rest of the way, getting home about midnight, not all that different from when he would have if he'd caught the train.

Many of you will probably read another version of this in Eric's diary, so perhaps I shouldn't have gone on at such length.

24 October. Returned today from a 3-day weekend at Eric's to find a wonderful reason why I shouldn't mow the lawn: knee-high weeds provide great camouflage for newspapers that would otherwise announce one's absence to would-be thieves. (camouflage? sheesh!) After fossicking around for a few minutes locating the papers, I mowed the lawn. Damn stuff grows when it rains. And grows, and grows. Perhaps I shouldn't have fertilized it...

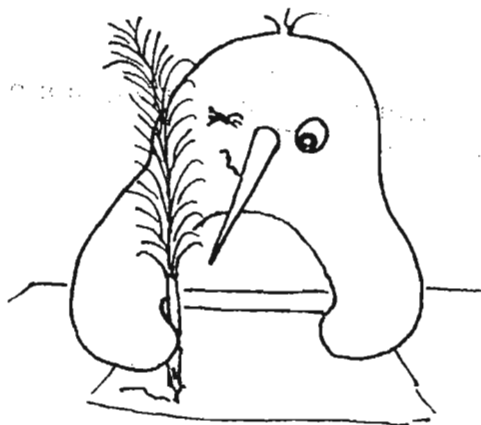
I took a chance and left the cat locked in the house over the weekend, supplied with plenty of water, dry cat food, and kitty litter (all in suitable containers). Returned to find both cat and house had survived. Previous cat Stuart would have wrecked the place to demonstrate his displeasure, but Minou appears to have restrained herself. There isn't even the reek of urine... amazing.

The weekend was most pleasant, if a bit hectic. Friday I was very busy at work, and didn't manage to get away till after 3 pm. By the time I'd been home, packed the car, caught the cat (who disappeared as soon as she realised something was happening), etc etc, it was nearly 4. However, both the car and I apparently were in the mood to drive fast, for a change, and nearly equalled our previous record of 3 hrs 45 min to Eric's. I roared up just as he was getting around to putting dinner on... superb timing.

I had intended to try to talk Eric into doing a bit of bushwalking over the weekend (weather permitting), so was delighted when one of the first bits of news he gave me was, "Ken Ozanne wants us to go bushwalking tomorrow". And so we did -- along with Alex Ozanne and Terry Frost. It wasn't an especially long trek, but much of it was up or down hill, so my underused leg muscles suffered a bit. Perfect weather: not too hot nor too cold. A pleasant bit of bush (in Faulconbridge) with some small waterfalls. The last portion had no path, so we bush-bashed. I gave up after awhile, after the speedier chums got too far ahead and I couldn't find the "path" they were following (Terry stayed behind with me). Eventually we all got together again, then Alex & Terry went ahead while Ken, Eric and I waited and had a snack. The mosquitos were beginning to discover us about the time we moved on. Walking back, mostly uphill, was fairly tiring; Ken was in worse shape than I, and Alex and Terry kept trying to outdo each other with examples of how fit they were. Eric and I tried to find a handy cliff to push them over, but failed. All in the spirit of good fun, and much enjoyed. Pizza afterward, and an early night for me.

Sunday I spent a couple hours at Ron Clarke's, running off electrostencils, some more time helping Eric take photos of computing gear, nattered to Christine Smith and Bob Ellis who rolled up unexpectedly, and later Eric & I had dinner at his mother's.

NATTER AND ANTI-NATTER



((Canberra has been in the grip of a postal dispute for the past month (this is being typed 12 October), and although all the work bans were lifted today, it may take another month before the backlog is cleared. Whether the dispute seriously interfered with distribution of the September issue of Wrevenge, I don't know -- but it has certainly prevented any responses to that issue, or the previous one, from reaching me.

((The minor short-term advantage in this situation is the opportunity to actually clear the backlog in my letter files -- both for publication and for personal replies. Next time, though, could be a nightmare.

((Some thoughtful but inexperienced British reader sent me a British Postal Order in payment for a fanzine. Australia Post won't cash on of these. Upon reflection, however, I realised that it was a useful as a postage stamp (which I advertise that I take), as I send either back to Britain, to some other faned to whom I owe money. So, well done.--JHW))

PATRICIA MCKINLAY
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Chapel Hill, Qld 4069
Australia

If you are at all interested in 'different' interpretations of Christianity -- have you heard/seen/read a book called Mission by Patrick

Tilley? It has a view of 'religion' which is a lot like mine in patches and nothing at all like it in others. I found it fascinating because it accepted J.C. himself as the 'son of God' and saviour of mankind etc, then went any reinterpreted the accepted definitions of saviour, heaven, hell, etc. The story actually makes the 'greatest story ever told' appear logical -- which is no mean feat I feel.

I love discussions on social implications of practically anything ... I never feel I know what I think about something if I haven't discussed it with someone who disagrees with me. This zine should start me thinking about lots of new things.

((No, I have never heard of that book, Patricia, but it certainly sounds like I'd find it interesting.--JHW))

JERRY KAUFMAN
4326 Winslow Pl N
Seattle, WA 98103
USA

I think Wrevenge has been at its best when people have written from their experiences. I hope you encourage your contributors to write on your

serious topics in this vein. The debate on what is proper in fanzines continues, and this is my bit: what belongs in fanzines is people. Their experiences are both the best shapes in which to express their personalities, and the best avenues through which to stroll their emotions. It isn't necessary to write about fandom to be fannish; it is necessary to write personally about one's topic. (Quick, find some exceptions; I'm sure you can ... no, good articles about sf don't count, because when they're good enough, they're actually about the article writer's experiences of a book. This is why I like Bruce Gillespie's pieces.

((Yes, that's what I aim for and encourage... but it doesn't always work out that way. I still tend to pay more attention to content than form; probably my science training. Still, we try.--JHW))

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

I may have been in just the right mood for Wrevenge V2:N6, for I thoroughly enjoyed it ... from the cover and all the way through. There is no doubt that Marc Ortleib just had to be printed and shed a good laugh over the more serious topics that have gone before; top marks on that one.

Your comment at the end of Mala's LoC: one of the hardest things in the world to be is truthful and honest; from trying to be that yourself and also getting other people to believe that you are so, and hoping that they will be the same with you. Being honest can get you in one hell of a lot of trouble; and you often stop being truthful to save someone else's face. It just can't be done, even down to meaning what you say. Because what you mean today can be changed by the facts of tomorrow, and no matter how firm you are in the belief and conviction of your words, if it turned out that those words would hurt someone you loved, you would alter those meanings. Humans are such lovely changeable things; but a pain in the arse to boot. Which puts us all in a Catch 22 situation ... we should trust people, but if I did that working for myself as I do for a living, I'd be a dead duck inside a year. Being truthful and trusting is the worst thing out, because you can't do what you want to do.

((Some well put thoughts there, Pete. I was rather speaking of a more limited situation, without making that clear. But as you say, even then one may be less than truthful if you wish to save a loved one from pain... the real difficulty is knowing when to hedge the truth a bit, and when it's really offensive to do so. Hm, now that sounds like a topic for another series of essays!--JHW))

E. B. KLASSEN
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Canada V8T 2W4
29 July 1983

I can't tell you how much interest awaits the arrival of Wrevenge here. Each issue is read and discussed by at least five people. It seems odd to think it, but after the latest has arrived, friends are invited over, individuals drop out of the conversation to read it, and afterwards, animated conversation revolves around rape, castration fears, whatever. (I live in a weird apartment.)

((Those are probably the most welcome words I've read in a long time. Most of my correspondents like my zine (an exception appears on the next page) -- if they don't, I suspect they drop of the mailing list pretty quickly -- but to know that my efforts get people talking about these issues, that makes my day! That's really what I want the most from this zine -- to encourage people to think, and even better, to discuss things with their friends. Whether they agree with me or not. --JHW))

((The following letter is reproduced verbatim, with the exception of a paragraph on a totally different topic, which has been removed. My comments are on the following page. -- JHW))

21 July 1983

Joseph Nicholas
22 Denbigh Street
Pimlico
London SW1V 2ER
United Kingdom

Dear Jean

This letter will no doubt bore you to tears, since it doesn't say anything that I haven't already said to you several times before; but bear in mind that I'm responding to your comments by and about me in Weber Woman's Wrevenge 12, not ANZAPA, and since the majority of the readers of the former are not members of the latter I'd appreciate this opportunity to correct, for them, what I consider your distortion of my criticisms.

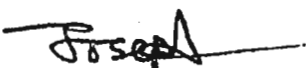
"I don't agree with the implication you make in many of your letters, that writing is the most important thing about a fanzine," you say. But this implication is in fact nowhere present in anything I've ever said to you, save perhaps in the highly edited versions of my letters that have seen print -- so highly edited, I feel, that vast swathes of my argument have been reduced to a shambles of arbitrary assertions and my meaning crippled beyond recovery. So, as shortly as possible, then: what I have said to you is, simply, that if you don't put an equal amount of effort into the way in which you express yourself -- your style -- then the impact of what you have to say -- your content -- will in consequence be blunted. Such a statement is based on nothing more than the truism that what you have to say influences the way you say it (and vice versa), its corollary that ideas cannot be separated from the words that contain them, and the axiom that clarity of expression is a direct consequence of clarity of thought -- a truism, a corollary and an axiom that strike me as so self-evident, and which are accepted without question by everyone else I know, that I'm amazed we still have to argue over them in this fashion.

Perhaps it's just that you neither accept nor believe in this truism, corollary and axiom. "The topics discussed are of equal or greater importance," you say, "and that's where I put my emphasis," having earlier in the same paragraph suggested that it's possible to enjoy the contents even if the writing isn't very good. Perhaps you'd care to explain how; it's certainly my experience (and, again, that of everyone else I know) that the worsely written something is the less enjoyable, the more frustrating, it is to read, simply because what is being said is rendered unclear, is fudged and fumbled. "I emphasise the personal, and feelings, over statistical things," you continue -- but don't you think that, if I thought this was halfway true, then (given my oft-made claim that fanzines are primarily a personal medium) I'd have bugger-all to complain about? In my opinion, there is next to no personal writing in the pages of Weber Woman's Wrevenge because the bulk of what you publish is so dully and insipidly written as to convey nothing whatever of the personalities behind it.

"I do not see myself primarily as a fanwriter," you say, "nor do I want to work hard at improving my anecdotal skills." But from where do you derive the impression that fanwriting consists almost entirely of anecdotal reportage? Fanwriting is, simply, writing that is produced by fans, and in that respect is subject to exactly the same critical strictures as every other "form" of writing.

Okay? Is that clear now?

Best,



(I have no quarrel with your truism, corollary and axiom at all. However, I will point out the obvious: that 'clarity of writing' often produces deadly dull writing, and convoluted, obscure and utterly unclear writing can be quite delightful to read. Certainly, if material is unclear, fudged and fumbled -- lacking some orderliness, it may well be (usually is) not enjoyable to read, but if the topic is sufficiently interesting, it might be. As for 'personal writing', I begin to suspect that there are as many meanings to that phrase as there are people using it. I mean writing from personal experience, or about one's personal beliefs or feelings. True, such writing may not reveal much of the 'personality' of the writer -- especially as it appears to often depend on whether one knows the writer or not. Perhaps the writing in Wrevenge seems more personal to me because much of it is written by people I know, or have been corresponding with so long that I feel I know.

And lastly, dear Joseph, I would have thought that someone so astute as yourself could tell, long ago, when you're being baited, I've tended to think that you do know, and have been baiting me in return. Whatever the case, it's been fun, but I don't intend to spend much more space in these pages, as I suspect it bores most of my readers far more than it does me. --JHW))

DAVE LOCKE
6828 Alpine Ave #4
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USA
2 August 1983

... until Greg Hills I've never heard of anyone quite so fond of their penis. Well, he may have gone on too long about it, but in all honesty I'd have to

say that I, too, am attached to my penis. If I lost it there would be much inconvenience. What I'd probably miss the most is the ability to relieve myself out the side window during long autotrips on the interstates.

((Not while you're driving, I hope!--JHW))

I know that if I lost my penis I would likely spend much time contemplating the purpose of walking around with just a set of nuts. With or without penis, they have a tendency to bang against each other and against my legs when strolling, but wearing a tight pair of jockey shorts creates problems in other ways. Without a penis, there seems little value or purpose in having nuts which bang about on you, and chances are I'd let them go before it came time to replace my old shorts with new ones. The 'facts' involved here, of course, would have no bearing on my feelings, and my feelings are that I would occasionally miss my nuts if for no other reason than because I would no longer be able to scratch them. This must be hard for a woman to understand, I know. It's part of the male mystique, which is something I'm not sure I understand myself.

Yes, it is difficult to find assertive women who say what they mean. The non-assertive ones rarely say anything, and there are lots of assertive ones who say everything but what they mean... Of course, the same can be said of men, and for that matter it isn't necessary to be assertive to say what you mean or to be interesting or honest. However, if you're going to be assertive it does seem counterproductive not to say what you mean. At the very least it's a waste of energy to run about being assertive about things you don't mean. It makes it difficult to accomplish anything, unless you're just trying to confuse people or mislead them.

Joseph Nicholas, of course, is full of Dingo's Kidneys when he says that 'fanwriting is an entirely pointless activity unless you're doing your absolute best.' Once in awhile I give it my absolute best, usually when I've run out of tequila, but most often I treat fan-

writing as a fun hobby that shouldn't be taken too seriously. I took it seriously once and noted that hair began growing on my palms. Since then I've refused to go balls out every time I sit down at the typewriter, unlike Joe Nicholas who I presume always does numerous drafts until his prose is so polished that you can see his cheeks reflected in it.

((Er, yes, thank you for those thoughts, Dave. I am momentarily without a snappy comeback. --JHW))

JOAN DICK
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Australia

LynC's 'Discrimination' made me think back to my childhood and my schooling. It's only now that I realise how girls in my day were regimented in what

they were allowed to do at school. We had no say at all on the matter. Perhaps they had to balance class sizes with available teachers (WWII was on), but I wish it could have been different.

LynC's remark 'Brute force, and lack of funds, are very effective arguments for conforming' is so true. Atoms may be split, but human beings, men especially, stay the same each successive generation. Also 'even if it's a person, and it almost invariably is.' Sometimes I wish I could live along for ever, and have no contact with anyone at all. To be hurt by a person is bad enough, but when it's someone you love or loved, who should have known better, it's even worse. Where I live now, lots of people keep very much to themselves. I wonder just who hurt them so badly that they won't let it happen again.



EVE HARVEY
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15 June 1983

I used to be a soft-hearted idealist until 2 years ago when John and I had to take over the care of my father, who suffered brain damage in a car accident in 1974. Nowadays I just don't know. Is his life worth the cost?

I wholeheartedly believe my mother would still be alive if he had been allowed to die. It would have been a shock, but she would have had the chance to rebuild her life instead of looking after him for 5 years. Too, John and I wouldn't have had our life together so drastically upset. Most importantly, I would have remembered him with love, which I definitely won't now. To save that life, 3 others have been changed beyond recognition, one cut short at the age of 56 which is far too young to die. I think the cost was too high and that's why I always wear a seat belt; dad would have been killed if he had been wearing a belt, and I would rather be dead than cause the upset involved. I may sound incredibly hard and selfish, if so just bear

in mind that I was the only one in the family willing to take him on because I didn't have the heart to put him in a home when he didn't want to go -- and I still haven't the courage to do that now. So it's not just because I'm a selfish bitch -- it's the reality of living with someone who is mentally handicapped. These days, therefore, I would say in answer to this debate, ask the people who will be most affected by the decision, and those idealists who are not being affected just keep quiet. It's all so easy to have ideals about what other people should or should not do; it's a lot more humanitarian to ask the parents of the severely handicapped baby what they want, and then give them the support they need, whatever their decision. In other words, if you don't have to suffer the consequences, kindly stop telling people what they should do.

((I think your view is very sensible, rather than 'selfish' -- of course, it happens to agree with mine! Thank you for the personal account to illustrate the point I was making some issues ago. --JHW))

Whilst my blood's still high, I'd like to comment on Diane Fox, since I was brought up by one of those 'fools who lacked both compassion & practical experience of the cruelty of oppression' who supported Hitler in pre-war Germany, and could never quite reconcile the picture painted of him in this country, with first-hand experience. I would take slight exception to Diane's sweeping generalisations. If anyone taught the Germans about oppression, it was the Allies with their 'reparations' after World War I. I read somewhere that it was the Allies' own actions of grinding the Germans into the ground and making them 'pay' for WWI with prohibitively high reparations, that set the right psychological background to Hitler's rise. We had, luckily, almost learnt the lesson by WWII, although my mother did say that conditions in Germany were far worse under the Allies than they had been actually during the war. From what she described, it was the typical 'conqueror/conquered' situation, with what few resources there were going to ensure the Allies were wellfed, clothed and housed etc first. How about fewer generalisations and a little more realism, eh, Diane?

((The concept that the between-wars treatment of Germans led to Hitler's rise -- or the conditions to make that possible -- was what I was taught in history class, too. If he'd found some other outlet for his delusions of grandeur, he'd probably be seen as a hero today. None of which, of course, makes his actions against Jews etc any more acceptable, not that you were in any way suggesting that. --JHW))

MARY GENTLE
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Bournemouth, Dorset
England
1 June 1983

One point comes to mind reading your and Paul Skelton's remarks on the malformed, disabled, retarded members of some future utopia, and that's

the mentally handicapped. If all imperfect (and there's a loaded definition) foetuses are disposed of, then social prejudices against the 'imperfect specimens' will be even harsher; and where this brings in the mentally retarded is that some severe cases are not identified until the child is (say) 18 months old. Are such cases to be 'aborted' at that late date? I think there is an idea in a lot of people's minds that a disabling accident can happen to anybody, but to bear or be born malformed or retarded somehow involves a fault. Maybe the old superstition that anything, including illness, is a judgement on you from God?

Whether true or not, it's said that those people who still practise the exposure of infants (sometimes

'unwanted', and most times because famine or drought mean it just can't be supported) choose either the newborn, or those under about 2½ years old. The interesting reason given is that until a child learns to speak, it isn't quite 'human', and therefore can better be lost than a fully human older child. (From my limited experience of kids, I have to say that this seems true to me: babies are very lovable animals. When they talk, finally, they become 'people'; but they also lose something of that charm that animals have.) Treatment in future will be much the same as treatment in the past, I should think; pragmatic, and based on resources. Or is that to underestimate prejudice? I think the question is: does the mentally or physically disabled person have the same right to a life as a 'normal' person? Maybe they won't appreciate it. Do they need less or more? Maybe a better way to put it is: what kind of a disability do I have to have, to be denied the resources of society? which of course can only be answered in individual cases, and not on the basis of some general rule-of-thumb.

And even then, judgement can be extremely hard. There is a boy -- Irish, I think -- spastic, and thought to be badly retarded; the classic basket case. Christy Nolan (if I've remembered his name right) with a lot of help from a supportive family, and some new muscle-relaxant drugs, was able to tap letters on a typewriter. Not incoherences or short notes -- he wrote a book, DAM-BURST OF DREAMS. Whether it's a good book or a bad book isn't important (I don't think it's much different from any 14-year-old, except that it would have to be a pretty exceptional teenager to write a book in the first place); what's important is that there is a first class writer's perception locked in his head, and nobody knew it was there. Are there emotional perceptions locked up inside the mentally handicapped? We might never know; and not knowing, how can one judge?

((Some excellent points there, Mary. I think the most relevant thing in that last paragraph, though, is the 'supportive family'. Without that, Christy would almost surely be a basket case still. That's why I tend to pragmatism, though my idealistic views may differ. If the resources are there (either within a family or society) and will be used to assist every individual to achieve his or her full potential, that's one thing; but, generally speaking, they're not. To speak (as some do) of a 'right' to life, without making every effort to provide a quality life, strikes me as sheer hypocrisy. How to create a climate where provision will be made to maximize that quality of life (assuming one thinks it's worth doing, and I do think so) is the real problem. One to which I have no solutions, though I do have a lot of strong ideas -- ideas which differ greatly from the ideas of others who espouse the same goal. What that says, mainly, I think is that there is no one 'answer'. --JHW))

Something I find interesting in a more speculative way is this sperm/egg/foetus deposit bank concept -- I think there was something on it in an early Heinlein, from the point of view of spacing out planned births. But consider some of the wilder implications: say if I conceive two children, one I bear and the other is kept in stasis; my daughter then has that embryo implanted and brings it to term -- is that child my daughter or my grand-daughter? (Or son.) A couple of generations of that and everybody would be totally confused. One could space a family out serially over a century or more. Or suppose my child conceives a child before I'm past the age for bearing, and I bring it to term? Can one have a mother as one's sister? There are darker implications; but I prefer to imagine the panic in a lawyer's office when it comes time to read the will; and just chortle.

((Obviously a revision of the concepts of relationships is required, but will people get around to it? --JHW))

KEVIN MCKAW
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Hamilton Hill, WA 6163
Australia

4 August 1983

I suppose that I suffer from the male feminist's problem of defining my position in society and coming to terms with my viewpoints and beliefs

that seem to clash with my own instincts. I recently suffered quite a shock in discovering that I identify more easily with female personalities than I do with the 'normal' sex roles for one of my gender... I find it rather amusing really. I find it totally impossible to think of myself as a 'man' but rather easy to think of myself in terms of being a 'person.'

((Good! I wish more men were like that.--JHW))

I find it rather annoying that I cannot join any women's or feminist groups as they reject me due to my gender. The reason they give is that subjects such as rape cannot be discussed if a 'man' is present. This is irritating as I often talk with my friends on such subjects, and they say that the fact that I am a male doesn't bother them because I don't 'seem' like a 'man'. They perceive me more as 'a person who just happens to be male'. In fact, I find that I am rarely perceived as being male at all, but more as 'some different sort of female' as it was once put to me. You should realise that in what I am talking about I am referring to talks with close friends only. I have, over the years, developed a rather convincing camouflage that I present to the world as being a 'normal everyday man'; a role that I act even though I do not really feel that way.

((Some feminist groups, including some chapters of Women's Electoral Lobby, do accept and even welcome men, but many women have had such bad experiences with men taking over groups, or putting women down, that they prefer not to take the chance again. The individual women may or may not grow out of this feeling; but even those of us who feel perfectly comfortable in many mixed groups, still like to have a women's group where we can talk -- or feel we can talk -- more freely. Besides, I reckon it does men good to find out what it feels like to be excluded. It's hard on some men, but others learn something.--JHW))

I should point out that even though my personality may not be, my instincts seem to still be male, though somewhat subjugated. As you may have guessed, this makes me somewhat confused. I'm wondering if feminism usually has this sort of effect on males who embrace its concepts. I seem to have experienced a break in gender identification. This is, of course, not unknown. A similar situation occurs in a certain African tribe where some children raised as girls, develop & change into males at the age of 18. They seem to experience no distress at this switch of gender, as it often happens in the tribe. Interesting? I find it so.

((I think that if our society didn't set such rigid sex role stereotypes, this sort of confusion would be less likely to occur. As for what males who embrace feminism feel, I'll leave an answer on that up to my male readers.

((Kevin sent me another letter, a "Loc from a hospital bed" in response to my "View from a hospital bed", in the midst of which he was injected with a sedative, and later had an operation (between paragraphs). The deterioration in his handwriting was quite amusing, and receiving this missive cheered me up greatly. Ta, Kevin.--JHW))

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VOTE FOR GUFF 1984!!

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ROGER WEDDALL
79 Bell Street
Fitzroy, Vic 3065
Australia

1 August 1983

I myself can testify to the tiresome fact that many strong feminists will not accept me as an okay person because of my sex. The trouble of course is that there are so many men around (probably by far the majority) who treat women as second-class citizens and cute sexual playthings, nothing more, and there's nothing to distinguish MCP's from your ordinary, everyday non-sexist male. All you can do -- all I can do -- when in that situation is to accept that you are not going to be treated in a friendly fashion, or trusted, by these women for quite some time (until they get to know you), if at all, ever they do.

I can understand their point of view -- it must be easy to more-or-less adopt a permanent scowl, when it comes to all dealings with men -- but if it is an easy viewpoint or attitude to fall into, it is also the worst way to act, for it reinforces what many men -- and women -- believe about feminism, that it isn't really such a great thing because all feminists are bra-burning man haters. This of course is patent nonsense, but it's the cliché that much of the popular (?) media has settled for, and it's up to people like Sue Thomason to bear the load of breaking down that barrier. For my part, I just accept that, in a tiny minority of cases, I am going to be discriminated against by some women, because of my sex. What I have to do is accept that as a fact of life, and wait for the hostility to go away. Sometimes it takes an awfully long time, but eventually, acceptance is won.

((Another example of behaviour being dictated by feelings, rather than facts.--JHW))



GLEN CRAWFORD
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Australia

The zinc-schmaltz argument is really taking the search for discrimination to the extreme, and I agree with you that the 'message' is existant only in the mind of the feminist looking for an insulting needle in a literary haystack.

((Hang on there, Glen, I did not say that, nor do I agree with that statement!--JHW))

Let's consider the obvious... Star Wars, GAH, etc are all earning big bucks in the USA, and there will naturally be clones looking to cash in on the trend. If it's a proven seller, copy it! The other point which comes to mind is the general trend in music, art and literature toward a simpler style of the past, and let's face it, the superhero was around a hellava lot earlier than Germaine Greer and her friends! (Besides, I think it's nice to have a few real men back in SF... the quiche eating variety that wants to 'relate' to aliens is boring. Don't relate, nuke 'em!)

((OOoh, stir, stir!--JHW))

I think both you and Sue Thomason hit the nail on the head about the Feminism movement ... Neither of you are acceptable feminists because you are both SUCCESSFUL feminists. You live your lives the way you want to live, they've taken control of your own destinies, which the radical feminists will never do because they are too damn busy being oppressed. I believe there is more than a little masochism in militant anybody's, and they really get pleasure out of whining about their unhappy lot, rather than getting off their fat fannies and DOING something about it.

((Glen, do you have a natural talent for being insulting, or do you have to work at it? Whilst your comments certainly apply to some 'radicals' and 'militants', such sweeping generalizations don't do any more good than the 'whining' you speak of. I personally know quite a few 'radical feminists' who ARE 'doing something about it' -- though what they're doing may not be your idea of what they ought to be doing. Their activities range from setting up and running battered-women's refuges, to street theatre; from dropping out of established society and getting on with their lives, to vandalism and other activities of which even I don't approve. I've also met some of the sorts which you mention, but in my experience -- which I suggest may be a bit more than yours -- the whiners are in the minority.

((It is also, sometimes, awfully damn difficult to live one's life the way one wants to, if the law and society place excessive barriers. For example, suppose you're a woman who wishes to leave her husband, and take her children. Generally, society will assist (though perhaps not as much as you'd like) -- but not if you're a lesbian. Then it's pretty sure that you'll be considered 'unfit' and your children will be taken away. Unless you're very wealthy, it's rather unlikely you'll be able to win that one, even if you can mount a court battle. Small wonder you might become 'radical' after such an experience! I could go on at some length, but not now--JHW))

SUE THOMASON
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England

31 August 1983

Oh ho, somebody has brought up the 'matey hugs' problem in the lettercol. In my first job, I worked with a kind and skilled 60 year old craftsman who would insist on catching me alone in the woodwork shop and delivering 'affectionate' hugs and sloppy kisses. After the first few times, I complained rather nervously (it was my first job) to the manageress of the establishment, whose reaction was, 'Oh, don't mind Bert, he does that to all the women. His wife's a bit unsympathetic to him, you know.' I wanted him to stop, but was unable to do so without hurting his feelings. 'Don't do that, I don't like it' had no effect whatever on him, so I ended up shouting 'PISS OFF' and slapping him in a moment of exasperation. Poor chap. Poor insensitive lonely chap. But I'd do the same again. I don't like other people assuming that I'll welcome, or at least cheerfully tolerate, their physical attention when I often don't. Yet, in my last job, when the union circulated a memo on sexual harassment at work, asking members to report any cases to the local reps, it was laughed at by the (predominantly female) staff who had never had to come to terms with how unpleasant an experience it can be.

Being touched without permission is something that frequently sends me off into one of my 'I just don't like men' moods. Not anything as violent as deciding that I positively HATE men: just that if this is what being a man is all about, I find the whole idea faintly repellent. What sort of nasty twisted person wants to get his sexual kicks out of making people afraid of him? The sort of stupidity and arrogance

that believes, genuinely believes, that if he wants me, I must really want him? That's the reasoning of a 2-year-old. Luckily a select few individuals have had some success in convincing me that (thank God) all men aren't like that.

ALLYSON M. W. DYAR
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USA

11 August 1983

In re to Joan Dick's LoC while I'm not contemplating a hysterectomy, I am in the process of being sterilized. All hinges on my losing 15

pounds and I'm getting there - slowly but surely. I can just imagine the enormous relief it must bring after a hysterectomy both from any problems relating to the uterus and related structures, but also from pregnancy.

My spouse is in the Air Force and noting the number of women who are either pregnant or have two or three babies in tow, I wonder if the USA has gotten near Zero Population Growth. I personally can't relate to all that since I have always (for about 15 years since I was about 13) known that I never wanted children, and Dafydd agrees with me.

I'm certainly very happy with my decision, but I find myself defensive when I talk to anyone about it and I haven't even mentioned it to anyone that is in the Air Force. It seems to me that the majority of Air Force families have at least one child -- I can't identify with them.

Dafydd was stationed at Andersen AFB Guam when we were first married, where I first had a chance to see the number of children there were on base -- considering the lack of activities there, I wondered if the women became pregnant out of lack of any meaningful activities? Considering that I was bored out of my skull, I wouldn't doubt it.

((I would guess that's one factor. Another might be, if it's still true, that pre-natal care and delivery are virtually free for military dependents. But the phenomenon you describe hardly seems unique to the military; anyplace you find a large concentration of people in their twenties, especially where few are in professional occupations, the number of young children will be very high. Most couples who marry 'young' have their children very quickly, even if they only have 2 and quit. Another, smaller, group either marry later, or put off children until their 30's (more typical of, tho not confined to professional categories -- the women, I mean). Then there's us stubborn ones, who never bear children. I like to live in a neighbourhood full of elderly people and university students -- the child ratio is very low!--JHW))

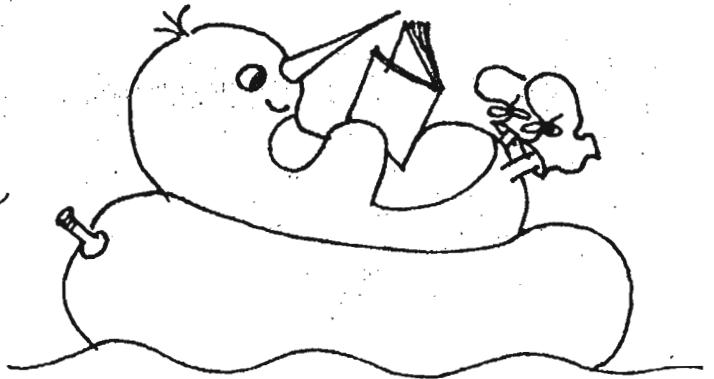
I ALSO HEARD FROM; Peter Graham, Diane Fox, John D Owen, Alethea Raspa, Christine Ashby, Leslie David, Joanna Masters, Andy Andruschak, Terry Collier, Jan Howard Finder, LynC, Eric Mayer (whose aerogramme had a large bite taken out of one corner; this evidently happened before the letter left the USA because it was sealed in a US Postal Service plastic bag apologising profusely and at length for mangling the enclosed missive; and from what was left of it; it sounded most interesting, being the comments of someone who has children and likes it), Julie Vaux, Pamela Boal, and Teresa Morris. No doubt your letter is still being held ransom by the Australian Postal Service, ACT branch.

And just a reminder of my new postal address:

Jean Weber
P O Box 42
Lyneham, ACT 2602
Australia

BOOK REVIEWS

(all reviews by the Editor
- Jean Weber - unless
otherwise noted.)



Marion Zimmer Bradley, The Mists of Avalon, 1982 (Michael Joseph Ltd)

Quite a few people in US apas I belong to, are interested in neo-pagan and similar ideas; for the past several months I've seen constant references to this book as a good one to read to find out a bit about the subject of the goddess religion. So it was with delight that I accepted Carole Cranwell's offer of the loan of her copy, since I am too cheap to pay the Australian price for a hardcover, and it will be some time before my copy (ordered through the SF book club in the US) will arrive. Quite by coincidence (if you believe in coincidence), Joy Window at just about the same time loaned me a copy of Drawing Down the Moon (see next review), another book recommended by my pagan acquaintances as a good introduction to neo-paganism in America today. I read the two books more-or-less at the same time (a chapter of one, then a chapter of the other).

The effect on me was quite overwhelming. Marion Bradley has done a superb job in The Mists of Avalon, of creating a mood, setting a scene, and really making the events come to life for me. There were times, reading this book, that I felt I could almost step through the mists and be right there where it was all happening. Now, I haven't much background of knowledge about the Arthurian legends, so I really don't know how much this volume sticks to the accepted legend, but from a different perspective, and how much is new. As far as I'm concerned, it doesn't matter. There are precious few 'facts' known about those days, anyway.

The perspective of the book is from a woman's view -- primarily Morgaine's, Arthur's half-sister, and a grand-daughter of The Lady of the Lake, Viviane. The men are generally background characters, going about what they consider Very Important Business, while actually Viviane is trying to manipulate events to preserve the old religion rather than allowing Christianity to drive it out. The Christian religion is not sympathetically portrayed, while the old religion is. The contrast between the guilt of weighty sin (especially for women) and the freedom of choice of the old religion, is strongly drawn.

The 'mists' of the title refer to the fact that Avalon, the site of the high priestesshood of the old religion, is withdrawing from the so-called 'real world' into a sort of alternative time-stream. (An older time stream is met occasionally in the land of the 'little people' etc which diverged from 'reality' many many years before.) It is possible, but difficult, to pass between the worlds, and as time passes at different rates in the different time-streams, it can be a problem if one does visit another world. The whole concept is presented in a very plausible way, known and understood by the Lady of the Lake and the priestesses;

One of the most fascinating parts of the book to me was Bradley's version of the Holy Grail -- how the quest for it began, and why. That was one of the more overtly 'magical' sequences in the book; most of the so-called magic that occurs could be explained in some 'scientific' way or another (another exception is the visions seen occasionally -- and deliberately -- by various priestesses).

I highly recommend this book to anyone interested at all in the subject. Some may find Bradley's penchant for detail tedious (as some do in the Darkover books), but to me it's this wealth of detail that really makes the book live. The repetitions are fewer, and the overall quality of editing higher, than in many recent Darkover books, too.

And a note especially for Australian readers who may be put off by the price (\$20): the paperback edition will appear in 3 or 4 volumes, the total cost of which will run more than the hardcover. It's a long book (876 pages).

Margot Adler, Drawing Down the Moon, 1979. Beacon Press, Boston. ("Pagans in America Today")

I found this a very fascinating book. Every odd bit of information I'd heard or read over the past few years on neo-paganism -- much of it self-contradictory -- was covered in this book. The 'contradictions' occur because of the diversity of opinion and practice among neo-pagans, but even more because of the diversity of opinion (often very dogmatically stated) among the 'scholars' and academics who have published papers on the topic. The most notable thing about those papers is not what they say about neo-pagans, but what they say about the preconceptions and prejudices of the writers!

I was also amused and delighted to read about people I'd heard of -- and read interviews with people who share some apas with me. Obviously the book is sympathetic to the varieties of neo-paganism, though I got the impression that the author found some of them a bit bizarre even for her. One of the concepts that impressed me the most was found at the very beginning of the book, and echoes throughout it: "There are few converts. In most cases, word of mouth, a discussion between friends, a lecture, a book, or an article provides the entry point. But these events merely confirm some original, private experience, so that the most common feeling of those who have named themselves Pagans is something like, 'I finally found a group that has the same religious perceptions I always had.'" In other words, you always were a

pagan, you just didn't know what it was called (Much like my reaction when I discovered Feminism; I always was a feminist, I just didn't know my beliefs had a name).

One of the things that always gets in my way when thinking about religion is the concepts of 'worship'. Reading this book made me think that, if I could find a definition that wasn't offensive to me, I might one day embrace some form of paganism myself. There are many concepts in spirituality that appeal to me (I do meditation, and get a lot out of that practice, and am basically sympathetic to all sorts of ways of 'getting to know your own body and self') though they are often wrapped in packages containing a lot of other stuff I don't like or think is silly. The essentially anarchistic nature of paganism appeals to me.

Another item in the book delighted me. The author talks about the difference between 'science' and 'the religion of science' -- the idea that science and technology will solve all our problems (or conversely that they're the cause of all our problems) -- not recognising that science is a method and a tool, and how people use it is quite a different subject. Anyway, she mentions the sorts of 'science religionists' who ridicule and refuse to think about certain topics such as anything related to psi powers. Now I'm not exactly a devotee of psi, but I do think just because scientific methods can't measure something, doesn't mean that something doesn't exist. I first met the dogmatic point of view in graduate school, and quickly developed a delight in harassing my professors by little things like talking to the plants (this was a botany department). They were highly offended and I thought they were pompous pricks. It's a wonder I got my degree.

There's a long chapter devoted to Women, Feminism, and the Craft, which particularly interested me, as it's been in connection with feminist friends that I first began to hear about paganism. Another concern I've had about the whole business has been the emphasis some people put upon the "Earth Mother" role of women. Certainly for some people that's a very important part of the goddess worship; but not necessarily. This chapter dealt quite a bit with the different views of politics and whether 'religion' & politics can, or should, mix.

I certainly recommend this book as an introduction to the topic, as it was recommended to me. It did not 'convince' me of anything -- it wasn't supposed to -- but it was sufficiently interesting to motivate me to learn a bit more about this & related issues.

Zoe Fairbairns, Benefits, Virago, London, 1979.

This book isn't marketed as SF, but it's certainly 'speculative fiction' (though not exactly 'science fiction'), being set in the waning years of the 20th century. It's an overtly feminist book, and takes place in London. The title refers to social-service payments ('benefits') to women-raising-children. The author traces the 'logical' development of thought in a conservative group trying to manipulate behaviour (especially women's behaviour) and events through changes to social programs. The action centres around a 'tower' of apartments, built as welfare housing and soon abandoned after being almost destroyed by the people sentenced to live in it. The building is taken over by a group of squatters, and turned into a commune -- without benefit of electricity or other modern conveniences. Its presence is largely ignored by the powers that be, who don't

want to know about the problem. But once 'welfare payments' are hinged to 'suitability', women living in the tower -- amongst other groups -- are almost by definition 'unsuitable' mothers, and their benefits are cut off. This brings the residents (who've generally been going about their lives quite apart from society, on the basis of 'you leave us alone, we'll leave you along' (apart from some of them collecting benefits, and others having paid employment)) into direct conflict with the society and its mechanisms. One of my favourite fantasies then occurs: the women take over, and begin to enact a lot of reforms. But the thing that causes this 'happy' event is a most unhappy event -- one which almost destroys a generation.

Quite a well-written, all-too-believable story. Some might consider it a bit polemical, but that's worked into the story very well I think (compared to some books I've read). Recommended.

Two reviews of...

Robert A Heinlein, Friday, New English Library, 1982.

1) by Glen Crawford.

'Heinlein's back - and better than ever' -- Harlan Ellison

'The Old Master is back.' -- Jerry Pournelle.

And so continues the blurb on the inside cover, famous people saying nice things about this newest from the acknowledged master writer of SF. I, unfortunately, a mere reader of the genre, can find little in Friday to inspire me to such eloquent praise. About the only thing I can agree with in these glorifying remarks is the single word 'back'. Back is right, about twenty years back in fact, to the time he was writing Glory Road. In fact, the first thought I had about the story was its resemblance to this earlier work.

Friday is the story of an AP (artificial person) who happens to be an attractive, oversexed, rather cold-blooded young female. Because of her unusual birth (my mother was a test tube, my father was a knife), she is regarded as inferior, and denied all human rights. Inferiority is one thing she certainly does not suffer from however, as her genes have been altered to 'enhance' her, which gives her all sorts of bionic-woman-type super powers that have a totally aggravating habit of turning up conveniently just when she needs them to escape some sticky situation she's been written into.

The tale is told in first person narrative, as is Glory Road, and this format bugs me, as it smacks too much of the sort of egoboo pulp fiction we all loved before we discovered style. It certainly starts off on the right foot, with our heroine killing a man who is following her about four lines into the first chapter, and two more in quick succession at the start of Chapter Two. In between we are given some insight into the world in which our girl Friday lives and works. It is a mixed up world of interstellar travel, life-by-credit-card, and horse-drawn private transport, with Ell-Five space stations and a divided USA thrown in for good measure. Friday is a courier with a Mission Impossible type secret organisation, and at the end of the first chapter, she is grabbed by the 'Bad Guys'.

The second chapter is the venue for the infamous gang-bang scene you've all heard so much about, but if you're into SGM or 'hot' prose, forget it... The best way I could describe it would be to suggest you try to imagine a two paragraph resume of the 1964 Cola-Cola YoYo Championships, with no pictures! The rest of the chapter tells of her interrogation and torture, and at the start of Chapter Three we find her rescued and being recuperated. This takes the next

three chapters, and tells us a little about her professional circumstances, but by Chapter 5 the story is bogged down in a miasma of minor sexual encounters with assorted good-looking males, and details of her involvement in a group sex family.

Things seem to look up in Chapter 10, when 'Red Thursday' occurs, and major political figures are being assassinated wholesale, and sabotage and anarchy are taking over the whole population. All this, however, is seen through the eyes of four sexually exhausted people over breakfast, and one is left with the feeling that something BIG is happening outside, if only the protagonists would get their butts away from the food and go look! This mood continues right through the book until Chapter 22, as we follow Friday's attempts to get back to her Boss via several odd USA independent states and sexual encounters with various males and females. I felt totally frustrated as I was forced to take the 'minor' viewpoint, while there was obviously exciting things happening all around.

She finally does find her way home, where she gets a still-insufficient explanation of what's been happening, and is sent to do some study time at a computer terminal, where she conveniently predicts that civilisation is in decline, and will be decimated by bubonic plague within three years. Her Boss dies, and desperate for money, she takes a job as a courier taking a developing embryo out to a sterile princess on a distant planet.

Finally, at Chapter 28, the story starts to get moving. Friday leaves Earth carrying the embryo in a false marsupial pouch hidden behind her navel, or so she thinks. It isn't until well into space she realises she's pregnant, and therefore will be killed to protect the 'mother' when she surrenders the foetus. She decides to jump ship at the next stop, a planet called, would you believe, 'Botany Bay'. The ship is of course loaded down with spies watching her, but the two leaders are conveniently also APs, and switch sides without a murmur, and help in the escape. On Botany Bay, she meets up with old friends, and they all live happily ever after...

Friday is 428 pages long, and could be cut to half that without damaging the story one little bit. In fact, it would probably help it along by cutting out the 'waffle' and letting the story tell itself. I found it most aggravating to read, as I seemed to be forever waiting for something to happen, and it never did. The writing itself is typically good Heinlein, with plenty of dialogue, but the tale behind the people is weak, and does not hold the reader's attention.

(another view, by Jean Weber)

Well, Friday certainly held this reader's attention, but that's no doubt because the sort of story Glen's complaining about is the sort I prefer. To me, all those exciting political carryings-on are background to people's lives, and I empathise with people who just get on with their lives and let all that happen around them. Friday overreacted? I don't think so. She seemed to have a healthy attitude toward sex as a multipurpose recreation activity. I did get a bit annoyed at her mooning over the 'joys' of the family, but at least she came to her senses after part of her 'family' shafted her when its prejudices came to light -- when she makes the supreme mistake of admitting to her AP origins, in the mistaken belief that people who 'love' her would understand.

I also found annoying the mixture of 'bionic-woman' capabilities with a little-girl longing to run home to Daddy, but then why should someone who is physically enhanced (and mentally bright) necessarily be emotionally superior to the rest of us? I suppose the author was warning of the dangers of such an imper-

sonal upbringing, but then he didn't suggest that the mother was essential, just that some closeness with another human being was. Even the rape scene didn't offend me -- it was made clear that she did not enjoy it (though she pretended to), nor was she any more fussed that she would have been by another form of violence against her -- less, in fact, because the physical harm wasn't great. In the context, of a person trained to expect and counteract attempted bodily harm, this attitude seems quite sensible.

I wouldn't call it a great book (like *Stranger in a Strange Land*), but neither is it an offensive book (like *I will fear no evil*). I found it an enjoyable read, but not one I'd spend money on (this copy was borrowed from Glen after he'd read it).



Hilbert Schenck, *A Rose for Armageddon*, Timescape, 1982.

This short (175)page book is one of the most stunning SF novels I've read in a long time. No wasted words here -- the repetition is part of the effect, as one of the point-of-view characters (Elsa) tries to come to grips with a very elusive memory from her childhood.

Both main characters (Jake and Elsa) are University professors in their 60's, working on a complicated computerised project to sort out the 'morphologies' of interaction (of humans and animals) on a small island in Cape Cod. They hope the model will be extendable to worldwide human interactions, and can help people understand why violence happens. Meanwhile, all around them, their world is collapsing in chaos. The University is mainly on strike, though a few instructors (including Elsa and Jake) continue to go in to teach their classes and do their research. Violence flairs up all out of proportion to the minor arguments that occur even between them and some of their colleagues. It's a creepy feeling of not being in control, of being carried along with events, unable to stop yourself even when you recognise what's happening.

The computer predicts where they'll find a hoard of old coins; the press loves it, and they get more funding. Later, it predicts a Very Important Anomaly -- a place on the island where none of the intersecting forces being studied has touched. Elsa and Jake rush off to study this spot -- convinced it is the clue, the answer, to all they're searching for. The city burns behind them, a storm almost drowns them, but they reach the island and walk to the mysterious spot. It's very difficult to enter (the tension at this point in the book is very high), but what happens within is not too surprising -- though what happens when they emerge is quite a shock (despite the lead-up). HIGHLY recommended.

Phyllis Eisenstein, Sorcerer's Son,
Del Rey (Ballantine), 1979.

I was pleasantly surprised by this fantasy, which turned out to have a lot more substance to it than I had expected, either from the jacket blurb (which I tend not to trust anyway) and from the only other book by this author I've read, In the Hands of Glory, a SF novel published in 1981.

One theme in this book which I appreciated was that of the unreasoning fear and hatred of women, held by some men who've had little experience with women. Smada Re-hyk proposed marriage to Delivev Ormoru; she refuses him. He is outraged. "Am I ugly? Are my manners churlish? Is my home unfit for such as she?" he rages, never considering that she may wish to love someone before she marries him, or that she may simply not wish to marry at all. Then he decides she must hate him, and be plotting revenge, reading into anything that happens exactly what will fuel this paranoia.

He sets about to protect himself, and to conceal his activities from her for awhile, he sends a slave demon (in human form) to impregnate her, believing that she will abort the foetus, but in the meantime be sufficiently distracted to not pay attention to him. She, however, falls in love with what she believes is a young, blond knight who appears at her doorstep, and decides to bear the child. The son, Cray, years later sets out to locate his lost father. The usual sorts of adventures meet him along the way, but eventually he ends up as an apprentice in his father's house. (Smada knows who he is, by this time, but Cray doesn't.) Smada's paranoia is now further fueled, and he plots to kill his son.

The son escapes to the demon world, where he further his education in sorcery and later leads the demons in defense of his mother's castle. A charming tale of love winning out over hate -- how to you 'lead' demons whose only contact with humans has been through enslavement? Why would Free demons follow Cray? Well done. Recommended.

Suzette Haden Elgin, Twelve Fair Kingdoms, Berkley, 1983 (c.1981)

I wasn't so impressed with this book (the first of a trilogy), though it's an amusing enough tale for some summer light reading. It's told in a sort of southern dialect (but without the tedious spelling changes to indicate pronunciation -- just the turns of phrase that are typical of the area and different from 'Standard American') and takes the point of view that the reader already knows much of the background, which is then doled out as required. A nice device to keep the reader guessing, and one I enjoy when it's well done, as it is here. But if there were any deep underlying profound thoughts, I missed them.

Another book worth borrowing, but not spending money on. Oh, yes, it's a fantasy, but one in which it's evident that the magic has something more behind it. Takes place on a planet colonised by refugees from the Ozark region of Earth, and occurs about 1000 years in the future. The people have deliberately (I think) chosen to maintain a low-technology society; perhaps a later book will tell why. The women are the decision-makers and both men and women use magic, but of different sorts. A Challenge is issued, and young Responsible of Brightwater sets off on a Quest to answer it.

C. J. Cherryh, The Dreamstone,
DAW, 1983.

This is the first overtly 'fantasy' novel I've seen from Cherryh, and while the writing's as good as her other works, the subject matter may appeal to different tastes. I first read part of this book in a different form (but with the same title) in Amazons! (1979, edited by Jessica Amanda Salmonson), and enjoyed it then. Another version was previously published (1981) by Donald M Grant as 'Ealdwood', a title which I'd seen on the lists but was unable to get a copy of.

The ancient forest of Ealdwood (Old Wood) stands near warring factions of men, who occasionally encroach upon the forest to cut down or burn trees. The forest exists in another dimension as well, where time runs at a different speed, and all the inhabitants (non-human) are in harmony. Arafel the Sidhe occasionally crosses over to the dimension of men, when they threaten to damage her forest. Here she rescues a young harper fleeing from evil men, exchanging her dreamstone for him. Later she must allow him to return, when he realises that the loss of the stone is hurting her.

Meanwhile, another man, once a leader of a now-dead king, has found his way to a place of refuge, removed from the warring world in another of these peaceful other dimensions, and resolves to end his days there. Eventually, he yields to his sense of duty and comes out to do battle again (the death of the harper is the catalyst in his decision). Arafel gets drawn into the affairs of men by another combination of factors: talking to a girl who grows up to be a princess; arguing with Lord Death; rescuing an injured young man who otherwise would have died -- a young man carrying a message to the princess' keep.

Cherryh's writing evokes in me a strong feeling of participation in whatever she may be writing about, whether the subject matter interests me or not. Most of this story seemed rather familiar (the Faery, the forest, the multiple dimensions, etc), but she's handled it well. And there's a very helpful glossary of Celtic, Welsh and Old English words at the end -- so I could learn not only how to pronounce the odd (to me) spellings, but see how they related to words or names that do have meaning for me.

I did feel a bit disappointed in the book, perhaps because I've been reading a lot of others lately with 'deep meanings' in them, and this one didn't seem to have that depth. Still, all in all a pleasant if not outstanding book.

Jessica Amanda Salmonson (editor),
Heroic Visions, Ace, 1983.

An original fantasy anthology. The most magnificent story in the lot, in my estimation, is Jane Yolen's 'Sister Light, Sister Dark' -- a simply told tale with a bizarre twist at the heart of it: a warrior with an 'identical twin' who materializes only in light, but who is always around and able to communicate with the more-substantial sister. The dark sister is no help at all in a fight, however, unless there is some light -- her weapons are no more substantial in darkness than is her body. Fritz Lieber's 'The Curse of the Smalls and the Stars' was highly amusing, though a bit thick to wade through in places. I'd never read any Fafhrd and the Grey Mouser stories before, and I am now tempted to seek out others. Other authors found here are Phyllis Ann Karr, Charles E. Karpuk, F.M. Busby, Joanna Russ, Robert Silverborg, Alan Dean Foster, Grania Davis, Gordon Derevanichuk & Michael Bishop.

And now, a few comments on two books reviewed by other people in earlier editions of this fanzine:

Sandi Hall, The Godmothers, The Women's Press, 1982.

(Reviewed by Peter Graham in Wrevenge #11, p.14)

I certainly wouldn't consider this a 'utopian' novel, though there are utopian elements in one of the future societies depicted. It has a sense of bizarreness that I like, and it took me a while to sort out who was doing what to whom, and when. The changes of time-stream are at times a bit confusing, but contribute to the sense of confusion that must have existed in the main character at times -- she's the one that gets shunted back and forth. The concept of a society of women, up there in future sometime, trying to affect the past (so that their own future will in fact be created?), isn't a new one, but I liked the way it was handled. And the paranoia of the big business men, who are convinced 'the feminists' are the cause of all their economic problems, was hilarious -- and, I suspect (from the reactions such people give to things like the Equal Rights Amendment), not too far off the mark. One man tries to infiltrate the women (in our present day) and find their 'leaders' -- unable to think of a group that doesn't have any, or at least not in the sense he means. Quite an interesting book.

David Yallop, The Day the Laughter Stopped, St Martin's Press, 1976.

(Reviewed by Harry Andruschak, also in Wrevenge #11, p. 13-14.)

This book is most definitely about injustice, or a miscarriage of justice, but it really has little to do with the debate on what should be admissible in a rape trial. Firstly, the charge wasn't brought by the alleged victim; she was dead. And even if her past history had been allowed into the trial, it sounds from this book pretty unlikely that it would have made much difference: the accused was marked for persecution, and even the judge was a party to it. Harry says there was no law allowing the woman's history as evidence; I didn't notice this was even mentioned in the book. The author does point out that the defense attempted to bring in some of this material, but the judge rejected it as irrelevant, not inadmissible. The main 'trial' was carried on in the press, anyway, and much relevant information was simply ignored. So, as an exhibit in the great rape debate, I consider this book irrelevant, except insofar as it shows a clear example of how it's really people's attitudes, not the law, that often decides things. As Harry points out, the accused was acquitted, but his career was ruined.

James P Hogan, Voyage from Yesteryear, Del Rey, 1982.

Another book about a utopian society and its clash with Earth-type capitalist paranoids. Hogan uses his stereotypes skillfully, and this time delivers far fewer, and smaller, dollops of science in lecture form. The Chironians were 'created' from computerised genetic information, though they've now bred two generations 'naturally', and their social mix of robots and humans is a communistic paradise, where everyone does according to their ability and receives according to their needs (and desires). The Earth people go wild when they arrive, and all the intelli-

gent but frustrated ones (hampered by 'the system' from developing their talents and potential) are immediately drawn to desert the Earth ship and become Chironians as soon as possible. These include a bunch of Army misfits, who decide to stay around and be a Fifth Column lest the really paranoid highers-up blow up the planet in their zeal to win it over to The American Way. A lot of this was a little too pat to be believable, but the action moved along well and there was enough personality development to satisfy me, so I found it most enjoyable. Hogan's writing is steadily improving, though he'd better get away from the trite material if he doesn't want to stagnate in it. Still, it's imaginative trite material, and a lot of fun. And non-sexist; he has both sensible and stupid men and women; mostly stereotypes, but both positive and negative ones.

Charles Sheffield & David Bischoff, The Selkie, Signet, 1982.

Now here's a really gripping, chilling book for you. It has many of the elements of the horror story, mixed with a scientific explanation for an old Scottish legend of seal-people. An American couple come to live in a small town in Scotland, associated with a project to build a power plant in the area. They think the opposition is just 'environmentalists', not realising that the power plant would endanger the habitats of the Selkies or seal people, who are already suffering such a low birth rate that they are dying out.

The horror elements are more in the way the story is told, than in the story itself. An excellent example of how the author's approach to something alien can completely change the reader's approach... even when the words tell us that the aliens are not really malevolent, they are just trying to save themselves. Very well written, quite convincing. A book worth spending your money on.

Alexis A Gilliland, The Pirates of Rosinante, Del Rey (Ballantine), 1982.

A delightful book, which I enjoyed immensely, as I did the two earlier books in this series. It helps to have read the others; though this book stands on its own, some of the humorous references are likely to be lost if you haven't. The space station Rosinante continues to experience union problems, even as its governor tries not to get caught up in a power play between Japan and the various nations of North America. Several of the main characters are computers, one of which finds religion and preaches it to some of the other computers. The results are both amusing and frightening. A fast-paced combination of hard science, thriller, and political commentary.

Damien Broderick, The Judas Mandala, Timescape, 1982.

This reads as if it had been written in two distinct parts, separated by some years. The first part has the quality of a philosophical state induced by indulgence in illegal substances; the second part is more straightforward. I can't quite decide whether Broderick uses all those polysyllabic buzz-words with his tongue firmly in cheek, but I like to think so. If not, he's awfully pretentious. The story's about time-jumping, and paradoxes abound.

WEBERWOMAN'S WREVENGE FIFTEEN

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Electrostencils by Ron L. Clarke, Faulconbridge. Cover printed on a (very inadequate) photocopier, other pages on Isopress, my aging Gestetner.

Illustration Credits

Alison Cowling, below;

Margaret Sanders, 1, 7, 13. Cover and other fillos from "Women: A Pictorial Archive from Nineteenth-Century Sources (391 Copyright-free Illustrations for Artists and Designers)," Selected by Jim Harter, Dover Publications, New York, 1978. The quality of the 'originals' in the book are excellent, but the cover print in particular got very pale in copying. *sigh* well, at least it wasn't someone's original artwork that got butchered this time. Speaking of which -- I have heaps of little fillos around (some not at all appropriate to the topics in this issue, which is why I didn't use them), but nothing suitable for a cover. (hint, hint)

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