

# Weber Woman's Wrevenge

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WEBERWOMAN'S WREVENGE TWENTY  
(Volume 4, Number 2, November 1984)

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Alison Cowling, 14, 15	Bill Rotsler, 1(bottom), 5
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COVER

Another cartoon from Julie Vaux. This one is in response to "a certain male fan" who isn't terribly impressed with Australian fanzines and artwork.

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# THE RUBBISH BIN



An Editorial by Jean Weber

The big question this time, of course, is: will I manage to conquer the problems of typing and duplicating this issue so it's readable I certainly hope so; I'm getting as tired as you are of the semi-legible offerings recently. Some pages lastish turned out very good, so at least I know it can be done with the equipment I've got. I'll spare you the technical details. (And no, I still haven't conquered the problem of the missing question marks, so the punctuation is a bit odd in places. Please bear with me.)

This time I have quite a mixed bag, including the usual lengthy lettercolumn. Loading off is a column from someone who appeared on the fan scene early this year and sounds very interesting. Greg See-Kee introduces a slightly different topic into those pages, and certainly can contribute a somewhat different viewpoint.

Alex Stewart's article (reprinted from his perzine) is just the sort of personal introspection I'd like to see more of; he reports that his life has improved since he wrote the item.

Eric Lindsay wanders in with a frivolous item, just for a change of pace, and I catch up on recently-published Australian science fiction and fantasy.

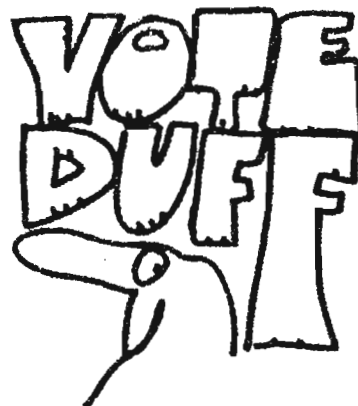
It's a more sf-oriented issue than usual, between my book reviews and the lengthy lettercol discussion on books and writing. As usual, though, I've had to severely edit the letters I received. I cut out almost entirely most references to discussions well past, not because the letters weren't interesting, but because I had to draw the line somewhere. How I wish I had the time, energy and money to put out 100-page zines like Marty & Robbie Cantor do.

Speaking of the Cantors reminds me to remind you to vote for DUFF or GUFF (or both). The GUFF (Europe-to-Australia) candidates haven't been announced (I'm typing this on 3 November), but I suspect they'll be as hard to choose between as the DUFF list. How I wish we could afford to vote for "All of the above"!

However, one must make a choice, and I'm going to tell you mine - in detail. Because the voting is by the Australian system, you can list your preferences by number, rather than voting for only one. So here are my choices, and the reasons.

- \*\*\*\*\*
- \* \* \*
  - \* My recommendations for DUFF voting \* \*
  - \* (remember, it's the Australian prefer- \* \*
  - \* ential system) are as follows: \* \*
  - \* \* \*
  - \* 1 Joni Stopa (well-known in the midwest; \* \*
  - \* I nominated her) \* \*
  - \* 2 Marty & Robbie Cantor (produce a great \* \*
  - \* fanzine; pity about the smoking) \* \*
  - \* 3 rich brown (don't know him but Eric \* \*
  - \* says he used to do a fine fanzine \* \*
  - \* 4 Mike Glicksohn (he's been here before; \* \*
  - \* otherwise he'd rank higher) \* \*
  - \* \* \*
- \*\*\*\*\*

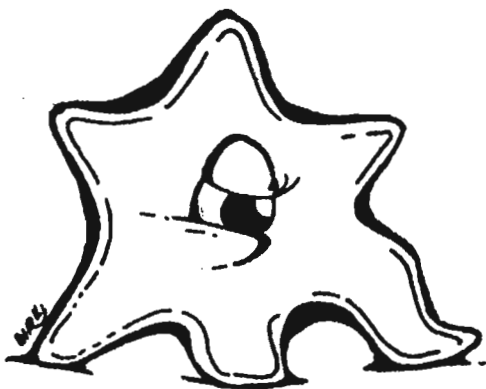
Ballots are available from:  
Jack Herzman, Box 272 Wentworth Building, Uni  
of Sydney, NSW 2006, Australia  
Jerry Kaufman, 452E Winslow Place N, Seattle  
WA 98103, USA  
Deadline for voting is 20 February 1985.



# RAMBLING THOUGHTS

(ON LOVE, MONOCULTURALISM,  
AND SCAPEGOATS)

by Greg See-Kee



Last night I was explaining to my friend Laurie, "Love is a fabrication of White Anglo-Saxon culture of the current generation.

"Remember FIDDLER ON THE ROOF, where the Jewish father cannot understand the Love obsessions of his children."

"Is that why there is so much hatred and violence in families and society. I've always wondered about that."

"Love in this society is a religion which is replacing Christianity. Anglos have made it their god. Remember Maslow's hierarchy of needs. Love-addicts are stuck at the third level: The need to belong. They are searching for an institution to replace the decay of the extended family."

I made it clear to her that these ideas are not my own. She doesn't like my lecturing, so I didn't tell her that communists think that Love is a capitalist plot, an opiate of the masses.

Clarifying these ideas to her helped me to understand many things about my own upbringing. I used to be puzzled about the "grown-ups" who were obsessed with Love Songs and Romance. But the grown-ups I saw had Love-type relationships filled with hatred and pain.

For example, there are my own mother and father, trying so painfully to reach the mass media ideals of Love. My sisters and I eventually reached that young adult stage of independent goal setting: "Do I want to be a clone of my parents. No, I don't want to be a clone!! That is too unhappy."

What led Laurie and I to discussing Love was having just seen the play CATHOLIC SCHOOL GIRLS. I wanted to see it because most of my old lovers were brought up in Catholic schools.

The play made me cry. Catholics have so little appreciation of being Human. Catholics feel that they have failed as Jesus-clones or Sacred-Mary-clones.

Now I understand why the Humanist and Rationalist Societies are so full of angry, cynical anti-Christians. Why the Catholic women and I have shared a furtive obsession with sex, yet we aren't really interested in it, for ourself. And that's why the Irish are so "stupid" and self-destructive -- so much self-loathing, that life becomes an endless migraine. Finally so many odd details started to make sense.

The play CATHOLIC SCHOOL GIRLS has for the moment put me right off Catholics and ex-Catholics. They resemble too much the client-type that I handle in my role of "telephone counsellor". Catholics are therapy cases -- of sharing their private hell. Germaine Greer and many others were Catholics. Most of the KENJA "personal growth" organization in Sydney is Catholic.

-----  
But the people with whom I live at the moment are not Catholic. They are all Anglo-Protestant, and I have difficulty in understanding them.

Underlying my life is a deep suspicion of things "human". It is Human to kill on a grand, purposeless scale ("war"). It is Human to use hardware/firmware/software to torture and not kill people. These people are our soldiers, mad people and psychoactive-drug-dependent people.

R.D. Laing, good Anglo that he is, describes well the Anglo perfection of having clashing Verbals and non-Verbals. At those times I am glad that I am not mono-ethnocentric. (I just coined the word, right now.)

Other than myself, the house in which I live is mono-ethnocentric. A well travelled friend said it is very Anglo. You do not self-disclose, particularly non-verbally and emotionally. "Tight-lipped and tight-arsed" -- that's what black people and some gay people might say.

Anglos are strange and interesting creatures. Common to other humans, they too have taboos. Their definition of "intimate" used to cover death, religion, personal hygiene, social politics, emotional expression, interpersonal politics... Slowly influences of other cultures are changing them. Modern music is broadening their repertoire of kinaesthetic movements and self-expression. Their current fashion trend - multi-culturalism - will have a permanent therapeutic effect on these imperialistic conquerors.

The Anglo approach to interpersonal problems is to avoid discussing them. Instead, they bury the discussion by turning it on their psyche (good for the makers of anti-depressants and other chemicals) or plotting politically in the "masons" and dinner circles. Direct verbal confrontation is a new technique to them. They use it only when they attend a Jewish invention such as "therapy", encounter groups and other emotive, non-verbal activities.

The point I want to make about monocultures, is that they are like a farmer's monocultural crop. If any disaster strikes, there are a limited number of ways to handle the situation and you lose the whole crop. In contrast, a heterogeneous culture allows greater adaptation to the needs of interfacing to the outside world, in preparation of the wider diversity that exists outside of the culture.

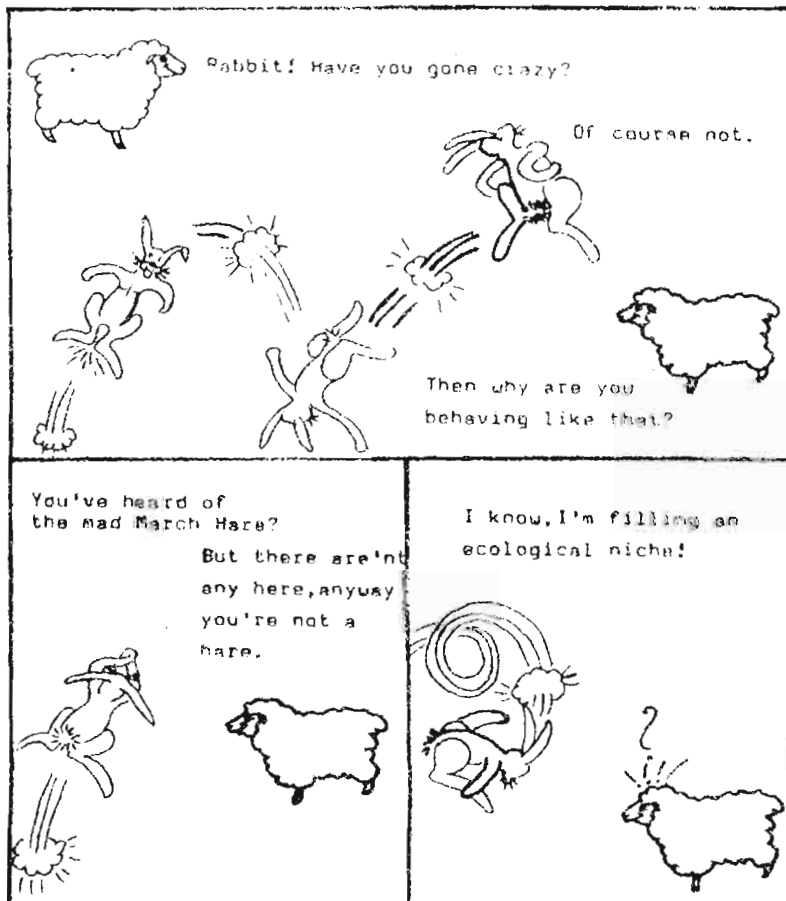
In my monocultural household, the other male is learning an Asian martial art in lieu of the usual gun-toting interest of other males who have lived here. Another person is learning something derived from Jazz Ballet. However, my housemates reflect the monocultural biases of Australia. When faced with real or imagined traumas, their coping mechanisms are traditionally Anglo. I know of other ways of coping, but monocultural Australia is consciously or unconsciously xenophobic, and will not accept other methods of coping.

One other thing we discussed: scapegoats.

Immediately my Introspect mode switched on. Do I scapegoat the Anglo Protestant and the Anglo Catholic

Part of my heritage is the scapegoating of foreigners as "dirty, primitive, and impractical." And scapegoating women as "silly, impractical and good for housework."

Scapegoats are essential to pre-rational, relatively ignorant people. These people have few other conceptual/emotional tools for dealing with the pains and anxieties of life. Few people are aware of how culturally determined they are. It is very hard, perhaps impossible, to find any evidence to support the hypothesis of "free will". We are all creations and dinosaurs of previous cultures. And we are all taught to scapegoat.



### The Rabbit's Progress

by Lyn McConchie

# I AM A ROCK

by Alex Stewart

(Reprinted from Alex's Restaurant #1, April 1984)

Fate, as I'm sure you've discovered by now, is perverse. Finally, after years of thrashing around and getting nowhere, everything seems to be falling neatly into place for me. At the moment, true, it feels as though my life's being fed through the Kenwood, but there's a strong possibility of coming out of it further ahead of the game than I'd ever have thought possible a couple of months ago. So why, now, do I find myself with vague, momentary feelings of dissatisfaction, so fleeting it's almost impossible to pin them down and identify what seems to be missing from my life. The whole thing's so nebulous I've only been able to approach it by trying to define what it isn't, and hoping to find something left in the residue.

To start with the obvious, and disappoint all the amateur Freudians, it's not sexual frustration. I can vaguely remember that from early adolescence, but these days sex simply isn't that important to me. I'm not sleeping with anyone at the moment, true, but I don't feel I'm being deprived of anything much. Casual sex doesn't really interest me, and I don't feel close enough to anyone I know at the moment to want to make love to them.

That doesn't mean I don't find sex enjoyable, of course, but paradoxically, I find the pleasure I get from sleeping with a woman is almost completely non-sexual. The nearest I can get to explaining it is the sensation of watching someone you care for very deeply unwrapping a carefully-selected Christmas present; the joy for me lies in the giving, the sharing, which probably explains why I find casual sex less satisfying -- giving only matters when you care about the recipient.

It seems to mean a lot more to women, though, both physically and emotionally, which makes it very hard for me to refuse if one of them takes the initiative. It can be a nightmare for someone as naturally tactless as I am to try and find a way of saying no without hurting her feelings, and being lazy by nature, I'm always inclined to take the path of least resistance in any case. I do have a set of guidelines I try and stick to though, and the one I'm usually adamant about is never sleeping with friends. I know from experience that once I've slept with someone on a casual basis it's almost impossible to step back across the border into simple uncomplicated friendship.

It might be different, I suppose, if both of us felt the friendship was developing into something deeper, but that doesn't seem to be happening with any of my female friends at the moment. And, to be honest, I'm not sure how I'd react if it did. Since I'm naturally shy and undemonstrative, I find it almost impossible to open up emotionally to anyone, and I find affection almost impossible to express; so terrified of being hurt, rejected, showing my vulnerability, that I hide away behind a self-erected wall of flippancy and over-assertive self-confidence. I shy away from emotional commitments of any kind, and the harder I try to break down the barriers I've built up over the years, the stronger they seem to become.

Friendship, on the other hand, is extremely important to me. Sitting at home all day, living inside my own head so much, I desperately need to get out in the evenings. Sports, pubs, parties and cons, simply meeting and talking to people, is an essential anchor for me; almost a reaffirmation of my own identity. Living alone only intensifies the turning-in on myself, so much I can find myself thinking aloud without even realising it. Quite an embarrassing habit if it happens in the street.

I feel very ambivalent about living alone. I relish the freedom it gives me, being able to go away at a moment's notice, come in at all hours, leave the washing-up to fester if I can't face doing it. But I'm used to being part of a very close family. I don't really miss having other people around per se; they make noise while I'm trying to work, they "tidy" my papers so I can never find anything, and they grate on my nerves in a million subtle ways. What I do miss, even after more than four years, is the sense of companionship, the presence of someone who cares about me, knows my moods, and who I care about in turn. It's no fun cooking for one, and cooking every single meal, and I need someone to kick me into getting the Hoover out more than once a month.

And that, I suppose, is the mysterious missing factor. I never thought I'd be able to pin it down so precisely when I started this. I need companionship. Not just friends, not necessarily a lover -- just someone to share my life with, and feel for, and care about.

And that's the hardest admission I've ever had to make. Maybe I can kick a couple of the bricks away after all. Wish me luck.

((The very best of luck to you.-JHW))

# THE LOVING COUPLE

by Eric Lindsay

A whole vista of terminological inexactitudes and semantic confusions exist to misdescribe those couples in bedlock, if not exactly in wedlock. When Jean began to turn up at my house on a regular basis, such as every day, I began to consider this matter seriously.

My thesaurus listed "union", which reminded me inescapably both of union suits, and also of a rabble of workers. The alternative, "cohabitation", sounded far too formal a state. Neither association was precisely to my liking.

"Partner" is a possibility, however except in the old West, with their partners, there is the suggestion of business together. Funny business, in a commercial sense.

An even greater problem is what to call one's partner. "Mistress" is old fashioned, likely to cause considerable problems with women's liberationists, and leaves the woman with no equivalent name for her male friend - unless the happy pair happen to be enthusiastic readers of "Gor" porn, in which case I suppose "master" would be suitable.

"Lover" is not strictly accurate, since people don't have to live together to be lovers. At least, Romeo and Juliet managed without. "Live in girl friend" may be accurate, depending on the age of the friend, and can be reversed to "live in boy friend", but is more than a little unwieldy. Moreover, it is ageist, and I live in dread of some Gray Panther hobbling into action if I use the term.

I suppose "girl friend" is at least slightly better than "spouse equivalent", which tends to be mispronounced "louse"; or "chamber mate", which always reminds me of chamber pots.

In almost any country other than Australia, "mate" would have possibilities. Here it is applied to anyone with whom one is sufficiently familiar to acknowledge when they pass by on the street, even if you can't recall their name. Well, considering the way sex is trivialised, I suppose even that doesn't place it out of contention. The greatest difficulty will be with nautical (but nice) types, who will have second mates, and so on.

If you were thinking of marriage you could use "hus", which is a husband without the hand, but where does that leave the wife I certainly don't believe "hussy" would be acceptable, but at least it is better than "sin in law".

There are also a set of underlying assumptions about one's sex, whatever, being of the opposite sex, although homosexual marriages are no longer a total scandal. But what of the group marriage Does no one have a term for more than a loving couple

Then there are the jokes about fidelity within marriage, or disasters in attaining that state. Marriage is like a lottery, except there are no prizes. Marriage is a tourniquet: it stops the circulation.

Most people are seeking romance, not a comedy of Eros. Too much is made of the sitcom view, partnerships as slapstick, or partnerships as a response to enormous need. Wrong: you can always find someone to love you, even if you have to do it yourself.

Many fans use the term "significant other". This was totally spoiled for me by an exchange in a computer magazine, in which one person called another his "significant peripheral". He was promptly taken to task by the editor: "You mean 'significant co-processor'," he said. "'Significant peripheral' is an entirely different piece of equipment, and has the same name as my first computer (a Wang)."

((Editor's note: Eric omits one serious candidate, probably because he couldn't think of a suitable pun. "De facto" is a term common in Australia, meaning a spouse "in fact" if not in law. These days, there are few legal differentiations between legal and de facto marriages, a situation that can be either helpful or a nuisance.))

*Thou shalt  
not  
Dun*



natter

&

anti-natter

ON BOOKS AND WRITING

Jessica Amanda Salmonson  
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USA

Such praise for GOLDEN WITCHBREED! This book is going to be a commercial success, I'll predict; but that is not the measure of artistic success. It is imaginative but poorly written; sentence for sentence, it is often laughable. The rampant over-use of alien words seems at times to parody the sillier elements of science fantasy. Too much of the book seems to me to play into the role-playing gamers' needs rather than the needs of people interested in something of literary power. Lastly, it takes ideas already treated with highly artistic stylization (LEFT HAND OF DARKNESS) with the apparent aim of making the ideas more feminist (a noble desire) but seems largely to make them adolescently sexy. The major influence the book is apt to have is to make the role-playing gamers think in less sexist terms. As literature, however, it is unsophisticated, overdrawn, and often ridiculous.

Style has become very important to me where books are concerned, and little genre fiction aspires to anything polished and beautiful. Any cretin can have a wild imagination and a few of them can write books. So I take no special pride in the ability to write and sell novels. It is honestly an occupation dominated by cretins. But in my growth as an artist, I hope to achieve higher and higher levels of stylistic excellence. It is the only reason to keep writing. Ideas are a dime a dozen and clever books don't interest me anymore. To suggest some works of stylistic superiority: Consuelo de Saint-Exupery's KINGDOM OF THE ROCKS; Giovanni Papini's short stories and his experimentally bizarre GOG; Amy Lowell's prose-poems; Baudelaire; Alphonse Daudet; Leonora Carrington. In f/sf there are few who compare; Le Guin has captured a high form of artistic stylization only twice. Tanith Lee, also twice, in the rococo stylizations for

DEATH'S MASTER and NIGHT'S MASTER (DELUSION'S MASTER fails as art) but much of her work is pedestrian, especially her SAPPHIRE WINE sort of approach which like Mary Gentle's work inadvertently parodies sf. The leading stylist in f/sf today is probably Michael Bishop. Delany and Silverberg occasionally equal Bishop. Others who strive for stylistic value include Joanna Russ, Josephine Saxton, Carol Emshwiller, Tom Disch... Avram Davison makes jests of style and Michael Moorcock's GLORIANNA is so overly stylish as to be a downright bore.

The big problem in science fiction today is that it values scientific extrapolation above symbolism; and the problem in fantasy is that it values event above symbolism. The idea is to tell the story and do nothing else. This attitude does not value levels of understanding, nor does it value stylish excellence. I would love to see a growing segment of fandom become discerning and critical, though in the current atmosphere, they would soon find themselves reading Daudet and many pre-pulp era stylists and foregoing the horrible, offensive blather that is science fiction.

((Your letter is an excellent example of "diff'rent strokes for diff'rent folks". For example, the books I enjoyed most of Tanith Lee's are the SAPPHIRE WINE duo; I found her DEATH'S MASTER and NIGHT'S MASTER tedious. "Style" - especially symbolism, which usually escapes me completely - often gets in the way of a story, I find! - JHU))



Joy Hibbert  
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One feminist complaint about McCaffrey's Dragon books is the non-existence of detail about the highly oppressive Holds, where women are ways to link families, where abortion is forbidden, and where women are kept pregnant till they die. Pern is very nice if one can be a dragon-rider (or live in the Weyrs) or a Harper, but the rest of the planet is less pleasant. What sort of life do the drudges have, sleeping in the kitchen, never having a chance to wash, available for rape at any time. Or even the noblewomen: remember how Fax's wife was treated, or Menolly before she ran away. Or the woman in Moreta, whose father didn't acknowledge her because she was ugly.

Maia Cowan                    COA  
55 Valley Way                COA  
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Personally, I would have enjoyed *THENDARA HOUSE* a lot more if it hadn't been so relentlessly one-sided: men are complete jerks, women are all noble and loving even when their behavior is bad. A couple of times I wanted to put my finger down my throat to dislodge the preachments and one-dimensional stereotypes. The story itself was sound, but the people weren't always completely real. She was particularly unfair to Peter, who was portrayed as a completely, unrelievedly insensitive clod; but he must have had something going for him if both Magda and Jaelle found him so interesting. Or they had their own faults to overcome, if they were attracted to someone who would misuse them so. I find it hard to believe that Peter is representative of Terran male attitudes, yet there was no "balance".

On the other hand, I completely agree with your assessment of *FROSTFLOWER AND WINDBOURNE*.

I highly recommend Barbara Hambly's *THE LADIES OF BARRDRIGYN*. The ladies of the title coerce a mercenary leader into training them as a guerrilla force to free their city, all their men having been either killed or enslaved, or gone over to the enemy. For all the fantasy elements, it's a very realistic portrayal of the way harsh reality would change formerly sheltered "ladies" -- and, at the very end, the mixed reactions of the society at large to the implications of the change. It also features some truly delightful individuals (not all of them likeable), original plotting, droll humor, and is an altogether entertaining read.

Bev Clark  
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I had some problems with *THENDARA HOUSE*. On the good side, it was an absorbing story, well told, which was a pleasure after some of RZB's more recent books, which had rambled or been repetitive or seemed overlong for the plot. I read *THENDARA HOUSE* through in a couple of sittings. The minus side, which was the part that bothered me, was an undertone, not of feminism, but of dislike of men. This attitude has been present in several of RZB's recent books, most notably *TWO TO CONQUER*, where Bard seemed like a straw man composed of all the worst traits of the worst macho men, but it seems to be getting stronger to the point where there are virtually no sympathetic men in her books, unless they're gay. Peter, for instance, I found so extreme that he would be a stereotype now; I couldn't take him seriously as a character because he seemed so unrealistic taken in toto (and so different from the way I remember the character from *THE SHATTERED CHAIN*), and this made me somewhat less than sympathetic to Jaelle's problems with him. I enjoyed the Guildhouse sections more because I wasn't actively annoyed with the handling of the characters, but there too, some of the conversations rubbed me the wrong way.

((I disliked the portrayal of Peter for the same reasons as Maia and Bev, but my memory of him in *THE SHATTERED CHAIN* isn't much of an improvement. It wasn't that he was so awful in that book, but that I could find nothing to attract Jaelle in such an overwhelming way. I thought then that she was acting like an idiot over him, and *THENDARA HOUSE* did nothing to change that view. -JHW))

James Styles  
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2 June 1984

The portrayal of males in any fashion does not irritate me as I rarely identify with any written characters, preferring to perceive them as individuals different to myself, albeit with their own differences. My annoyance is with writers who have some dogma to preach and fail to cloak it sufficiently in a good readable story.

Joy Hibbert  
(address earlier)

31 July 1984

A recent event in British fandom may shed light on (Maia's) question. You may have heard about the infamous *Matrix 48* cover. In case you haven't, it showed a man dressed as a barbarian, standing up and ejaculating/urinating into

the mouth of a prone, scantily dressed, woman. This cover received a lot of comment, almost all of it negative. But every complainer, male or female, said how much they objected to the portrayal of women in the drawing. OK, true and fair enough, it is offensive to portray women in that manner. But why didn't any men object to the way they were portrayed I would have thought it was equally offensive, but no-one commented on this.

I agree with Maia about doing something about a situation, but also feel it's necessary, in this context, to work out why something happens, or at least, why we feel the way we do about it. For example, feminism is often accused of being anti-sex, puritanical because of its objection to pornography. So, should we just do something about the pornography problem, burn down sex shops etc Or should we look at the problem, work out whether we are being puritanical and if not, what are our reasons for objecting to pornography. I believe the latter, as it is too easy to rationalise irrationality by acting first and thinking second.

Dave Rowley  
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I think I rarely identify with the male lead. Why I suppose it's something to do with personal experience. I have never been a barbarian so therefore the barbarian doing whatever over the woman on the Matrix 48 cover is definitely NOT me. But then I didn't like what was being done to the woman. Is this because all women are interchangeable in stories. They haven't got definite roles, THE astronaut, THE cop, etc Summed up, I think in nearly all cases I do not identify with the "hero".

Alex Stewart  
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I agree that stereotyping can be equally hurtful to men; I, for one, am sick and tired of being expected to be aggressive, insensitive, and promiscuous (to name only three "masculine" traits I've never possessed, and find repulsive in others). And you're dead right about popular fiction reinforcing the stereotype. Offhand I can't think of a single novel, film, or television show where the HERO wants a stable, lasting, and emotionally open relationship with one woman. But this is what most of us really do want out of life. At least I do, and all the men in fandom I've spoken to about it; but then men do tend to be a little more open and honest than the average mundane.

There seem to be something of a new movement emerging in British fanzines at the moment, with people more willing to discuss their personal concerns; on the whole, I think, this is a good thing, although a few seem to be more interested in simple exhibitionism than in actually saying anything. I happen to like this trend towards greater openness. As a friend of mine remarked in his zine recently, you can only go on making smalltalk in print for so long; after that you have to start relating to people on a human level.

I suppose you've heard about PAPA I must admit I was pretty sceptical when the idea of an all-male apa first surfaced, but now the initial foot-shuffling and general air of vague bafflement has died away it seems to be developing into a Very Good Thing. There ARE topics that can be discussed purely between men, and which we can all benefit from. Personally I find it very relaxing to feel I'm writing purely for a peer group, with the freedom to discuss -- for instance -- attitudes to sex, or sexism in society, or the pressures to conform to stereotypes of masculine behaviour without having to worry about offending any feminists who may be reading it. (Women do, of course, but they're not the primary readership, and so I can leave them out of my thinking.) I've noticed the same thing when I've been lent copies of The Women's Periodical; people DO write differently for a peer group than for a general circulation fanzine.

Jessica Amanda Salmonson  
(address earlier)

When I was taking more time to provide feminist analyses of books, a great many men wrote letters of comment about the male stereotypes. It does seem to annoy them, especially in context of denying women the right to be annoyed with how women are portrayed in so many stories! The thing almost never commented on are the nature of the stereotypes. The brainless brawn is a symbol of power. The brainless blonde is a symbol of powerlessness. Both kinds of stereotypes are stupid caricatures; but one reaffirms men's actual cultural power, the other women's lower status. Time and again the stereotypes are of this sort. A really sensitive and aware reader will be annoyed with stereotypes of men and of women in fiction, but in both cases the annoyance is mainly that the stereotypes degrade the position of women. The space-conquering macho and his sexy girlfriend are equally repugnant stereotypes, but look who's invariably in command! Rather than analyse the existence of stereotypes, a reader should look beyond the stereotypes to their cultural reason for existence. When we do that, we learn the purpose of stereotypes is to uphold an unbalanced status quo.

Ian McKeor  
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Worksop  
Notts. S80 1TG  
U.K.

22 July 1984

Two of the stereotypes so beloved of early SF writers are ones I find especially irritating: the scientist (mad or white-haired father figure) and the beautiful but dopey young lady... The scientist stereotype has always annoyed me because as a practising research chemist I know damned well I and everybody else I work with simply doesn't behave like that... On the other hand when you consider a novel like *TIMESCAPE*, Gregory Benford managed to capture the mood and atmosphere of academic research extremely well. At least today we can find the occasional novel or story to highlight which transcends the stereotype... Surely the reason why Gregory Benford was able to surpass the scientist stereotype was because he was able to draw on his own experience... How much of an author's best writing draws on his own experience Isn't it easier to describe what you've felt and lived through, than to try and imagine it all from scratch How easy to fall back on stereotyped views when you try to write about something beyond your direct experience. So maybe the root of the trouble is that there still aren't enough prominent and successful women in society for male authors to model their SF characters on, and that authors don't come into contact with the few who have become well known.

Gerald Boyko  
PO Box 328, Str A  
Vancouver, BC  
Canada V6C 2N6

24 July 1984

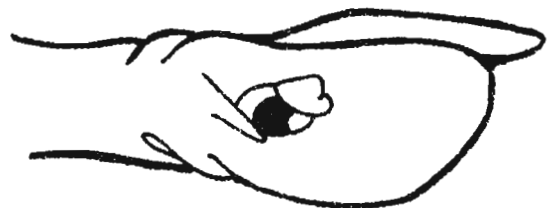
During my innocent childhood, when females were girls and males were men, I wasn't bothered by the standard male/female portrayals, because men were depicted as superior and that was as it should be. As I grew older and more suspicious of values around me, I began to realise the male myth was a trap. I still didn't care how women were portrayed (they could stay home and cook when happy and cry when unhappy), but I was concerned how men were portrayed. What if I didn't have what it takes to match the image I cried in private, but wouldn't it be nice if I could do it in public like girls I became not irritated, but disgusted, when I'd see a movie with brave men and helpless women. If someone attacked me, I'd like to feel free to scream and run if I thought that was safer than staying and fighting. I felt disgusted because I realised I was being exposed to a form of brainwashing, as I was when my mother wanted me to "grow up to be a real gentleman".

To cope, when I'm exposed to a story where sexual stereotypes are reinforced, I often imagine that the screaming woman is really a screaming man, and the fearless man is really a fearless woman. Then the ludicrousness of the situation becomes evident and I silently laugh at it. That's more fulfilling for me than to become disgusted or irritated. When I do feel irritated or disgusted, I know it's an outward reaction to an inner fear. This fear is the outcome of feeling discounted unless I conform to the stereotype. When we feel discounted, we feel unloved, when unloved we experience fear (if this were not so, then relationship breakups would not be so tragic). To survive, we transform this unconscious fear into anger, sorrow, disgust, blaming, or irritation. We can also deal with it by transforming it into humor. It doesn't always work. When that happens, it's because my self-righteousness gets in the way. But when seeing the humor in a situation does work for me, it works very well and is more fun than getting upset.

Steve George  
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Canada R3N 0Y4

13 July 1984

Maia Cowan comes off as a voice of reason amidst a sea of excessive bias compared to the tone of most of your letters... Yes, I get irritated sometimes. Not only by the way men are depicted, but also by the way they are depicted relating to women. But I don't get irritated much by stereotypes. Stereotypes exist because those kind of characters exist in the real world. For the purpose of reading a particular story, I assume that character A, whether stereotype or not, is being described the way he/she is because in the universe of that story that is exactly how that character is. I don't see it as a statement that all women, or men, are like that. Or all blondes. Or all muscular males. Whatever. Stereotyping is a useful sorting process and is one we use everyday in real life while dealing with all sorts of people. While ideally it would be nice to treat (know) all people as "individuals" with many characteristics and idiosyncracies, this is not usually possible. So we categorize into types... (Stereotypes are) a useful, if sometimes unkind, method of categorizing.



Eric B Lindsay  
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Australia

COA  
COA  
20 June 1984

I tend to find the portrayal of men impossible to live up to, at least in the "heroic" type of sf/mystery to which I am partial. I always feel inadequate, because the hero is better with the snappy comeback, smarter (except for doing dumb things as required by the plot), and generally all round too damn competent. Their gadgets work first time, whereas I burn my fingers on the soldering iron and take four attempts at anything. They discover new scientific laws, whereas I have problems understanding the old ones (and usually get them wrong). They are invariably multi-talented, while I seem to be multi-klutzed. Women find them irresistible, leaving me wondering how the hell they have time for all the other things they do during the story. The list goes on and on. Nor are the anti-heroic types any better: too much like reading an autobiography... you know, failure at fourteen different jobs, divorced twice, just missed having three mistresses because they took up with a family of dwarves from a nearby circus, and died by being accidentally emptied into a garbage truck when they came home drunk.

#### MISCELLANEOUS

Sam Wagar  
Dragonfly Farm  
Lake St Peter  
Ontario  
Canada K9L 2K0

COA  
COA  
COA  
2 July 1984

I keep meeting all of these attractive and intelligent women, generally lesbians. The other day at the peace festival out on the Toronto Islands I met a Witch and singer from Vancouver area who was right down my wavelength on everything but sexuality. Politically radical anarchist, Pagan, hippie-punk attitudes, musical interests, and so on and on. Sign. Sex becomes unreasonably important when one is not having any.

18 July

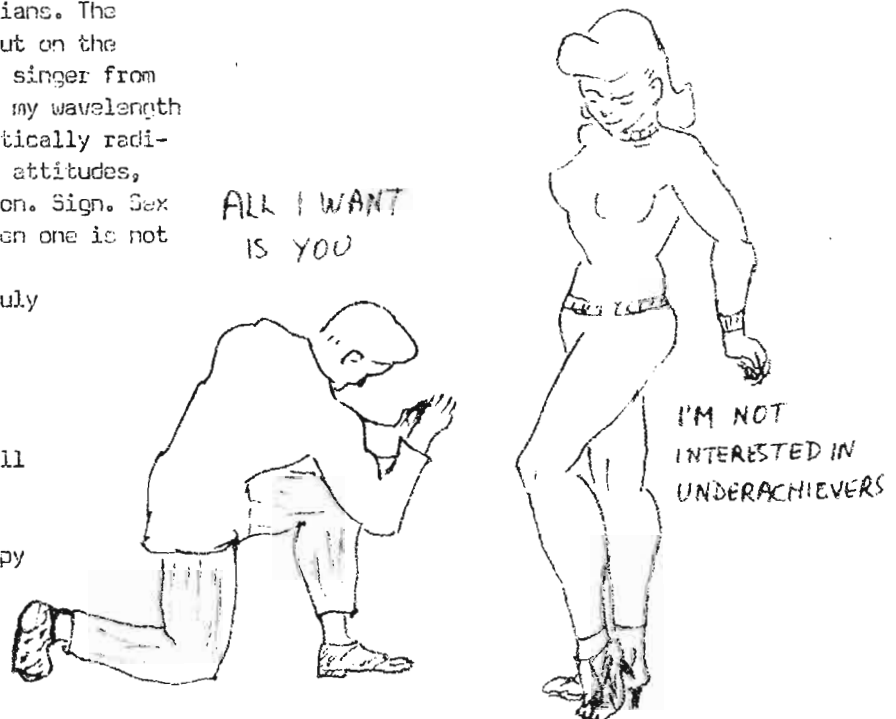
As of August 15th 1984 After the Discovery of Agriculture (give or take a hundred years), I will no longer be the inhabitant of this pestilential city (Toronto). I will be living on Dragonfly Farm... in rural squalor rather than urban poverty! I expect to be quite happy there, after spending several years longing for the country. My various projects here (in Toronto) have either ended, fallen through, or changed so

that I can extricate myself and not leave anyone else holding the bag. I'll only transfer the Pagans for Peace Newsletter and network up here with me. Judging from the number of rural Pagans I've met recently, it'll be quite a good environment for that... We're also thinking of recruiting a whole new group to rejuvenate Dragonfly as a community (there are currently only two people living there, three when I go up)... And Sam wanders further away from normal, dreaming of capturing himself in the cycles of the seasons...

Darroll Pardoe  
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Cheshire WA7 2SA  
England

6 October 1984

Martyn Taylor may think that the most desirable thing to have is fidelity, but I don't. To worry about fidelity is to be insecure in the relationship - to think that if they go off together than you will be left out in the cold. It implies something rather insubstantial. If two people have enough of a commonality of interests, views and outlook, they won't have to worry about what the other is doing when they're off on their own. Nobody has a right to the love and affection (or for that matter the services of the body) of another person, except as those things are freely given - to think otherwise is to assume rights of ownership over that person, a bad thing all round.



I wonder why some men try so hard to find evidence of "male cycles". Is it an extension of the jealousy that women should have or do anything not open to men There's a certain type of "male feminist" for instance, who always argues very loudly and forcefully the rightness of his opinions - which may indeed be right but don't necessarily have the proper attitude of mind to back them up. And it was interesting to see the reaction in certain quarters of British fandom when the British women's apa TWP was set up a couple of years ago - outrage that a group of women should have dared to do something that they excluded MEN from! It struck me at the time as rather quaint - but sad that they should have seriously meant what they were saying. I have a suspicion that this "male cycles" business is in the same way an attempt to deny to women any areas of experience peculiar to themselves.

NAME WITHHELD BY REQUEST 20 October 1984

((A man referred to by Joy Hibbert and Dave Rouley in their discussion of "open marriage" has written with his version of events. -JHW))

Joy and I had been happily flirting (by mail) for some time prior to actually meeting at a convention... I must admit that I took most of it with a pinch of snuff, believing that she was playing the paper image to match me. Also... I'd heard that she had just had a little bit of a disappointing relationship prior to our correspondence, and I thought I might be getting caught in the reboop from that. So, at least we met. We started talking ... and, connected with assorted body signals that would've stopped a Zebra Crossing at 50 yards, produced one of the more interesting ideas not on the programme.

For the record, I wasn't told of the Open Marriage arrangement... (and even so, my social conditioning would've still blocked me out in part from the basic relationship beginnings) and when Dave threw the keys at me twice (Joy got very "huffy" when I threw them back, by the way) I thought something wasn't quite as it might all be. The "offer" to watch wasn't an offer as such, but a question of intent (voyeurism is a recognised fetish, though its practitioners are normally a little shy when asked directly...). The "Outraged Husband" routine is another classic way some men have of "getting their rocks off"... Yes, I was quite prepared to stand there and have Dave beat the shit out of me - I'm a non-violent person by nature, even though I am bigger than Dave - because I had been caught with my hand in the cookie jar so to speak.

Now that I understand their relationship better, I can see that a lot of the mistakes I made might seem like a SitCom script - though I should also point out that if I'd been informed of the relationship earlier in the proceedings then half the generated complications would not have been inter-group generated in the first place. A little knowledge may be a dangerous thing, but it certainly would've helped in my case.

I'd like to keep my name out of it, to protect Joy and Dave...

Maia Cowan  
(address earlier)

A friend suggested that an important aspect of "power" is the ability to keep other people from imposing their will on you. I suppose the technical term would be "autonomy", but I favor that definition no matter what the word used.

I feel that I have a great deal of control over my own life -- it's going more-or-less the way I want it to, largely as the result of my own decisions and actions, not because of fate or external factors. (In psychology we call this an "internal locus of control". If mine were any more internal, I'd have a black hole!) In fact, the only thing that saves me from neurotic compulsiveness about it is that I don't expect that things will be totally the way I expect them to be.

On the other hand, I do have my contradictory aspects. I frequently recognise that most confrontations aren't worth the effort -- I'd lose more than I'd gain by fighting, and in fact, more than I'd lose by avoiding the fight or giving in. And yet I WANT to fight back, even though I recognise that it wouldn't really profit me anything. I've finally decided that the problem isn't that I don't fight back, but that I want to when there's no use to it. Reason can overcome socialization, but the socialization may not entirely go away. So: do I find it easier and more beneficial to give in and then go my own way, because I feel powerless and "know I can't win", or because I recognize confrontation as a "no-win" situation, and don't need to prove my powerfulness by assaulting other people I may be taking a very Taoist attitude without really realising it.

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I Also Heard From a whole bunch of other people, but I have given up trying to keep lists, since letters get filed in many different places and I don't keep a correspondence log.



## ON CHILD ABUSE

Jessica Amanda Salmonson  
(address earlier)

I was interested in the responses to Lyn's piece on child abuse; the sympathy she garnered, but very few terror tales to match it. I'm convinced such abuse is common in our society, but too little research has been done. (Every time something horrible in our society is investigated, it turns out to be not just a significant statistical percentage... but a whopping 1/4 of everyone, i.e. percentage of women raped before age 16, percentage of men admitting in controlled interviews that they would rape women if they knew absolutely they could get away with it, and now in the US nationwide scandals of ordinary daycare centers for children used for sexual access to children ...) Your fanzine had to have gone out to a dozen or so people with experience in this area, either abusing their children, abused by their parents, or both. No one speaks.

((Actually, I've received several communications which I haven't published, detailing personal experiences of child abuse. These haven't been DNU; I just found it too depressing to put them all into print. So it isn't entirely a case of "no one speaks", but of editorial selection. -JHW))

From a little before age seven I was a ward of the state in the care of a legal guardian who liked to beat the shit out of me and my sister,

17 months younger, every Monday "for good measure", then look for "real" reasons the rest of the week as well. I was once whipped until my legs were hamburger and when a neighbor asked why my legs were bleeding, I told them I slid down the canyon on some rocks. Because once I'd told the truth to a social worker who didn't believe it, and I was punished for a week.

My sister who had asthma and couldn't travel on the road with my mother (we were transients) was with this guardian from birth, but she didn't get me until I had to start school. The thing is, children's patterns for their entire adult life are probably established by age three - so by the time I was being abused, it was too late to make me anything but extremely cynical. My younger sister had no such comparisons in life. Until the day that guardian died she was loved by my sister.

And the disease has been passed on. One of my sister's children died in a refrigerator, placed there as punishment for crying when very ill. Another ran away from home so many times that she was finally placed in a foster home. The third is a pathetic little nurd and I don't know how he's being treated, except that social workers are keeping an eye on the situation, I hear. I have nothing to do with them.

I would never hit or punish a child in any physical way because even "rational" authority makes me sick at my stomach. But my sister would just as soon smack a kid as say how do you do, because child abuse is passed on in just this way... This is a terrifying difference between child abuse and rape. Though women are purging themselves of the secreted rape experience, men are certainly not writing you letters admitting to having raped or wanting to, and they should be, to the same tune of 1 in 4, if they dared be honest. But in the case of child abuse, the victim very often becomes, in the long run, the victimizer, and neither one dares speak.

((I did get one letter, "anonymous" - though I am sure I know who wrote it - and unsurprisingly DNU, from a man who expressed a deep fear of women and a desire to rape them. He is not generally known in fandom. -JHW))

I do believe that when your fanzine "baits" people with horrible experiences to tell them publically, you cause them to take emotional risks. One feminist fan recently denounced gay fans in print; some while ago, a BNF who had her tubes tied because she feared getting pregnant by rape, and who was a virgin at 30, was ridiculed at great length in print. It is not always wise to take risks with fans; in fact, from my own experience, it is foolish, unless one is willing to put up with the smug self-centered conceit... To a degree Martyn Taylor's letter proves my point.

Oscar Dalgleish  
87 Robslee Road  
Giffnock  
Glasgow G45 7ER, U.K. 2 October 1984

I would tend to agree that child abuse does stay with you for the rest of your life, but... eventually, you learn that you have to forget all that has gone before, in respect of the person who hurt you, and carry on... I think that it is vital that you go through a period of self loving, and caring for the hurt and pain and loss which you feel.

As a child, I was subject to a form of abuse, exactly the opposite of the purpose of my parents' actions... when I was growing up, my parents, and especially my father, were involved in the setting up and running of a family business. I was left in the care of my two considerably older brothers... I was cared for physically, perfectly well. However, the fact that I was continually being left by my mother, and that I never saw my father for most of the day, left me with a stranger for a father, and a fear of being left by those I love. I hated, and very much needed to hate, my father, because he was always the one to hand out the punishments for everything, and yet was never around enough to show whether or not he cared.

I know now that in his way he did care, and showed it by trying to provide our shop as a stable basis for us. But for a long time, I needed to hate him, in order to release my feelings of pain... I no longer feel the need... that cycle is something which must be destroyed, because to do otherwise is to live in a self-imposed misery because of the unthinking or uncaring actions of another.

We are each responsible for our own lives. Certainly, what has been done to us will affect how we are when we can finally take control of our lives, but that isn't a reason to let things continue indefinitely. Yes, hate the one responsible, and have pity for yourself, as you would for another; but some day, give yourself time to accept that you have a problem, even if not of your own making, and start, for yourself, for your own good and happiness, to put your life together the way you want it. Maybe you will never learn to forgive, but I don't think that's important, nor is "keeping your hate pure" as Joy puts it, but certainly it is important to be without guilt for feeling hate and pain. It shouldn't be the end of your feelings, but the beginning of changing your life to the way you want it.

Ian McKeer  
(address earlier) 15 October 1984

I read Martyn Taylor's first letter with ever-increasing astonishment, not simply because he'd interpreted something in such a different way from me, but also because it sounded so unlike anything else I've ever read of his in a fanzine.

One thing Martyn said in his first letter did, however, set me thinking. He refers to Lyn's "problem" and to her "conquering" it. The way I read Lyn's piece I thought that her inability to really trust any man was indeed a problem for her... Reconsidering things, I wonder whether I ought to have interpreted what Lyn said that way. How remarkably easy it is to take for granted that everyone should wish to live in a certain way, in this case with a partner that can be trusted. (But) it's not really apparent whether she's satisfied with her life the way it is or whether she would like to change her feelings and attitudes if she could; whether she's resigned to the way she now lives or has adapted and built a lifestyle of her own around her experiences.

How far away from some relatively arbitrary "norm" are people allowed to move before they're considered abnormal and deemed to be in need of treatment for their condition in order that they should be returned to normal and hence be happy

Diana Fox  
PO Box 1104  
North Sydney NSW 2060  
Australia 9 October 1984

I think Martyn has done himself a serious injury. If he can react in this way to Lyn's agonizing tale... he would not be wise to discuss his own problems anywhere that a reader of Wrevenge might see them. His letter has probably fulfilled the secret fear ((of many victims)) that they are soiled or that others will reject them if they learn of what has happened. He has done great harm, but most of it is "hidden" harm - like an iceberg, the biggest part is where it can't be seen, and thus will do even greater damage. He has helped make the unspeakable a little more so.

((Martyn's hardly the first fan to do this (see Jessica's comments earlier), nor the most vicious, but I do take your point. At least Martyn eased the situation a bit by seeing it differently on his second look. -JHU))

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VOTE DUFF \* \* VOTE DUFF \* \* VOTE DUFF \* \* VOTE JONI STOPA \* \*

# BOOK

# REVIEWS



by Jean Weber

I've had quite a spell of reading Australian novels recently. Not all of them are "recent", as you'll discover, but all are recommended reading.

Lee Harding, *Waiting for the End of the World*, Hyland House, 1983.

This is a magnificent book; I think it's the best thing Harding has yet written. I'm told it has been nominated for an Australian Children's Book of the Year Award, but don't let that make you think it has limited appeal for adults.

Harding's characterisations of both adults and young people (but especially the latter) are thorough and believable. His depiction of the Dandenong Ranges east of Melbourne is also very realistic. Here has developed a community of refugees from the city, people who have survived the withdrawal illness from the drugs everyone must take. They mostly live in small groups in abandoned houses, cooperating when necessary for their survival. Many are strange and withdrawn (we'd probably consider them "mentally ill", though harmless) - a legacy from their former city lives. In Manfred's case, the trauma of his escape and illness has caused him to lose his memory. Simon's past is unknown, but he leads a solitary life in the forest, rarely speaking with anyone else. Kathy makes plans for her future, learning skills such as archery. Liz is angry and upset, lashing out at those who care for her. Periodic raids of the Patrol from the city keep everyone insecure.

Then Simon has a dream of the hills burning (fires lit by the Patrol) and warns the residents to flee for their lives. (His prophecies of other disasters are well known, so most people heeded his warning.) Each person must make a decision: to stay and take their chances with the fire; to go to "the ruins", which may be safe from fire but certainly not from the Patrol; or to go into the plains to the North (where armed nomadic bands with endanger the rare traveller) and seek another home in the further mountains.

The "plot", thus summarised, sounds simple. But the people aren't; they are real, complex personalities, grappling with a world they didn't shape and which they feel powerless to affect - one where certain other people try to do them harm even though they've done nothing to deserve such treatment. Anyone who's felt alienated from an impersonal society, will appreciate the frustrations of the characters in this book. All they want is to be left alone to live their lives, but this is not to be. How they cope, and how they feel about their situation, is the substance of this book.

A Bertram Chandler, *Kelly Country*. Penguin, 1983.

Anyone familiar with even a bit of Australian history has surely heard of Ned Kelly, a bushranger ("highway robber") in the then colony of Victoria, in the late 1870s (he was hung at Melbourne Gaol in 1880). He is mostly famous for the suit of metal armour he wore. Many Australians like to think of Kelly as a sort of Robin Hood or revolutionary, rebelling against the Victorian government and, ultimately, the rule of England.



Chandler has taken this idea and done a "What If" novel: what if (a) Kelly were in fact a revolutionary and not simply a common criminal and (b) what if he'd prevailed and won instead of being captured and hung early in his "career" Chandler has worked into this hypothesis another of his favourite things: dirigibles (which were in fact in use in the 1820s), and several minor (to this story anyway) other facets of alternative history: a successful rebellion in Canada, and the support of Irish-Americans for the rebellion in Australia. The time paradox problem is handled well, though Chandler gets a trifle heavy-handed in a couple of places when pointing out clues to what's changed (but then, most of his non-Australian audience probably wouldn't get subtle references, would they).

My only real quibble with this book is that I wanted to know more about the alternative "present" Australia, while Chandler only shows us glimpses. But it's unfair to criticize an author for not writing the book one wanted to read, and Chandler's certainly done a fine job with the one he wrote.

Rory Barnes & Damian Broderick, Valencia, University of Queensland Press, 1985.

Set far in the future, with virtually immortal characters, this book was a delight to read. Amusing adventures alternate (or coexist) with serious questioning of (please pardon the cliché) Life, the Universe and Everything. The authors do a wonderful job of skewering trendy revolutionaries, amongst other topics. The cover blurb sums up one theme: "dominance and submission, both in the political sphere and in the relationships among its characters". (The cover also blathers on about some academic questions along the lines of "is it science fiction Is it contemporary lit", but we'll ignore that.) Despite some of their activities, the characters are very believable: we've all met them before - at university, at work, in fandom...

This book has certain similarities to Broderick's *The Judas Mandala*, but manages to keep the large academic bullshit words in their place: where the characters are indulging in academic bullshit!



Catherine Helen Spence, *Handfasted*, Penguin, 1984 (written 1879).

"Catherine Helen Spence is one of the neglected women of Australia's history... (she) began her professional life by teaching, supplementing a meagre family income, then supported herself and her widowed mother by writing. Her first novel, ...the first novel written by a woman about Australia, was published in 1854. Six other novels were published between then and the 1880s, by which time she was a full-time journalist. She wrote on a vast number of public issues, particularly on women's rights, law reform, child welfare, cultural trends, cooperative ventures and trade unions... she stood, unsuccessfully, as the first female Australian political candidate in 1887. The manuscript of *Handfasted* was (rejected) on the grounds that 'it was calculated to loosen the marriage tie - it was too socialistic, and consequently dangerous.'"<sup>10</sup> - from the Preface by Helen Thomson.

One could consider this a "utopian" novel, as it depicts a society that has thrown off many of the fetters of 19th-century sexual and social constraints, especially those enslaving women. The main characters are the narrator, Hugh Keith, a young Australian medical practitioner who discovers a lost colony of Scottish immigrants in a North American valley (Columba), and Liliard Abercrombie, a young Columban woman who comes to love him. The central concern of the book is with the Columban practice of "handfasting", a sort of one-year trial marriage - a radical concept in 1879 - and its moral implication for deeply Christian people.

Nor has the author fallen into the common trap of having all the inhabitants of her "utopia" happy and accepting of their situation, or their society being one which offers all things to all people. Columba lacks reading, writing and books (for all but a select few), for example; and some of its people chafe at their lack of opportunity to go beyond the valley and see the rest of the world. In many ways, life in Columba sounds boring (and the author recognises this).

The reader must keep reminding herself that this book was written more than a century ago, lest she become bored with some of the author's obsessions. It's not a superbly-written book, but it is fascinating reading.

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 \* VOTE JONI STOPA FOR DUFF \*  
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Damien Broderick, Transmitters, Ebony, 1984.

A difficult book to describe: not only does Broderick jump from one short scene to another, but he jumps from one year to another, back and forth over 15 years. If you can keep track of when you are, a picture eventually emerges of the main characters and their problems and concerns. This picture is built up not only from conversations and narrative, but also from excerpts of the characters' own writings - mostly in fanzines. Yes, many of the characters are involved in Australian fandom. Has Broderick written his friends and acquaintances into this book I don't know; you'll have to ask someone who knows Melbourne fandom far better than I. I couldn't recognise anybody; but that doesn't prove anything. I found it a good read; I enjoy this sort of writing and found the alleged fanzine excerpts to be very much like real fanzine writing, even if not the writing of any specific people.

I've heard it suggested that this book will have limited appeal because it's "about" fans. I hope this isn't true, because it seems relevant and of interest to a far wider audience. It's really "about" people; they just happen to be people with a particular hobby - though I don't agree with the back cover's portrayal of fandom as "the oddest subculture Kurt Vonnegut never thought of." There are a lot of odder subcultures out there.

Jack Wodhams, Future War, Cory & Collins, 1982.

I put off reading this book for some time, because it's "about" war and soldiers. When I finally took a closer look, I discovered it's a study of handicapped people who have found an important niche and derive a sense of personal value from their contribution in a war where the fully able-bodied can't be spared; of fear and the techniques of manipulating people's emotions and minds; of the human need for love and caring even in a man programmed to be beyond both; of fanaticism. A most interesting book.

A. Bertram Chandler, The Wild Ones, Paul Collins Pty Ltd, 1984.

Chandler's last completed novel, this continues the saga of John Grimes. Two females introduced in Matilda's Stopchildren, Shirl and Darleen, rejoin Grimes in this enjoyable romp. A good book for reading on the bus or train; doesn't strain the brain.

M. Barnard Eldershaw, Tomorrow and Tomorrow and Tomorrow, Virago, 1983 (censored edition first published 1947).

"M. Barnard Eldershaw is the pseudonym for Marjorie Barnard (b. 1897) and Flora Eldershaw (1899-1956), two of the finest Australian novelists of this century who were personally involved in the radical left in the 1920s and 30s. This, their last novel, (is) set in Australia of the past and the future... (The portion set in) the 24th century (features) Knarf, a writer, (who) lives in a society of technocratic socialism... Knarf has written a novel which begins in November 1924 and tells the story of an Australian working man... his hopes, fears and loves, his family, their friends and lovers. Through their eyes we experience the Depression... the Second World War, ...and the threat of a Third World War. When first published in 1947, the book was seriously cut by the Government censor." - from the back cover.

The two stories are interwoven as Knarf reads excerpts of his novel to a friend and also notes and discusses events in the 24th century. I found the 20th-century portions of the book to be very believable and in fact it was difficult to realise where history ended and "future history" began - I had to keep referring to the dates. Presumably this would have been more obvious to a reader in 1947 or 1948, but rather than detracting from the story for a modern reader, it added to its interest. I was, however, disappointed in the passages set in the 24th century - that's what I really wanted to read about: the authors' vision of the future. There wasn't enough of it. But one must recall the authors' purpose was more to draw attention to injustices in their own time, than to speculate on a far-future utopia.

This is a fascinating and well-written book which I am delighted to find republished.



George Turner, *In the Heart or in the Head*, Norstrilia Press, 1984.

"... a brilliant literary memoir in which George Turner chronicles his chaotic growing up in a family for whom fact and fantasy were equally acceptable and often indistinguishable. It is also the record of his development as one of Australia's finest novelists and his entanglement with science fiction..."

Interleaved with this George Turner has written an equally remarkable and witty essay on the growth of science fiction in twentieth-century writing." - from the dust jacket.

This book will probably appeal most to those who have met George Turner, read his books, reviews or opinions, or heard him speak - but it should also make fascinating reading for those who've never heard of him. Turner's opinions are strongly stated and well reasoned, whether one agrees with them or not (I agree with some and not with others), and I especially recommend his list of topics neglected by sf writers.

One of the most impressive parts of this book, for me, is Turner's piercing looks at himself and some of the stupid things he's done in his life. We all do stupid things; few of us admit them to ourselves - much less in print - with so little rationalization or, alternatively, so little breast-beating. Turner strikes me as a superb example of someone who knows his faults, and also acknowledges his inability - or refusal - to conquer those faults. Presumably he's learnt to accept himself for what he is, and goes on from there, neither ashamed nor proud of what he is. I felt I'd been granted an insight into the sources of his strongly-held and strongly-stated opinions, and could respect those opinions more, even when I disagree with them.

George Turner, *Yesterday's Men*, Faber & Faber, 1983.

"...the third in a series of novels concerning the reconstructed world of the twenty-first century. On Earth the aims of the Ethical Culture first described in *Beloved Son* (1978) and in *Vanaglorry* (1981) are under fire from thinking men, and an extraordinary experiment is designed to examine the real natures of the despised ancestors who had ruined the world with violence and greed. Needing to assess the psychology of violence at first hand, today's men - the men of the twenty-first century - recreate the New Guinea wartime conditions of 1942-1945, and sit back to observe human nature in the raw." - from the dust jacket.

The story is told in a spare, no-words-wasted style, and Turner manages to get in a great many digs at present-day society and its trendy opinions, especially as regards "human nature" and the supposed ethics of military personnel. He has drawn on his personal experiences in New Guinea during WWII. This book is especially interesting to read just after reading Turner's memoirs, in which he discusses the genesis of the book.

I think he makes some very good points on issues which are not accepted by many anti-war activists and many feminists who view all military men with suspicion, seeing them as symbols of the macho violence ethic. Turner demonstrates that it's not that simple, and in so doing he shows how one can make a strong statement of opinion in fiction without stooping to polemic.



# DIARY NOTES

by Jean Weber

Eric spent much of August at my place, catching up on fanac while I went to work. It was very pleasant having him around, especially since we weren't under each other's feet all day.

September wasn't a very memorable month. Very busy, though - I spent a lot of time working in the yard, partly because it was a nice change from all the writing and editing I was doing at work. By the time October arrived, I was badly in need of a holiday.

It started with Parandiacon, a small relaxacon held in a suburb of Sydney. My back had been giving me such trouble (cramps in the right leg this time) that I had to ask Eric to come down on the train and drive me back to Sydney. (If we hadn't needed the car, I wouldn't have bothered, just taken the bus.) Several long-unseen friends showed up at the con, and I indulged in my once-a-year bout of dancing - in this case, to the music of Rocky Horror (Eric fled, saying the amplification hurt his eers). A pleasant weekend.

On Monday (a holiday in NSW!), we went to Keith and Laura Curtis' place for lunch. I'd never seen the famous Curtis book collection before, and Keith treated us to a wander through various fascinating volumes, complete with commentary. The food and wine were good, too. Much later than expected, we finally drove off into the sunset to Eric's house.

Fortunately we'd booked for a 4 pm flight on Tuesday, giving us plenty of time to repack and catch the train into Sydney to catch the plane. We were met in Mackay by Leanne Frahm and spent the night at her place, catching a bus the next day to Airlie Beach (a mainland resort town from which boats depart for the Whitsunday Islands), where we spent 10 days.

There we had a very nice self-contained (kitchen & bath) room, but next door was a loud "disco" type restaurant every night, so Eric didn't get as much sleep as he wanted (I had my earplugs, so I hardly noticed). We went sailing several days on a catamaran and a trimaran. We also camped for two nights (dropped off and picked up by one of the sailboats): we had intended to go to one of the islands, but gale force winds that day forced us to be dropped off on an otherwise-inaccessible beach on the mainland instead. (It was the only day the sea wasn't almost dead calm.)

We discovered a delightful seafood restaurant and ate there three nights; wish we could have afforded more. Overall, the holiday was great, despite a few minor disasters like a bus drivers' strike when we wanted to leave

Airlie Beach and go to Townsville. The weather was ideal, and the tourist crowds had all gone home.

We hired a car to get to Townsville (secretly pleased about the bus strike as we'd wanted to hire a car but didn't really want to spend the money) and stayed 4 days with friends of mine there. I got to see several old friends (not many are left in the area) and dragged Eric around to show him places I'd lived and other scenic wonders. Then we drove back to Mackay and stayed 3 more nights with the Frahm family before flying home. On October 17 Kerry and Leanne helped Eric and me celebrate my 10th anniversary in Australia at a local restaurant, and the next day Leanne drove us to a nearby rainforest park for lunch.

Hitchcock would have loved it. Leanne went bird-watching, while the birds sat on the trees and watched Eric and I read books. One kookaburra kept swooping down over the table from his perch, narrowly missing my hair each time. Little did we know then what he was up to. When Leanne returned, we set out the lunch supplies and began to eat. A few minutes later, the kookaburra swooped down, snatched a half-breast of chicken from Leanne's plate - right from under her nose - and flew off. She was not amused.

On Friday the 19th we flew back to Sydney, and took the train to Eric's. Saturday featured an emergency trip to the dentist to have two of Eric's teeth extracted (no doubt he'll describe this in more detail in his own fanzine), and I finally drove home that afternoon. Sunday was spent mowing the knee-high lawn and doing other domestic chores. I discovered that the final bit of my back fence had been replaced while I was away. The place is slowly beginning to shape up.

Minou apparently enjoyed herself in my absence; she stayed with a friend down the street. She distinguished herself by catching two mice as well as a bird; they forgave her the bird and said she was welcome to visit again.

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