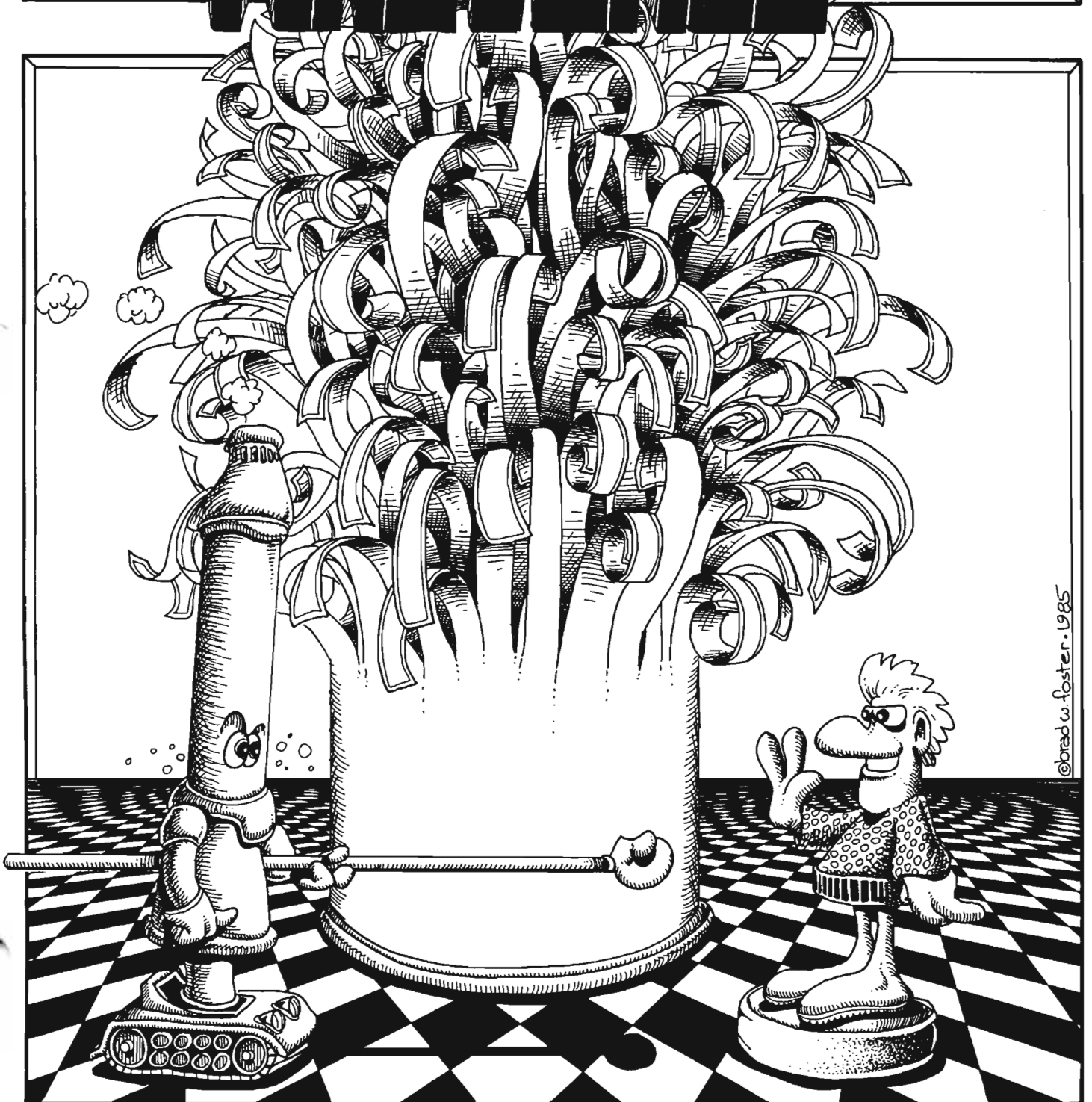


WEBERWOMAN'S WREVENGE



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THE RUBBISH BIN AN EDITORIAL

BY
JEAN WEBER



THE LAST ~~DANGEROUS VISIONS~~ WREVENGE?

Well, maybe. Or maybe not.

Certainly this zine will appear less often, two or three times a year or less, not four. I am far too busy writing and editing at work to have the ambition (even if I can find the time) to write and edit at home. Joseph Nicholas may not believe I care about the quality of the contents of my zine, but I do (even if not as much as he thinks I should).

But of even more importance to me is the enjoyment I get from producing it, and reading the responses. When I don't have time, production becomes a chore, rather than an enjoyment. Time to cut back, or quit.

I considered not producing this issue in time for Aussiecon, due to lack of time. Although I had plenty of material, it needed a lot of work, and I wanted to write another article, summing up my recent reading and Self-Transformations experiences. I wanted to do a really special issue. This isn't it.

However, I had commissioned a cover from Brad Foster, and felt I owed it to him to publish for Aussiecon as I'd promised. No one (except Eric and I) will see it in time to influence their Hugo votes, but that wasn't the point. I'd commissioned the cover BEFORE I learned that Brad was a nominee for the fan artist Hugo. I just like his work!

So, Wrevenge #23 (an auspicious number) is scrapper than I'd like (though perhaps no more so than a "typical" issue), and I make no predictions - much less promises - about the date of appearance of #24.

THE MAILING LIST

Someone's got to go. Now that Wrevenge will appear less than 4 times a year, I've taken it out of "registration" with Australia Post - it will no longer qualify.

This won't affect overseas postage costs (registration saved me nothing on them anyway), but it will more than double domestic postage - making all issues expensive to mail. Hence I'll probably put future issues through ANZAPA and possibly 1 or 2 overseas apas (how naughty of me), and ruthlessly cull other people from the mailing list.

One change will be that Wrevenge is no longer available for trade with anyone who chooses to send their zine. Many zines don't interest me all that much, regardless of how well they're produced or the quality of the writing in them. So, Wrevenge will be available for ARRANGED trades only, in addition to contributions, letters of comment, interesting clippings, unused postage stamps and *ghasp* money. People on Eric's list who have been getting our joint mailings will probably continue to get Wrevenge regardless, since it costs little extra to send both together.

I'll be contacting faneds to tell them whether they're on my trade list or not. But if you're worried, and do want to get Wrevenge (whenever it may appear), you might Do Something to ensure your place on the mailing list.

A lot of people, especially in Britain, have been writing over the past year about the (far from new) idea that apas drain off fanwriting activity from general-circulation fanzines. The argument is about whether this is true, and if so whether it's a bad thing.

To a certain extent, it's no doubt true that if one has limited time and energy, that which is spent on apa writing detracts from the time and energy available for genzine writing. However, if one didn't write for an apa (or several), one wouldn't necessarily write for genzines, or publish them. One might do something else entirely.

In my case, I belong to 1 monthly and 5 bimonthly apas, 4 of them joint memberships with Eric. I regularly write fairly long essays for 3 of them (Golden Apa, Apa-69 and Women's Apa). Some of those essays find their way into Wrevenge as well, but many don't.

If I weren't writing those essays, I probably wouldn't be writing articles for Wrevenge or for anyone else's zine. I often get more satisfying feedback (quality and quantity) from a 30-member apa than I do from a 230-member mailing list. The apas I write regularly for are self-selected groups interested in the sorts of topics I'm interested in (essentially human relationships). A lot of material doesn't sit as well in a genzine as it does in an apa, but it's of more interest to me.

That's where I'll probably be putting most of my (limited) fanac in the next year or so: into the apas. Perhaps I'll do selected reprints, as several British fans have been sending me lately. But the interactive quality of Wrevenge is bound to suffer from a less-frequent publishing schedule, which may make it less interesting to me, which will not enthruse me to publish it...

Or then again, maybe not. Any number of things could happen to inspire me to publish again. We'll all just have to wait and see. The only thing that's certain is that I won't do it unless I enjoy it. As long as I enjoy apas more, that's where I'll publish, if at all.

THE RETURN OF THE QUESTION MARK

Now you see them! See???

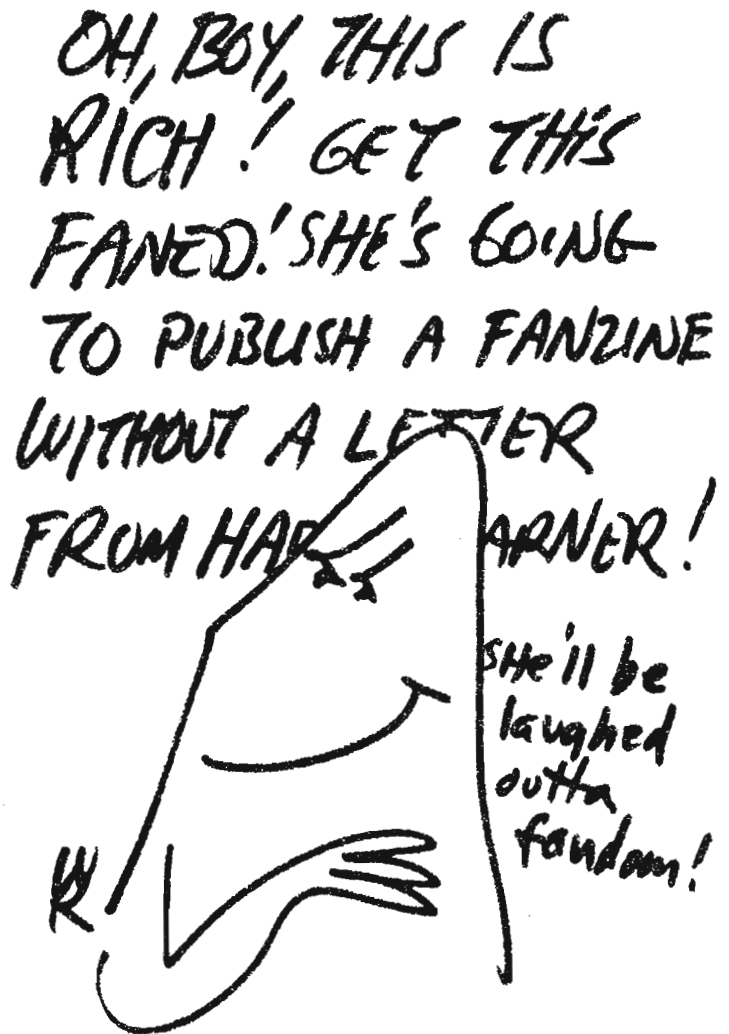
Without going into all the technical details, it's like this: the printer card (part of the interface between the computer and the typewriter) was "eating" the question marks. We discovered this somewhat by accident.

The solution: new card (fortunately Eric had one lying around). Presto: question marks!

Brad Foster says of his cover illustration, "Please don't ask me to explain it as, like most of my work, it just kind of grew together on the page without my really being aware of what was happening".

Some of my readers might like to assist Brad in "explaining" his drawing. Perhaps I've been influenced by some of Brad's other work, or perhaps I've just got certain thoughts on my mind, but I find a lot of fairly obvious sexual symbolism in it. What do YOU see?

The most creative and detailed responses will be published next issue (and since it's likely to be 6 months before the next issue, even overseas readers should have plenty of time to submit an entry). "Winners" will, of course, remain on my mailing list indefinitely.



NEW ZEALAND: GODZONE COUNTRY

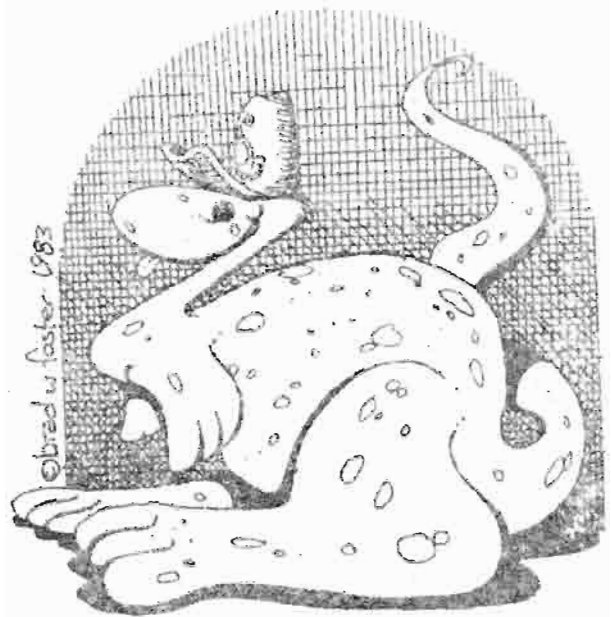
by Lyn McConchie

New Zealanders, or Kiwis as they are usually called, tend to be a rather insular people. This is because NZ is mainly composed of three islands, two large and one medium-sized. The remainder of the country is a lot more islands, ranging from small to very small. The two large islands are called, with startling originality, the North Island and the South Island. The medium-sized one (situated south of the South Island) is called Stewart Island, after some chap.

Kiwis often refer to their beloved country as "Godzone". This is not to indicate that "he" lives here, only that if he lived anywhere, it would be here, if he had any taste at all. In fact, if he did move in, he would probably be regarded as another Pom and asked to join the Union.

The Kiwi is a large flightless bird that once inhabited all of NZ. Unhappily, these days it is rare, and great efforts are being made by the Wildlife Department to encourage it to breed. In this it bears no resemblance to its human namesake, who needs no encouragement at all. It is a shy and retiring bird (again no similarity) and although it does have wings, they are rudimentary - very definitely unlike human Kiwis who spend their weekends taking to the skies with a manic joy in anything from actual planes to hot-air balloons, hang-gliders, micro-lites and free-fall parachuting. On this principle NZers are called "Kiwis" the same way very big men are called "Tiny".

The other well-known non-human member of these Islands is the Tuatara. This is a large lizard, noted mainly as the only surviving reptile from the age of Dinosaurs, from which time he has descended unchanged to the present day. Fascinating as this may be, it is not reflected in the habits of the Tuatara. Should you drop in to the Zoo to look at one, you will discover that after an hour or so your subject might blink. Several more hours of observance might provide the physical excess of a gulp or two or, unbelievably, the sliding off of his log



and a slow and stately waddle to the food provided by the Zoo staff. In fact a casual observance of the Tuatara would lead most people to the belief that he is stuffed rather than alive. In this the Tuatara bears a curious resemblance to most New Zealand politicians.

Kiwis (the human kind) are a breed that believes in its "rights". With these in mind, they regularly cram 16 people into a boat built for 6 and, sans life-jackets, flares, radio or common sense, set out to get a breath of sea air. "Search and Rescue" regularly does, and gets no thanks for it. Equally adamant on their "rights" are deer shooters, who in addition to losing themselves and being rescued with a monotonous regularity, also shoot themselves, their friends, wives, and once in awhile the odd deer. Many of those who talk about their "rights" are to the left, while those who are left, are often right, those who are left, right, etc have joined the Army and will be seconded to the Search and Rescue Organisation, where it will be their task to see that no one is left and everyone has their rights.

The less said about the White settlement of Godzone the better. The Missionary arrived determined to civilize and bring Christianity to the Maori. This was easily done by selling him small quantities of beads in exchange for large quantities of land. This was known as civilizing the natives. Later when the Maori objected to this rather one-sided arrangement, he was often shot. This was known as converting the natives. In this way a large proportion of the Maori population were either civilized, converted or both.

Some time later, settlers arrived. But alas, homesick for their native land, they tended to bring birds, animals and plants with them. Which is why you may watch, on your back lawn, a squabble between an Indian Mynah, English Starlings and Sparrows, with music supplied by a native Tui, and noises off supplied by an Australian Morepork who has been woken up by all the commotion.

You may also shoot Thar in the Southern Alps, red and fallow deer in the bush, and goats anywhere. Of all the introduced species, goats are one of the two worst. To say that the Wildlife Department's views on whatever idiot introduced goats to NZ are inflammatory is a considerable understatement. The other problem animal is the rabbit, of which the less said the better.

Coming just behind goats and rabbits is the opossum, a dear little furry beast with a nose strongly reminiscent of Rudolf the Red-Nosed Reindeer. No one would mind 'possums at all if it weren't for a few minor bad habits they have. Like ring-barking trees, climbing telephone poles and electrocuting themselves (and plunging the entire area into darkness as they do so), and not being the kind of "person" one wishes to meet in a dark alley ('possums have an extremely short temper and the claws to back it).

New Zealand is a country of great ecological contrasts. One may develop sunburn in Kaikohe (without the polluted beaches), take a harbour cruise on the ferry in Auckland (without the hippies/skinheads etc), enjoy the beautiful geothermal wonderland of Rotorua (I said to mind the boiling mud pools!), and develop broken legs and frostbite skiing at Mt Ruapehu. Wellington is built, like Rome, on seven hills and has magnificent views (if you don't mind the walk, and don't have a weak heart - if you do, it also has a magnificent hospital).

From Wellington one catches the Cook Strait Ferry (if the Cooks and Steward's Union isn't on strike again) and eventually arrives in Picton, about which the less said the better, as it is a Tourist Town and therefore beyond the pale. One then heads towards the West Coast, where the main topics of conversation are the latest batch of "Hokanui" (a particularly ferocious type of moonshine), timber or coal - unless the rain stops for a few hours, whereupon the possibility of a drought becomes the major topic.

Dodging an awful lot of lakes with unpronounceable names like Manapouri, Tekapo and Wakatipu, you will eventually get to Invercargill. No one quite knows where the name came from (the town was founded by Scotsmen), but the story goes that a dinner was held just after the first settlers arrived, for some bloke named

Captain Cargill. The dinner consisted of alternating courses of Foveaux Strait Oysters and Hokanui, after which everyone had such appalling indigestion that they all had it "in fer Cargill".

Finally, if you still have the strength, you can board a small boat that plys between the South Island and Stewart Island. The latter is noted for two things. The first is "mutton birds", birds which live in burrows on the local beaches. They are caught, killed and salted down in barrels. If correctly cooked, they taste like kipper. If incorrectly cooked, they taste like nothing else on Earth. The other thing that the Island produces is oysters - large ones! - enough said.

Godzone has a population of 3-1/2 million people and 70 million sheep. (It is a local belief that some of the latter have found their way into Parliament.) In short, NZ is a agricultural country, which explains why some of our politicians occasionally descend to muck-raking, woolly thinking, and often wind up looking a bit sheepish.

The religion of NZ is rugby, a noble game, played by noble men, and should any misguided foreigner suggest different, he'd better be either the World Champion Runner or the World Champion Boxer (and I wouldn't count too much on the latter, because a length of 4x2 round the earhole from behind is counted as quite noble in "farming pubs").

In short, New Zealand is indeed Godzone country, so much so, that Heaven will come as an anti-climax to most of us. Since more of us are likely to go to Hell than Heaven, this may explain the trickle of immigrants to our cousin over the Tasman Sea, Australia - where they are, presumably, getting some practice for the "other place", and good luck to them; even Hell won't be as hot as Australia. (Actually Australia is a wonderful country; it's just that it's full of Australians, which is a drawback for any place.)

And as the sun sinks slowly into the West, we hear the Anglican Maori Choir singing a song of farewell to the White half of the country... Te pakeha kai Te koore... a lovely anthem which is better left untranslated, for the sake of racial harmony. HERE MAI!

SEXUAL PERVERSION IN THE BSFC

by Charlotte Proctor

We haven't had a really good scandal in the Birmingham (Alabama) Science Fiction Club in 3 or 4 years, since Paul Flores threatened to kill Jim Cobb and thereafter left the state, spreading rumors of his own violent death in his wake. But that's another story.

Some people get obscene phone calls... I get obscene letters. Actually, when the first one came, addressed to ANVIL, c/o me (I am ANVIL), at the post office box, my reaction was "Well, what do you know, ANVIL has received its first crank letter". Newspapers are always getting crank letters, so why not ANVIL. It was from a person who had attended several meetings about a year past, and had paid his dues, which was why he was still on the mailing list.

About that time, besides him, there were 3 or 4 other "turkeys"... people we really didn't like, who came to the meetings. The regular after-meeting pizza run was discontinued because the general membership were violently opposed to socializing with these people. It was replaced with a by-invitation-only or "closed" after-meeting party at different members' houses. Subsequently, John (the letter-writer) and two others quit coming, and another was told to clean up his act or get out. He cleaned up his act. But I digress.

The "crank" letter was a xerox copy, very hard to read because of the scribbling, and the lack of coherency. It talked, as I remember, about the Vernal Equinox, the pizza run (now defunct), and mentioned S&M, leather goods and "teat clamps". Ugh, repulsion, nausea!! I showed it to Linda, who is ex-president and has had a lot of industrial psychology courses. But that is different from abnormal psychology, and she didn't want to look at it and told me to throw it away. I did. Oh, yes, it referred to "Charlotte the Harlot", which didn't sit too well with me.

Then, three days before our April meeting, at which we were expecting, and actually had, several out-of-town visitors, another letter arrived. It was addressed to me, and began "Dear Charlotte". It was written on industrial paper towels, the kind you get out of a box in public restrooms, and included a dirty picture, and a check for club dues.



Some excerpts: "Each meeting is like a sieve pressing down on each pulsing brain cell all writhing under the intensity of the stimulation impact... each idea turned out by the spacy minds and freaky enthusiasts as they tremble and rhythmate through my perceptual field with their pounding imprints... like intellectual dogs in heat, inwardly locked in copulatory conflict my inner man howls with inward delight, gasping at the sheer shazam as it plows through my mindfucking receptrices..."

Gag, puke. This man is crazy, and I can't turn him loose on the innocent and unsuspecting. You see, I have this complex that says I have to take care of things, and people expect me to. But, it is well known that I over-react to everything, so I frantically tried to get in touch with as many people in the club as possible before doing anything. And there was the timing... the club meeting where John threatened to show up was only two days away, and I didn't want a big scene in front of visitors. So.

I arrived at the club meeting and there he was, dressed all in black and I think he had a clerical collar on and he was wearing a large gold cross. I looked around the room and there was no one there who knew about it except Adrian and he's too good to be involved in anything like this, so I just crooked my finger at John and said "Come with me". We went outside and I handed him his check back and said that I didn't want anything to do with him.

He immediately said, "Oh, were you insulted by my letter? I didn't mean to insult you." (Ghod, I had forgotten how disgustingly unctuous he was... no wonder we stopped going to pizza.)

"No, you didn't insult me... you offend me. No one knows me well enough to say the things you said to me."

I turned on my heel and went back into the meeting room, shaking like a leaf. I am not good at this sort of thing. Thank goodness he didn't follow me in. Adrian asked, "Did you explain it to him?" No, I did not; I don't explain things to crazy people.

You know, I was really upset, and I had hoped someone would be there to support me. Warren and Steve are both old married men, and quite used to hysterical females, and would have been condescendingly tolerant - that's better than nothing - but they weren't there. When Julie had to deal with the hotel after Bachcon, both Steve and I went with her. We didn't say anything, but were there. That's what I wanted. But no matter, I got rid of the crazy before the visitors arrived.

Later my friend Greg, who is not a club member, did some investigating. He said he thought the name was familiar. Sure enough, he discovered that this self-same person has been ejected from a Birmingham poetry group, and from a church! His name is on the blacklist in the guard shack at Ski Lodge III, where he had been harrassing a hairdresser. So I was vindicated. The guy is known far and wide, and has been kicked out of better places than BSFC.

A post script to the whole affair came in the form of a postcard to Linda. It addresses questions to the club, and club members have supplied the answers:

Q. Does Charlotte have the right to throw me out of the club because she reacts hysterically and personally to a creative piece of writing submitted to ANVIL in letter form?

A. (from Julie) Yes. Charlotte can do anything she wants to.

Q. Can the club afford to lose membership dues because of Charlotte?

A. (from Linda) Yes. Especially since we made \$317 at the auction.

Q. Why does she act like a Mountain Brook Bitch?

A. (from Penny Frierson) Because she's been running around with me too long.

Q. Why does she react like an alcoholic?

A. (from me) Because I've been practicing.

Q. Why does she put on her Witch Hat to throw me out?

A. (from Valerie) Because she couldn't find her Nazi Storm Trooper Hat.

* * * * *

A postscript to this story from Charlotte: When this rather putrid thing happened, after the initial shock it got to be pretty funny. But now that I've written it up, I'm not so sure about it. It is difficult to convey the feeling of craziness without actually seeing the letters, and trying to comprehend the long, rambling, incoherent sentences, which - no matter what they were about - used words and phrases of a sexually evocative nature (driving, pulsing, throbbing, etc) over and over again.

And actually, it isn't a funny story at all, until the situation was resolved, and we could laugh and make up answers to the questions. It was scary and depressing, and it was a serious matter to me.

THE SCEPTICAL FEMINIST

Quotes from THE SCEPTICAL FEMINIST, by Janet Radcliffe Richards, Penguin, 1980.

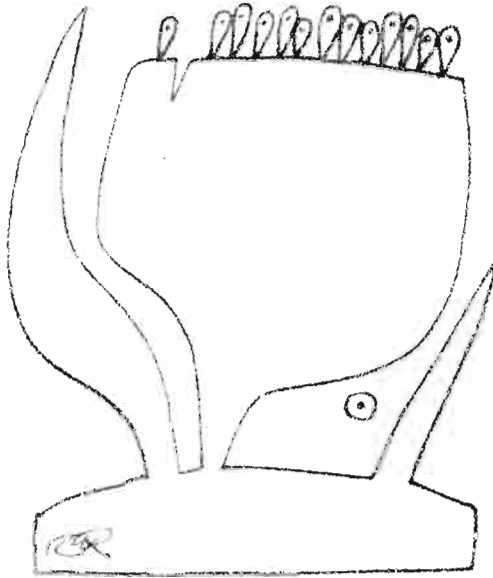
There is no mistake in the stress feminists place on the importance of sisterhood and personal experience. The only error comes when these perceptions are taken further than they will go, and allowed to slip into various shapes of unreason...

There is nothing wrong with women's retreating from men to find an atmosphere where they can better understand their own problems, but there is a great deal wrong if this good principle turns into a feeling that everything male ought to be rejected, and results in a suspicion of logic or science. Feminists can get nowhere without logic and science.

It is right to say that people's feelings are of overriding importance, but... disastrous

to... think that strong feelings are therefore the best guide to truth, because that makes it impossible to find the best ways to make people happy and protect them from suffering.

It is right to regard all women's experiences as important, and perhaps even to say that the most important experiences are those of the most oppressed and least articulate women. But to go to the extreme of saying that every woman's opinion about what should be done or how things should be explained is equally valuable is to hold the whole movement back; the women who do have special skills have to lose them in the communal voice, and if the least effective women are as much in public as the others the cause is done no good.



COMMENTS ON SELF- TRANSFORMATIONS

ROBYN GREENWELL (Australia): "Somehow I wouldn't have expected you to be the type of person to do a 'Self Transformations' course, Jean. I thought of you as the type who was quite able to accept the self you had (which of course includes a capacity for change and development). I would really like to see you write more on this subject. I'm always reading about these courses in extremely enthusiastic but utterly vague terms, and when someone I know actually does one all they can tell me is that it's hard to explain 'what goes on'. I for one am far too cynical to pay a large sum of money for something when no one can tell me what it is that I am buying.

"There was an interesting article a few weeks ago in the Sydney Morning Herald's Saturday Magazine about 'self growth' courses and therapies. Apparently some of them use quite aggressive tactics to get people to sign up.

"I was very amused to read that one of the courses offered, for a huge fee, to make you 'more spontaneous'. For years people have been criticizing me for my spontaneity! I have committed the social sins of laughing when I am amused and crying when I am sad, and have even been known to tell men when I want to go to bed with them! But teaching spontaneity!!!! The idea is so utterly absurd! And then in another sense, it's quite frightening. Does our society dehumanize people so far that adults have to take lessons to be able to simulate the behaviour patterns they were born with?" ((Yes, in many cases. -- JHW))

"Or perhaps the whole thing is a gigantic con. As you're probably gathered, Jean, I'm very cynical about this type of course, but I'd love to hear more about it. You seem quite happy with what you got for your money, so what exactly was it?" ((See my comments to Jack and Julie, and Gordon's remarks, for some hints. It's not easy to say 'exactly' what I got from the course, and I'm not prepared to try. -- JHW))

JACK HERMAN (Australia): "What was wrong with YOU that you needed Transformation?"

((I was dissatisfied and unhappy, but didn't know why. I knew from experience that in such a case, my thinking ends up going in circles and it is very helpful if someone can jolt me out of that circle and into new lines of thought. Once I can get a grasp on what IS wrong - WHY I'm not happy, I can work on ways to do something about it. -- JHW))

"My first caveat was with the use of 'The Law of Synchronicity'. Since there is no such thing, it can have no real relevance. I would have thought after your excursion into the Illuminati, you would have seen Synchronicity in the ridiculous light that all that material was cast.

"Your assumption that anger built up can only be spent in anger comes into conflict with classical theories of drama, which see a catharsis of emotion through pity and fear, the catharsis cleansing all the emotions. In interpersonal relationships, discussions should not be conducted in anger, but one should wait until one is calm so that matters can be resolved."

((I did not say that anger can only be spent in anger, just that it should be recognised for what it is, and expressed or released. Such release can be in many different forms. It need not be screaming at the person I'm angry with. I agree that discussions should not be conducted in anger. That is why I am keen to release my anger, so that I can then be calm. In my case, if I suppress the anger rather than expressing (releasing) it, it is likely to surface again when I am trying to resolve a matter, and be expressed at a time and in a way that is harmful.

One rather silly but quite effective way I have of expressing anger is to jump up and down on a cardboard carton, screaming loudly. My workmates think this is quite amusing, and I feel quite calm and relaxed afterwards. I guess that is a type of catharsis. -- JHW))

"Your exposition of the place of self and one's reality is incredibly strange: you suggest that the judgement of one's self is based in one's reality and that one can change one's reality to fit one's persona, or adjust one's persona in light of perceived changes in one's reality." ((Did I suggest that? I couldn't even follow it! -- JHW))

"But the reality is external to self and is not controllable by self." ((I didn't say I controlled external reality, just that I influence it. -- JHW))

"While there is some evidence for recovery and improvement in condition based on the placebo effect, I have seen no proof that mental condition (good vibes or whatever) can affect a rate of improvement." ((Improvement in what? There is plenty of evidence in medicine. -- JHW))

"How much did all this Transformation cost?" ((A\$325, or about \$5 an hour, a lot less than conventional counselling services! -- JHW))

GORDON LINGARD (Australia): "To a large extent, your thoughts on ST correlate to mine. I did the first two courses in early-mid 1984. Although I believed much of the metaphysics was rubbish, I thought the psychological model they gave, as a basis for many of the techniques and processes they did, was one of the most elegant theoretical models I have ever come across. It made so many diverse ideas and information come together.

"I might as well say a few words on what I felt about the course. The principle aim of ST is to provide a specially designed environment to help you free yourself from your own self-induced limitations, to become 'empowered', as they say, and live the life you choose.

"One of their main tenets is that many of the problems we have, had their roots in our very early childhood. As a child, our innocence in the world is traumatically shattered by any number of trivial incidents. Trivial at a mature adult's level, overwhelming in proportion to the young child. As a result, we develop defense mechanisms far out of proportion to what these incidents really require, and we keep them for the rest of our lives.

"We waste a lot of potential by pouring energy into maintaining these defensive systems, so a lot of the 'processes' done in the course are designed to defuse them. Just learning the particular types you use can rob them of their power. Throughout the course I was amazed to see the extent of the systems that everyone had developed, the depth to which they had limited, sometimes crippled, their lives and how blind they were to the operation of them.

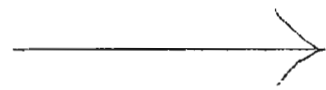
"During the course a nameless, relentless apprehension would build up as, more and more, I brought myself to bear on my own fears. When I at last broke through that barrier (i.e. I had at last made up my mind to do so), it was in a storm of emotion that was quite shattering, yet there were always people around to support and protect me. Afterwards I would feel incredibly exhilarated, as a lot of pent-up energy had been released. It was the same with everyone else.

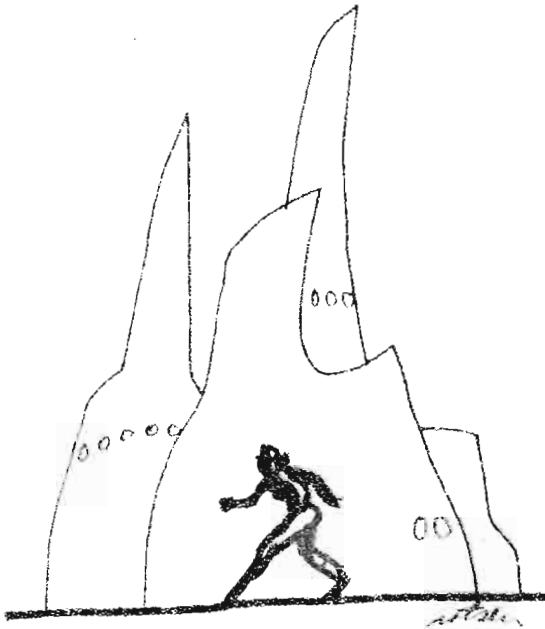
"I imagine that every time the barriers within are penetrated, they become more and more permeable until their grip on you is lost. Not all of the time was so explosive though. Often it was full of happiness and love, which is just as important.

"I haven't done anything with ST for over a year. Most of their more advanced courses deal with mostly metaphysical subject matter of which I have no interest. I have also noticed that many of the participants use the courses like a drug and have therefore missed the point by becoming addicted and losing some of their freedom. ST is well aware of this and tries to stop it, but I don't think they succeed.

"I learned many powerful concepts and gained a far deeper understanding of myself and I use this knowledge to help improve my life. Although I have a long way to go, it seems to be working very well."

((Thank you, Gordon, for putting that so well. -- JHW))





JULIE VAUX (Australia): "Frankly my first reaction on reading the material is that it's all too good to be true. Like unreal.

"Secondly I couldn't help thinking tough luck for all the working class people who can't afford courses like this when they're the ones with the worse stress. If you don't have money you suffer.

"Thirdly it's all very well dealing with internal problems but what about external problems? Learning how to meditate won't stop lousy jobs, or people raping, abusing etc you.

"It just sounds too good to believe. Achieving inner balance is a matter of movement as well as centring.

"I'm suspicious. Prove it: do you know many people who, say several months after doing the course, still feel the benefits? Do they encourage you to pay for more courses? Is the course authoritarian?

"As for increased creativity, well honestly what I really need the most is just simply some one to believe in me, some one to tell me, yes they believe and care, someone to say 'you are an artist - you can make it - you can do it - I believe you have talent and I'm not just saying that to shut you up'. I need a friend or more friends to tell me that - to chide me when I'm lazy - to reach out when I'm tired.

"I'll tell you what I don't need - apathy and mellowness and inertia and sloth.

"Would this course give me more friends? True friends, I mean; not mere social acquaintances.

"AGAINST MELLOW

"I am against 'mellow' as a concept. Why? Because I regard it as dangerously, fearfully closely akin to words such as mediocrity, average and even apathy.

"Consider what we associate 'mellow' with, dear readers -- a certain quality, not merely of relaxedness, but also of blandness, evenness, of things settling, like earth in a jar of water, to a level of what? Dullness? Monotony?

"I am not against balance. It is natural for things to reach a point of equilibrium as they change from one thing to another, be they atoms following the laws of quantum physics and dancing from one energy level to another, or more splendidly, mid-day or mid-night, when time seems to slow.

"Balance, not inertia, please note.

"It seems to me that mellow is horridly akin to that vice or state of mind and soul that the ancients described as Accidie or Sloth. This is a dread slowness that poisons the soul against pleasure, that slowly damps the fire of life and leads to world weariness. It is not the same thing as being centred or relaxed! Who feels this lack of liveliness?

"I am in favour of intensity! I am, however, far too exquisitely, painfully, aware, as of the sharpness of a blade, that the soul that touches fire can parabolically orbit the black hole of despair. Who was it who said, most wisely, that joy and sorrow are twain.

"If all we can achieve is mellow, how can we hope to hold and be upheld by ecstasy? Yes, ecstasy! An orbit rising into the light! Rise against inertia on wings of fire and air!

"The ancients believed there were four elements, or five if you include spirit: fire, air, earth and water. With feet earth bound, we must reach on the wind for the fire of the sun.

"Consider this with care.

"A final thought - how many people, yes including fans, do you hear speak of a lack of energy and motivation to do things, or fanzines for that matter? How many of us have the energy but not the skill or balance?

"We have to avoid 'mellow' and quest for our hearts. Don't be dazed by the noon light that gilds and burns. Don't sink into the mud. Reach for fire and glide on an even keel, on balanced wings, or at least try to learn to fly.

"Why be mellow yellow, fizzy like some sickening soft drink, a mixture of folly? Fight against mellow! Quest! Seek!

"It's okay to be angry sometimes! It's not neurotic to be intense! Touch the fire!"

((You're right in a way: it IS 'all too good to be true', in the sense that the course cannot and does not magically change anyone's life. Not everything they claim will happen to any one person, but I'm quite sure no one could take the course and NOT benefit. Yes, it's tough luck for those who can't afford such courses (though they do have 'scholarships'), but that is true for almost anything you can think of, and why should I (or you) deprive myself of something just because other people can't afford it? Am I supposed to be unhappy just because other people are unhappy? That strikes me as a silly and self-defeating form of 'solidarity'.

((While solving my internal problems won't stop rapists, thieves, etc, it really is quite amazing how much one's attitude to life affects what happens to one. Bitter, suspicious, unhappy people seem to collect bad things that happen to them, which 'prove' that they are correct in being bitter, suspicious, etc. While happy, relaxed, (pardon me, 'mellow') people tend to have mostly good things happen to them. Why? I don't know, but it's true. And I know that in my own case, when I changed from having a negative approach to life, to having a positive approach (about 15 years ago), life started treating me differently. Sound silly? Yes. But it's true. (And if someone had told me beforehand that it would be true, I would have laughed in their face.) Yes, Julie, learning how to meditate DOES help stop people abusing you. It's not a magic cure, but it helps.

((When you learn to love yourself, you won't need someone else telling you they believe in you and care about you -- but when you love yourself, these things will happen. That's probably the most important thing a course like this can do for anyone. Yes, I believe doing a course like this will give me more friends - perhaps other people on the course, perhaps not. The main thing, Julie, is that when you (or I) quit trying to win friends, and just feel good about ourselves, people come to us. If someone feels good, they feel good to be around.

((Yes, I know several people who, up to 3 years after taking the course, still feel the benefits. No, the course is not authoritarian, and you do not have to believe a word of it; it still works. Yes, they do encourage you to sign up for more courses, but they aren't particularly pushy (I get an envelope a week from them, telling all about what's happening, but no one phones or hassles me).

((As for your thoughts about mellow and related matters, to me there is a difference in WASTED emotional energy (being upset about things, for example) and CONSTRUCTIVE emotional energy (enthusiasm about art, work, people, any

project). You mention this yourself in A second letter: "INTensity of experience I enjoy, but not UNNECESSARY tension". Yes! That's the exact difference!

((One very important thing a course like this, and meditation, can do is help one quit wasting energy, so one has more energy to spend in positive ways. To me, being 'mellow' means letting the stuff we can't do anything about roll by without upsetting us; we can still work to overcome injustice, but without being so emotionally upset (and people are more likely to listen, I think). Reducing stress isn't the same thing as becoming lazy. For example, at work I often have several deadlines at once, and people interrupting me all the time. Sometimes I get upset at all this and chase everyone away so I can get some work done, but if I'm tense it takes a long time to concentrate. But some days the world can seem to be collapsing about my ears, and I'm relaxed and not worried about it, and I cope with everything and get the work done in plenty of time. If I could be 'mellow' like that all the time, think how much I would get done!

((May I recommend a book that explains what I'm talking about? It claims rather more for the techniques than I can accept right now, but it does explain very well the idea of wasted emotional energy vs positive emotional energy, and goes to great lengths to assure the reader than you don't have to change your lifestyle at all - you just feel better about yourself and life. It's called "Handbook to Higher Consciousness" by Ken Keyes, Jr; published by Living Love Publications, Oregon.

((You are quite right to be suspicious about a course like this, and I always am too. In this case, I knew people (Gordon Lingard and Joy Window) who'd done the course, and thought it was great, so I felt it would not be a waste of money. Also, I had done some of the things (like meditation) before, and knew they had done me a lot of good, but I felt I needed to learn some new things. -- JHW))



A LETTER FROM

TARAL

Taking fandom too seriously is something a lot of fans do. I did, Ted White does, Richard Bergeron does. Even people who say they don't probably do. It is, after all, a complete little world in which many people are totally absorbed.

I was relatively unhappy about a lot I saw in fandom, but didn't have anything else to turn to, at least that wasn't in some way bent to fandom's service. I had my art, for instance, but it had no place of publication other than fandom.

I'm turning away from fandom, bit by bit, and don't care an awful lot about its issues and institutions at the moment. So what if TAFF or the WorldCon go up in smoke? If fans created them once, they can create them again, and if they don't then they can't want them very much.

But if you are going to put a lot of time and effort into a thing - a major part of your life in other words - you might as well take it seriously. How much satisfaction is there in doing things by half-measure?

A lot of the newer fans feel differently about it, I've noticed. Their view seems to be that fandom is another game, like D&D or watching TV, that you apportion bits of time to as you fancy. The result is sloppily produced fanzines with little of interest or that's well written. When someone like Ted complains, because he thought fandom was important enough to spend a major amount of time on, the newer fans wonder what he's talking about. Isn't fandom clearly a trivial pastime? Does this man really expect us to go to all that extra trouble for no good reason?

To a large extent I side with Ted about this. I want to publish the best zine I can, short of slick paper and typesetting, just as I like to draw the best I can, and wouldn't publish anything less. (Well, to be more accurate, I have published plenty of zines that are less than my best, but I'm always unhappy about it.)

I think too, when Ted White was more the average fan than he is today, fandom did offer a much more interesting forum for discussion and creativity than it does now. People who take things seriously occasionally justify their interest by doing difficult and inspiring things. Most fans wouldn't be any the worse off if Richard Bergeron, Dick Eney, Bjo Trimble, or Donald Wolheim hadn't taken fandom seriously.

They would still enjoy themselves in their own circles of acquaintances and friends. But in some sense, fandom itself would be diminished without the WAis, the Fancyclopedia, artshows, or the WorldCon.

Feuds are a pain in the neck, and the tragedy of it is that they're mostly unnecessary. They seem to come from an adversary attitude that perhaps comes from the competitiveness that underlies much of fandom. You can't admit you were wrong, so the other guy must be totally wrong. He insulted me, so I'm justified now in any tactics I care to use against him. He must be either driven out of fandom or totally humiliated. That seems to be the progression in a feud.

I can't say that I'm innocent of the same thought processes - it took a lot of hard thinking about myself to figure out why I often did things I later regretted, and what I came up with was basically that I lacked the desire to deal with people peacefully, and that I felt threatened by them one way or another.

No one ever overcomes all their fears or aggression, but a lot can be accomplished, and I've found the effort productive in many ways - keeping down stress, not the least of them. But you can also reach people easier if you aren't trying to fix all the fault on them and refrain from insulting them. You can still be quite clear about your disagreements or grievances; but without alienating the person out of hand, you might have a chance to work something out.

Working something out seems frequently to be the last thing two fans feuding want. Some fans even thrive on feuding, feeling that a victory puts them a bit further up the ladder of BNFdom. And occasionally there are real stakes involved, and the feuders are basically trying to get bigger slices of the pie. (One of the reasons why I don't like organization in fandom, it makes pies to cut up and fight over.)

The emotional insensibility, the increasing organization, and the growing mediocrity of fandom are the principle reasons I've grown apart from it. I still have a lot of ties, and various things I mean to do in fandom, but the days since fandom was a way of life for me are over forever. I rather think I'll never be through with it, but it may be that my fanac hasn't reached its low point yet. I've a number of interests to pursue which might well take me in a totally different direction.

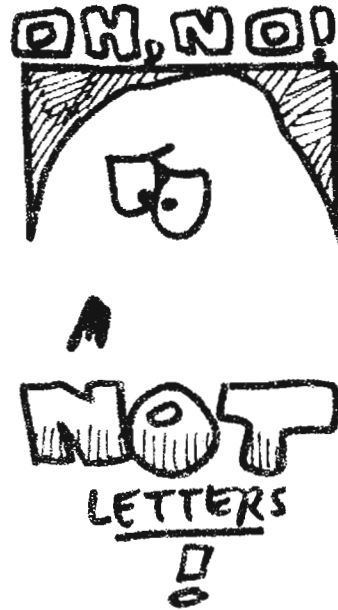
MATTER & ANTI-MATTER

JOAN DICK... "I was interested in what you had to say about expressing anger. Anger is an emotion, and perhaps for far too long I have been keeping my emotions bottled up. Like a pressure cooker. Something that becomes highly dangerous when it blows its top, but can be beneficial when the pressure is allowed to slowly bleed off. For the last four years I have been relieving my pressure valve. I can understand why it could be dangerous to others if someone is not allowed to express their anger.

"I definitely have been conditioned by 'right' and 'wrong', 'should' and 'should not'. But over the last few months, I have begun to have second thoughts about a lot of things. Perhaps my family may not be totally happy about my new thoughts. Because one idea, accepted with great enthusiasm, is that mothers are not lackies to their children. They are PEOPLE - WOMEN - human beings with rights. Not doormats. Now I'm wondering about all those people who write to you. How do they think about and act towards their mothers... It's funny, but people accept new ways of thinking and living, but some of them become resentful when their parents show signs of doing the same thing."

((I was fascinated by your letter, Joan, because I know so many people who feel their mothers 'won't let them go' or make demands upon them - something my mother has never done to my sister and me - but I've never heard the mothers' side of the story. No doubt there are as many mothers whose children won't let them go. My own mother was quite relieved when both my sister and I announced that there would be no grandchildren, so she'd never be called upon to babysit!

((I have what I consider a friendly but distant relationship with my parents, by mutual agreement. We would help each other out if needed, but we don't make demands on each other, or have expectations about what the other 'ought' to do. I realised some years ago, when I began making friends in my parents' age group, that I act towards my parents much as I do towards anyone else in similar circumstances. I feel no particular 'duty' towards my parents, nor do I think they have any 'duty' towards me. The fact that none of us are exactly poor helps, of course. -- JHW))



BUCK COULSON... "People pay far too much attention to what their associates expect of them. You don't make your mark by following other people's expectations. Of course, you don't make it by being yourself, either, but it's more fun that way... Incidentally, I've never believed that anyone else's ways are as valid as mine, but I have no missionary spirit; if they want to do things in an inferior manner, that's their affair."

LARRY DUNNING... "Can you be in love but not be a friend to the person you are in love with? To me friendship is something you can only give to other people, and if you're lucky they might give some of theirs to you; but the important thing is your friendship to them. As I see it, it means respecting them for being who they are and in celebrating their identity with them."

GARTH SPENCER... "I've got a pretty clear idea that lots of men - and some women - honestly think love has to be earned, or bought. I always thought love was something you won, and I wasn't allowed to know the rules of the game."

MARGARET HALL... "Monogamy is a way of living that suits me. I still have friends of both sexes, but the relationship with them is not as deep or committed as the relationship with my husband - it never was even before I was married. It's not something that has been changed by my marriage; I committed myself to Graham BECAUSE I had a deeper relationship with him than I'd ever had before with anyone else.

"I personally can only cope with a few very close relationships and these are taken up by my husband and children. I thought long and hard before getting married, and took the marriage vows in all seriousness, meaning to keep them. Dammit, if I hadn't intended to keep them, I wouldn't have made them; I'd have been honest and just lived with Graham while it suited me.

"I am greatly annoyed by people who marry dishonestly, making vows that they know they have no intention of keeping. 'Open' marriages are a contradiction in terms. I'm not saying that freer arrangements are wrong - just that, if that is what is wanted, then that must be the arrangement from the start. That way no one gets hurt (hopefully)."

((But surely, Margaret, if both people know - and agree - that the arrangement is to be 'open', and make suitable vows (rather than the conventionally exclusive ones), there is no dishonesty and no contradiction. Bernadette Bosky, in various apas, explains this point of view quite eloquently. It may not be a relationship that you would want to call 'marriage', but that is a separate issue. After all, it's only recently become acceptable for married women to have male friends (in fact, many women even in Western society today are not 'allowed' by their husbands to do so). In that respect, someone from 100 years ago - and some people today - might find YOUR marriage shockingly - or at least dangerously - 'open'! -- JHW))

DEBI KEAN... "I notice that a great many American authors appear to see altruism as a filthy word. I have the impression that Ayn Rand and her objectivism is more mainstream in the USA than she would have thought. When I encountered objectivism 2 years back, it was totally new to me, and I am afraid I DON'T accept its tenets - it would be very dishonest to claim I do - but I feel objectivist thought is a basic part of the American culture. Am I right? Or am I just indulging my habit of categorising?

"This was prompted by your review of 'City of Sorcery' and Vanessa. As described, the pointed MZB makes with Vanessa is a valid thing, but IS altruism a bad thing? Is self-interest

really as beneficial to others, as to the individual who lives by it?"

((I'll leave it to those Americans who live in America to speculate on how 'basic' objectivism is to American culture. As for altruism, I think it is a matter of distinguishing between what people do, and why they do it. MZB's point, with which I agree, is that self-sacrifice out of a sense of duty is harmful to the individual, not that unselfishly helping others is wrong. But also one can sincerely believe one is 'helping' someone else, when one is actually doing just the opposite. Sometimes what a person needs most is to learn to make her own decisions, and then carry them out. Too much 'help' can keep a person dependent on the helper, something which can happen whether it's an individual, a private group, or the State doing the helping. Which is not to suggest that welfare payments should be cut off, or that you shouldn't do nice things for your friends (or even for people you don't know), just that it's a complex topic too often treated as if it were simplistic.

((Also, as we all know, many people dominate other people in the guise of 'doing what's best for you'. The dominating person may genuinely believe he or she is acting out of unselfish (altruistic) motives, or s/he may know perfectly well s/he's pushing the other around. Parents, for example, often keep their children emotionally, if not financially, dependent long after they should be set free.

((Acting out of self-interest can also be either a good or bad thing, depending on a whole lot of factors. Ayn Rand's characters always seemed to me to carry self-interest too far towards not caring about anyone else's welfare at all, but this needn't be the case. And to me, helping someone else because you want to, rather than because you feel a duty to do so, is preferable. The fact that my motivation may be my own self-interest doesn't make the action morally less acceptable. It is far too easy for even well-meaning people to attempt to use emotional blackmail on each other, especially if they believe they have 'unselfishly' done something. If you know you've done something out of your own self-interest, you also should know the other person has no obligations toward you for what you did. -- JHW))

SUE THOMASON... "To all intents and purposes, I have 'disappeared into' a monogamous relationship, though it's not quite as conventional as marriage. I wouldn't assume that other people ought to live this way - it's not even the ideal life pattern I would choose, but I think it's the best I can do at the moment.

"I now sleep with Rory (when I can), but I am not 'in love' with him, and don't feel much specifically sexual/passionate attraction to him. This doesn't mean that the physical side of our relationship isn't important to me (it is - very) or that I don't enjoy it (I do - a lot). I'd like to settle down with Rory because he's someone I could share my life with happily at close range. However, I'm not sure what I feel for him is properly 'love' in its most altruistic definitions. I certainly want him to be happy, but I specifically want him to be happy WITH ME, if possible. I doubt whether his welfare is truly more important to me than my own. And I want him around because I enjoy being with him, not because I think it makes him happy to be with me. I am forced to conclude that my feeling for him is almost entirely selfish and self-centred, and based on my desire (if not need) to be loved, rather than to love.

"At least with Rory I'm consistent. There are other people, my real friends, whom I feel very close to, and I don't think there's one of them I haven't felt sexual desire for at one time or another. However, it doesn't usually seem to last for long, and as I am evidently not able to handle 'casual' sexual contact, and (more importantly) as far as I know my friends do not reciprocate my feelings, it seems positively dangerous to attempt to do much more than acknowledge them to myself (and usually to Rory). Oddly enough, I don't think I'd feel 'unfaithful' to him if I did make love with someone else, but I certainly would feel unfaithful if I felt I'd done something that had to be concealed from him.

"Thus my theoretical problem with non-monogamous relationships has always been one of how I could be honest, truthful and intimate with more than one person, without making any of the other people involved feel left out, or second best, or jealous. I think that would mean they would all have to be very secure, well-balanced people - probably much more secure and well-balanced than I am. Somehow this doesn't seem fair.

"I do feel my life would be greatly impoverished without my friends, the people whom I love. And I suspect that the reason I haven't slept with my friends is that I seem to find getting into an overtly sexual relationship a very difficult and intimidating thing to do. Sex

is such an incredibly powerful thing, particularly when it isn't just a pleasant physical sensation, but an affirmation of trust and an outward sign of an intense emotional attraction. I can't let myself be that vulnerable to very many people. In a peculiar way, it's because my friends ARE very important to me that I haven't found it easy to sleep with them.

ERIC MAYER... "I think that a long term relationship with one person is 'better' not in a moral sense or in the sense that it is preferable for everyone, but intrinsically.

"It is 'better' for the reason that reading the whole book is 'better' than reading only the first chapter; 'better' in the way that an entire symphony, with all its development and orchestration, is 'better' than the symphony's major theme sounded alone on a piano.

"The idea that there must be something boring and limiting about loving one person throughout one's life simply does not take into account the complexity of human beings. You cannot know as much of a person in one year as in five, or in five as much as in twenty. As Adrienne points out, people change -- or rather they accentuate different aspects of themselves, of the seemingly infinite possibilities we each possess -- throughout their lives. It is a much richer experience, to my way of thinking, to know one person deeply, throughout a life, than to know a variety of people less deeply.

"Of course, I'm stating an ideal. More times than not, such a relationship isn't possible. Nor is it necessarily to everyone's taste. But I am bothered by the implicit suggestion, in Adrienne's article, that those who prefer a single relationship are somehow shortchanging themselves, and I would argue just the reverse. Twice she mentions 'disappearing' into a marriage. Indeed, people can disappear into social conventions associated with marriage, but that is the fault of the social conventions rather than the relationship itself.

"Then too, one may in fact 'disappear' from the perspective of others, while living a much fuller life oneself. As you know, Kathy and I have two children, aged 2 and 4. I never was very sociable before they came along, but if I had been, I would've had to disappear for 2 or 3 years for each child because raising them is a full time job. But it is also an invaluable experience, for me.

"Like most learning experiences, it can be frustrating and painful at times. Oddly, I've done more writing in the last few years than at any time in my life, much more than I did when I was at college with endless time on my hands.

Certainly marriage, and even children, is not the end of everything, as some would have it.

"I would even argue that a stable, long term relationship frees you to expend energy on things other than finding a relationship -- whether long term or not -- something most people seem to want.

"As to the question of what is 'love' -- well, 'love' is a word. A troublesome word too, in that it doesn't necessarily mean anything.

"Adrienne aptly talks about how a bad relationship might be prolonged because the people believe they are in 'love'. It's a problem, because we have invented this vague word 'love', that when we invoke it we feel it actually signifies the existence of something other than the relationship itself.

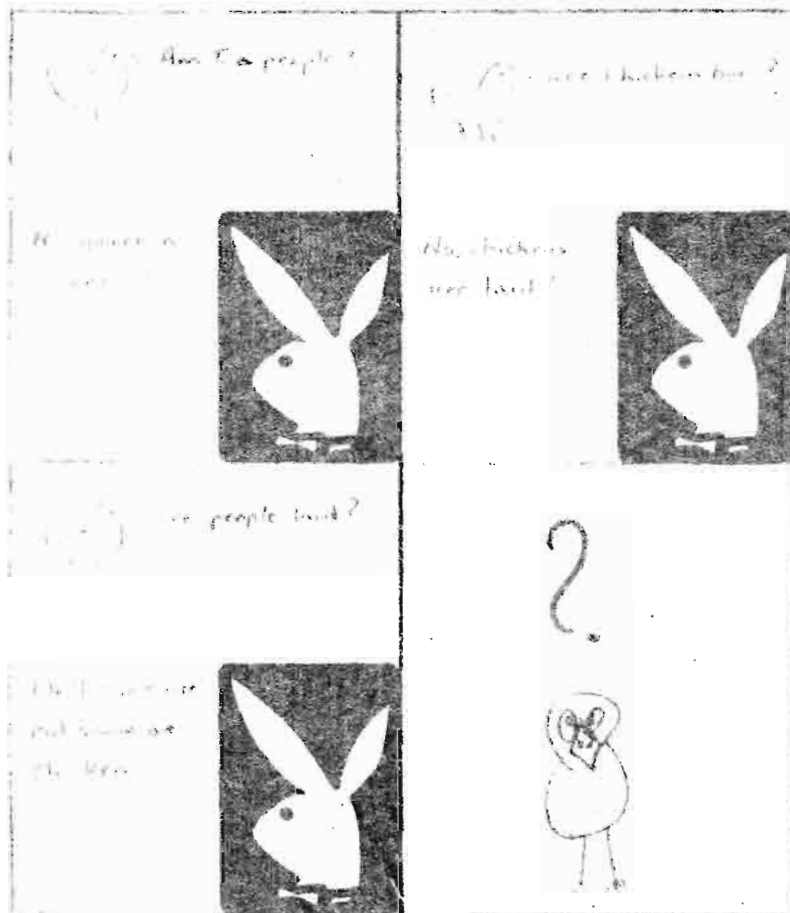
"At one point two people are in love. What they mean is they have a good relationship. Later the relationship deteriorates, but they still insist they are in love. The word has

taken on a life of its own. Or, conversely, people change, their relationship alters, their feelings change, they may decide, wrongly, that they are no longer in 'love' because their circumstances are different than they were when the word was first invoked.

"Maybe this is a reason I am wary of intellectual discussion. Words are treacherous and we all tend to use them differently. Usually, we agree on the meanings of words to the extent that we can interreact fairly smoothly in everyday life, but when we really try to dissect how each of us uses the language, it becomes difficult.

"Back to Adrienne's article. I do agree that it is wrong for a person to espouse one philosophy while actually holding another. However, as to people holding different views on relationships throughout their lives... is that surprising? Or dishonest? People do change."

The Rabbit's Progress
by
Lyn McConchie



BOOK REVIEWS

BY JEAN WEBER

THE WANDERGROUND, by Sally Miller Gearhart, The Women's Press, c. 1979.

Although billed as 'science fiction', this is a feminist fantasy that is likely to either delight or enrage most readers. It delighted me, but not because I took it as either a serious extrapolation from the present day or a suggestion of a possible future. Nor did I consider it 'utopian', as the cover blurb bills it. If I'd read it as any of those, I doubt I would have liked it, much less thought it well written.

This book starts from the presumption that the Earth itself has rebelled against the domination of men (meaning male humans), and does not permit technology to function outside the cities. Some men (the 'Gentles') live in the countryside, but in harmony with nature. Some women live in the cities, still dominated by male ways; other women live there as 'underground agents' for a new women's culture developing in the hill country.

It is the women's communities in the Wanderground upon which this book focuses. These women are developing powers of telepathy, telekinesis, and other functions of the mind. Thus they are able to communicate and to do many things without machines and technology. Their society is the 'consciousness-raising' group on a much larger scale. As the story develops, we visit several communities and catch glimpses of their lives, as well as glimpses of life in the city; the latter will be very familiar to the residents of say London or New York, but may not strike quite such a chord with Australians, even those in Sydney or Melbourne.

There are many delightful touches in this book that some readers may find silly. For example, the women's relationship to cats, or the chaotic living arrangements of some members of the community (any woman - or man - who is fed up with having other people trying to coerce them into being neat will love the image of some of the elder women's 'nests'). But the basic message is one of love, and has roots in those 'primitive' cultures which communicate with the spirits of plants and animals.

The plot involves the discovery that some men appear to be regaining the ability to use technology outside the cities, thus endangering the refugees. What is causing this, and what can be done about it? Shall the hill women cooperate with the 'Gentles'? Not everyone agrees.

This book reminded me of Suzy McKee Charnas' WALK TO THE END OF THE WORLD and MOTHERLINES, in its basic premise of a separate women's culture, which is finding new ways to live (and even reproduce) without men. Gearhart's book, however, is more sympathetic toward men, while still giving the impression that we'd all be better off without them. As a vision of a loving lesbian separatist future (but where not everyone agrees - a feature of 'utopias' I simply cannot swallow, no matter what other premises there may be), it is well done. I don't believe that men are the enemy, or that lesbian separatism can save (what's worth saving of) the world, but I thoroughly enjoyed this book anyway.



DIADEM FROM THE STARS, by Jo Clayton, Daw, 1977; and its sequels, LAMARCHOS (1978) & STAR HUNTERS (1980).

Also in the series are IRSUD, MAEVE, THE NOWHERE HUNT, GHOSTHUNT, THE SNARES OF IBEX (may be more by now for all I know). Not bad for a fantasy series; Clayton writes well and is improving. Strong female lead (Aleytys), who generally does things her way. She is telepathic, empathic, telekinetic (all that ESP stuff). In the first book we meet her as a teenager in a feudal environment on a backwater planet, where she suffers not only from being female but also from being different - her mother was an outsider, who abandoned her when she was young. She leaves her adoptive clan and sets off to search for her mother.

Meanwhile, a thief crashes on her planet, and his booty - the "diadem", a crown-like living electronic device which gives its wearer unusual powers - comes to possess Aleytys. Now she must also learn to control those powers. As the series unfolds, she leaves her home planet and searches among the stars for her mother's homeworld, and for the secret of the diadem - all the while pursued by the diadem's previous owners.

MOONSCATTER and MOONGATHER, by Jo Clayton, Daw, 1982, 1983.

CHANGER'S MOON is, I believe, the third volume in this trilogy, another fine "sword & sorcery" fantasy with a strong female lead. Serroi is a "misborn" of a nomadic tribe, doomed to be killed in childhood. She is taken by a powerful sorcerer, under whose teaching her mental powers are developed. Later he casts her out, and she seeks out the valley of runaway women and girls, among whom she learns the martial arts. Little does she know that she is the pawn in a worldwide game of power between sorcerers.

In the second book she travels with a high-ranking male she has rescued. He's neither stupid or incompetent, but he is used to wielding power; it doesn't help him much with her, since she's more skilled in coping with the circumstances they find themselves in.

SHORT VIEWS

WILDRAITH'S LAST BATTLE, by Phyllis Ann Karr (illustrated by Wendy Adrian Schultz), Ace, 1982.

Quality fantasy, despite the "sword & sorcery" aspects. Excellent philosophical points about loyalty, love and hate, revenge and punishment. Strong female characters.

DRAGONS OF LIGHT and DRAGONS OF DARKNESS, edited by Orson Scott Card, Ace, 1980, 1981, illustrated.

Some of the best, and most varied, fantasy I've read on an otherwise rather overworked subject: dragons. Here the term "dragon" is very loosely interpreted. Excellent stories, by both "big names" and newcomers.

DREAMING THE DARK: MAGIC, SEX & POLITICS, by Starhawk, Beacon, 1982.

A feminist pagan's view of using our "power-within" to replace a tradition of

"power-over" others to help build a better world, without exploiting nature or others, and without denying our sexuality. Included are tools for building nonauthoritarian group structures, and suggestions for activism.

THE SCEPTICAL FEMINIST: A PHILOSOPHICAL ENQUIRY, by Janet Radcliffe Richards, Penguin, 1980.

Very readable philosophical analysis of many commonly-held feminist views (and some anti-feminist ones). Richards agrees with most feminist ideas but points out that supporters often argue either weak or wrong reasons for their demands, even though those demands may be quite correct; Richards presents what she considers logically supportable reasons for these views. She also does a superb hatchet job on some of the opposition, for example on the topic of "femininity". (A quote from the book is given on page 6 of this zine.)

THE SENTIMENTAL AGENTS, by Doris Lessing, Random House, 1983.

The fifth volume of the sequence CANOPUS IN ARGOS: ARCHIVES. Tedious at times, this book has many delightful moments. The NY Times Book Review calls it "a dissection of the political illusions of our own terrestrial 20th century - and a parable about how language is debased when used as a political instrument". It certainly is that.

CHANUR'S VENTURE, by C.J. Cherryh, Daw, 1984.

Daw should be chastised severely for splitting this novel into two books - and not warning the reader anywhere on the covers. (I should have been more suspicious at the large typeface used.) The second half will be called CHANUR'S REVENGE.

That sneakiness (no fault of the author's, I'm sure) aside, this is an enjoyable, if somewhat lightweight, sequel to PRIDE OF CHANUR. The human Tully is back, inadvertently causing deep trouble for Pyanfar Chanur and her clan. Inter-racial tensions run high, and there's action aplenty. Good reading, but you might wait to get the second volume before starting.

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This fanzine is available for contributions, letters of comment, artwork, interesting clippings, uncanceled US, UK or Australian postage stamps, arranged trades, editorial whim, or A\$1.50 or equivalent per issue (air mail extra). I prefer some sort of personal response.

CONTENTS

The Rubbish Bin (Editorial), by Jean Weber.....	1
New Zealand: Godzone Country, by Lyn McConchie.....	3
Sexual Perversion in the BSFC, by Charlotte Proctor.....	5
The Sceptical Feminist, quotes from Janet Richards.....	6
Comments on Self-Transformations (letters).....	7
A Letter From Taral.....	11
Natter and Anti-Natter (letters).....	12
The Rabbit's Progress, by Lyn McConchie.....	15
Book Reviews, by Jean Weber.....	16

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