

Weber Woman's Wrevenge

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sisterhood
is
strength

That's easy
for her to say
she's 7ft tall



I USED TO BE A PAGAN BUT NOW I'M JUST ME



by Joy Window

It's hard to describe what goes on at a Self-Transformation class without sounding all white-lighty or like you've been taken over by the "Moonies" or someone. I was attracted by the idea of learning meditation, which I had often wanted to learn. However, meditation by itself is not enough. You have to know how to deal with the stuff that comes up when you get in touch with your unconsciousness, and that is the tricky bit.

After I had been blown out of my mind by the basic workshop, I intended to rest on my laurels, as it were, feeling pretty smug about the whole thing. Then the problems I was working on indicated I should do the next workshop, as it was particularly pertinent. That weekend was also eye-opening.

It's distressing to talk to people about what you see as the advantages of a self-analysis program like this, and then have them turn on you as though you have been brainwashed. This has happened a couple of times, and I can only conclude that the violence of these people's reactions comes from fear of being brainwashed themselves.

The Self-Transformation approach is very much like this: "we think we have developed this pretty good system for helping people to help themselves, that is the 99% of people who are not mentally disturbed but just get depressed every now and then, or feel they are missing something in their lives and want to find out what it is. Our system is based on eastern meditation and western psychology (using gestalt, Jung, bioenergetics, Carl Roger's person-centred approach and anything else they might think appropriate at the time -- certainly not inflexible) and helps identify and change, if it is wished, the negative behaviour patterns which run us around. Try them and see if they work for you." They sure do.

I can't easily summarize the enormous amount of information I am putting into practice. It's made me less paranoid and more trusting of people. I can see the paranoia and fear in everyone else, and take steps to minimize it. One of the main things I discovered is that it's possible, indeed natural, to have so-called peak (or mystical) experiences without any associated belief system, e.g. while travelling through Ireland, the belief system on which these experiences were hung was the neo-pagan world view, which is okay, but one should not limit oneself to the limitations of that belief system. In other places, Christian, Buddhist, etc labels are used, but one can, and I did, have them "secularly", especially at the weekend

workshop which the course culminates in. Talk about self-induced visions of the Universe!

To start from the beginning, Reena at work started the ball rolling, then told Gordon about it. Both of them were very quiet about it; in fact I wasn't really aware of Gordon doing it until the end of the weekend workshop. One would have to be really dense to miss the glowing energy bundles which were walking around. Although intrigued, and slightly jealous of the obviously wonderful benefits of "unblocking", I was very defensive, being very distrustful of anything vaguely resembling "therapy".

Gordon however pointed out that I had said myself that I could be improving things (if only I knew how), and that I didn't consider my life perfect, that I had problems which I should face and could overcome -- which I had to agree with. I had everything a person could want -- a good relationship, friends, job, home, stability, etc; but I still considered something was missing, and the fact that I couldn't figure it out caused me great depression at times. I wanted to learn how to stop flaying myself.

Going to the introductory lecture was an effort -- I postponed it right to the last minute, then almost didn't make it through the door through a sudden burst of fear and crying. Pulling myself together, I wondered what was making me so afraid -- I had to face it. I walked out afterwards in a turmoil -- the vibes were incredible. Why should I be afraid of people who had obviously taken a good hard look at themselves, and instead of finding something horrible had found something fantastic and beautiful. With much trepidation, I signed up.

I discovered many things, as each of us individually did. They were not always the same things, but our common humanity was enough for a lot of similarities to crop up. I discovered the thing they had looked at and found fantastic was my own Self, both conscious and unconscious and that which transcends both. Getting a glimpse of that was mind-blowing, the most profound experience of my life. I discovered the missing ingredient to my life was my lack of 100% participation in what is going on right now around me and in me, and my cutting off of so many things and people through unnecessary fear.

It all seems so obvious now, but needed to be pointed out very forcefully to most of us to get past the games we play to stop ourselves seeing. Most of these games were set up in early childhood as defence

mechanisms when we didn't know any better. Their appropriateness no longer exists, but they still run us around. Again the limitations of belief systems -- we are much bigger than our belief systems, and identifying exclusively with them limits us from being what we truly can be. I cannot put an explanation on a lot of the things that happened on the weekend, but I cannot deny my experience which was incredibly beautiful.

I subsequently took another workshop with the Transformations group, this time called "The Experience of Spontaneous Feeling". The courses are experiential, with a theoretical model to help you remember why things are happening from a psychology point of view. The general idea is that we learn to suppress our true feelings as a defence mechanism when very young, and even not so young, but this suppression causes not just the obvious problems but stops us when we really do want to feel and let ourselves go. The negative stuff becomes an unconscious habit, and armouring, which prevents us from really relating to people and the world in such a way that our life is always meaningful.

For about a week after the workshop, I was experiencing feelings so intensely that I felt I would never be bored again! (After these workshops, you really do feel as though you are living your life to its absolute maximum in joy and meaningfulness -- and if for that short time, why not longer, if one continues to put into practice what one learns -- this is what I am finding even now.)

Having zapped myself out of my tiny brain on this one (the people at work in the meantime wondering why I am glowing all over the place, yet getting very defensive when I explain -- seems there is an inherent distrust of happiness and fulfillment!); I thought to rest on my laurels again. But Gordon decided it was time for him to have another bash, and enrolled in "The Experience of Personal Power", which I am doing as well. It is a great challenge to do a course with him, as I've noticed I reserve certain parts of my personality for different people -- and to expose these to world view is not fearful, but incredibly relaxing. It takes too much energy to hold up the shield, especially when you aren't aware that you have one.

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WOMEN PLAY POWER GAMES TOO

by Kevin McCaw

One day you're working late at night on the computer editing your next issue of your fanzine when in walks a stunning lady who is looking for her brother (also a member of the computer club). You tell her he's not there and go back to your editing, ignoring her.

Half an hour later she comes back, as she still hasn't found him. She decides to wait there awhile in case he arrives. You get to talking to her and after awhile realise that you've never gotten on with anyone so well. By the time her brother turns up 3 hours later, you are completely lost (but don't yet know it).

Over the next month a courtship ensues and you become very good friends (having really fallen). Meetings are always arranged to suit her timetable. You spend a whole day each week searching for some little gift to give her the next time you meet. You discuss interesting things with her, like her girlfriends' torrid lives and their changing boyfriends, her work, her course and youth work.

Having fallen very much in love while she still remains aloof, she one day breaks you down to confess that you love her very much. She says that it's all right and that she loves you too. But you're going to have to change your religion, and learn Greek, and do what her parents wish, and if they disagree to you, you will have to disappear, or if she finds someone else she likes better then you'll step out of the way. In fact, you offer to do all this because she keeps dropping hints that if you don't meet her high standards then you couldn't be right for her, and perhaps we ought to stop meeting, or she constantly hints at every meeting that this is the last time you will ever see her. She likes to tell you how jealous she is making her girlfriends by telling them about you.

Finally, she invites you to her parents' house one Saturday (they mustn't know that you're more than just a friend). You think, "At last! She really does care for me!"

She has invited you there to tell you that's it. You really won't be seeing her ever again. You love her so much that you are even willing to accept the fact that she now does not want you.

You remember back to the times when she asked you, "What have you got to offer me?" You've already given her all you have to give, so your only answer can be, "I have only myself to offer, and my love." She asks you, "Nothing else?"

I spent months trying to do all I could to keep her approval, but I was not able to change enough to become the man which she wanted.

She discarded me without any regret or qualms. She took with her a whole piece of my life that she could keep with her always. All the poems and letters and gifts that I had written or made for her.

I had one letter from her. A letter that said in fairly nice language, "I don't want you -- goodbye and thanks." That letter was all I had.

I had been a passing trinket to display before her girlfriends.

Men play power games. But women play power games too -- much nastier games.

I don't feel guilt anymore when I read tales such as Paula Johanson's. I used to feel guilt for being a man -- for being even a little similar to those types of men. I don't any longer. I can now understand how some men would be like that. They're being human.

DIARY NOTES

by Jean Weber



The Christmas-New Year holiday was quiet and pleasant this year. I had no difficulty getting leave for the 2 days of 'work' during that week, but Eric couldn't arrange time off. So he came down to my place on Saturday (Christmas Eve) and we both drove back to his place on Tuesday (he had to work Wednesday as well), where I stayed until I had to go home (the following Monday).

Christmas in Australia is typically either stinking hot or pouring down rain. This year was a bit of both. Christmas Eve and Christmas day were very hot and still; late on Boxing Day (26 December) it rained, a well timed event since Tuesday then was fairly pleasant for driving. The rest of the week was mostly rainy and rather chilly. Since I had intended to spend the time printing the January issue of Wrevenge, this was fairly welcome weather. If I'd been planning on basking in the sun, going to the beach, or even indulging in a camping trip, I would have been most disappointed. Perhaps, in some ways, I do lead a charmed life.

Anyway, we mostly read books and apahacked over the holiday, a pleasant occupation for two fans. We also indulged in a gift-opening ritual. Eric had given me a small mountain of little 'stocking-stuffer' type parcels, so I was able to drag out the present-opening for the better part of two days. - especially since my parents had also sent a bunch of tiny gifts. The haul included such gems as a letter opener, a garlic press, wire uutters, pegboard pegs (mercifully not wrapped individually), several books, a digital pendant watch (from Eric), jade earrings, a worry seal, some cassette tapes and postcards from my parents.

The digital watch turned out to be somewhat confused. It was supposed to show the time, and when you pressed a button, it would show the date and then after 30 seconds or so, revert to the time. This one showed the date; when you pressed the button, it briefly showed the time and then reverted to the date. Not only that, we could not convince it that the date changed at midnight rather than noon. (Other than that, it was a very nice watch.) As soon as the holidays were over, it went back to the shop for repair or replacement.

I gave Eric a hair dryer... not to curl his lovely locks, but to use for heat-shrinking wrappings on electrical components. (Chorus of 'it figures' from the readers.)

One pleasant surprise of the holiday was a phone call from Bob and Margaret Riep, visiting from Tasmania after a silence of a year or more. We went out to dinner at the local Chinese place, where I managed to misguess one dish and almost get sick on some suspect sauce. However, I noticed in time, and didn't suffer too badly, and otherwise thoroughly enjoyed the evening. Bob & Margaret seem to be doing quite well. They've bought a house, and have a whole flee of MGs, it sounds like; and are about to quit their mundane jobs and go into business for themselves. Sounds alright, though will probably be a lot of work.

Eric and I started quite a few people by actually making an appearance at the traditional Smithfield New Years Eve party held by Mark Denbow and Kim Lambert. This is the third year I've said we've show up, and the first we've actually made it. Mind you, we left very early (before all the guests even arrived, I'm sure), in order to drive home before the drunks got on the road. For those not familiar with this Aussiefan event, the Smithfield party (any Smithfield party) goes on for 3 or 4 days, with guests bringing tents, caravans, sleeping bags and heaps of food (not to mention drinks and smokes). This one was billed as the last Smithfield Smithfield party, as Mark & Kim have now moved to Canberra. The next 'Smithfield' party will almost surely be held here. (Smithfield is the name of the Sydney suburb they lived in, and at least part of the reason for the weekend-long parties is that it's quite a ways out from the other fannish households, and is an especially trek for those without cars. When going to Smithfield, you're always told to 'pack a lunch', on the theory that it will take you most of the day to get there.

We actually went because Eric was finalising a sale of a computer to Mark. No, cancel that, mustn't be so mercenary... but it does take a bit to stir us to actually get into the car and drive into (or even towards) Sydney. The party itself was pleasant, and the rain even stopped for the day; most of the guests were not known to Eric or I, but this meant we had plenty of time to talk to everyone we did know, and got to meet some new ones.

Sunday the 1st of January 1984 it rained, a lot. In the late afternoon, we decided to go out to buy something (I forget what), and my car wouldn't start. The obvious first guess had to do with the wet weather, except that it had been wet for months & the car had always started before. As usual, visions of expensive and exotic repairs danced in my head.

On Monday it was still raining, and the car still wouldn't start. I had to get home if possible, so we phoned the NRMA (Auto club) and a couple hours later a harrassed-looking man arrived, announced that the problem was wet leads, gave me a lecture on cheap leads and their uselessness ('though you probably paid quite a bit for those!'), and proceeded to dry everything out using a blowtorch!

Actually he didn't lecture me, he lectured Eric (or tried to). We kept mentioning that it was my car, and I was the one who'd have to drive it, get it fixed etc, but this man insisted on talking to Eric. Such blatant male chauvanism, we both had a good laugh afterwards.

One good side-effect of the delay was that, by the time I got started (after lunch), the rain had stopped, so my trip home was less hazardous than it might have been. The usual number of idiotic drivers were on the road, overtaking in dangerous places, and so on. The worst near-miss we saw was on the drive to Eric's, though -- we were overtaking a slow car on a hill; it was two lanes of traffic going in our direction, so we were in no great hurry to cut back into line. As we passed the car, we saw someone on a small motorcycle in front of the car, so we stayed in the passing lane till we were well past the cyclist, just to be safe. A car came up very fast behind us, cut into the lane beside us in front of the car we'd just passed, and almost ran the cyclist off the road. Eric, who used to ride a motorcycle for some years himself, was furious; I was pretty angry myself. It was definitely a situation where even a pacifist feels like committing a bit of mayhem.

I got back home, picked up the cat, and emptied the post office box. Not much had accumulated; the postal backlog evidently cleared during the next week. Tuesday night I phoned John Foyster to learn the GUFF results and found I'd come in second to Justin Ackroyd, who'd had a very convincing win. I greeted this news (which I'd expected) with somewhat mixed feelings: I'd wanted to win, and make the trip, to meet all the wonderful people I'd been corresponding with the past couple of years, but -- this isn't a particularly convenient year to travel for me (next year I'll have long service leave available and could make a really long trip if I wanted to), and I had some doubts about wanting to be obligated for anything. Travelling on my own I don't have to be nice to anyone, or be on any con panels if I don't want to, or visit people unless I want to see them -- not to mention being responsible for administration for several years afterwards (and fund-raising). Now I realise I don't actually have to be nice, or be on panels, or any of that stuff, but I reckon if a bunch of people are paying my way, I do have obligations. And I would have fulfilled them admirably, I'm sure -- but I might have had days when I wished I didn't have to. Anyway, Justin will be an excellent GUFF winner, I've no doubt, so I'm delighted for him.

A few days later, a paper arrived with the list of who had voted -- and I recognised few of the names. (Only Australian votes) I also noted without surprise that most of my friends and acquaintances were conspicuous by their absence. Not that it would have made any difference to the outcome, but still. Of course, I did not go about extracting voting slips and money from people like I do when someone else is standing; I just can't do that for myself.

On the other hand, I noted two American names that I recognise (Michelle Armstrong and Seth Goldberg), which I'd like to think voted for me. Now ~~that's~~ being a good friend, when the fund involved isn't even connected with one's own country. No matter who they voted for, I think it's especially nice.

And so back to work. One of the people with whom I've had a love/hate relationship since I started at the Division of Computing Research 3 years ago, Terry Holden, the Assistant Chief, retires today (31 Jan.). He was on holidays for most of December and January, and on the 20th a retirement party was held. Quite a pleasant affair, at which Terry made a few pointed remarks about the politics of the place, and I sat opposite the Director of the Institute of Physical Sciences and had a pleasant chat. The Division is one of a dozen or so in an administrative group called an "Institute"; there are 5 or 6 of these in the Organization as a whole. I sat next to a fellow from work who asked me several questions about why I'd moved to Australia, why I liked it better here than in America, etc -- and then proceeded to lecture me on various issues about which he disagreed!

Later in the evening I was introduced to a short, bald middle-aged man at the next table, who said to me, "Marcia Sloger" instead of "How do you do" or some such usual phrase. I blinked; he said, "Does that name mean anything to you?" "Yes, I went to University with her," I said. He then proceeded to tell me he knew Marcia's husband Charley, and had stayed with them on his last trip to America, and they'd asked him if he knew me, as if being in the same Organization (of about 8,000 employees) he surely should! We had a bit of fun reminiscing about this and that before I started getting sleepy and went home.

Meanwhile I've been building a ceiling in the office side of my new garage. Eric and I put up about 1/3 of it one weekend (after spending half a day shopping for the materials and getting them home). Cutting the panels to fit took up most of the time; actually putting things in place wasn't too bad, but tricky until we got the hang of it. The next weekend I coned a friend from work, Joanne, into helping me finish the job. Now if the electricians will just come back and finish their work, the place would soon be usable.

I've also paid large amounts of money for a micro-computer of my very own. Eric imports Apple copies from Taiwan, and is getting one in for me. Fortunately I can borrow some items (like a monitor) from him for awhile, so I won't have to buy more than the basic necessities. It should arrive sometime in February, sort of a birthday present to myself. Perhaps the next copy of Wrevenge you get will be word-processed... and then again, perhaps not. Eric keeps assuring me of all the problems I'm likely to have, getting everything (especially the programs) to cooperate.

A quick change from the personal to the political. A week or so ago the Queensland government received an extortion threat to introduce foot-and-mouth disease into Australia if the government didn't release prisoners from the State prisons. This is apparently the latest move in a long-running argument over the Qld prison system, which is pretty bad by Australian standards. But even though the cause may be good, that sort of extortion attempt strikes me as totally unjustifiable. Of course one cannot know whether it's a bluff or not (the government is treating the threat seriously, but not giving in to it), but to endanger the livelihood of millions of uninvolved people (not to mention the innocent animals) is sinking awfully low. Meanwhile, the Qld government has introduced new legislation to increase police powers to detain, search, ~~kill~~ etc. Charming.

31 January 1984



7 February 1984. The saga of my medical problems with contact lenses continues. I will spare you the details, but it's beginning to sound like a sequel to the article I wrote for *Holler Than Thou* on the aftermath of my nose operation. I'm seeing an eye specialist next week, and in the meantime am not even attempting to wear the lenses. Most likely I'm allergic to some of the wretched chemical used to clean them, though why I should get reactions in only one eye at a time, I don't know. Further bulletins as they happen.

I probably forgot to mention that Eric gave me a "home mushroom" kit for Christmas. It's begun producing mushrooms, which are delicious, but when one is away for three days, some of them get quite large. I could write a story about the fungi taking over the laundry room, if I were so inclined. I wonder what will happen when I'm away for a week?

I did mention Eric's also buying me a watch for Christmas, and that it didn't work properly. We still haven't got it (or a replacement) back from the store, so I wasn't surprised when my current watch stopped working. (It fell on the ground and cracked the winding-pin off.) Would cost almost as much to repair as to replace, so I decided to give it to Eric for parts. I dug an old watch out of the closet, but it didn't work either. So I trundled off to the chemist and asked for a "cheap" watch; ended up with one that cost \$5.95. It's digital, of course, and very much no-frills, but it does tell time at least as accurately as my old one. The little light doesn't work properly (I didn't discover this till I'd thrown out all the receipts and stuff, so can't return it, but for \$5.95 waddaya want, eh?) Its main failing, however, is that it's a wristwatch, and I loathe wristwatches. Mostly it lives in my wallet, where it is not quite as useful as it might be.

Since I'm not going to be travelling overseas this year, it seemed a good time to do something I've been thinking about for quite awhile: take a course in Small Business Management. Such courses are given at places called "Colleges of Technical and Further Education" (TAFE for short), and carry no tuition fees. One does have to pay \$14 Student Union fee (part-time rate) and \$2 for photocopying of course materials (damn cheap). The books run another \$28! (could be worse.) The other nice thing is that this course has no exams, because it doesn't give you any formal qualifications. It's very much designed for people who want to go into business, so presumably have the incentive to learn as much as possible. (If they don't they fall in other ways, I suppose.) I'm looking forward to it - except that the instructor smokes cigarettes. First class next Monday evening, 6-9 pm.

Why do I want to study small business management, you may wonder. Well, somebody has to manage Eric's computer business, don't they? Seriously tho, my incentive is more a matter of looking ahead to

'retirement' from CSIRO in a few years perhaps, and setting up a business of my own (probably free-lancing at least at first, on editorial work etc) in Springwood. I'd like to know more about the government regulations and other stuff, mostly. I imagine that's a real trap for the unwary, especially if too cheap to pay a pro to take care of the red tape. Even if I paid a pro, I'd want to know enough about the subject to ask sensible questions and be able to evaluate whether s/he was doing a good job and/or one worth what s/he charged.

15 February. Last Thursday I travelled to Melbourne to attend a meeting and visit friends. The four days turned out to be both exhausting and exhilarating. The meeting was to do with work, and took place at the CSIRO's Film and Video Unit. We looked over their facilities and had quite a lively discussion on the work of the Unit versus what some members of the audience thought their work ought to be.

Following the discussion, we had a Happy Hour, attended by some of the members of the CSIRO Executive, the "Board of Directors" so to speak. I took the opportunity to ask two of them, including the Chairman Himself, what if anything they'd decided about the fate of the Division of Computing Research. The answer, only slightly paraphrased, was, "Yes, we're going to split it into two units, but just when, and who will do where, and other details, have yet to be worked out." Needless to say, this doesn't leave any of the workers knowing much more than they did before.

Next on the agenda was a dinner at a local pub, where we all sat around, ate and drank ourselves silly, and indulged in off-the-record meaningful communication. I staggered back to the home of a friend about midnight and did not get up quite as early as planned on Friday.

Friday I wandered into Melbourne about 11:30 and met Joan Dick, who often writes to *Wrevenge* and other fanzines, but whom I'd never had the chance to meet before. She showed me a delightful little vegetarian restaurant, where we had a light lunch and got better acquainted. Then we went off to Space Age books, where I introduced her to Justin Ackroyd, Roger Weddall and Roman Orszanski, who was in town interviewing for a job. While at Space Age, I talked with Merv Binns and came away staggering under a load of books to review, including two that are only out in hardcover which I wanted to read but didn't want to pay for. I also bought a couple of books, so my brand-new knapsack (gift from Eric) was bulging. As I slung it over my shoulder, the strap ripped loose. It can be mended, but was something of a nuisance for the rest of the day.

Next stop was back at CSIRO, where I caught up with some people I needed to see. Then walked a few blocks to an office where an acquaintance from WEL works. We nattered for an hour or more until it was time to go home, and I caught a tram back into the city to meet my hostess, Pricilla, at her office. We went to a pleasant (though not cheap) seafood restaurant for dinner, then back to her place where another old WEL friend dropped in -- again we ate and drank till about midnight.

Saturday I spent reading a book and completely forgetting to phone some other people I wanted to catch up with, like John Bangaud. After 5 pm I walked over to Christine and Derrick Ashby's house for dinner and a small "party" where I got to catch up with quite a few fannish friends. The party also turned out to be a congratulatory one for Marc Ortlieb and Catherine Circosta, who'd only a few days before announced their intended wedding date. I was not insulted by being upstaged. I was a bit startled to learn, however, that Sally Beasley and Dave Lickett had beat them to it, getting married in January.

Again a surfeit of food and drink, and to bed late (for me). Didn't sleep well, due to a bright light just outside my window, and city noises. Unfortunately had to be up around 8 on Sunday morning, to be ready for someone to pick up Priscilla and me to go to a WEL meeting. We had to be there before 10. I said hello to many old friends and went in the spare room for a few hours' sleep while the meeting went on. Got up in time for a magnificent potluck lunch, followed by sunbathing and swimming in the backyard. Most pleasant. Someone from the group lived near the airport, so she drove me there in the late afternoon, after stopping at her place for a chat and a snack. Having eaten all that, naturally this time the airlines fed us "supper".

By the time I got home I was running on an adrenalin high again, and couldn't go to sleep till midnight. Monday I was not my brightest and best at work. In the evening was the first meeting of the class I'm taking; it turned out to be fairly interesting and no one smoked in the classroom.

Tuesday morning was spent on a couple of meetings at work -- preceded by being told (on about 15 minutes' notice) that the Chief wasn't there, so I had to organise alternative people to meet the visitors. Grr. The meeting was fairly interesting, though. It had to do with CSIRO's relations with the public, both specialist audiences (e.g. industry) and the 'general public'. By the time it was over, I wished I'd been taking notes.

After lunch I zoomed off to the eye specialist, who turned out to be the most unhelpful and arrogant person I can ever remember having the misfortune to deal with. I'm still too enraged to go into the details. His entire attitude projected, "What are you doing here wasting my time? Come back when there is something wrong with you." I suggested that it was rather difficult to time medical crises when one had to make an appointment two weeks or more in advance. Now he could have said what he did in a pleasant manner, but his manner was anything but pleasant. Eventually I extracted the information that I could turn up without an appointment if/when my eye had another emergency situation, but it might be someone else seeing me as he wasn't there very often. Fair enough.

I went back to the office shaking with rage, and phoned my optometrist, who reminded me that he'd warned me this specialist was like that, but added, "He's very good." At what, I wondered? At least Tuesday is the night when my one TV show of the week is on, and it's a comedy. I had a good giggle and finished stapling and enveloping the ANZAPA mailing.

Meanwhile I managed to offload two bookkeeping chores, having found volunteers to take both the WEL books and those for the Women's Centre. Today I finished bringing the WEL books up to date and handed them over (with a sigh of relief); I'll hold on to the Women's Centre ones for a few weeks yet, till I have time to explain them to my successor.

And a boat must have come in, because mountains of fanzines, magazines, and books have been arriving. Most of which will have to go with me to Eric's for my holiday next week. I have a week off, and had originally planned to drive up to his place on Saturday and stay for 10 days. But with class on Monday, I'll stay here till Tuesday morning.

This might give me some time on the weekend to move some furniture into the new office, now that the wiring is done and the electricity is working. But I suspect I won't get quite that organised that soon. I want to finish typing Wrevenge as soon as possible.

(Review of Princessions, continued from page 9)...

Pursuing Truth, Women Striving for Equality and Peace, and others; an Episode Guide to Charlie's Angels (a show I've never watched), and letters from readers. Also a magnificent cartoon strip by Lela Dowling -- if this one is typical of her work, I definitely want to see more!

I have a slight problem reviewing a magazine (fanzine?) like this. Because it's fairly professionally produced, and costs real money, I tend to set much higher standards than I would for a fanzine that is generally available for trade, letter of comments, etc ("the usual"). I'm not sure whether this is fair or not (Ms Foster obviously sends contributors a free copy of the issue in which their work appears -- and will send me a copy of the issue in which she reviews Wrevenge, but I doubt her trade policy is quite as liberal as, say, mine.). Now don't misunderstand-- I'm not complaining about the cost or the trade policy, merely giving a bit of background on why I am inclined to be harsher on a zine such as this, than I would be on some others. (I also tend to be harsher on books I've bought; than on those I've been sent to review; that's almost surely not fair.)

So, what shall I say about Princessions? It's well laid out, readable, and has some good artwork (but then everyone knows I have no taste in art). I definitely like Ms Foster's editorial policy, and I found the article on the Wonder Woman Foundation very informative. I was most disappointed to discover how dated the McCaffrey material was (or much of it) -- good grief, I attended a convention with her as guest since that interview was recorded! I did like the photos of Anne, though. And it's hardly Ms Foster's fault that I have no interest in Charlie's Angels, is it? All in all, certainly of more interest to me than many similar zines by men, so I hope it continues and goes from strength to strength.

Available from Foster Publications, PO Box 6783, San Jose, CA 95150-6783.





Marion Zimmer Bradley, *Thendara House*, Daw, 1983.

This is the long and eagerly-awaited sequel to *The Shattered Chain*, and I found it well worth the wait. MZB here deals directly with the issue of lesbianism within the Renunciates or "Free Amazons" of Darkover -- those women who have renounced the traditional female role of wife and mother, to join a Guild which offers them both protection and dignity.

The "Free Amazons" have been bit players in several books about Darkover, and had a leading role in *The Shattered Chain*, but never before has the reader had a look inside the Guild itself. Much of this book takes place within Thendara House, the Guild's communal home in Thendara, the Darkovan capital. Magda, a Terran woman born and raised on Darkover, whom we met in *Chain*, has come to the Guildhouse for six months of initiate training. We see not only her daily life, but also her reactions to it (primitive by her Terran standards).

Quite a bit of feminist theory is stirred into this book, but I thought it was done in a manner very logical and suitable to the events taking place. Many of the debates between the Renunciates themselves reminded me of debates in feminist groups I've belonged to -- as no doubt they were intended to. I think it's a good book to give to someone who wants to know what feminists are really "on about" (and/or who doubts the differences of opinion within the feminist community, who thinks there is a feminist "dogma"). The women here are individuals. Some love men and bear children (there is no barrier to "freemate" marriage or childbearing outside marriage for a Renunciate); some love women; some show characteristics typically considered "masculine", others "feminine"; they argue; they help each other; they have sulks and ecstasies, just like everyone else.

MZB's brilliant touch in this book, I thought, was to also have a Renunciate go to live in the Terran community, where she must learn to adapt, just as Magda does in the Guildhouse. Jaelle marries Magda's former husband (a nice touch) and finds his Terran male habits and assumptions very difficult to take. She tries to explain her point of view to him; he simply doesn't hear her. The contrasts (and similarities) between the two women's experiences make absorbing reading.

BOOK

REVIEWS

All reviews by the editor unless otherwise noted.

There was for me the added odd touch that many of the debates and discussions that take place in the Guildhouse are very similar to a series of scenes I wrote several years ago for a story that I never finished. It was almost like reading my own notes! I interpret this as a sign of how true MZB's visions are for so many women. (The other similarity was in some of the characters' descriptions, and that I interpret to a bit of stereotyping both MZB and I indulged in. For example: the kindly, loving healer woman is one of the few in the House who routinely wears skirts rather than pants. Do we unconsciously connect the so-called "feminine" traits of healing, comfort, nurturing etc with "feminine" habits of dress or clothing?)

Very Highly Recommended.

Phyllis Ann Karr, *Frostflower and Windbourne*, Berkley, 1982.

Phyllis Ann Karr was right, I didn't enjoy this book as much as its predecessor, *Frostflower and Thorn*; but I still thought it was delightful and am likely to read it again (a status few books I read can aspire to). Once again we meet the sorceress Frostflower and the warrior Thorn, two women in a world where much is opposite to our own, but sex roles are not completely reversed. For example, the male priest-farmers generally rule the land and their priestess-wives are secondary (but necessary) to them. However, we meet in this book a woman whose priest husband has died, and whose brother is trying to get hold of the land she's inherited by pushing her back into a secondary status in his own household. She isn't buying any of that, and intends to rule her own lands her way. There is, apparently, precedent for this, but it's not common and she has to argue a lot about it. The main story centres around the efforts by Frostflower to discover who killed Eleva's husband. When he died, the sorceri (convenient scapegoats) were blamed; the nearest one was a young man named Windbourne. Thorn is sent to extract a confession from him, but helps him escape instead. After they've made their way back to the mountain home of Frostflower, she decides she must clear his name. Windbourne actually plays a very small role in this book, though his habit of castigating himself for thousands of imagined faults

made me suspect we'd all have to suffer with him through a few hundred pages, but mercifully the author spared us too much of this. So, principally this is a "murder mystery", but the exotic setting and general interest to me of the culture of this land, made it much more than that to me. Once again, Karr manages to present a very real but different society without resorting to great dollops of expository writing. Once again, she also manages some fine comments on our own society, without spelling them out in capital letters and words of one syllable so even the least observant reader will notice.

Phyllis writes that she's just finishing up a new novel. I can't wait to get my hands on it. This one is also recommended.

Barbara Ehrenreich, *The Hearts of Men*, Fluto Press, 1983.

This book isn't SF, nor even fiction. It's a wittily-written account of the changes in male and female roles in America since the late 1940's. Ehrenreich describes the way men as well as women were pressured into narrowly-defined postwar roles (the "breadwinner" male; the "housewife" female); if society was going to throw women out of work, it had to find some way (or some one) to support them. She chronicles the revolt of some men (the Beats) against the male breadwinner ethic, and the medical discoveries that were turned into popular psychology and "scientific reasons" why certain behaviour was not only necessary, but desirable. Each "discovery" went through a fad period, lasting several years, then lingered on as a subtext to the next fad. Each fad no doubt contained much truth, but was not understood by those who slavishly followed its dictates. All of this, by the way, is told in a very droll style that had me giggling over most pages.

As an American woman who grew up during the times described, and who remembers all these pronouncements from the medical community, I enjoyed the book thoroughly. I could see how I, and all my compatriots, were manipulated all those years (with, I hasten to add, varying degrees of success). An Australian friend at work commented, after reading this book, that she began to understand why feminism was such a big deal in America, with that sort of background; here, she said, those influences were much less evident.

A quick listing of contents may give the flavour of the book: Breadwinners and Losers (Sanctions against Male Deviance); Early Rebels (The Gray Flannel Dissidents); Playboy Joins the Battle of the Sexes; The Beat Rebellion (Beyond Work and Marriage); Reasons of the Heart (Cardiology Rewrites the Masculine Script); From Conformity to Growth (The New Psychology); The Androgynous Drift (Counterculture vs Masculine Culture); The Male Revolt Redeemed (Class Uplift and Health Reform in the Seventies); Backlash (The Antifeminist Assault on Men); For Women, Surviving the Aftermath.

To me, the most interesting contention in the book is that the anti-feminist backlash is actually more against men who dare to break away from the rigid male role model than against women who do so. The male revolt actually threatens the male-dominated "family" model much more than the female revolt does, suggests the author. Sounds reasonable to me (defectors from the One True Path etc).

Another recommended book.

John Varley, *Millenium*, Berkley (trade pb), 1983.

A really gripping book full of fascinating time paradoxes, with a surprising (to me) amount of characterisation considering the fast pace. A somewhat gory theme underlying theme lends urgency to the tale. I could have done without the ending, however. Recommended despite the brevity and lack of information in this mini-review. Good reading.

John Crowley, *Little, Big*, Bantam, 1981.

A superb book to which I'm not even going to attempt to do justice. Long, involved, packed with images; the characters seem so real to me, despite their vague connections with reality-as-we-know-it. Magnificent contrasts between the decaying city and the country estate where time seems to go on unchangingly. By the end of the book, I was so envious of the unreality of the country life, despite my lack of interest in being manipulated by forces I don't understand and, indeed, don't really even know are there. Is this a new wrinkle in the annals of conspiracy theory? Words fall me over this book. It is fantastic (pun intended). Read it. Highly recommended.

Winifred Holtby, *Women and a Changing Civilization*, Academy. (Reprint of 1935 edition)

Further adventures in on-fiction land. Reading this, one could well believe it was written in 1983, except for the occasional reference to contemporary happenings. Well written but depressing in that the reader cannot avoid realising how little has changed in fifty years. Good to thrust at those who crow, "You've come a long way, baby!" Tell them, "Read this, and then still try to say that with a straight face."

Mary Gentle, *Golden Witchbreed*, Gollancz (hardcover), 1983.

I blush to admit that I didn't know Mary Gentle was a "real writer" until I read that this book had been published, and then its dust-jacket informs me that she's previously published a number of short stories and a fantasy for young adults. (She writes interesting LoCs, too.)

This book deserves lots of superlatives. I was very impressed with it. Mary has accomplished quite a feat: she's done a variation on a theme I generally don't like, and kept me interested all the way through 476 pages. Perhaps I shouldn't say a "theme", but a "technique". The theme is one I like: earth envoy (a woman in this case) meets alien culture and learns not only about the aliens but about self. The technique is that of the envoy taking a trip around part of the alien planet, meeting various races and having adventures along the way. Typically the reason for the trek, or quest, is merely some excuse for the

writer to tell a bunch of stories and trot out a whole stable of exotic creatures which inhabit the planet. (Sometimes these are very well done, but they still don't interest me very much.)

But Mary's story is only superficially in this group. Her envoy goes travelling all right (an envoy should, after all, meet the people), and the Bad Guys try to kill her, and she has all sorts of harrowing adventures and treks around quite a bit of the continent while surviving, but it all fits into a coherent whole. People keep popping up along the way, but their presence is logical and appropriate in the context, not mere gratuitous coincidence as is so often the case.

Mary's also worked in as a sub-theme another favourite topic of mine: how would a society develop if its children were not raised as females or males but all the same? Ursula Le Guin tackled the problem in The Left Hand of Darkness, but there the adults as well can be either male or female (and usually are both at various times in their lives). Mary Gentle's Ortheans are neuter until their equivalent of our puberty, when they become the sex they will remain for the rest of their lives. However, since until then no one has any idea which sex they will be, all children are naturally raised simply as children. And since by the time they "change", they are fairly well trained in some skill, virtually all occupations have both male and female practitioners. This situation is never discussed; it simply is. Only once does the topic of the neuter status of children come up, when the envoy suddenly realises that's what they are, and her companion simultaneously realises that Earth children have sexual differences. The Orthean's reaction is: But how do you know when they are adults? The Earth envoy's reaction is: But how can you raise a child if you don't know what sex it is? I loved it.

Ah, but what about this Golden Witchbreed then, you may ask? So did I, and I'm still wondering a bit. Is there another book coming, Mary? In fact, I won't say much about them, because they are the central mystery of the book and if I gave that away, it would be spoiled for you. (Wouldn't it?) Suffice to say we never really meet any, but they (or their memory) lurks always in the background and the Ortheans fear of them underlies many of their actions.

What else can I say? I loved this book. It in many ways reminded me of Le Guin's works, and that's definitely a complement without suggesting that I think Mary Gentle has set out to deliberately copy Le Guin. It simply has that wonderful flavour, which I love. Read this book. Don't wait for the paperback -- get it now. Highly recommended.

Steven Bieler, Prelude to Pulp, Fool's Paradise Press, 1983.

\$5 (includes postage) from the author, PO Box 1870, Seattle, WA 98111, USA.

A self-published book that reads like a series of fanzine articles. The chapters purport to give hints to the aspiring writer of science fiction. They are full of cutesy word-plays with the occasional one-liner that amused me. Your sense of humour may encompass this; mine didn't. It is, however, well put together with glued spine and library tape, though only 32 pages long. My copy had variable damness of printing.

Julian May, The Adversary. Pan, 1984 (paperback).

Compared to Mary Gentle's Golden Witchbreed, I can't manage to heap quite so much praise on this book, though I did enjoy it. This is the fourth (and final!) volume in the Saga of the Exiles, though the evidently is a Trilogy of "prequels" in the making.

The first three volumes are The Many-Coloured Land, The Golden Torc, and The Non-Born King. Each can pretty well stand on its own, as can this book, especially since each book has a brief synopsis of the preceding ones at the beginning, just to remind you of who's who and what's been happening.

In The Adversary, lots of loose ends get tied up -- one might say, in knots. And so many characters keep changing their minds (or seeming to), that you don't really know right up till the last page how it really is going to turn out.

If you don't like the sort of book where psi powers play a big role, you won't like these at all. I don't take that sort of thing seriously, but I frequently enjoy books that do. In this one, various experiments toward groups of people working together to channel psi power through one person to accomplish something that no one person could do alone, come to fruition. Both for good and not-so-good purposes. Several characters, about whom the reader has presumably been concerned for several volumes, finally sort themselves out (with the help of those who love them). The quotient of irreverent and smart-ass remarks scattered through the events seemed a bit lower in this volume, but perhaps I'm just becoming jaded. There still were some delightful non-sequiteurs lurking unexpectedly to amuse the reader.

I have read elsewhere that there are also a great many literary and mythical references in these books, which have apparently gone completely past me. Those with a wider knowledge of such things may well find dozens of things to tickle their fancy. I love the sort of book that has those kinds of references in them, but only if I get the references! In this case, I didn't. Pity. (I didn't get much out of Mel Brooks' film, Young Frankenstein, either, mostly because I've seen no other Frankenstein-type moves, nor read any of the books. It's hard to appreciate send-ups, either, when you don't know what's being sent up).

A friend asked me if I thought this series was worth reading. Oh yes, I replied, definitely worth reading. Not at all sure if they are worth spending the money (\$5.95 a volume), however.

Princessions. #14, Summer 1983, Foster Publications.

This 36-page magazine is typeset, offset printed, has a colour cover, and costs \$2.50. The editor's statement of purpose includes: "...what women are accomplishing in the world of pop culture, not just behind the scenes, but in fiction, too... One of the reasons we started to produce this magazine was because there really wasn't much out on the fan market to appeal to the female fan... in 1977." This issue includes an interview of Anne McCaffrey (part of which dates from 1979, a bit old), some information on the Wonder Woman Foundation (which makes awards to women for achievements in fields such as Women Taking Risks, Women

.....continued on page 6.....

I REMEMBER

by Lyn McConchie

-- Hiding the weals at school because somehow it was shameful that I had been beaten.

-- Feeling sick whenever I saw the heavy duty rubber coated flex used for electricity.

-- Lying curled on the floor in the kitchen while my guardian raved texts from the Bible as the doubled flex rose and fell across my back and shoulders.

I was eight when he became my guardian, sixteen when I left. For eight years, religious texts and beatings occurred at least twice a week. After all, his sister had only adopted me, I wasn't his flesh and blood; and now she was dead, I should have died instead of her. Besides, adopted children were always bastards and unless the sin was beaten out of me early I would undoubtedly be wicked when I grew up.

I remember the hunger of missed meal after meal, "Fasting and repentance are good for the Soul." I remember the neighbours who must have known some of what occurred but didn't want to "get involved."

It was worse by the time I turned eleven: the starving and the beatings continued, but something new was being added. Now the opening of a bedroom door after dark became an added horror -- not intercourse but a ritual that sickened me. Wealed from an earlier beating, I lay in bed.

"How much do you love me?"

Within weeks I had learned the required answers. "Lots and lots."

"How much?" "Baskets full."
"You know I had to punish you, it's for your own good, but you still love me, don't you?" "Oh yes."

And I remember how I forced myself not to vomit while I chanted my way through the required litany. I remember how I hated him until, after years, hate kept me going, hate and hope. If I hung on long enough, I could get away once I turned sixteen.

I turned loner, solitary, the cat who walked by herself. How could I share with a school-friend anything of my life? To a child a year is forever.

Once I swallowed 50 aspirins, and woke up in the morning to mourn, not my failure to die, but my failure to escape.

Fourteen, and to the litany was added caresses, and to the beatings an element I saw but didn't understand. Sadism, sexual pleasure in another's pain, is not something easily understood by a fourteen-year-old who has been insulated from any sex knowledge by her solitaryness at school and religious fanaticism at home.

Sixteen and I was free, not without trouble, but I had been making plans for the whole of the previous year, and I achieved escape successfully.

The next couple of years I lived in coffee-bars (in some ways the equivalent of street kids in those days). And I used to think I'd had a rough childhood. (JHW))

I learnt I was unable to look people in the eye: eight years of beatings, among other things for insolence if I had dared to, had rendered me incapable of the straight look unless I specifically remembered and forced myself. I learnt I would always automatically pick a corner to sit in, failing that a wall at my back. Many of the beatings had begun with my being grabbed from behind.

I was in my twenties before I noticed almost casually that I could not stay in any relationship; somewhere between 6 months to 3 years and I developed a revulsion for being touched by my lover. I still liked them as friends, but no longer wanted to be anywhere near them as lovers.

Finally, about the time I turned 30, I realised. I had thought for years that I had escaped relatively unscathed from my guardian, apart from odd quirks I could handle. I had seen no crippling emotional problems.

So I was wrong, underneath for years unknown I had a vast and total distrust of men. I need to trust a lover; being close physically, one must trust at least physically. Even more, if one is close mentally/emotionally, one needs to trust the same way. I can't.

Eight years of brutality taught me never, ever, totally trust a male in any area that directly affects me. So, I need to trust, I can't trust, eventually the pressure builds up to where I cannot stand the guy's hands on me and I'm gone.

Over the years I have learnt to turn a guy off me gently when that time gets close, but still stay friends with him. (I have several friends who are ex-lovers.) If we are friends for a few years after, I may be able to be an occasional lover again, once three or four years have passed.

I am resigned to this, I prefer to live alone, don't want to marry, so trying to cope with a really permanent lover would bother me. But sometimes I wonder if that is reality or just rationalising.

I like men, I have male friends, but I remember eight years of some of what a male who has power is capable of. So do other female friends, who have become feminists. I have just become one, a me who still cannot look you in the eye, who still sits in corners for preference, and who if you lift a hand fast near me, will either cower, white-faced, or fly at you in a mindless rage of terror.

I wish I didn't have these reactions but I do. I wish I didn't remember but I do. Down more than 20 years echo the thud of flex or wood against flesh, and still the echo of hate I learned I remember.

I try not to let memories matter, but I can't quite ever forget. Which of you would.

((Lyn says she wrote this item "for Roger and other guys who wonder why some women become savage towards men". She also notes that her guardian died 20 years ago.



NATTER & ANTI-NATTER

(("Frost versus the Beauty Queens" elicited quite a few remarks from readers, mostly commenting on the vehemence of his reaction; I won't print most of them here, just a few things on the substance of the topic he was discussing.--JHW))

PAMELA BOAL
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10 Jan 1984

The footnote to Terry Frost's item made me smile. I'm afraid the financial realities of charity work makes one cynical and downright two-faced. Whether or not a beauty contest is degrading to women (or a Mr

Universe contest is degrading to men) is irrelevant, if people are willing to shell out much needed cash to see them, then a fundraiser would be wrong to miss out on taking advantage of the fact.

It's odd how often I find feminists (supposedly fighting for the rights of individual women) are least able to appreciate the fact that people with disabilities are individuals. Some of us can appreciate the appearance of an attractively proportioned and well-groomed human as well as say a pretty bird or animal. Some of us agree with feminists that parading only one aspect of a human being in such a fashion is degrading. We agree or disagree because we are people, with individual preferences, not because we happen to be disabled. I don't happen to know any cerebral palsied people resident in Victoria, but those I know here would certainly say to those feminists, "kindly refrain from laying your pre-conceived notions (about how I as a disabled person regard beauty contests) on men."

((Fair enough, but what Terry didn't point out in his footnote was that the group opposing the beauty contest was organised by a coalition of disabled people, including the Women with Disabilities Feminist Collective. They claim that the funds raised by the Quest (the contest under discussion) about half of the funds raised goes in administration of the Quest itself, a very poor return on the community's investment dollar. The funds raised total only about 4% of the Spastic Society's funds. While I'd agree that every little bit helps, I do think that sometimes it is wrong for a fundraiser to use certain types of fundraising, rather than wrong to refrain from doing so. For example, I think it would be wrong to encourage an unhealthy practice such as cigarette smoking to raise funds for any cause, no matter how worthy. Beauty contests may be in a less clear-cut area (in one sense perhaps they do no one any harm), but to me the principle is the same.--JHW))

SUE THOMASON
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10 Jan 1984

I don't like beauty contests either, but that is no reason to be gratuitously insulting to the poor women who've been brainwashed into believing that their transient physical appearance is the main,

or the only, good thing about them. 'Beauty' is rather an odd concept nowadays, in Western society. Personal attractiveness is a very individual thing -- some people will find any given person attractive,

some won't. Beauty seems to be associated with both physical and moral "health" and "goodness" too.

SAMUEL WAGAR
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11 Jan 1984

Beauty contests are an abomination. They are an assault on the human spirit... beauty in human beings, for me, consists of those moments when people are unselfconsciously acting from their truest heart. The body when filled by the soul is very beautiful, when walked Barbie-doll-like onto a stage in the service of commerce it is very ugly. But, I found Frost's comments on the probable intelligence of the women participating in the contests quite offensive. Just because someone is "beautiful" doesn't mean that she is less human than the rest of us (the exact attitude of beauty contests -- these "ideal" figures are to represent what other women can never attain, themselves being devoid of humanity because "ideal").

JOY HIBBERT
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22 Dec 1983

Terry makes a point about none of the contestants bugging up the show. There was an interesting sketch on the first series of "Not the 9 O'clock News" which had a woman in a beauty contest answering these silly questions. It went something like this:

"What do you like doing in your spare time?"
"Screwing."
"Ah. Er... why do you want to be Miss World?"
"So I can screw famous people. Come on, show us your willy."
It's better if you can see the expressions on their faces.

((The article on "Kids" (why people want or don't want to have them) also gathered a few comments, though most repeated items mentioned by the writers of the snippets in the article.--JHW))

JOY HIBBERT
(address above)

I can understand why people want children, but I find all the reasons of dubious merit and not with the child's interests at heart. Since I don't have any children, I can still feel the feelings of a child, and know how I would feel if I found out I was born for any of those reasons. The reason I was born is probably even worse -- Dad thought a few children would be "nice", failing to realise that they grow into people with opinions and moods, probably because Mum is an only child and Dad is a youngest. So Dad was downright obnoxious when he realised we were going to think for ourselves and not just worship him for ever. But to take bits of Linda's letter: "You learn a lot about yourself.. and your parents." And the child has to bear the confusion of your self-discovery. "Wanting to leave a part of myself for the future" and risking being either severely disappointed when the child turns out the opposite of what you'd hoped, or trying to force it to be what you want it to be. Perhaps we should leave these people who want children with their emotional reasons for parenthood -- their rational reasons sound far too much like a deliberate experiment.

((The following excerpt doesn't really do justice to Jon's letter, in which he elaborated on each of the categories which I am merely listing.--JHW))

JON SCOTT
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9 October 83

Kids' happens to be an astonishingly controversial subject in my house just at this time. Though solidly averse to breeding, I moved in last year with a bwoman with two children, both from her now

defunct marriage of ten years standing. The clearly stated line was "it seems to be worth the price I am going to pay." Well, I'm a man of logic and order, so let me produce a summary of all the reasons pro and con having kids that I can glean from your initial contributions and that I can think of, with Carolyn's help.

Reasons in Favour of Having Kids:

1. Emotional Satisfaction
2. Raising Curiosity
3. Friendship
4. Personality Mirrors
5. Religion
6. Altruism (akin to masochism)

Reasons Against Having Kids:

1. Direct Cost
2. Indirect Costs
3. Time Cost
4. Infringement of Privacy
5. Restrictions of Movement
6. Restriction of Emotion

Well, that is about all I can pick up. There are other reasons why people have had kids (marital glue, peer pressure, and sheer stupidity all spring to mind), but I do not consider these to be reasons for or against the deliberate act as such, but rather reasons why it happened.

I'm lucky. Ours are a 13-year-old girl and a 10-year-old boy. I am not responsible at all for 1) in the "against" category, as this is Carolyn's responsibility along with their father. 3) and 4) are now pretty well satisfied, as is 5); Martin alone requires still a consequential load of 6). 2), however, is agonising. I tend to cringe when one of the kids uses one of my resources -- the Hifi, the better furniture, my slotcars or trains, my tools, etc. Belinda is both clumsy and inconsiderate, Martin just a little young. If I could afford to casually replace, had never acquired a taste for, or could purge myself of, my delicate playthings, I would be in clear water.

As for the reasons in favour, only 2) and 3) appeal. I am getting plenty of 2) here. 3) is tempting but I know too many instances where this does not come off as planned: I don't really fancy my mother, nor does Carolyn hers, and we are not odd in this among our friends. I'd be very wary of Belinda as a friend!

Frankly, I would want to be callous and very well off to get in this racket at the ground floor, but then I am pretty selfish compared to that needed for devoted parenthood. I'm with you, Jean, as it does not grab me, I'll give it a miss.

((Moving right along to the topic of "power", two of the short articles in this issue address the subject in a very personal way. It is certainly true that both men and women can -- and do -- use personal power in very destructive ways. But I sometimes wonder about people who put up with being "used", unless there is some other reason -- for example, legal (e.g. underage child) or economic -- why they can't terminate the relationship.



And before anyone gets too insulted by that remark, let me emphasise that I've been in that situation, and can understand and empathise with those to whom it happens. But it also makes me appreciate that quite frequently it does take two to make an unequal power relationship. And that the "weaker" member usually has a whole host of rationalisations why he or she is in that situation. I know I did. It wasn't until I understood that that's what they were -- rationalisations -- that I could begin to do something about it. Anyway, on to the letters. --JHW))

JOHN D OWEN
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12 Jan 1984

As the project controller for the Faculty of Science at the Open University, I'm in a position where I have to persuade people to work together, to co-operate in a mutual endeavour. With many academics involved whose

whole lives have been spent in political argument (either for position or for funding, always in competition with other academics), the idea of co-operation often comes hard -- this is less so in some areas than others, and Science as a whole does it less than other disciplines (having worked with Arts academics on occasion in recent years, I can say that they are far, far worse). When conflict occurs, then the powerplays begin, and our courses begin to suffer. That's when I begin to worry hard, since there is nothing more intransigent than an academic whose ploys have failed, and who is expected to re-arrange his or her opinions to coincide with the "majority" (i.e. them as won) view.

So, in a way I have to wield power to do my job well, and to get other people to do their jobs well in order that my ultimate goal, the production of a good course for the student, isn't fouled up by their problems and mistakes.

I have always worked as honestly and truthfully as I can. This often seems to freak people out. I once had a director who told me that I was too honest ever to be a good manager, implying that one of the "powers" of a manager had to be the ability to dissemble. Well, as a manager of sorts, who has to deal with people, and manipulate them to a certain extent, I have found that

by approaching that task with honesty, by being careful to always tell the truth (as I see it), by admitting when I'm wrong (astounding the lengths some people will go to, to avoid that) -- all of these things go together to frighten many of the people I have to work against. The people I work for appreciate it, whereas the departments I have to constantly struggle with to get the necessary resources for our projects are wary of me, since I don't react in the way they have come to expect people around here to react. That's power of a sort, a kind I can live with, since I know that what I'm doing is never done with the aim of humiliating someone (though it sometimes does): it's done with a view to clearing a path through to an objective defined by the needs of the Faculty or the University.

Truth and honesty may not be seen to be powerful, but in situations where everyone is trying to wield power, then they are often the only clear path that a person of conscience can follow.

SUE THOMASON (address above) Power is energy, and I don't think that there is any exchange or flow of ideas or energy,

there is no communication and no point in communication between two people whose power/energy/position is exactly the same. In any close relationship, for every transaction, there has to be a giver and a receiver, i.e. there has to be an inequality. What is bad is getting stuck in one position, and it's easiest to get stuck at the bottom of the energy slope because you can roll down effortlessly and sit there for years, but it takes energy and effort and hard work to get back up to a position of energy/power again. . . . What a lot of power-hungry women in relationships where they're dominated by men don't realise is, that in any relationship there's only room for one person in one place at once. So when the woman is at the bottom the man is one up from the bottom because that's the easiest place for him to be. To change things for her, either he has to move as well, or she has to make a tremendous effort and jump 2 places at once or find another pathway altogether.

(Hm, well all that's awfully academic, Sue. I do not see "equal" being the same as "exactly the same". A transaction, as you call it, can be two-way, with each person being both a giver and a receiver. I think of "good" power relationships as dynamic equilibriums. No one "wins" or "loses", is "above" or "below" the other, except perhaps in a trivial sense where a choice must be made. If the choice is mutual, it's not really a win/lose situation anyway. If the choice is unilateral, it is. The analogy of top or bottom of an energy slope is true, but not the only possible analogy. I would like to hear more of your views (and those of other readers) on this topic. -- JHW))

GARTH SPENCER 1296 Richardson St. Victoria, B.C. Canada V8V 3E1 20 Dec 1983

My concept of power is of power abused, and I generally see (have seen) power abused by women. It's usually weak, petty power, deceitful in its conception and vicious in execution. I know, intellectually, that it isn't a feminine but a human vice. You may imagine what I consequently think of humanity in general.

I am continually amazed at the things people do and the ways they feel. Debby Kean's remark that "Birth fathers . . . rarely give a curse", pro or con, about children they conceive out of wedlock, is so far outside my experience I have trouble processing it. Do all male humans behave this way? Or most? Is it just New Zealand males, or do I suffer from similar programming?

(Well, not all men "don't give a curse", but it's by no means an uncommon situation. Most women know of more than one man (either from her own experience or that of a friend) who has abandoned the woman as soon as she learns she's pregnant -- or as soon as he finds out. These bad experiences tend to stick in one's mind more than good experiences -- but the good are then cherished far more when they do occur.

No, it's definitely not just New Zealand men. -- JHW))



(On to Wrevenge #15 (November) -- JHW))

PAUL BRAZIER 75 Hecham Close Walthamstow E17 5QT England 27 Dec 83

Paula Johanson's piece was rather wonderful. It's just the sort of thing I've been looking for in feminist writing, because it doesn't lay blame so much as recount what happened and realise the outcome. Perhaps

it is worth saying that one of the great problems with being a man who is sympathetic to the Women's Movement is the number of Male Chauvinist Pig Women I meet all the time. I don't mean repressive anti-women women so much as the kind of woman who allows a man to dominate her and actively connives at that domination by relying on him to supply money/food/clothing/shelter and to make all the important decisions in her life. Now if you've been brought up to be a dominant man but have decided to reject that stereotypical attitude to life, it can be very unsettling to have a woman insist that you re-adopt it. It's very easy to say that I should try to persuade her of the error of her ways, but isn't that patronising? Shouldn't she be able to work her way out on her own? And what do you make of the woman who, while vociferously asserting her own independence, plays mind games to make me feel guilty about dominating her when in fact what she wanted was for me to take the blame while she had the freedom to act under my umbrella? That's a confusing sentence. I won't try to explain now, but it is perfectly factually accurate.

As you can probably see from the above, I am more than a little confused by feminism, and go along with a lot of what Kevin McKaw says in his letter. However, I had the good fortune to meet a sympathetic woman recently who went out of her way to find a feminist assertion class which accepted men (it's not that I hadn't tried so much as I'd never really thought about that approach). Our self-image is constantly reinforced by the society within which we live, and if we are non-conformist then we need the support of a peer group to maintain our identity. And there are precious few of us men who would prefer to be persons-with-male-bodies. So it is important for feminist groups to be a little more open towards us, or we will become as alienated as many women rightfully already are.

Back to Kevin McKaw's letter. He is rejected because "subjects such as 'rape' cannot be discussed if a 'man' is present." He finds this annoying. Perhaps if he thought a little about the problem he might find it understandable. Women's groups are for women! Just like SF groups as for SF fans. Now sympathise or

even empathize as much as you can, Kevin, you'll never know what it is to be a woman. And thereby hangs the reason you aren't admitted. Go to an SF meeting. Take a mundane friend with you. Notice how merely the presence of the non-elect affects the conversation. It has often been noted that the only thing SF fans don't talk about when they gather is SF. I would add to that the rider "except when there's a mundane present". Have you not noticed how politeness leads you to avoid subjects of conversation which might embarrass the stranger in your midst? And have you noticed how those subjects have a perverse habit of recurring to everyone's embarrassment? It's not the fact that you're a man that women object to: it's the fact that you can't understand some things because your body is different from theirs, and these are the things they want to discuss without impediment.

TIM JONES
20 Gillespie St
Dunedin
New Zealand
10 Dec 1983

I was interested in your comments on Roxby Downs and nonviolence. I've done some training in nonviolence here in New Zealand, and am a member of a resource group in Dun-

edin. The nonviolent movement in Australia has been spreading very rapidly of late, and a lot of its impetus came from the training carried out with people participating in the Franklin/Gordon blockade in Tasmania. The training in nonviolence carried out within the Tasmanian Wilderness Society was started by a couple of New Zealanders, one of whom went back to spend some more time with them just before the blockade started and who lives in the same house I do.

I found Kevin McCaw's letter particularly interesting. I once heard feminism defined (by a woman feminist, though I can't remember who) as "putting the interests of women first", and in those terms I'm not sure if it would be valid, in the long term, for a man to identify himself with women -- and for women to accept that identification. Another term that I've often heard used to describe feminists, heterosexual as well as lesbian, is "women-identified-women", which seems to illustrate the point. Like Kevin, I guess, I've increasingly felt alienated from traditional male roles and values, from the New Zealand equivalents of "Ockers" who in their bush shirts and black singlets still form the predominant image of the New Zealand male. I've found it very hard to challenge the workings of this stereotype in other men, and therefore have few close friendships with men -- but ultimately, I think, it's more important that pro-feminist men work to bring other men around to that point of view, than that they identify themselves as "some different sort of female."

So I guess I'm saying that it's more important that "men's groups" get together to work out acceptable and positive ways of being male than that men identify themselves with women -- but I haven't become involved in a men's group yet, and I don't imagine that I'll find it easy to do so.

((The "definitions" of feminism that you cite are held by some feminists, but not all; I would agree with your conclusions, though, regardless.--JHW))

DAVE ROWLEY
(address as for
Joy Hibbert)

(letter to Kevin McCaw)
I too have problems with this 'men excluded' attitude. I think it is a sort of Catch-22 situation.

If you are a decent bloke you care enough to be interested, but a decent bloke would respect their uncomfortableness with men and leave the conversations. Rough, isn't it?

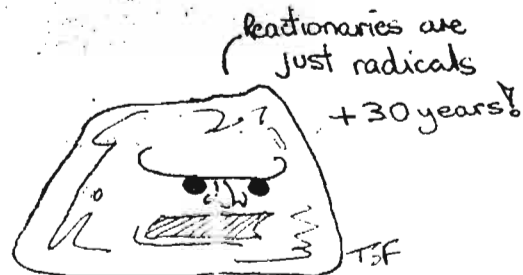
I went to a showing of "The Power of Men is the

Patience of Women". This really upset me, as my father used to (don't know if he still does) illtreat my mother. Quite a few women and only a couple of blokes stayed behind after the film for a discussion. I said nothing, but the other chap chatted what seemed an "out of proportion" amount of the time. Joy (Hibbert), my wife, pointed out to me that men tend to dominate conversations. Another good reason to not allow them into groups.

Over here we too have "anti-sexist men's groups", but they are few and far between. When we move to near London, I intend joining one to raise my consciousness.

As to thinking of yourself as a person, as opposed to a man, I find most of my problems occur at work. There are all these unthinking selfish men. One makes a comment about a woman, others laugh. I feel uncomfortable and try to point out their selfishness, etc. They look at me in a funny way (almost backing away in horror). I feel more uncomfortable and think, "maybe next time I'll keep my mouth shut so I won't get persecuted too."

This talk of male "instincts" makes me think of the way we have been brought up. In some people this "conditioning" doesn't take, and only partly works. This can account for the "nice guys" and the feelings of being out of step with the rest of the males. As to the business of "rigid sex roles", I mentioned to the "old lady" who cleans the workshop where I spend 39 hours a week, that I wish I had made some cheese scones yesterday (a Sunday) so I could eat one now. The thought of me slaving away over a cooker must have been too much for her sixty-plus year old brain. "Doesn't your wife do the cooking?" "Oh I like cooking," I reply. She looks at me in a funny way. "Mumble, mumble, must get on with my work."



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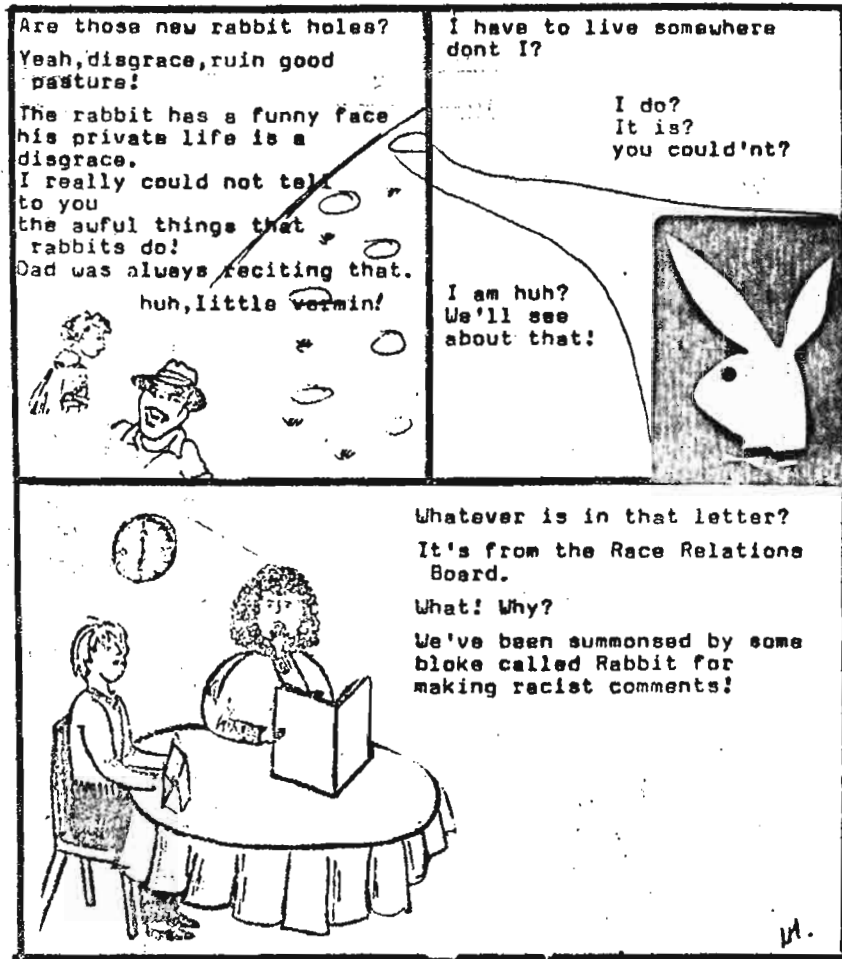
I seem to have put my foot in it a little, haven't I? I certainly wasn't writing off all active feminists as such, but rather that small group of extremists, who like their counterparts in any organisation from the PLO to fandom, give the others a bad name, and often seem to be the only ones who get publicity because of their shock value. I am only too aware of the work being put into the cause by dedicated and caring people, but more damage by far is being done by the idiot fringe element that is "into feminism".

((What you consider the "idiot fringe" or "extremists" is quite likely different from what Joy Hibbert or I, for example, might so classify. I don't agree that "more damage is done by whoever they are, than good is done by the others." This is rather like arguing that more harm is done by those who misuse science and technology, than good is done by those who don't misuse it. Rather depends on your personal value-system as to what is "good" or "harmful".--JHW))

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**THE
RABBIT'S
PROGRESS
(Episode #2)**

by Lyn McConchie



BEV CLARK
744 Belmont Pl E #203
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USA
24 January 1984

Kevin McCaw's Letter... made me realize that I have always identified more easily with male than with female personalities, to the point that

I would probably come down on the masculine side on a personality inventory designed to measure such things. This extends to feeling a distinct lack of certain traditionally feminine characteristics, such as the ability to understand and empathize with people as individuals (I'm great with humanity as a whole, or with people in groups) or basing all my happiness on a love relationship (I've been told, by a man in fact, that I am too independent emotionally) -- though I have lots of friends, of all degrees of closeness. I first really thought about this subject when I read a paper by a female psychologist that was supposed to explain how women reasoned morally; I didn't recognize any of the forms of reasoning she described as ones I used. I felt more kinship with the forms of reasoning described in the paper the female psychologist's paper was intended to refute. (The original paper purported to rank the moral reasoning styles of the whole human race according to a scale devised from the responses of 100 male Harvard undergraduates, a biased sample if I ever heard of one.)

At the same time, I have never wanted to be anything but a woman, even when I was a pretty tomboyish child. (How many girls have had a tooth knocked out in an ice hockey game?) When I wanted to grow up to save the universe, or at least the solar system, because I loved Isaac Asimov's "Lucky Starr" books, I was going to do it as a woman. (Lucy Skywalker?) I never felt that my options or my behavior were

limited by my gender, nor did my parents, and as a result I have never personally felt oppressed or had any trouble relating to men as an equal. It may be that this history is why I identify with a masculine point of view in many respects; like most men I was raised with the assumption that of course I could do what I wanted to, and gender was not a concern. I've felt more limited by my height (I'm 5' even), in fact. And my sexual identity is definitely heterosexual female.

Possibly for the same reasons, I've never been a militant feminist. Of course, I've never been a militant anything; I find the militant or extremist personality distasteful (which I have occasionally regretted). On the other hand, I realize intellectually that it's frequently the militants who break the way for the rest of us and get the branches in their faces for their pains, too. If nothing else, the extreme position makes moderate change possible by making it look reasonable in comparison. For this, I respect militants -- and remind myself so every time I get impatient at what seems to be a particularly silly or counterproductive action. (More specifically, I respect their contribution to society; I may not respect them or all of their actions, especially violent ones that involve innocent people.)

*****I ALSO HEARD FROM*****

Terry Jeeves, Mike Rogers, Roger Weddall, Julie Vaux, James Dean Waryk, Don Griffiths, Brian Earl Brown, Joseph Nicholas, Judith Hanna, Roelof Goudriaan, Arthur Hlavaty, Sam Wagar (several times), Joan Dick, Harry Andruschak, Christine Ashby, Jessica Amanda Salmonson, Darroll Pardoe, Marc Ortlieb, LynC, Martyn Taylor, and probably some others whose letters I've misplaced.

WEBERWOMAN'S WREVENGE SEVENTEEN

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