

# Weberwoman's Wrevenge

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## WEBER WOMAN'S WREVENGE

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This fanzine is available for contributions, letters of comment, artwork, interesting clippings, uncancelled postage stamps, arranged trades, editorial whim, or A\$2 or equivalent per issue (air mail extra).

I prefer some sort of personal response.

## The Rubbish Bin

Why this issue is early: The concomm for Circulation 4 in Canberra has invited me to be their mascot, and offered to print an issue of *Wrevenge* to distribute to attendees. Thus a rush to get another issue done quickly – and many thanks to the committee!

Peggy Ranson did the cover, complete with title, and I really like it. She said in her letter, 'I'm rather fond of the female road warrior as she has *all* her body covered! A change from the usual tramps we see.' This reminded me that I've had in my files for some time an article from Lyn McConchie on the subject of cover art, which just fits with Peggy's cover and her comments.

As for me, I've sold the apartment in Potts Point and we'll be moving out soon, probably by the time you read this. If you haven't already changed your listing of my address, please do so now.

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## Art Credits

Arts & Letters clip art, 3, 4, 6, 8

Terry Jeeves, 5 (from jan finder's collection, some years old)

Daryl Murdoch, 13 (from jan finder's collection, some years old)

Peggy Ranson, cover, 9, 11, 12

portions of Daw book covers, 14, 15, 16

Beloc in The Wall Street Journal

# 1969: Moon walks, Woodstock and me

The first person to walk on the moon (20 July 1969 USA time, 21 July in Australia), and the Woodstock concert (mid-August 1969), have been the big items on the 20-years-later memories-are-made-of-this list lately.

I managed to miss them both, by spending the summer in Costa Rica (Central America) on a graduate course in tropical ecology.

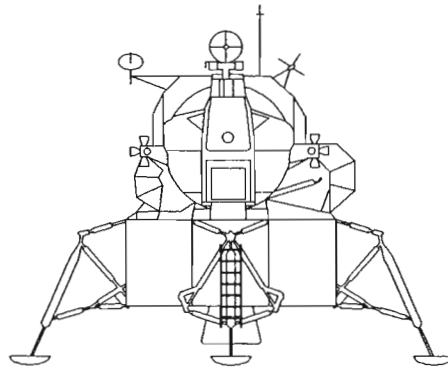
The year 1969 looms large in my personal list of Very Important Events. The moon walk and Woodstock played important roles in my life, much as the Vietnam War did – but all at a distance, setting the cultural scene for my personal growth and development.

I didn't go to Vietnam, though I knew many people who did; I didn't go to Woodstock, though I knew some people who did; and I didn't watch the moon walk on television like millions of other Americans.

## Moon walk

On 20 July 1969 I was sitting on a coral island in the Caribbean sea, holding a gas lantern so my fellow students could find their way back from a night diving expedition. (I couldn't see well enough without my glasses to make diving worthwhile, and didn't like swimming anyway, so had volunteered for the job no-one else wanted; everybody was happy.)

The night was warm and clear. I was looking up at the moon, which I remember as full (but may not have been; one's memory plays tricks with the symbolism of Important Events), and wondering if the astronauts had made it there safely. We'd kept up with the Apollo news through several-days-old English language newspapers and the occasional mention on the (Spanish language) radio, but on the island we were visiting that week, hardly anyone seemed to know about, or take any interest in, these far-away events –



or if they did, they weren't telling *us* about it.

Anyway, there I was on this coral island, wondering what was happening on the moon, and thinking about the big decisions hanging over my life that summer. My marriage was in deep trouble, and I had to decide what to do about it. I'd been granted a reprieve in decision-making on that subject when I won a place in this summer course, far away from my husband. It gave me two months to think, without having to deal with him directly.

When I talk about my marriage, and especially the last two years of it, I often sound like I blame him for all the problems. I don't, although I probably did at the time. Certainly he bears the responsibility for his behaviour, but the 'blame', if any, falls on the conditioning we both received from the society we grew up in. By 1969 I still hadn't heard the terms 'feminism' or 'women's liberation', but many of the concepts seemed self-evident to me. They certainly weren't self-evident to *him*, although we'd been married for two years before I realised the full extent of the differences in our approach to a marriage partnership.

My problem was that I'd been conditioned to believe that it was my job to deal with our interpersonal problems, and if I really loved him, I'd do whatever was necessary to 'save'

our marriage. (This statement oversimplifies a complex understanding, mostly not in words, on my part, but it's near enough.) This was a problem because the only ways I could see to 'save' the marriage meant denying my own needs and interests, and this I didn't want to do. I knew it would be a disaster.

The trip to Central America helped me sort out my priorities. I confirmed my feeling that I couldn't be happy without my work, or with someone who couldn't accept me as I was. If I tried to change, it wouldn't help, because it would be a lie. I also realised that as long as I kept picking up the pieces of our relationship, he would never have the need or the opportunity to learn to accept responsibility for his own feelings and actions – to 'find himself', as the phrase went. Both of us would remain stuck in a situation of reacting to each other, and life in general, rather than acting positively, and really getting on with our lives. Eventually it became clear to me that the only solution was to go our separate ways, and that this was okay.

I did determine to give the relationship one last chance when I got home from the trip, but his behaviour hadn't changed a bit, and he was, if anything, even less willing to listen to my point of view, so after a few weeks I moved out. I still had misgivings about whatever I did, but at about that point I 'discovered' feminism, and the fact that I was not alone. Thousands of women were saying much the same things.

Twenty years later, feminism's public image is often one of focussing on economic and legal issues (which are very important), but behind all that is the very personal stuff that I went through, and that millions of women are still going through: the expectation of their husbands and families (and often even themselves) that they will

fill a particular role, and if they don't (or if they do and hate it), then there is something wrong with them personally, rather than something wrong with our society.

Of course it hurts the men too. I can now see, though I couldn't in the '60s, that my husband's main problem was that he did not want to conform to society's role for him, but he was trying very hard to do so, failing, and frustrations out on me – and, no doubt, being jealous of me for having the nerve to try to break out of the role expected of me. (From what I've heard, he eventually found his own path, just as I've found mine. I hope so.)

### Accepting responsibility

There are those who look upon all this 'find yourself' stuff as very selfish. To me, anyone who accepts the responsibility for his or her own actions is not selfish, or at least not in the negative, pejorative sense. (Many people, of course, do what they want without regard to others, and do *not* accept that responsibility, but that's a different issue.)

Accepting responsibility for one's actions includes accepting your responsibilities towards other people, especially children and other dependents. It does *not*, in my opinion, include accepting the responsibility for the *actions* of other people, especially other adults – which is the burden that much of society tries to lay on women. (If he beats you up, you did something to deserve it. If your children get into drugs, it's your fault – you're a bad mother. And so on and on.) (And yes, this works against men, too, who are expected to 'keep their wives under control'.) Nor does it mean accepting responsibilities that you have never agreed to, such as the social expectations of what a wife (or husband) is 'supposed' to do, be, think, feel.

What I learned in 1969 – though I didn't have the words for it yet – was that I was *not responsible* for my husband's actions, and he was not responsible for mine. We might con-

tribute to each other's problems and frustrations, out of which those actions arose, but that is not the same thing. He might be unhappy if I left him, but he certainly wasn't going to be happy if I stayed. And neither of us was mature enough to deal with our problems in a constructive way. Although I was beginning to learn about accepting responsibility for my life and actions, he hadn't yet reached that stage. And no one, especially me, could tell him that was the *real* issue, until he was ready to hear that message.

### Woodstock

And Woodstock? Well, it was a symbol of the generation that tried to break out of those constricting stereo-types. Some people went on to accept responsibility; other merely became selfish. But an atmosphere was created in the '60s that allowed the feminists of the '70s to become visible and be heard, if not always accepted.

This was very important to me, as I could admit to, and talk openly about, things I wanted in life that weren't part of the suburban-wife-and-mother image. I could find women and men who accepted me the way I was, and could be my friends – *real* friends, who would help me in a crisis as well as enjoy the good times. I could stop trying to be something I wasn't, and be happy with what I was.



## Snaps

During my travels I made some notes about things I liked better in the USA, or liked better in Australia. Here's a few:

**Telephones:** Everywhere – I was amazed at the number of easily-available *and working* public telephones, in shopping areas, airports, train and bus stations, and other public places in the USA. But the service at my parents' place was conspicuously poor – their local telephone company is perhaps a negative example of the effects of deregulation. An Aussie would consider the standard of service quite normal.

**Iced Tea:** I love the stuff, but Australians seem to think it's weird or disgusting, possibly because tea is generally drunk with milk here, and even I agree that cold milky tea sounds disgusting. Iced tea is readily available in the USA, and usually delicious.

**Hot tea:** generally inferior in the USA. The tea bags contain inferior leaves, and it's hard to convince anyone you want milk, not cream or lemon or whatever, to put in your tea. Also hard to convince people you want it at the end of the meal, like coffee, rather than during the meal. And the 'bottomless' coffee cup beloved of Americans rarely has its counterpart in the 'bottomless' tea cup!

**Breathing Easy:** The ubiquitous non-smoking section is mostly a recent innovation, certainly since I left the States (1974) and still uncommon in 1980, my last visit. One can actually enjoy eating out, and even survive an airport waiting lounge, in America these days. The conspicuous exception to this statement was Virginia, which is not surprising as it is one of the tobacco-growing states.

**Tippling:** I don't like it. Americans tip (their wage structure depends on it); Australians don't.

**Efficient, courteous service** (mostly) in the USA: This is probably related to the practice of tipping.

# Reality forum

{Here are the responses to my request for comments on 'what is reality?', some time ago. - JHW}

**Lloyd Penney**  
412-22 Riverworld Parkway  
Toronto, Ontario  
Canada M8Y 4E1  
30 January 1989

Reality is the sum total of your perceptions. Objective reality is nearly impossible for subjective humans to truly glimpse, so reality must be what we believe it to be, no matter if the majority believes otherwise.

We can influence reality by trying our best not to reach quick conclusions, but to gather the facts as best as you can find them out.

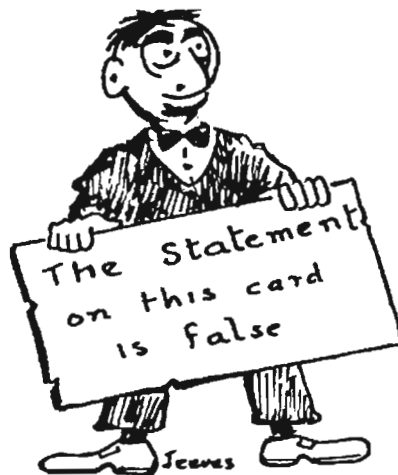
We change reality by broadcasting half-formulated opinions based loosely on rumours, and that way, we have the potential to hurt a great many people. Fandom needs to learn to gather the facts before it accuses anyone of injustice or wrong-doing.

**Buck Coulson**  
2677W-500N  
Hartford City, IN 47348, USA  
29 January 1989

How does one tell fantasy from reality? ... it depends on what sort of reality you're talking about.

Of course, there's one basic rule: you'll never learn if you believe everything you're told; you have to be able to think for yourself. Which, of course, eliminates a good share of the population right there. The other big segment which is hopelessly unreal consists of those people who believe that 'wishing can make it so'; that what makes them feel good is necessarily true, and real.

With them out of the way, one can get to a few specific problems. If you want to know the reality of something personal - is he or she really a friend, or a lover, or a nice person - all you have to do is check with other people



the individual knows, and weigh their responses with what you know about *their* reliability.

For something more distant - are blacks really inferior - you need written records, as well as some personal knowledge of the subject, if possible. Again, you have to check the reliability of your sources; because it's in print doesn't necessarily make it true. Science is mostly reliable, because scientists check on each other, though new theories should be treated with suspicion.

(I omit psychology and psychiatry from the sciences, not only because they're actually arts, but because they deal with the human mind, and no two human minds are alike, so there is no way to adequately check the theories, which may or may not be valid for group behaviour, but can't be at all valid for individual behaviour. Even in group behaviour, insurance statistics are more reliable, if there are any that bear on one's particular problems.)

So I guess the answer is, check all the sources you can find, try to check on the accuracy of the sources, and then make your own decision. (Do I always do this? Of course not; nobody does. But over 60 years, I've checked on the reality of a good art of my environment. And unless I'm pretty positive, I also try to preface my remarks

with 'I think' or 'it seems to me', or some other qualification. I certainly don't try to check the reliability of all the individuals in an Australian fanzine, most of whom I'll never interact with at all; it's a waste of time. And there is no real way to check on some things; I don't believe in God, because I don't believe in the accuracy of the Scriptures, but there is no way I can be positive that God is unreal, so it has to stay belief.)

You also asked 'What is reality, anyway?' Reality is what really occurs. Fantasy is what we believe occurs. As for influencing reality - it ain't likely. A few individuals happen to be in the right place at the right time to influence the actions of humanity, or a large part of it; most of us will never have the opportunity. We can, maybe, influence the actions of a few people, which is a small change in reality. No individual is going to influence anything in the non-human sector of reality - the sun's heat, the earth's orbit, etc. It's barely possible that large groups of humans might learn to do so, in the future; since the future is unknown, speculations are meaningless, except as the affect individuals in the present day.

**Dave D'Amassa**  
323 Dodge Street  
East Providence, RI 02914, USA  
22 February 1989

There are two kinds of personal fantasy. The first is temporary fantasy: fantasizing about the past (reminiscing or asking 'what if...?') or the future, but *not* the present. The second kind of fantasy, fantasizing about reality, is concerned with the present.

For what is reality? It's pretty difficult to define, isn't it? "Reality just is," many would say; and they'd be right, essentially. Reality is simply everything that is true and real at a given time; so, a fantasy about reality

is concerned specifically with the present.

This goes for any fantasy about reality, no matter how fantastic or absurd; if Ferdinand wishes his skin were purple, he is doing so against the reality that at present his skin is not purple.

What I'm getting at is what I think may be part of the problem with the confusion of reality versus fantasy.

Acting on temporal fantasy about the future can help shape what we experience when the moment comes and future becomes reality: a hundred and fifty years ago, thinking people fantasised about being able to fly one day. Scientists acted on this fantasy, working on it until the technology was developed that enabled us to fly.

But while acting on temporal fantasy can influence future reality, acting upon (or enacting) a fantasy upon reality does not necessarily affect the present positively; instead of going to work on a flying machine, you jump out of a window, attempting to resolve the fantasy with reality immediately. But reality itself remains unchanged; as with sheep, you don't fly so much as plummet.

There is nothing destructive about fantasy itself; nor, I suspect, is it controllable. Therefore, trying to 'beat fantasy out of children' is sort of like telling someone not to think of a purple cow: it is on their mind the whole time they are stifling it. In that light, there may be something to the vulgar myth that those who scream the loudest about promiscuity and pornography probably log the most calls to 'Phone sex' hotlines.

*{It's evident to me from these letters, and from other things I've read and conversations I've had, that people use the word 'reality' to refer to at least two phenomena, which one might call – for lack of a better term – 'physical' reality and 'mental' reality.*

*To me, the notion of 'mental' reality is similar to that of 'the power of positive thinking' or the concept of the 'self-fulfilling prophesy'. We all know that our*

*beliefs and actions affect what happens to us, at least in some circumstances. The differences of opinion seem to be mostly to do with questions of how much affect, in what circumstances, and whether or how much we can control the phenomenon.*

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## Parking places

Living way off here at the ends of the Earth, I don't have a lot of contact with people who have participated in, or know much about, the ideas taught by the 'self-awareness' industry, or what its critics often call 'that California crap'. In America, everybody I met (not just in California) seemed to know a fair bit about it. No doubt it figures in television shows quite a bit.

What interested and amused me the most was that everybody seemed to know about 'creating parking spaces', which seems to be a joke among both critics and proponents of self awareness, and something of a metaphor for 'positive thinking'.

The idea is that, if one can create one's own reality, an obvious manifestation is for one to find a parking space for one's car when one needs it, even in areas renowned for their lack of empty spaces.

Now I don't exactly *believe* that, but it's certainly true that when I believe the space will be there, it usually is; if I'm convinced that it won't be there – if I'm having a bad day, and everything is going wrong – it definitely won't be. This proves nothing, of course; but correlations are fun, and making off-hand remarks to newly-met people along the lines of 'will your parking space be there?' or 'everybody think positively about parking spaces now' – and having them react with a laugh and a knowing nod – is fun, too. Even the

*Michelle Hallett talks about this, among other topics, in her article Speculations on reality on page 17. She, and I, hope to see some more discussion on the subject.*

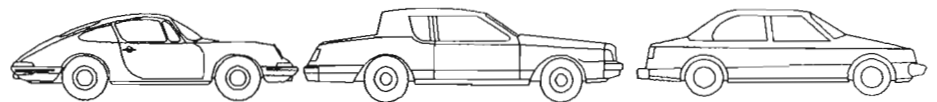
*For a slightly frivolous look at one aspect of the subject, read on. – JHW}*

disgusted looks from strong critics are fun; I enjoy teasing people in non-personal ways.

On the other hand, I try not to upset people by such remarks, if they appear to be stressed. That can get a bit personal. For example, when Seth Goldberg drove me to Stanford University to meet Michele Armstrong for lunch, he remarked at the beginning of the drive that parking was very difficult to find in the vicinity of the place where we planned to meet, and that we'd probably take a long time to find a space. When we arrived, it was indeed true. We drove around the parking area several times, and Seth was showing distinct signs of distress.

It was definitely not the time to cheerfully say, 'how can I create a parking space for you if you're so convinced there won't be one? Our reality-creating mechanisms are working at cross purposes here'. Somehow I did not think he'd appreciate that at all. So I refrained, though with difficulty. It was hard to keep from giggling (not at him, but at the situation).

The really funny thing was, he finally said, 'I'll just park illegally then, and get a parking ticket'. About 10 seconds later, someone pulled out of a spot right in front of us, and we got a legal spot after all. Apparently once he quit creating a no-parking-place reality, my reality cut in!





# Speculations on reality

by Michelle Hallett

Reality may not seem to be the sort of subject on which one could speculate. Reality is what's there, what *is*: there should be no argument about this.

The Concise Oxford (Seventh edition, 1982) defines *reality* as 'the property of being real, real existence, what is real, what underlies appearances', while *real* is defined as 'actually existing as a thing or occurring in fact, objective, genuine'.

By those definitions, perhaps reality is a topic which can be speculated upon, even argued about.

## Physical reality

Physicists claim to describe reality, though even before quantum physics, no physicist would tell you that their laws describe absolute reality. The laws of physics are perhaps our best description of reality at this point, but they are open to revision, as Einstein revised Newton.

Despite the comforting solidity of this pad on which I am writing, the desk on which it is resting, and the physical laws which make writing possible in this fashion (pressure of pen on paper, desk acting as barrier obstructing pad from falling on floor, chemical energy created by my metabolism which allows movement) – things which I take for granted – it seems possible to ask how valid is this feeling, this security in my existence and the existence of the materials I use to do the things I want to do.

Rene Descartes closed his eyes once and discovered that

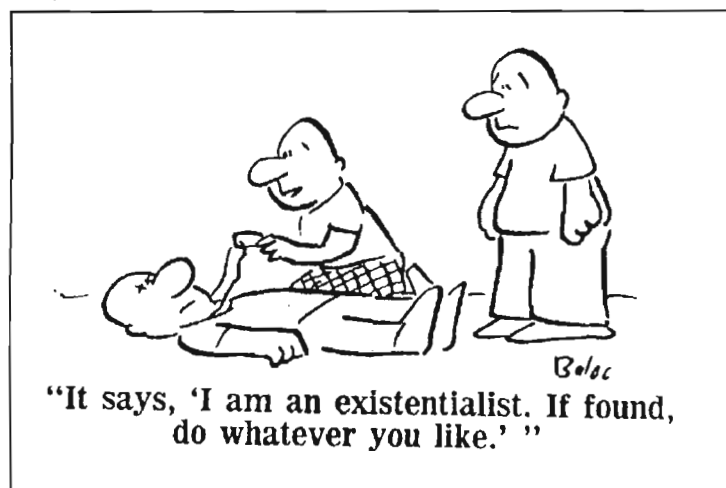
he couldn't testify to the existence of anything. He said, 'I think, therefore I am' largely because he felt it was the only thing he could be sure of. He had to think to produce that sentence.

## Reality-testing

According to Freud, we are constantly assessing the reality around us, attempting to distinguish between it and illusion, and on this basis, making decisions as to further actions. This process is called *reality-testing*, terminology which always brings to my mind the notion of someone (usually female and dressed in a turn-of-the-century style bathing suit, with cap) lightly testing the water with their toes.

Reality-testing does, however, serve to illustrate the major point of what any speculation of reality is about. That is, regardless of whether physicists ever come up with a truly hard-and-fast unchangeable, valid-for-all-circumstances description of reality, what matters for all of us is not The Reality but our reality – the reality that I, you, or human beings in general can manipulate. We want to know how we can live with it, or improve our conditions within it.

Under these circumstances, psychological, economic or sociological models of reality are as valid as physical ones.



## Beliefs, or mental reality

Beliefs often determine people's actions, a principle on which advertising is based. The purpose of advertising is largely to create belief in a particular product, by associating that product with a person's self-image, and thus to generate sales.

The economy is strongly based on beliefs. For example, a belief that there is a recession causes people to think differently about how they spend their money. This furthers the recession as sales/revenues are not generated, new jobs don't become available, and so forth. I think that most economists' solutions for a recession are based largely on beliefs about other people's beliefs as to what the economy will do next. These beliefs then go a long way towards generating the conditions they meant to describe, especially if they are published in a well-respected newspaper.

I'm not sure how far one can go in using belief as a basis for a model of reality. I've heard it said that if you really believe in something, you can make it happen, but I'm not sure that believing I will grow wings will do much for me. Even believing that I will grow taller will probably not help; I seem to be firmly bound by genetics to remain the 4' 10" I have been since adolescence.

There are some things it doesn't seem possible to believe in, though perhaps I have not tried hard enough. On the other hand, self image – my beliefs about myself – does determine the choices and actions I make in life, and hence my own reality. This works on a larger scale as well, as indicated by my example of the economy given earlier, but there seem to be limitations.

These limitations seem to be determined by physical laws.

Basically, I can desire that anything will happen, but then I must look at the framework of reality around me and determine how I can get what I desire. Wanting to be rich, for example, is the result of conscious assessment of the world around me, which leads me to realise that I need money to do most things and the more I have the more I can do. How I go about becoming rich depends on factors such as whether I am a first world citizen with a greatly needed skill or a villager living in a third world area suffering from acute crop failure.

Wanting to be taller might be similarly motivated. My world is one where tall people are perceived as stronger or somehow more culturally noble than short people, or at least according to the experience of this short person – though that may be the result of personal perceptions rather than actual reality. Making myself tall would be easier if I were a geneticist trained in DNA manipulation and I could get a grant to further my research. All this of course would depend on how I could manipulate the actions of other people and turn them to the advantage of my goal.

### A goal-oriented model

If I were to create any model of reality, the one that seems most likely to me is a goal-oriented model.

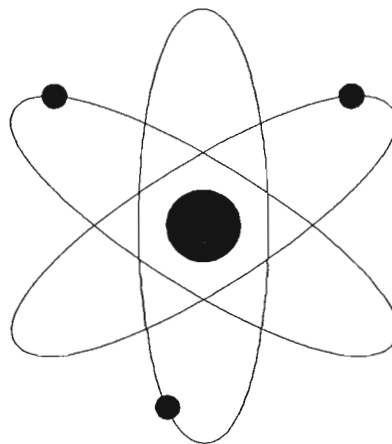
Reality grows and develops. Twentieth century reality is not the same as the reality of our Cro-Magnon ancestors. Much of our present reality has been shaped by human actions, and human actions are strongly determined by assessment of the world around us and our ability to act with it – that is, beliefs about ourselves (self-image) and our environment.

Human actions are usually goal-oriented. Against a background composed of both 'nature' and other people, we move to satisfy certain urges or needs: sex, hunger, self-preservation, relief from boredom, etc.

### Quantum physics

I've tried studying the subject of quantum physics for years, but find that for me, much of it is still very slippery. Although I feel I understand, when I try to apply my understanding to draw conclusions from the knowledge I have gathered, it all seems to fall apart.

The following therefore is based on a book titled *Superforce* (Unwin, 1985) by Paul Davies, a professor of theoretical physics at the University of Newcastle upon Tyne and the author of various other books on quantum physics. Presumably he understands



the whole thing a little better than I do.

According to Davies, space is not really a vacuum (or, to be more precise, a vacuum with the odd molecule of hydrogen or helium floating about). It is '... a seething ferment of virtual particles. [when] a "real" particle such as an electron ... moves through space, it is actually swimming in a sea of ghost particles of all varieties... the presence of the electron will distort this irreducible vacuum activity, and the distortion in turn reacts back on the electron' (p. 105).

Any particle is part of a constantly reacting network of virtual particles which continually assault it. As a description of reality, this seems analogous in many ways to the description of the economy above, or to the model of reality I have proposed, though it would be carrying things a bit far to speak of the goals of electrons as

they move through a sea of virtual particles, accepting and rejecting advances from various virtual particles.

More interesting is Davies' description of an attempt to measure the spin of a particular particle:

'Suppose the experimenter sets up his apparatus, and first picks a particular reference direction against which to measure the orientation of a particle's spin. In practice this reference direction could be defined by a magnetic or electric field... He carries out the measurement and finds to his surprise that the spin happens to point exactly along the direction of the field. The experiment is repeated many times, but the result is always the same... The spin always points along the reference direction chosen. The experimenter suspects some sort of conspiracy and adjusts the angle of his apparatus, but the spin of the particle always follows suit... He is perplexed by the fact that the particle seems to be reading his mind, because it always anticipates the direction he has freely chosen as his reference.

'Frustrated, the experimenter hits upon a devious stratagem. He will set up two different reference directions, A and B, and measure the angle of the spin relative to both. As the spin of the particle cannot possibly point in two directions at once, at least one of the measurements will show the spin at an intermediate angle... the first measurement [finds] the spin pointing along direction A. The next measurement he makes very quickly, before something can cause the spin to reorient... To his consternation... the particle... has realigned its spin to coincide precisely with axis B. Furious, the experimenter re-measures the angle relative to axis A, and... the spin is back at its original angle.' (pp. 32-22)

### Writing essays and reading tarot cards

Davies' description sounds to me a lot like the way I was taught to write essays at university: research all the facts with a particular question in mind, then write your essay using those



facts to support your argument in answer to the question. Draw a clear conclusion in answer.

Though this method is used to give an essay readability (that is, rather than just writing a collection of facts on a page, you give those facts direction, shape them and draw conclusions, giving the reader a framework on which to hang the facts), what you are actually doing is creating a version of the 'truth' or of 'reality' as you see it.

The same method is used in reading tarot cards. Rather than just give a vague interpretation of the cards from some sort of generalized future, the querent is asked to provide a question in relation to which the meanings of the cards are interpreted. The question is a framework on which to hang meaning in the form of an answer.

In either case, the writer or querent is analogous to the scientist who chooses the direction of the field, though in the case of the scientist, the confirmation of the results to the choice of initial conditions is unexpected. But what has happened in every case is that the initial conditions have played a very large part in determining the outcome.

What I have described here are three goal-oriented events, all of which work in related ways:

1. The essayist researches a topic with certain general ideas in mind, forms a conclusion in the form of a question, and proves the 'truth' of this conclusion. The conclusion is largely determined by how the facts can be fitted to the general ideas which formulated the choices of research material and shaped the question eventually asked and answered.
2. The tarot card reader lays out a set of cards, all of which have various individual meanings, and binds those individual meanings into a whole meaning by relating them to a particular question about a forthcoming event.
3. An experimenter sets of the apparatus necessary to determine the spin of a particle and finds that a particle's spin is always related in

the same way to the initial conditions. Those conditions give 'meaning' or existence to the particle's spin.

What the researcher has in mind to begin with may not necessarily be the result of the activity (if it is, the result has often been forced), but it will form the basis for determining that result. Things don't have individual existence, but co-exist in a framework which associates them. Another goal can take the same facts or tarot cards and manipulate them to draw different results.

One step further might lead to magic or sorcery, where the magician wills and his/her will is done, provided the initial conditions are all correctly met. All we need do is find out what initial conditions are needed.

## Synchronicity

An interesting theory, though one with no real scientific sanction that I know of, is expounded in a book by F. David Peat called *Synchronicity* (Bantam, 1987). His basic thesis is that below the level of matter (as described in quantum physics) and the unconscious mind (as described by psychoanalysts) is a level at which these two are unified. This is the level at which meaning is created.

Thus the ordering of facts in an essay to fit a certain argument or conclusion creates a pattern of facts which means something. All levels are at work in the essay writer: the facts gleaned from experiment or from reading the work of others and believed to have physical existence, the conscious mind which determines the questions asked, and the unconscious mind which leads the essayist to choose those questions over others and which shapes and forms sudden insights in the essayist's conscious mind as the facts are worked upon.

Peat believes the key to this lowest level is synchronicity, the random occurrence of certain patterns of events in relation to (or at the same time as) each other. These are then given meaning by the observer. The suggestion is that groups of events like to

occur together. Thus if the moon is in Capricorn at the time of an individual's birth, that individual will grow up to be the sort of person who intuitively feels that success in life is important to a person's wellbeing. If we can read one system of events, we can read the other, by cross reference.

## Conclusions

I'm not sure what conclusions one draws about reality from the above material. All my examples seem to be random aspects of reality drawn together and made into a pattern by me, the essayist. All of it is made possible by mental manipulation, speculation, and any science fiction reader knows that anything is possible in the realm of speculation.

My framework here is very loosely hung and has large holes. Still it seems to me that this is also a good definition of science: a loosely hung framework which scientists attempt to fill. In filling their own particular holes, they often lose sight of the whole framework, so that what we have is a collection of discussions about bits and pieces which somehow hang together on a framework called reality.

I like quantum physics because it seems that it is here, more than anywhere else in the body of knowledge we call science, that the rules keep changing and tripping us up. I like to think of reality as constantly changing and tripping us up. But I also like a framework from which to manipulate that reality, with some degree of certainty at least. Some way in which I can set up goals and achieve them, then see what happens when I feed them back into the framework of reality.



*{I found the following clipping on Marci Malinowycz's refrigerator door. I don't know quite where she got it, but it looks like the sort of thing that's found in various guises in New Age and other circles. Although I don't (yet) believe in reincarnation, the philosophy it expresses sums up my approach towards one aspect of the whole self-responsibility, create-your-own-reality issue. - JHW}*

## **Rules for Being Human**

1. You will receive a body. You may like it or hate it, but it will be yours for the entire period this time around.
2. You will learn lessons. You are enrolled in a full-time informal school called life. Each day in this school you will have the opportunity to learn lessons. You may like the lessons or think them irrelevant and stupid.
3. There are no mistakes, only lessons. Growth is a process of trial and error, experimentation. The 'failed' experiments are as much a part of the process as the experiment that ultimately 'works'.
4. A lesson is repeated until learned. A lesson will be presented to you in various forms until you have learned it. When you have learned it, you can then go on to the next lesson.
5. Learning lessons does not end. There is no part of life that does not contain its lessons. If you are alive, there are lessons to be learned.
6. 'There' is no better than 'here'. When your 'there' has become a 'here', you will simply obtain another 'there' that will, again, look better than 'here'.
7. Others are merely mirrors of you. You cannot love or hate something about another person unless it reflects to you something that you love or hate about yourself.
8. What you make of your life is up to you. You have all the tools and resources you need. What you do with them is up to you. The choice is yours.
9. Your answers lie inside you. The answers to life's questions lie inside you. All you need to do is look, listen, and trust.
10. You will forget all this.

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## Books

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### Rebecca Ore, *Becoming Alien*, Tor, 1988.

Imagine a young human, Tom, who meets some aliens who take him away to a planet where individuals of many non-human races are trained together. Thus begins an involved tale of culture shock, xenophobia, and adjustment.

Ore generally did a good job, I felt, with her aliens: each race 'stayed in character' quite well throughout the book. But with so many races involved, she was unable to fully develop any one of them. Some had distinct sex role differentiation (neither the same as, nor opposite to, that of humans, I'm relieved to note); others didn't. All had varying (apparently innate) negative reactions to other intelligent species, though some were better at overcoming this than others. The sexual habits of different species were particularly thoroughly investigated (though Tom generally doesn't really know what's going on and is thus continually confused if not shocked).

The misunderstandings arising from extremely different cultural assumptions about behaviour, were generally well done. The contrast between the aliens' differences, and the differences between human cultures, was not dwelt upon, though it was mentioned when Tom meets some humans descended from 'specimens' gathered at other times in earth's history. Tom himself is particularly well portrayed, as he developed through young manhood and decided to rebel against what he saw as being 'used' by some of the aliens. He tries to understand and not to judge others by his own standards. Sometimes he fails, sometimes he succeeds; and finally he questions whether cultural relatively is desirable or an excuse for treating others badly. Perhaps it's okay after all to judge by one's own standards?



For a first novel, this wasn't bad. It suffered from trying to cover too much (I've invented all these neat aliens; now I'd better write a story about them'), but had good stuff in it, particularly the philosophic bits. A narrower focus in future books should help Ore become a first-rate sf writer.

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### Greg Bear, *The Forge of God*, Tor, 1987.

This book reminds me of several popular 'blockbuster' sf novels, such as those by Niven & Pournelle, or Michael Crichton's *Sphere*, which are set in present-day (or near future) America, and involve some major disaster related to aliens or their artifacts. In this book, there are several alien artifacts (in the USA, the USSR, Australia, and possibly elsewhere), with the usual military secrecy surrounding them; a missing moon of Jupiter (hard to hide from amateur astronomers); some science reporters; miscellaneous experts trying to figure out what's going on; some innocent bystanders who just happen to live in the vicinity of an artifact; and the families and friends of the other players.

The alien artifacts are associated with the impending destruction of the earth. Why? Where did they come from? What can humanity do about it? Although a bit melodramatic, as this type of book usually is, the subject matter seemed well handled, with more emphasis on people and their reactions than on technological fixes. I was a trifle disappointed in the ending, however, which seemed a bit of *deus ex machina* tagged on to give an upbeat finale, rather than having the story end in despair.

The main differences between Bear's novel and similar books, for me, have to do with the characters. Bear's women are more varied and more capable than most of the women in books by Niven & Pournelle, and both his men and his women seem more 'real' -- with both strengths and weaknesses; few are stereotypes, heroic or wimpy. Bear's science is better than Crichton's, and his characters don't make as many silly mistakes within their own fields.

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### C. J. Cherryh, *Cyteen* (published in paperback in 3 parts: *The Betrayal*, *The Rebirth* & *The Vindication*), Questar, 1988.

(I commented on the first volume in *Wrevenge* 34, so I may repeat myself a bit here.)

Many of Cherryh's novels dwell heavily on what's going on in the characters' minds; some dwell heavily on political maneuvering; this one does both. It also begins to tie together several strands of future history that have been developing in other Cherryh novels over the past 10 years.

*Cyteen* is a planet, where the government of Union (a group of human planets and stations which broke away from Earth's rule in books

such as Downbelow Station) meets. The novel focuses on one prominent researcher and politician, Ariane Emory. She was a prime developer of the azi, the cloned humans conditioned and programmed by tapes to perform specific roles in the development of space when natural-born humans were too scarce to do all the work. Near the beginning of Part 1, Ariane dies (presumably murdered), and is immediately cloned. In the hope of doing the next best thing to reincarnating Ari senior, her relatives raise the young Ari as closely as possible to the way Ari senior was raised, including several traumatic events which presumably shaped her personality and interests.

Remember 20,000 in Gehenna? A large group of humans, mostly azi, were abandoned there during the Earth-Union war, and managed to survive. In Cyteen we learn more about Gehenna, and Ari's plans for both azi and natural humans, and why these plans must not become public knowledge for several more generations, if at all. We learn about the Abolitionists, who want to stop the production of azi, and why. And we learn a lot about the workings of human and azi minds, through the comparisons of the two.

If you like fast-paced action, you'll probably find this novel a bit slow. If you like psychology and philosophy, politics and science, you'll probably be

fascinated by all its intricacies, as I was -- and you may even be motivated, as I was, to read Gehenna and other books again.

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**Elizabeth Moon, Sheepfarmer's Daughter and Divided Allegiance, books 1 and 2 of The Deed of Paksenarrion, Baen, 1988. (The third volume is Oath of Gold.)**

This heroic fantasy starts slowly, as Paks leaves her home, joins the mercenary soldiers, undergoes basic training and several seasons of battles, then takes to the road to seek her destiny. This slowness didn't detract from the story for me, as it allowed Moon to develop her character in depth. But if the reader is expecting feats of magic and daring, she has to wait awhile for them. Moon makes it fairly clear how tedious and uncomfortable a common soldier's life is likely to be, between the moments of heroism. Indeed the heroism may arise not out of feats of daring, but out of desperation and plain hard work.

Paks is clearly marked for something bigger than the mercenary life, but her introduction into the battles of good and evil end quickly and painfully. At the conclusion of the second book, she is wandering through the countryside, trying to survive, her fighting spirit and courage somehow taken from her. I look forward to the third book, and her presumed comeback. These are the first of Moon's many works I've read; now I'm motivated to seek out more of them.

And a note about the covers -- the Baen fantasy editions I have show Paks in

full body armour on the first book. The second cover shows her with very little clothing, but this depicts a scene in the book where she is nude, or nearly so. The illustration may actually depict more clothing than she should have been wearing! And the wounds on her body are clearly visible. See Lyn McConchie's article elsewhere in this issue for more on the subject of cover art. Unfortunately, these covers are too dark for me to copy successfully, or I'd include them.

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**Stephen Leigh, The Crystal Memory, Avon, 1987.**

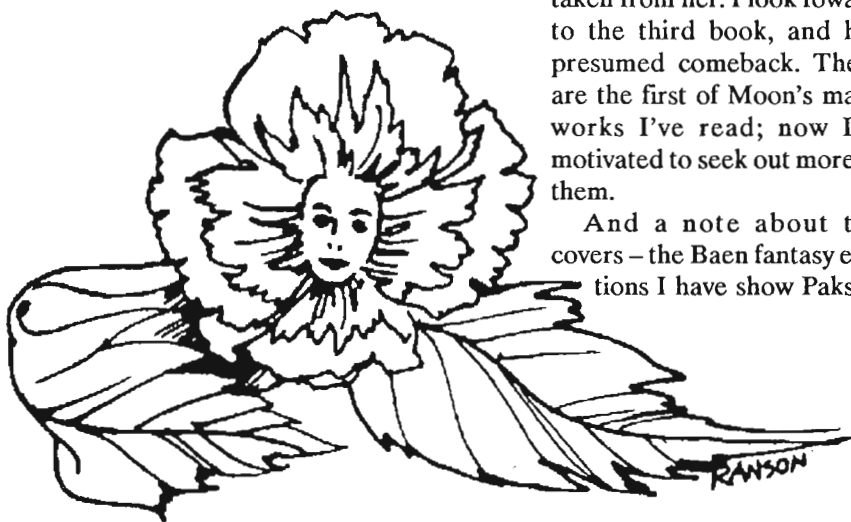
I liked this book because its main protagonist was a woman, and one I could relate to. The jacket blurb sums up the story: Free-trader Jemi Charidilis knows nothing of politics and cares less -- until her ship is attacked by pirates and she awakens brainwiped -- remembering nothing of the past two years, not even the death of her four-year-old son. Who had so cruelly cut a piece from her life? And why? The answer could determine the fate of mankind and affect the entire course of life in the solar system. But Jemi will be forced to risk her life to find the truth. Good reading.

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**Janet Kagan, Hellspark, Tor, 1988.**

This fast-paced and somewhat convoluted story left me a bit unsatisfied. I couldn't quite accept all that was happening, or perhaps more accurately the information given wasn't enough to justify to me what was happening. Too many bits and pieces had to be taken for granted. I'm not quite sure why this mattered, because I'm sure I've read many books about which I could make those same statements, but it didn't matter -- it didn't interfere with the story for me. Maybe I was in a contrary mood when I read it? I don't know.

Despite all that, I did enjoy the book -- and you might like it even more



than I did. It had some interesting ideas (for example, about the question of 'what is intelligence and how can we recognise/measure it?') and moved along quickly. For a story introduction, the jacket blurb's almost as cryptic as some of the story:

'On the newly-discovered planet, Lassti, in the flashing forests of bio-electric plant life, the body of ... the survey team's physicist is found. Has he been murdered? And if so, was it by the birdlike natives...? What will this mean to the survey team, already frustrated by their inability to measure the intelligence (or lack thereof) of the natives? ... Tough and wily Tocolh Susumo [a trader] is about to be attacked; she's about to rescue a young woman; she's about to be called before a judge; and she's about to go to Lassti and be immersed in an electric, high voltage mystery.' Tocolh is accompanied by her AI (artificial intelligence) ship's computer, Maggy.

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**Connie Willis, *Lincoln's Dreams*, Bantam Spectra, 1987.**

I wasn't surprised to be really impressed with this book, since it has received very good reviews and even, I think, won some awards. It's a fascinating study of people grappling with unexplained and incomprehensible events, which contradict their deepest beliefs in reality.

Jeff, a researcher for a writer of historical novels, meets Annie, an intense young woman suffering from vivid nightmares. He is able to 'interpret' her dreams, in the sense that he recognises the historical events that are occurring in them: events from the Civil War, from the point of view of Robert E Lee. But why she might be having these dreams is quite another matter.

Annie's psychiatrist, Richard, believes the dreams are symbols for whatever deep psychological problems Annie has, but she is convinced they are actually Lee's dreams, which she is having for him. When

Annie discovers that Richard is drugging her, she runs away from his care and Jeff takes her on a tour of Civil War battlefields while he pursues his project on Lincoln's Dreams. It's not a smart move on his part, but it seems like a good idea at the time. (He doesn't, after all, know anything about this young woman, her past, where she comes from, or anything.)

The development of events is dramatic and left me exhausted just reading about them. Interwoven with events is a series of discussions with dream researchers: each theory sounds whackier than the one before. And yet, are they really any crazier than the idea that Annie is dreaming someone else's dreams, across a time span of more than a century?



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**Suzy McKee Charnas, *Dorothea Dreams*, Berkley, 1986.**

Dorothea is an artist, who has chosen an almost hermit-like existence in New Mexico after fleeing from events in her past. She suffers dreams that appear to belong to someone else, at the time of the French revolution.

She is visited by an old lover, who is dying of cancer and fleeing from his own fears, but who knows enough of the relevant history to interpret Dorothea's dreams.

Three young men from the poor Chicano section of Albuquerque are caught up in violence to save their neighbourhood, flee from the city and end up at Dorothea's house.

How all of these disparate problems – including the ghost's – are resolved makes fascinating reading.

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**Kim Stanley Robinson, *The Gold Coast*, Tor, 1988.**

I found this book hard to get into – it took several tries – but once I did, I got really caught up in the story. It takes place in a future Los Angeles, where the freeways drive the cars and people spend a lot of time taking drugs and having sex. But there's a sense of futility about it all for some people, and others plot to change some things, for example to stop the development of still more lethal weapons systems.

Interwoven chapters follow the history of Orange County, from the time of the red indians, through the early Spanish settlements, to the slow build-up of white settlement and the establishment of miles of orange groves, to the sudden huge population buildup after World War II and the destruction of so much that had made that part of the country so beautiful and idyllic, to the future as it is depicted in this book.

Told mostly in the present tense, this book seems to rush along, much as do its characters along the freeways. Jim thinks a bit too much to fit in with his chosen friends, so he tries to hide it. He's something of a hero worshiper, and tends to grasp at other people's opinions so that he can fit in and be accepted. He's also a bit naive about the motives of people who do befriend him. All of these traits get him into rather a lot of trouble at times.

An interesting book, combining social commentary with an action-filled story about very believable people.

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**Michael Crichton, Sphere, Ballantine, 1987.**

Crichton wrote the highly successful *Andromeda Strain*, among other novels, and the edition of *Sphere* which I read did not mention 'science fiction' anywhere on the covers. Just as well, since much of the science is badly handled. As a thriller, however, it's not a bad book, especially for reading on otherwise-tedious plane or train trips. It's got the usual ingredients: an alien artifact, military secrecy, alien creatures, mind control (?), a group of scientists attempting to solve the mystery, and so on. I did like the aspects of 'create your own reality' at the end of the book. It turned an otherwise dumb ending into high camp.

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**Jo Clayton, A Gathering of Stones, Daw, 1989.**

This is the third volume in a trilogy following *Drinker of Souls* and *Blue Magic*. I enjoy Clayton's writing, and found the characters in this series interesting, but this volume seemed to go on far too long. There were too many players, and the build-up to the climax took rather too long, for my taste. Still, a good read despite this complaint.

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**Spider Robinson, Melancholy Elephants, Tor, 1985.**

A collection of short stories, not of the Callahan's saloon sort. Fascinating combinations of whimsy and seriousness, to make you think as you enjoy. A real master of storytelling is at work here.

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**C.J. Cherryh, editor, Merovingen Nights #4, Smugglers Gold, Daw, 1988.**

I'm continuing to enjoy this shared-world series, despite the absence of much of Cherryh's writing in this volume. My main complaint is how

slowly the main story progresses from one volume to the next, but the individual tales are enjoyable and well-written.

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**Marion Zimmer Bradley, editor, Four Moons of Darkover, Daw, 1988.**

Yet another collection of stories by various authors, set on Darkover. These don't pretend to be linked in any way except for the setting, and so can be enjoyed simply as good stories. I always enjoy these volumes, and this one is no exception.

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**Mark Laidlaw, Neon Lotus, Bantam, 1988.**

'Marianne Strauss has her work cut out for her. Not only is she the reincarnation of a brilliant Tibetan scientist, but the State Oracle has prophesied that she will liberate the Land of Snows from the Chinese. Now, an ancient computer in the guise of Tibet's patron saint has given her a secret mission – to recover five sacred relics containing missing memories. Marianne has the aid of a mischievous girl-goddess and a band of high-tech nomads, but will that be enough? For Tibet is a land where miracles and treachery are equally common – a land of rebel lamas, Tantric truckers, and demonic experiments. But Tibet's destiny is entwined with her own, and if Marianne doesn't find the divine devices, how will she ever find herself?'

I enjoyed this book.

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**Patricia Wrightson, Moon-dark, Hutchinson, 1987.**

Wrightson's Australian fantasies for young people are a delight to adults as well. If you haven't read any of Wrightson's books, I recommend any of them to you. Some may have Australian referents that overseas readers won't understand, but all have a wonderful Australian flavour that

isn't dependent on the stereotypes. Most of her books that I've read focus on white Australian children and/or the animals that live with white Australians – both of them interacting with the natives animals and spirits. (Three well-known books are based on Aboriginal lore: *The Ice is Coming*, *The Dark Bright Water*, and *Behind the Wind*.)

This one is concerned with 'Blue [a cattle dog that] lives with his master on a lonely stretch of an Australian river. Life for the wild creatures is ordered and harmonious until Blue senses a change. Bush-rats and bandicoots are battling for food; an elusive feral dog raids, kills, and vanishes. A swarm of flying foxes [bats] invades the precious pawpaw [papaya] trees. The balance of the land has been disturbed and the life of the animals' world is threatened. Then one night Blue hears a mysterious song: a haunting voice in the wake of the moon. It comes from deep within the spirit of the land and brings an offer of help...'

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The picture below is from the cover of the anthology *Amazons!*, edited by Jessica Amanda Salmonson. It really goes with Lyn McConchie's article, which starts on the next page. It's an example of an appropriately-dressed woman warrior.



Amazons!



# You can see I'm a female warrior because I have a sword and I'm in the nude

by Lyn McConchie

{Lyn offered this article to *Wrevenge* several years ago for first publication, but it languished in my files for so long that it has, I believe, already appeared in a New Zealand fanzine, probably *WARP*. Peggy Ranson's comments about her cover illustration encouraged me to dig the article out and publish it here, at last. - JHW}

I became a SF/F fan in my childhood. At first I read fantasy. Later I became hooked on science fiction and read Ray Bradbury, Leinster and Heinlein. In my teens, I returned to science fantasy as my primary love, and so it remains.

The covers on the early science fantasy paperbacks used to be very vague, at least the ones I saw in the sixties. Most of these were on Andre Norton's books, and the female warriors which sometimes adorned the Ace covers tended to be quite reasonable figures.

In 1969, however, New Zealand received copies of *Jirel of Joiry* in the 'Paperback Library' edition. I loved the Jirel stories but puzzled over the cover. This showed Jirel in war gear



Gate of Ivrel

holding a sword; but her armour ended at her thighs, and was shaped to her contours in a way that would have made it impossible for her to sit astride a horse.

Have you ever tried to get on a horse in a sheath frock? I have. Once when a friend asked me to return her horse to its paddock in an emergency, I was wearing a sheath frock. I still remember the trouble I had just getting on the horse. And when I finally managed, there I was riding down the road with my frock almost hitched to my waist and with the awful conviction that my pants were showing.

So, contemplating Jirel's armour, I was left wondering not only how she would get on her horse, but also if her pants would show. I also wondered why she would fight bare-thighed: what if her opponent slashed her across the legs? Surely warriors had leg armour? As a member these days of the 'Medaeval Re-enactment Society', I know damn well that knights wore leg armour! Presumably Jirel didn't, so the illustrator could show off her legs.

In the seventies I noticed that more books were becoming available with women warriors as the main characters, but no matter how she might be described inside the book, the heroine was invariably almost nude on the cover.

The three C.J. Cherryh books about Morgaine, published by Daw in paperback, were titled *Gate of Ivrel*, *Well of Shiuan*, and *Fires of Azeroth*. The cover illustrations, by Michael Whelan, were certainly beautiful, but unhappily quite unrealistic.

The first (*Ivrel*) shows Morgaine and her liegeman beside 'the gate'. Although the book stated quite plainly that it was in winter, in deep snow,

when Morgaine returned, on the cover she is wearing no more than a bra, loincloth and swordbelt. Yet as footwear she has calf-high leather boots, heavy leather riding gloves on her hands, and a boot-top length cloak.

This is just plain silly. If it was so hot that she is comfortable in bra and loincloth, her feet and hands in heavy leather would be most uncomfortably hot, and surely her cloak would be left rolled up with the saddle?

On the other hand, if she is supposed to be dressed for riding, I can only believe that Michael Whelan has never ridden in shorts with a saddle. The saddle usually has stirrups, and the stirrup leathers (the connecting straps, saddle to stirrup) *pinch*, if you have bare legs - so that an hour or so can leave one with little black and blue bruises all down the inside of the leg.

On the second and third covers, Morgaine is depicted actually on a horse. In each case she is wearing black leather armour cut out in an extremely odd way, since the upper thighs and groin appear to be left unprotected.

Unhappily this tendency did not cease as we entered the eighties. Take,



Fires of Azeroth

for example, an Andre Norton book (Del Rey paperback) with a cover by Laurence Schwinger. In the book the heroine Tirtha wears a sword and (specifically stated) men's clothing. On the cover she appears in a long white low necked flowing gown. In the book Tirtha has short raggedly cut hair; on the cover she is shown with hair that seems to reach almost to her waist. Why can't the cover depict the person inside the book?

Indeed this is the real complaint I have. It often appears as if the artist can know nothing of the story s/he is illustrating. It is not as if the, often fine, artists *cannot* draw the woman as a warrior. Michael Whelan, whom I castigated for the 'Morgaine' covers, also did the covers for Jessica Amanda Salmonson's first two *Amazons!* books. The first showed a female warrior in full body armour (with a strong resemblance to Japanese lacquered armour) and with full weaponry.

The cover was both beautiful and fitting for the book. The second cover was not so good. Again the painting was beautiful, but Michael was back to the 'if she's a female warrior let's get her gear off' bit. The redeeming thing was that the musculature of the shoulders and upper arms on the depicted women was obviously that of fit, trained warriors.

The cover of Marion Zimmer Bradley's *City of Sorcery* (Daw), done by James Gurney, is also irritating.



City of Sorcery

The woman depicted is properly clothed for the mountains in fur edged hooded jacket and trousers. However, in what is obviously freezing weather, she wears no gloves. And for some obscure reason she is holding her sword backwards in a way that would make any weapons master turn his/her grave. She's almost saying 'OK, I'm dressed as a man and I have a sword, but look I'm really a woman, just see how I hold my sword'. Why did Gurney have to spoil a good cover that way?

But a last word of praise. Barbara Hambly wrote *The Darwath Trilogy*. The cover illustrations for the Daw editions of all three books were done by David B. Mattingly. These are beautiful covers, which convey the ambience of the stories within as well as actual scenes from the books. All three books take place in winter, and on all three covers the characters are fully clothed, just as any normal person would be in that kind of weather.

The cover of the second, *The Walls of Air*, shows two of the main characters, Ingold the wizard and Gil Patterson, a (female) warrior, at the gates of the Keep of Dare. Gil is wearing soft leather calf-high boots, and a calf-length robe belted on over chain mail. She also has a woolen scarf wound high around her throat, and her hair is braided out of the way.

Yet, although the only things that can be seen of Gil are her face and hands, she is clearly a woman. If other artists are afraid that they will be unable to show clearly that the person in armour is female, then they should look at these covers.

While I'm on the subject, warriors do not, if they have any sense, have long hair blowing all over the place. Otherwise at a critical moment they are likely to get a face full and be blinded temporarily. This sort of thing leads to being dead permanently.

I notice that most of the 'woman warrior' fantasy these days is written by women. I also see that where their books show a woman warrior on the cover, nine times out of ten she either

doesn't fit the story inside, or is a joke as a warrior, or both. Why?

{The illustrations for this article were taken from some of the covers Lyn mentions. Unfortunately my scanner cannot handle colours very well, so it's rather hard to tell on the *Fires of Azeroth* cover what the woman's leg armour looks like. I don't have the Daw editions of *The Darwath Trilogy*, to show one of Lyn's 'good' examples.

The covers on the *Morgaine* books are not, to me, quite as bad as they might be, because the man depicted, in each case, is as unclothed as *Morgaine*. Many covers show the men clothed, but the women nearly naked. Whelan at least provides flesh for both sexes to admire - his men have nice legs.

I also note that, since Lyn's article was written, the fourth (and last) *Morgaine* book - titled *Exile's Gate* - has been published. Once again the cover illustration is by Michael Whelan, but *Morgaine* and her liegeman are both depicted in appropriately full body armour.

Despite her shots at the artists, I'm sure Lyn knows that it's the people who buy covers who control what goes on them. Even the editors (as well as the authors) are sometimes shocked at the inappropriate artwork that appears. The most glaring examples involve white women on covers of books in which all the characters are black (this, I believe, happened on at least one edition of a book by Octavia Butler). - JHW}



Exile's Gate